

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.

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.

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.

Do not handle or move the birds.

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.



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/hpai