



Tākapu / Gannet Colony at sunset. Photo: Piotr Zurek

H5 bird flu wildlife kete: distance tourism

Purpose: provide health, safety and biosecurity best practice to safely continue tourism with H5 bird flu (highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b) present in Aotearoa.

Who is this factsheet for?

This guidance was developed as best practice for DOC staff. It applies to DOC workers and, where DOC is directing or influencing the work, to others involved in DOC-led or DOC-supported activities including Treaty Partners, contractors, researchers, volunteers, permit holders, concessionaires and other PCBUs. This document can be used as best practice recommendations for the public and international visitors to keep themselves safe.

How to use this guide:

Follow all the steps listed in this factsheet, as well as any other relevant factsheets for your work

Step 1 Know your exposure risk and PPE levels

Step 2: Know and have the necessary PPE and hygiene

Step 3 Know your risks during tourism activities and how to manage them

Step 4 Know the H5 bird flu disinfectants

Step 5 Know how to make the H5 bird flu disinfectants

Before you start:

- ☐ Read over all the steps
- ☐ Know how to apply and correctly use the appropriate PPE
- ☐ Know how to appropriately clean equipment and clothing
- ☐ Always keep yourself, the wildlife and others safe
- ☐ Read all the FAQ's at this end of this document
- ☐ If needed, contact the DOC H5 bird flu team for further clarification



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Warning: viewing dead or dying wildlife can be very distressing

Large numbers of birds and marine mammals have died from H5 bird flu in overseas outbreaks. Your group may be the first to observe a mass mortality event. Observing mass mortality events may cause significant distress to your guests. Be prepared to cancel trips or change itineraries if there are mass mortalities in your region.

What this factsheet covers

This factsheet contains instructions to keep yourself and your guests safe while running wildlife tourism operations. It also has guidance to reduce the risk of spreading H5 bird flu through your activities.

High-risk sites are places where wild birds gather in large numbers, or where captive birds could come into contact with wild birds. For example:

- seabird colonies and breeding sites
- wetlands, estuaries, lagoons and harbours
- lakes and river mouths where waterfowl congregate
- coastal roosting and feeding areas
- wildlife rehabilitation facilities
- Captive facilities, especially where wild birds can access feed or water
- sites where sick or dead birds have been found.

The actions you need to take differ according to the type of activity you are running – whether they are viewing from a distance or close-up encounters, and whether they go into or through a high-risk site.

Distance observation before entering a high-risk site

Before starting visiting, identify any high-risk sites within the area. High-risk sites are where you are more likely to contact H5 bird flu sick or dead wildlife; such as, known outbreak sites or places where wildlife congregate or disperse in large numbers for breeding, feeding, resting, nesting or moulting.

Irrespective of the interaction with wildlife in the trapping area, assess the wildlife in any relevant high-risk sites from a distance (≥ 50 m if possible) prior to entering the site. Observe wildlife within the high-risk site for 10-15 minutes looking for an unusual event involving three or more sick/ dead animals (birds or marine mammals) or any suspicious H5 bird flu symptoms in live animals.

Keep your distance

Avoid supplementary feeding, chumming and other activities that encourage birds, seals, sealions, dolphins and whales to congregate.

Keep at least 200 m away from bird colonies, burrows and flocks on the ground, and at least 50 m from cliffs with nesting birds.

Report sick or dead wildlife

If a new H5 bird flu outbreak is detected or suspected during trapping, stop work, and report. Always keep children and pets away from sick and dead wildlife.

If you see three or more sick or dead wild birds or seals in a group, avoid contact, record what you see and report it to the Exotic Pests and Diseases hotline on **0800 80 99 66** or online at **report.mpi.govt.nz**

Follow the investigators instructions. Do not handle or move the wildlife unless directed to do so by MPI or DOC and you have adequate PPE and handling skills.

STEP 1: Know your exposure risk and PPE levels

Know your exposure risk, and the corresponding PPE number required to safely undertake tourism. When planning your activity determine the exposure risk for all sites and tasks you will be undertaking. Repeat this assessment at the start of the task (e.g. during toolbox talks and Job Safety Assessments - JSA) to ensure any changes to exposure risk are captured and mitigated.

Call a stop for safety at any point if the risk exceeds the levels of PPE and biosecurity mitigations you have in place for both yourself, staff and visitors.

Exposure Risk				
Indicates how likely it is for a human to encounter the virus based on the disease status in Aotearoa and trigger zones [§] .				
Extremely low	Low	Moderate	High	Extremely high
No H5 bird flu anywhere in Aotearoa AND No sustained transmission [†] of H5 bird flu in wildlife in any of the trigger zones [§]	Sustained transmission [†] of H5 bird flu is confirmed in wildlife in one or more trigger zones [§] AND/OR Sporadic detections [†] of H5 bird flu confirmed anywhere in Aotearoa	Sustained transmission [†] of H5 bird flu is confirmed or highly suspected in wildlife in Aotearoa AND No individuals at work site are show symptoms	Sustained transmission [†] of H5 bird flu is confirmed or highly suspected in your region AND Mortality above baseline [‡] OR Only some individuals (1-10) at work site show symptoms	H5 bird flu is circulating at the site you are visiting (confirmed or highly suspected). Mass mortality in birds and/or mammals at your site
Definitions [§] <i>Trigger zones: Australia, South Pacific, NZ subantarctic islands, Ross Sea region Antarctica.</i> [†] <i>Sporadic detections:</i> [‡] <i>Sustained transmission: an infectious illness that is actively spreading and being transmitted between individuals within a specific population or geographic region.</i> [‡] <i>Mortality above baseline: useful if population data is known and monitored for species' impacted by sustained H5 bird flu transmission.</i>				

	Exposure risk				
	extr. low	low	mod	high	extr. high
Tasks at increased H5 bird flu exposure descriptions Specific tasks that put people at higher risk from H5 bird flu exposure	PPE Levels				
Guided wildlife viewing that DOES NOT involve entering high-risk sites. Examples: guided wildlife viewing (hiking/ kayaking/ biking/marine mammal watching) that DOES NOT involve entering high-risk sites.	0	0	1	1	1
Activities INSIDE high-risk sites, or close up wildlife encounters but without: handling or hand feeding animals or handling of equipment that could be contaminated by faeces or bodily fluids Examples: Inside high-risk sites, Guided tourism – hiking, biking, kayaking, etc. Radiotelemetry tracking which doesn't result in handling of wildlife or contamination of equipment. Ground-based surveys (e.g. transects, quadrats). Installing/maintaining devices in colonies (e.g. sensors, cameras, etc.). Close up wildlife encounters.	0	1	1	1	1

Note: if you are directly handling and working with wildlife as part of a tourism experience, please refer to the relevant wildlife factsheet from the DOC H5 bird flu wildlife kete.

STEP 2: Know and have the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hygiene

Using your known Exposure Risk Level from STEP 1, ensure you have packed the required PPE and hygiene equipment. Follow the guidance on how to practice good hygiene, wear and remove PPE correctly for levels 0-1 on the DOC website.

Equipment	Level 0	Level 1	Packed it?
Hand sanitiser in pump bottle	✓	✓	
Alcohol wipes	✓	✓	
Disposable gloves (PPE underlayer)	optional	optional	
Washable material overalls. (PPE underlayer)		✓	
Work boots or PVC gumboots		✓	
Fish bin for storing and transporting gear		✓	
Disinfectant at correct dilution concentration <i>Make sure you have enough for all your gear</i>		✓	
Tub for disinfecting boots e.g., fish bin		✓	
Plastic container with lid for disinfecting other gear		✓	
Roll of duct tape		✓	
Permanent marker pen for labelling		✓	
Scrubbing brush		✓	
2 spray bottles of disinfectant		✓	
Plastic rubbish bags		✓	
Clean clothes and shoes to change into		✓	

At PPE level 0 you must ensure all staff and guests sanitise or wash their hands with soap and water before eating and after the trip.

At PPE level 1 you must ensure all staff and guests follow these instructions:

- sanitise or wash their hands with soap and water before eating and drinking
- disinfect their footwear before and after the trip
- clean their phones, drones or cameras using alcohol wipes after the trip
- re-wash hands after the trip

Footwear

At PPE level 1, you'll need to provide suitable disinfectant (see tables below) and brushes for guests and staff to clean their footwear before and after the trip. Brush off as much soil, mud and bird poo as you can before spraying soles and upper surfaces with the disinfectant.

Vehicles

Clean your vehicle – including the tyres and tread – with an appropriate disinfectant between sites.

STEP 3: Know your risks during tourism activities and how to manage them

Risk	How to manage
Disturbing wildlife by getting too close may cause them to disperse and spread H5 bird flu to new areas, it can also stress sick animals and hamper their chance of recovering from H5 bird flu.	Keep to the safe viewing distance according to your permit. Stay at least 50 m away from birds and marine mammals at sea and don't drive boats through rafts of birds. More detailed information can be found at: Sharing our coasts with marine mammals
Congregating wildlife may cause H5 bird flu to spread.	Avoid feeding, chumming and other activities that encourage birds and marine mammals to congregate.
H5 bird flu is spread via dirty footwear, luggage, vehicles and other items.	If you're in an area where PPE level 1 is required, provide footbaths of disinfectant and scrubbing brushes for guests and staff to use before and after the trip and any visits to shore. Keep luggage off the ground or disinfect it. Clean vehicle tyres if driving or cycling through a high-risk site.
Human infection after close contact with wildlife or contaminated items.	Ensure guests and tour guides keep a safe distance and don't interact with sick or dead wildlife. Make sure guests and tour guides wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser before eating and drinking. Phones and cameras should be cleaned with an alcohol wipe. Consider suspending your operation if you can't manage this risk.

STEP 4: Know which H5 bird flu disinfectant to use

Use this table to understand different disinfectant options and what each is suitable for disinfecting. Note that while disinfectants will work for the uses described below, they may damage the item being disinfected, e.g., cause fabric colours to run or damage boot soles.

	Hands and body	Clothing	Other soft surfaces (e.g. vehicle seats)	Phone or camera	Vehicles (e.g. boot/hard seat, trailers etc.)
Hand sanitiser and hot soapy water	✓	-	-	-	-
Ethanol	✓	-	-	✓	-
Isopropyl alcohol	✓	-	-	✓	✓ Use 70% on hard internal surfaces
Safe4	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
SteriGene	-	✓	✓	✓	✓ Also suitable for external surfaces
Virkon S	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Bleach: 5–6% sodium hypochlorite	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Prevail	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
F10 SC	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washing machine hot wash: 40°C, heavy duty cycle with detergent	-	✓	-	-	-

Key:



recommended for this type of disinfection –

– NOT recommended for this type of disinfection

How to use disinfectant

Ensure your disinfectants are in date, made up to the correct concentration and allowed to work for the required contact time before rinsing off. Collect and dispose of waste disinfectant according to the product's Safety Data Sheet and local hazardous waste requirements. Don't tip it out into waterways, wetlands, stormwater drains or the sea.

STEP 5: Know how to make and use the H5 bird flu disinfectants

Use the table below to correctly prepare the disinfectant for different scenarios. Contact Time means the length of time the disinfectant needs to be in contact with the item to be effective.

Disinfectant	Concentration	Directions & details	Contact Time
Hand sanitiser & hot soapy water	60-90% (hand sanitiser)	Hands, arms, and face should be washed with water and detergent, rinsed, and hand sanitiser or Alcohol wipes applied to hands, after fieldwork).	15 seconds (hand sanitiser)
Ethanol	60-90%	No rinsing required	15 seconds
Isopropyl alcohol	60-90%	No rinsing required	15 seconds
Safe4 (Halogenated tertiary amine)	10%	1 part concentrate to 10 parts warm or cold water	5 minutes
	1:10	No rinsing required. Fully dry item before reusing or animal contact. Irritant to skin. Lasts 7 days once diluted, make fresh weekly.	
SteriGene (Halogenated tertiary amine)	0.5% 1:200 dilution	1 part concentrate to 200 parts water. (25mls into 5 litres) For general cleaning of un-soiled areas Rinsing and drying required. Can cause allergic skin reaction and irritation when inhaled. Non-corrosive. Lasts 6 months made up with tap water, 12 months made up with deionized water.	General use 5 minutes
	1% 1:100 dilution	1 part concentrate to 100 parts water (50mls into 5 litres) if the item has been previously soiled and cleaned Can cause allergic skin reaction and irritation when inhaled. Non-corrosive. Lasts 6 months made up with tap water, 12 months made up with deionized water.	Equipment soak 20 minutes
	5% 1:20 dilution	1 part concentrate to 20 parts water (250mls in 5 litres) in the presence of blood or bodily secretions Can cause allergic skin reaction and irritation when inhaled. Non-corrosive. Lasts 6 months made up with tap water, 12 months made up with deionized water	Fabrics soaked 30 minutes or use 50ml SteriGene per 4kg load of washing
Virkon S (Oxidising agent)	1%	1 tablet per 500 mL of water OR 10 g of powder per litre of water for a 1% solution. Warm or cold water Rinsing required. Very corrosive and irritant to skin. Lasts 7 days once diluted, make fresh weekly.	10 minutes For clothing use a 3.5% solution
Bleach (with 5-6% sodium hypochlorite)	10%	1 part bleach + 9 parts water. Cold water only For clothing: 35mls bleach made up to 1 litre with cold water. Rinsing required. Irritant to skin. Check product concentration to ensure correct dilution rate. Lasts 24 hours once diluted	10 minutes
Prevail (Hydrogen peroxide)	2.5%	25mls Prevail in 1 litre cold water	5 minutes
	1:40	No rinsing required. Do not use undiluted. Biodegradable. Once diluted, lasts 30 days.	
F10 SC (Quaternary ammonium)	1%	10mls in 1 litre water No rinsing required. Less irritant to skin than other disinfectants.	10 minutes contact time

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can I get closer to the wildlife for a better look?

We want our wildlife to stay wild and not be negatively impacted by tourists, photographers or anyone else. Please keep a suitable distance between you and your animal subject, following any rules (e.g. minimum distance from marine mammals). If you notice any behaviour changes in any species due to your presence, back off at least until the animal(s) resumes normal behaviours. In New Zealand, disturbing, harming, or killing absolutely protected wildlife under the [Wildlife Act 1953](#) can result in a court-imposed fine of up to \$100,000 and up to 6 months or 2 years in prison, while instant infringement fines for nest disturbances range from \$600 to \$1,600. Leave the wildlife be and try not to disturb it.

I walked through an area with H5 bird flu infected bird poo – and I think I've been contaminated, what do I do?

If you have accidentally or deliberately been exposed to body fluids from an animal (e.g. faeces, regurgitation, saliva etc.) on your person or your PPE failed (e.g. ripped or torn), follow the guidance H5 bird flu: decontamination available through the DOC website [H5 bird flu wildlife kete](#). If you develop flu-like symptoms contact your health care provider and tell them you may have been exposed to H5 bird flu.

I take people out to an island. What if there's a different exposure risk there?

Do not land or walk through an active outbreak site. Follow the correct PPE requirements for the situation. Comply with all standard conditions for this activity, including following any signage at site.

A bird landed on my boat. What should I do?

Follow normal procedures, including any reporting requirements.

If the bird is looking sick with symptoms consistent with bird flu (symptoms include: weakness and trembling, paralysis, breathing difficulties, lack of coordination, blindness, diarrhoea, droopy head, lack of energy/ reluctance to move), report it to the MPI hotline on 0800 80 99 66 or online at [report.mpi.govt.nz](#). Follow their instructions. Do not attempt to handle or move the wildlife, unless directed to do so with the appropriate PPE.

I saw some birds on the water that looked sick. What should I do?

If you see three or more sick or dead wild birds in a group, avoid contact, record what you see and report it to MPI's exotic pest and disease hotline on 0800 80 99 66 or online. Follow their instructions.

I have a tourism situation not covered by this document

You might not be the only person or group with this question. If you have a task or situation not covered by this document and you are unsure and require guidance, please contact the DOC HPAI team HPAI@doc.govt.nz