

H5 bird flu – information for game bird hunters



About bird flu

Bird flu is a highly contagious viral disease that mainly affects birds. It can also spread to mammals including, on rare occasions, people.

There are two main types of avian influenza:

- High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), which can cause severe signs and high death rates in birds. There are a number of strains including H5, H7, and H9.
- Low pathogenicity avian influenza (LPAI), which typically causes few or no signs in birds but can possibly mutate to HPAI.

If you suspect H5 bird flu, contact MPI's exotic pest and disease hotline

If you see three or more sick or dead wild birds or marine mammals (such as seals or sea lions) in a group, report it immediately to the exotic pest and disease hotline on **0800 80 99 66**. The hotline operates 24/7.

Do not handle or move dead or dying birds. This helps prevent the spread of the virus and protects your health.

Provide as much detail as you can, including:

- a GPS reading or other precise location information;
- photographs and videos of sick and dead birds;
- species name and estimate the numbers affected;
- how many are sick or freshly dead, and the total number of birds present.

We will note the details and an incursion investigator will contact you.



How to protect yourself and prevent possible spread

You should always follow New Zealand Food Safety's advice on food safety for hunters, but we especially recommend that you:

- don't harvest or handle wild birds (or their feathers) if they are obviously sick or found dead;
- wash and dry your hands after handling or dressing wild birds;
- don't eat, drink or put anything in your mouth while handling or cleaning harvested birds;
- don't allow your dogs to collect sick birds or pick up birds that are already found dead
- wash knives and other utensils, and scrub chopping boards between preparation of raw and cooked foods;
- keep raw meat and poultry covered and away from ready-to-eat food, fruit and vegetables;
- cook birds well – an internal temperature of at least 73 degrees Celsius for at least 2 to 3 minutes is needed to kill bacteria and viruses;
- scrub and disinfect all boots and equipment between hunting sites – we recommend you use an antiviral disinfectant;
- wash any clothes that have been in direct contact with birds after each hunting trip.

Heat destroys the virus, so food that has been thoroughly cooked is safe to eat.

Read more on food safety for hunters on our website:

www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety-home/food-safety-tips-fishing-hunting-homekill/food-safety-hunters



For more information visit
www.mpi.govt.nz/bird-flu

