

H5 Avian Influenza – Years 5 and 6



Lesson Plan

Learning Intentions

We are learning to understand how H5 avian influenza can affect wildlife populations and why biosecurity plays an important role in protecting Australia's ecosystems.

Success Criteria

We will be successful when...

- ...explain what H5 avian influenza is and how it spreads between animals.
- ...describe the role of biosecurity in preventing disease spread.
- ...analyse actions people can take to protect wildlife and their pets.
- ...identify the correct steps to follow if we find a sick or dead wild bird.

Australian Curriculum Links

Learning Area
Science
Biological Science

Content Descriptions

AC9S5U01

Examine how particular structural features and behaviours of living things enable their survival in specific habitats.

AC9S6U01

Investigate the physical conditions of a habitat and analyse how these influence the growth, survival and adaptation of living things.

Science as a Human Endeavour

Students learn that science is used by governments, wildlife organisations, veterinarians, biosecurity officers and researchers to monitor diseases, investigate environmental challenges and develop solutions that protect wildlife and ecosystems.

Science Inquiry

Students:

- Pose questions about wildlife disease and environmental impacts.
- Analyse information from texts, images and data.
- Use evidence to draw conclusions about wildlife health.
- Communicate findings using appropriate scientific vocabulary.
- Evaluate actions that can reduce the spread of disease in wildlife populations.

Cross-Curriculum Priorities

Sustainability



H5 Avian Influenza and Biosecurity: Protecting Australia's Wildlife

H5 avian influenza is a disease caused by a virus that mainly affects birds. Some strains are mild, while others can cause serious illness and death in wild birds and poultry. A highly pathogenic strain of H5 avian influenza has been detected in wild birds on mainland Australia. As of August 2026, there have been 231 confirmed detections across several states.

Many species of birds travel long distances during migration. Because birds move between habitats, disease can spread through bird populations and sometimes to other animals. Scientists, veterinarians and wildlife organisations monitor bird flu closely so they can detect outbreaks early and respond quickly.

One important way to reduce the spread of disease is through biosecurity. Biosecurity refers to the actions people take to prevent harmful diseases, pests and organisms from moving between places. Good biosecurity helps protect wildlife, pets, livestock and natural environments. For example, poultry owners can keep domestic birds away from wild birds, provide clean food and water, and regularly clean equipment and enclosures.



Figure 1 - Swift parrots migrate to Tasmania to breed each year.



Figure 2 - Cockatiels

Everyone can help protect wildlife. If you are visiting a beach, wetland or park, avoid disturbing birds and never touch sick or dead animals. Keeping dogs and other pets away from wildlife can also reduce the risk of disease spreading between species. Washing your hands after spending time outdoors is another simple but important biosecurity practice.

If you find a sick, injured or dead bird, do not touch it. Instead, follow the "Avoid, Record, Report" process. Avoid contact with the animal, record important information such as its location and appearance from a

safe distance, and report your observations to a trusted adult or the Animal Disease Hotline on **1800 675 888**.

These reports help experts track disease events and make informed decisions that support wildlife conservation.



Lesson Plan

Tuning In

Display four images:

- A healthy flock of seabirds on a beach
- A group of chickens on a farm
- A migratory shorebird
- A wildlife ranger observing birds with binoculars

Ask students:

"Imagine you are wildlife scientists investigating a disease that could affect birds across Australia. What information would you need to collect to understand what is happening?"

Record student ideas under the headings:

- What do we know?
- What do we need to find out?
- Who could help?

Explain - "Scientists use evidence to investigate wildlife diseases and make decisions that help protect ecosystems. One of the most important tools they use is biosecurity. Today we will learn how H5 avian influenza affects wildlife and how good biosecurity practices help prevent diseases from spreading."

Show students the poster - **Avoid • Record • Report**

Discuss:

"Why do you think these three actions are important when dealing with wildlife disease?"

Show the HZAA Community Biosecurity webpage and explain that it provides trusted information to help protect Tasmania's wildlife - <https://www.hzaa.com.au/conservation/community-biosecurity/>

Modelling - I do – Introduce the new vocabulary

Biosecurity - Actions taken to prevent diseases, pests and harmful organisms from spreading between places, animals or environments.

Exemplar Sentences:

1. Good biosecurity helps protect wildlife from harmful diseases.
2. Farmers use biosecurity measures to keep their animals healthy.

Pathogen - A living organism or virus that can cause disease.

Exemplar Sentences:

1. Scientists study pathogens to understand how diseases spread.
2. Some pathogens can affect both domestic and wild animals.



Detection - The process of finding and confirming the presence of a disease or other condition.

Exemplar Sentences:

1. Early detection of Avian Influenza allows experts to respond quickly.
2. Disease detection often relies on careful monitoring and testing.

Guided Practice - We do

Check for understanding by answering quiz questions

Why do scientists monitor bird populations for H5 avian influenza?

- A. To count feathers
- B. To identify new bird species
- C. To detect outbreaks and respond quickly
- D. To train birds

What does the term "biosecurity" mean?

- A. Protecting computer systems
- B. Preventing diseases, pests and harmful organisms from spreading
- C. Building safer bird enclosures
- D. Studying bird behaviour

Which action is an example of good biosecurity?

- A. Touching sick wildlife
- B. Feeding wild birds by hand
- C. Keeping pet birds separate from wild birds
- D. Moving dead animals

Why can H5 avian influenza spread over large areas?

- A. Birds often migrate between habitats
- B. Birds build nests in trees
- C. Birds eat insects
- D. Birds can fly

How do reports from the public help wildlife experts?

- A. They provide information that helps track disease events
- B. They increase bird populations immediately
- C. They prevent migration
- D. They eliminate all diseases



Independent Practice - You do

Independent Practice - You Do

Create an informative infographic or poster that teaches your school community about H5 avian influenza and biosecurity.

Your infographic should:

- Explain what H5 avian influenza is.
- Define biosecurity.
- Describe the "Avoid, Record, Report" process.
- Include at least three actions people can take to protect wildlife.
- Use scientific vocabulary correctly.
- Include the Animal Disease Hotline number: **1800 675 888**.

Use headings, diagrams, images and concise factual statements to communicate your message clearly.

When completed, use the information you have learnt to write a script for a short talk to accompany your poster so that you can educate others on H5 avian influenza.

Plenary

Share your infographic with a partner and explain:

- Why biosecurity matters.
- How individuals can help protect wildlife.
- What steps should be followed when a sick or dead bird is found.

Key Message

Protecting wildlife is everyone's responsibility.

Avoid

Record

Report - 1800 675 888

By following good biosecurity practices, we can help keep Tasmania's wildlife healthy and support strong ecosystems for the future.

For further information:

Australian Government - <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/campaigns/birdflu>

Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania - <https://nre.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/animal-health/poultry-and-pigeons/bird-flu>

Behind the News – Video - <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/bird-flu/106937876>

Kids News - <https://www.kidsnews.com.au/explainers/eight-ways-australia-can-help-in-the-fight-against-bird-flu/news-story/11fa4aac2b36192130da00a97fda372d>

