

How to report suspected bird flu



H5 bird flu (H5N1 avian influenza clade 2.3.4.4b) is a contagious viral disease that can affect both domestic and wild birds. It causes severe clinical signs and high mortality rates in birds.

Clinical signs

The most obvious sign of H5 bird flu is rapid mortality among a group of birds. Other signs vary, depending on the affected bird species:

In wild birds:

- lethargy or a reluctance to move, droopy head, inability to fly or lack of co-ordination
- coughing, panting and nasal secretions
- severe diarrhoea.

In poultry:

- lethargy/reluctance to move
- eating less than normal
- droopy head
- darkened and/or swollen comb/wattle
- coughing, panting and nasal secretions
- swelling around the head and neck
- laying fewer eggs than normal
- watery or green diarrhoea
- bruises on body and legs
- a silent hen house.

Protect yourself and prevent spread – do not touch birds with suspected H5 bird flu

Practice good biosecurity

To help prevent the spread of disease, always practice good biosecurity and hygiene when dealing with birds in your everyday work.

- Keep sick and healthy birds separate.
- Wear disposable gloves and wash your hands after handling wild birds or poultry.
- Clean footwear and change clothes after contact with wild birds or poultry.



How MPI is handling public reports and laboratory testing

The focus is on tracking how H5 bird flu is moving around New Zealand. This information will help protect our poultry industry and support Department of Conservation's work to safeguard native wildlife.

Ongoing surveillance and testing will help build a clearer picture of where the disease is and how it is spreading. This will allow egg and chicken producers across the country to make informed decisions about the biosecurity measures that best protect their flocks while keeping their businesses operating.

MPI assesses reports using internationally recognised H5 bird flu risk criteria. Priority is given to reports involving:

- multiple sick or dead birds
- higher-risk species, such as seabirds and waterfowl
- birds that gather in large groups
- locations where the risk of spread is higher.

Experience overseas shows this targeted approach provides a faster and more accurate understanding of H5 bird flu spread than investigating isolated bird deaths or species that are less likely to pose an immediate risk.

Reporting bird flu

If you see three or more sick or dead wild birds in a group, avoid contact, record what you see and report it to the exotic pest and disease hotline on 0800 80 99 66 from anywhere in New Zealand. You can also report online at report.mpi.govt.nz. Do not handle or move the wildlife.

If you report online, select the 'dead or dying wild birds' option from the dropdown list and then the type of bird you have found.

Provide as much detail as you can, including:

- common name or species of sick or dead bird if known
- how many are sick or freshly dead, and the total number of birds present
- a GPS reading or other precise location information
- photographs and videos of sick and dead birds.

MPI will contact notifiers if more information is required.



For more information visit
www.mpi.govt.nz/hpai

