



Bulletin name	2026-01 H5 Bird Flu - issued 24/09/2026	
Target audience	Branch Presidents SLSNSW Senior Leadership Team SLSNSW Emergency Management Team	Branch Directors of Lifesaving SLSNSW State Operations Centre Clubs and Services
Purpose		
The purpose of this bulletin is to provide patrols with a clear and consistent response to reports of sick or dead birds over the coming season, in response to heightened concerns relating to the H5 Bird Flu. H5 Bird Flu is a high pathogenicity variant of avian influenza that mainly affects wild and domestic birds, poultry and some mammals. The risk to the public remains low, however, further spread in wild birds across Australia is anticipated and is being closely monitored by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).		
Scope		
This bulletin applies to all SLSNSW patrolling members		
When does the bulletin apply		
24/09/2026 – ongoing unless changes notified		
Operational Bulletin details		
Key messages for club members: • Do not touch sick or dead birds. • Report any sightings of sick or dead wild birds or other animals to the Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline on 1800 675 888 or via the online form. • The EAD will contact you directly if further action is required. • If further action is required from the EAD, please contact SurfCom via radio for further advice. • If you are concerned whilst awaiting a response from the EAD hotline (based on numbers, location, proximity to the flagged area, etc.), please contact SurfCom for further advice. • SurfCom will advise the relevant Duty Officer who will coordinate further steps to be undertaken in line with guidance from the DPIRD. • Always practice good hand hygiene whilst on patrol, particularly before eating and after handling equipment Key messages for the community: • Encourage beach users to keep children and pets away from wildlife, especially sick or dead animals, and to keep dogs on leads to help protect wildlife and reduce disease risks. • Direct the community to dpird.nsw.gov.au/ai for up-to-date information • All media enquiries about H5 bird flu should be referred to media@dpird.nsw.gov.au		
Related policies, legislation and/or authorising environment		
- Biosecurity Act 2015 - Biosecurity Regulation 2017 - SLSNSW Public Safety SOPS - Australian Government Bird Flu (Avian Influenza) - NSW Government H5 Bird Flu in NSW		
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