

The Response to Avian Influenza – Information for Visitors

IAATO 2023-24 Avian Influenza Protocols

Since 2021 the increasing intensity of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 outbreaks has resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of seabirds around the world. Marine mammals, including seals and sea lions, have also been affected.

The Antarctic community, from Antarctic Treaty parties to scientists, National Programmes, and the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is concerned about the heightened risk of avian influenza arriving in Antarctica via animals migrating to and from the region. This could have a serious impact on the local wildlife.

We are committed to the robust procedures in place to protect Antarctica from pathogens and non-native species. Due to the increase of avian influenza elsewhere in the world, we are heightening our vigilance with regards to operations this season.

Here is how you can prevent it being introduced and spread:

Before you go

Before you leave home ensure anything that may come into contact with the Antarctic environment – including clothing and equipment - is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

- Use IAATO's [Don't Pack a Pest](#) guidance to assist you.

In Antarctica: Visiting Wildlife

Existing protocols, including daily biosecurity procedures, and maintaining minimum distances from wildlife, are an essential part of protecting Antarctica. In addition, it is required that you:

- Do not sit, crouch, kneel or lay down.
- Do not place any equipment on the ground or snow.

If in doubt, ask your guides for direction.

Find out more about Avian Influenza from the [World Organisation for Animal Health](#).