

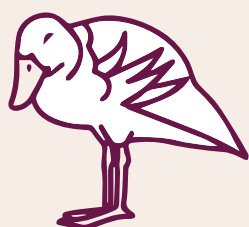


Keep a TOP WATCH! for

Avian influenza

Avian influenza (or bird flu) is a highly contagious disease affecting several species (mainly birds). It is caused by a virus, some strains of which are highly lethal and others more mild. The virus can mutate, meaning a mild strain could suddenly change to cause much more serious disease.

April 2023



Bird flu is a highly contagious disease that is caused by a virus

Some wild birds can carry and spread the virus without showing signs of disease. Domestic poultry, especially chickens are often more at risk than other birds.

What is the risk to Australia?

Harmful strains of the virus which have occurred globally, including in a number of Asian countries in recent years, could devastate both our native bird populations and the poultry industry if it got into Australia.

Are there any risks to humans?

There is no current threat to human health in Australia from this disease. However, bird flu has the potential to become a major public health risk. Infection in people usually occurs after close contact with sick or dead birds, but the virus can sometimes be spread directly from person to person, depending on the strain. You cannot catch this disease by eating cooked poultry meat or eggs.

What to look for

Clinical signs of disease is usually only seen in poultry, for example chickens and ducks, but could be seen in wild birds too. Once disease occurs in poultry it can spread very rapidly.

In mild to moderate cases you may see:

- coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, lack of appetite, ruffled feathers, unusual head position, tremors or lack of coordination
- combs and wattles of chickens may look swollen, enlarged and discoloured (purple or blue)
- hens may lay soft-shelled eggs before ceasing to lay.

In severe cases, sudden death of a large number of birds occurs.



Report if you see large numbers of sick or dead birds.

Tell a biosecurity officer, ranger or call the
EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE WATCH HOTLINE
1800 675 888