H5 Bird Flu and the Flinders and Outback Region

Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

Regional summary statement

The Flinders and Outback region contains some of Australia's most significant inland wetland ecosystems, supporting large numbers of waterbirds, migratory species and other wildlife across the Lake Eyre Basin. These environmental values make the region an important focus for H5 bird flu preparedness and response planning.

Priority features of the region

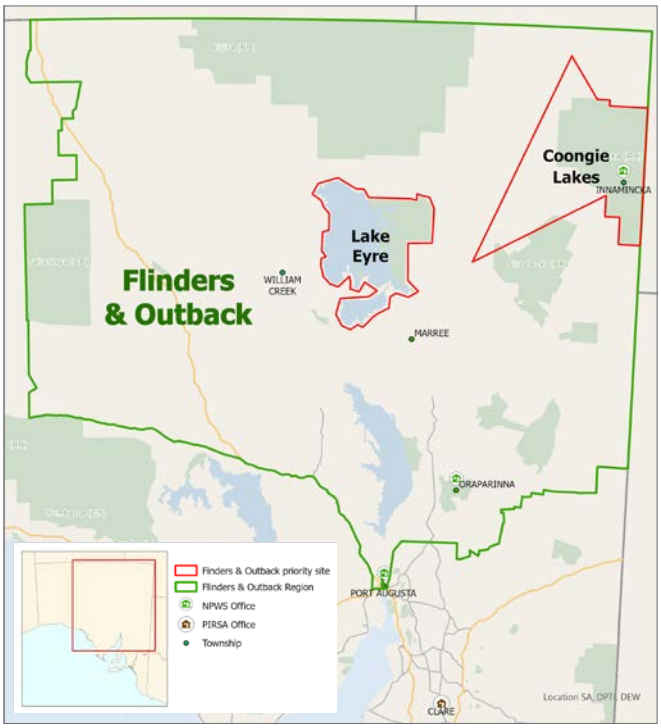
- Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre, Australia's largest salt lake.
- Coongie Lakes Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.
- Large waterbird congregations especially during flood events.
- Important habitat for migratory shorebirds and waterbirds.
- Supports significant breeding events for pelicans, gulls, terns and other wetland birds.
- Extensive inland wetland and drainage systems.
- Connectivity between Queensland floodplains and South Australian wetlands.
- Presence of threatened bird and mammal species.
- Existing pressures from feral animals, including cats, foxes and pigs.
- Increasing tourism and visitor activity during flood periods.

Priority sites

Coongie Lakes Ramsar Wetland

Located in the far north-east of South Australia, Coongie Lakes is a large and complex wetland system with a diversity of habitats including waterholes, shallow floodplains, and swamps. The presence of permanent waterbodies supports numerous wetland-dependent species in the otherwise arid landscape. Fed by Cooper Creek, the area additionally serves as a vital refuge during dry periods.

Flinders and Outback region H5 bird flu priority sites



Key features: Ramsar Wetland of International Importance; habitat for more than 200 bird species including around 87 wetland-dependent species and numerous threatened species; important waterbird breeding areas; one of Australia's last unregulated river systems; and critical refuge habitat during drought and stop-over site for migratory birds.

Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre

Located within the Lake Eyre Basin, Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre is Australia's largest salt lake. Although often containing little water, this ephemeral lake becomes critical habitat for hundreds of thousands of birds as periodic flooding transforms the landscape. This important inland refuge area supports some of Australia's largest bird breeding events.

Key features: Important Bird Area recognition; supports mass waterbird breeding events during periods of flood; critical habitat for many migratory and nomadic species; significant mound springs and wetland systems; and refuge habitat during flood cycles.

Cultural significance and key stakeholders

First Nations connections

The Flinders and Outback region is home to the Traditional Owners and custodians of Country, including the Arabana, Dieri, and Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka peoples. These lands, waterways and wetland systems hold deep cultural significance and support ongoing cultural practices and caring for Country. First Nations peoples are key stewards of the region's landscapes, coastal environments and biodiversity.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders whose interests, activities or proximity may be affected by, or relevant to, H5 bird flu management include the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the South Australian Arid Lands Landscape Board, the Arabana Aboriginal Corporation, Dieri Aboriginal Corporation and Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Traditional Land Owners Aboriginal Corporation, as well as the Outback Communities Authority, Friends of Parks and Nature South Australia, BirdLife Australia, Birds SA, Conservation Council SA, Traditional Owner advisory committees, scenic flight and tourism operators, pastoral lease holders, researchers and conservation organisations.



Management actions and at-risk wildlife species

Management actions for increasing the resilience of wildlife at-risk from H5 bird flu are being implemented across the region. For example, a SA Arid Lands Landscape Board-led project is supporting the resilience of species through pest animal control including the Ramsar wetland. Additional conservation management actions to be explored include assessment of vaccination and insurance population feasibility. Listed below are several of the key species present in the Flinders and Outback region identified as being susceptible to, or at risk from, H5 bird flu. Benefits to species such as these are the primary intended outcomes for current and future threat mitigation work.

- Australasian shoveler
- Australian painted-snipe
- Australian pelican
- banded stilt
- bar-tailed godwit
- black swan
- brolga
- common greenshank
- curlew sandpiper
- freckled duck
- grey falcon
- sharp-tailed sandpiper

Access the latest information at www.birdflu.gov.au

or for South Australian specific information at www.birdflu.sa.gov.au

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