

Overview of H5 Bird Flu

MPAB Meeting
25 August 2026



What is H5 bird flu?

H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b

- H5N1 HPAI (H5 bird flu) is a highly contagious avian influenza virus
- Mainly a disease of birds, but can infect other animals
- Can cause severe illness and sudden death in birds
- H5 bird flu has no effective treatment
- Infected birds shed the virus in saliva, nasal secretions and faeces
- Virus can spread via contact with infected animals, contaminated environments, clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles

Who can be infected?

Birds

Birds are the primary host of H5 bird flu

Wild birds, poultry and pet birds can be infected

Waterbirds, seabirds and birds of prey are important groups to watch



Mammals

Overseas infections have occurred in over 60 species of mammals:

Marine mammals (dolphins & seals)

Domestic pets (cats & dogs)

Farm animals (cows, pigs, sheep & goats)



Humans

Human infection is rare

People can become infected if they have close contact with infected birds, droppings or contaminated environments



Signs to recognise in birds

- Treat all species as susceptible
- Sign of disease varies, each case can be different
- Infected animals might look very sick, or show no signs at all
- Sometimes birds can die suddenly without warning

Sudden death

- One or multiple birds

Neurological

- Seizures, tremors, walking in circles, twisted neck, head tilt

Respiratory

- Breathing problems, sneezing, panting, nasal or oral discharge

Mobility

- Unable to stand, walk or fly properly

General

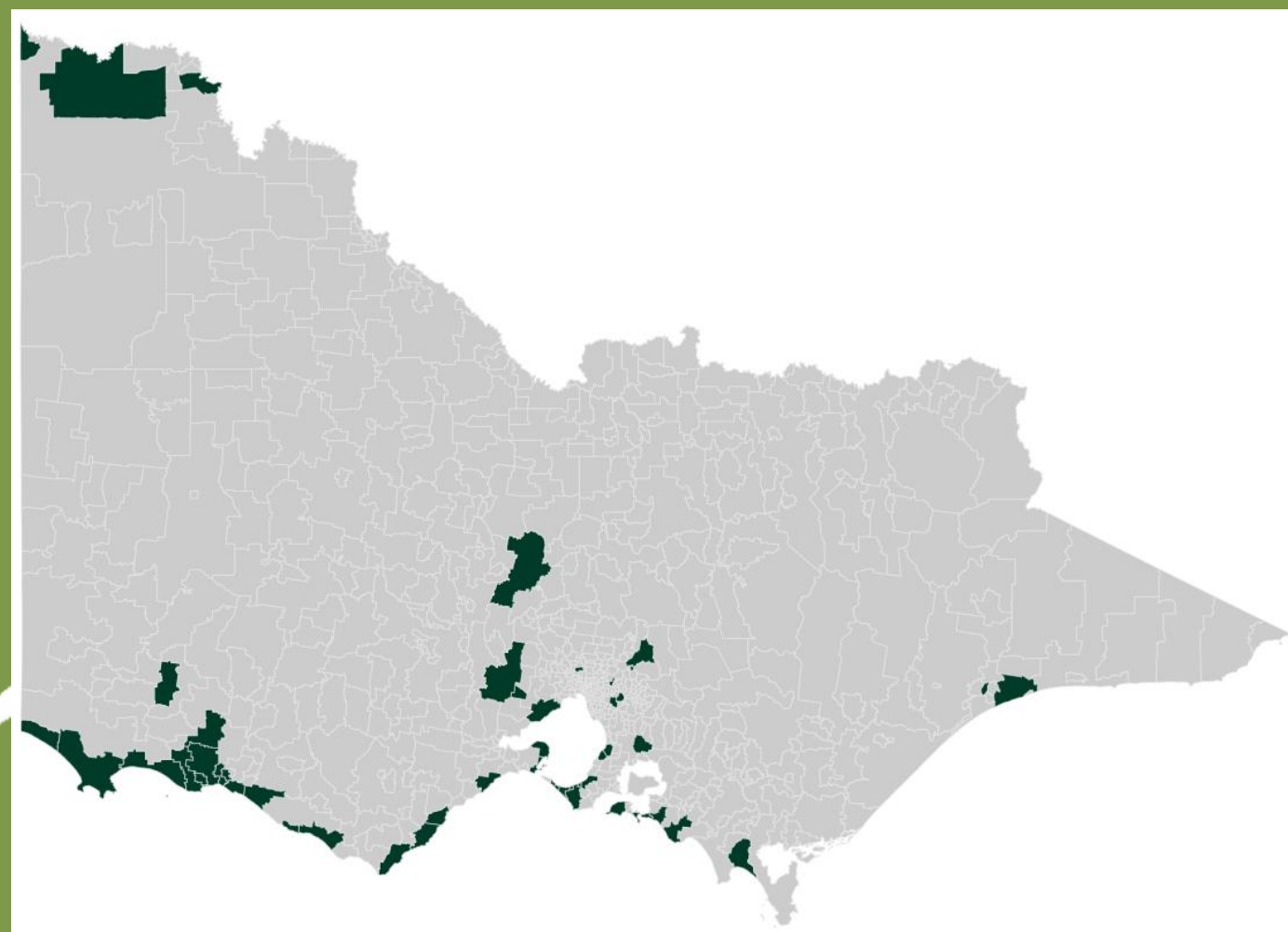
- Droopy or puffed-up appearance, diarrhoea

Current situation in Victoria

95 positive
H5 bird flu
events

The situation is changing quickly, and we are adapting as new information and government advice is available

Crested Tern



Location

Detections reported across multiple regions in Victoria, including metro Melbourne, coastal and southern inland locations

First positive case identified on the Mornington Peninsula on 6 August 2026

Species

H5 has been detected in:

- Greater crested terns
- Silver gulls
- Raven (x3)
- Magpie (x2)
- Shearwater (x1)
- Gannet (x1)
- Penguin (x1)

No detections in poultry or other animals

Control Measures

Enhanced biosecurity measures at vet clinics and in the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation sector

Control orders in place in some regions across the state to keep poultry housed to prevent contact with wild birds

Vaccination program to protect vulnerable native species, including penguins at Phillip Island and St Kilda Beach

Current situation on Mornington Peninsula

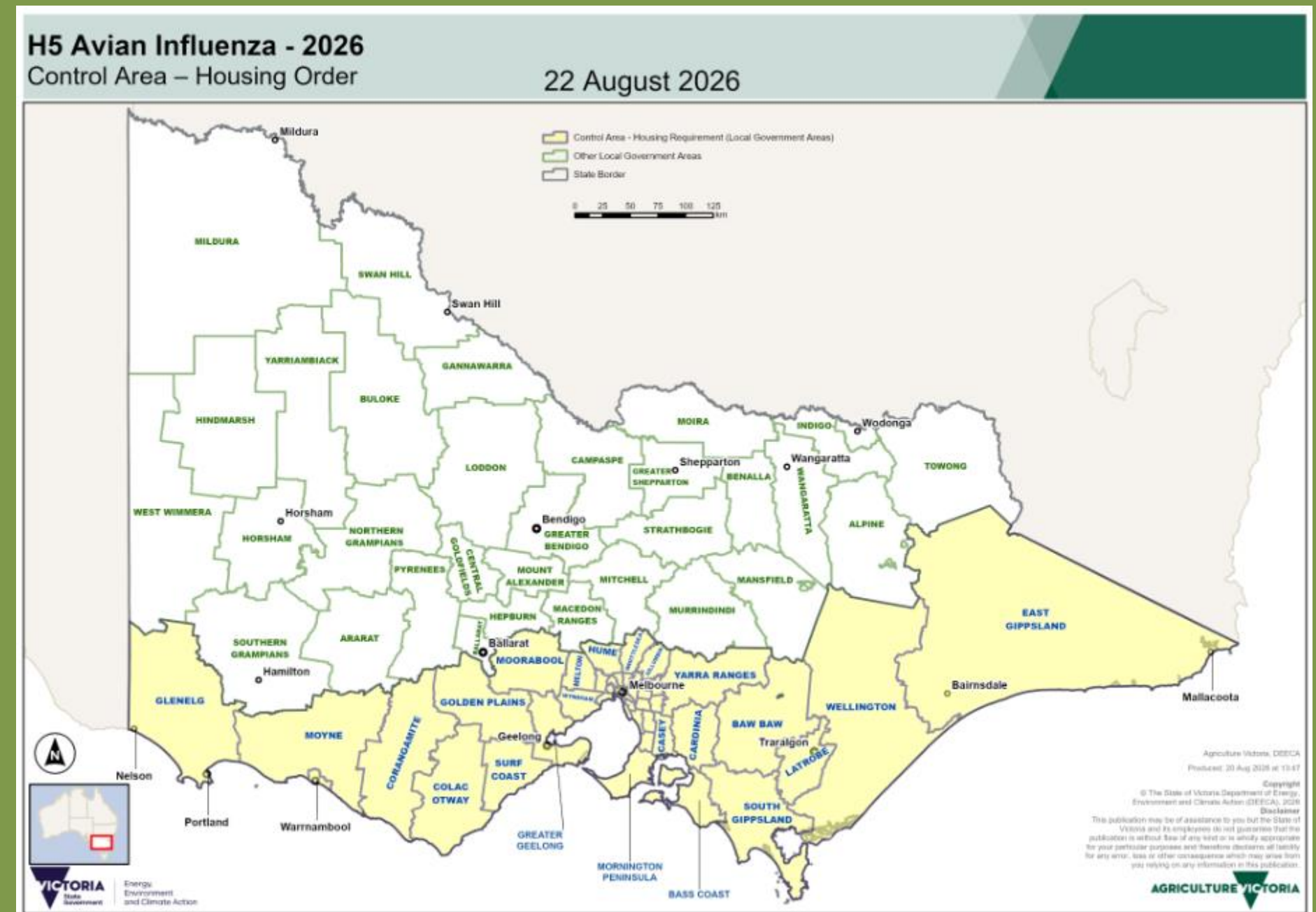
10 positive
H5 bird flu
cases

Silver Gull



Positive HPAI investigations

ID	Local government area	Postcode	Investigation Date	Species
1387	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3941	8/6/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1763	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3936	8/12/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1801	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3940	8/15/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1825	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3943	8/16/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1860	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3943	8/17/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1902	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3942	8/18/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1924	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3943	8/18/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
1996	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3938	8/19/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
2105	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3939	8/22/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies
2107	Mornington Peninsula Shire	3930	8/22/2026	Gulls, Terns and Noddies



Data correct as of 23 August 2026

Sources: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/poultry-diseases/H5N1-avian-influenza-H5-bird-flu>

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/poultry-diseases/H5N1-avian-influenza-H5-bird-flu/about-h5-bird-flu/control-order-housing-requirement>

How to keep your animals safe

Alpacas

- Infections in alpacas and other livestock is **RARE**
- Infections are typically associated with shared environments with infected poultry

Tips to protect your alpacas

- Prevent contact with chickens
- Clean water troughs regularly
- Practice good hand hygiene before/after handling animals
- Implement good farm biosecurity measures
- Maintain clean and hygienic farm facilities



Come Clean, Go Clean

General On-farm Biosecurity



People, equipment and vehicles can carry weeds, pests and diseases.



Enter clean by washing and disinfecting.



1 Remove dirt and debris.



2 Wash boots and tools with soapy water.



3 Disinfect boots and tools. Follow chemical instructions.



4 Wash hands, then sanitise hands.



5 Sign in/out.



6 Exit clean by repeating steps 1-4.



Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility.

Visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/biosecurity-basics

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

How to keep your animals safe

Chickens

- Infections in backyard poultry is **COMMON**
- Infections are associated with close contact with wild birds and contaminated environment and water sources

Tips to protect your chickens

- Clean coop, feeders and drinkers regularly
- Keep bird feed and water out of reach from wild birds
- Prevent wild birds from mingling with your chickens
- Implement good farm biosecurity measures



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Keep your birds safe

Poultry farmers, backyard chicken and bird owners, are encouraged to follow these steps to protect your birds from H5 avian influenza.

Limit contact

Prevent contact between your birds and wild birds. Keep bird feed and water out of reach of wild birds.

Limit visitors

Use signage, restrict access to essential personnel, provide protective gear, use footbaths, educate employees, and keep a visitor logbook.

Keep hands clean

Always remember to wash your hands and use sanitiser before and after entering a poultry area.

Biosecurity plan

Have a biosecurity plan and ensure that visitors and contractors follow the plan.

Restrict pets

Do not allow pets such as dogs, cats and other animals inside poultry housing.

Control pests

Use effective rodent and insect control programs.

Clean frequently

Regularly clean your chicken coop including feeders, drinkers and equipment.

Monitor health

If your birds are unwell, contact your local vet or notify Agriculture Victoria on the emergency animal disease hotline 1800 675 888.

Scan to learn more

EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE HOTLINE
1800 675 888



Questions?

- **AVOID** contact with sick or dead birds
- **RECORD** the date, time, location and take a photo
- **REPORT** multiple dead birds or marine animals to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline:

1800 675 888