

# Avian influenza (bird flu)

Respond, prevent and prepare.

Report multiple sightings of sick or dead birds.



**Avian influenza is a viral disease of birds.**

**Biosecurity is everyone's business.**

**If you spot multiple sick or dead birds, do not touch them.**

**Report it to the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.**

## What is avian influenza (bird flu)?

Avian influenza (AI), commonly called bird flu, is an infectious viral disease of birds that occurs worldwide, and has been detected in Australia.

It has not been detected in the Northern Territory. There are many strains of the AI virus. AI viruses mostly circulate in wild bird populations causing no disease or only mild disease. However, when some strains of the virus infect domestic poultry such as chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and pigeons, they can cause severe disease.

On rare occasions, some strains of AI virus can cause disease in humans.

## How does AI spread?

AI is spread by wild birds, contaminating food or water supplies. Migratory birds (predominantly shore birds and waders from nearby countries in South East Asia) can pose a risk if they harbour AI infection and then mingle with and transmit the infection to waterfowl that are nomadic within Australia. These nomadic birds can then mingle with and spread the infection to domestic birds, such as poultry and pigeons.

The disease is also spread by animal-to-animal contact, bites and scratches, and the movement of infected live birds, poultry products or contaminated feed, equipment and materials. The disease can survive in faeces, on feathers, egg or meat, and in water.

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## What to look out for

Avoid all contact with the bird if you notice it has any of the symptoms below:

- incoordination, tremors, swimming in circles
- inability to stand or fly
- twisted necks or other abnormal posture
- difficulty breathing, coughing or sneezing
- swelling around the head, neck and eyes
- dullness and reluctance to move, eat or drink.
- drop in egg production
- loss of appetite
- cloudiness or change in colour of the eyes
- watery diarrhoea
- sudden death.



## Bird owners

- Keep your equipment and poultry yard or aviary clean.
- Avoid contact between your birds and wild birds.
- Don't let feed and water become contaminated by faeces or other animal waste.
- Limit visitors to your birds.
- Quarantine new birds and monitor for at least 30 days before introducing them to your existing flock.
- Know the signs of disease.
- Immediately report sightings of any sick or dead birds.

## Biosecurity and reporting

Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility. Enhanced Northern Territory Government monitoring and surveillance is taking place. While the movement of wild birds can't be controlled, biosecurity measures are the best way of preventing disease spillover. Help safeguard our livestock industries, native wildlife and communities by reporting any sightings of multiple severely ill or dead birds.



## How to report

**If you see any unusual symptoms in your birds or find that a number of them have died within a short period of time, be on the safe side and report it immediately to your local veterinarian or the 24-hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888**



## More information

For the latest information, visit Biosecurity Northern Territory on Facebook.

Scan the QR code to find out more on Avian influenza (bird flu) or visit

[nt.gov.au/avian-influenza](https://nt.gov.au/avian-influenza)

The Australian Government publishes information about all current biosecurity response activities on [outbreak.gov.au](https://outbreak.gov.au)

## Avian influenza

