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H5N1 Bird Flu – ACA Advice for Caged and Aviary Bird Keepers

H5N1 (high pathogenicity avian influenza) has recently been detected in wild seabirds in Western Australia and South Australia. There are currently no reports of infection in pet or aviary birds in Australia.

H5N1 can infect a range of avian species and, on rare occasions, mammals including people following close contact with infected animals. Good biosecurity and hygiene greatly reduce the risk of spread to birds, people and other species.

For aviculturists, the greatest risk is contact with wild birds and contamination from wild bird droppings. Birds kept in enclosed aviaries and who's feed and water cannot be contaminated by wild birds are at low risk.

Reduce contact with wild birds

Wild birds, particularly waterfowl, may spread disease by Landing or defecating on aviaries. Covered aviaries are preferred where suitable to reduce exposure.

Good hygiene is essential

Hygiene measures are recommended regardless of H5N1.

- Wash hands before and after handling birds
- Clean feed and water containers regularly
- Remove droppings and waste promptly
- Avoid sharing equipment between aviaries

Quarantine new birds

Always quarantine new birds before introducing them to your flock. Use separate equipment and feed and water quarantine areas last.

Quarantine is good avicultural practice for many diseases—not just H5N1.

Watch for signs of illness

Seek advice if you suspect avian influenza.

- Do not move birds
- Contact your veterinarian
- Report unusual sickness or multiple deaths

At the time of writing, there are no additional legal requirements for private aviary keepers, however avian influenza is a nationally notifiable disease and any suspected cases should be reported immediately via 1800 675 888.

Further information: birdflu.gov.au



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