H5 Bird Flu and the Limestone Coast Region

Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

Regional summary statement

The Limestone Coast region, in South Australia's south-east, hosts an extensive coastline, offshore islands, and large wetlands. Numerous sites across the region have been recognised for their international significance and are remnants of the once more extensive wetlands prior to European settlement. These sites provide critical refugia for an abundance of resident and migratory waterbirds, including species that travel along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, as well as threatened wildlife that may be vulnerable to H5 bird flu.

Priority features of the region

- Internationally significant wetlands, including Ramsar-listed sites and nationally Important Migratory Shorebird Habitat.
- Major feeding, roosting and breeding areas for resident and migratory waterbirds.
- Remnant coastal wetlands, estuaries, lagoons and freshwater systems.
- Offshore islands and coastal habitats that support seabird breeding colonies.
- Presence of Australian sea lions and long-nosed fur seals.
- Habitat for threatened migratory and conservation-significant species.
- Strong connectivity between coastal, marine and inland wetland environments.
- Popular nature-based tourism and recreational destinations with high visitor use.

Priority sites

Bool and Hacks Lagoons Ramsar Site

Located southeast of Naracoorte, Bool and Hacks Lagoons Ramsar site is an internationally recognised wetland complex characterised by shallow freshwater swamps. Multiple habitat types provide critical resources and refugia for threatened species of frog, fish and birds.

Key features: important habitat for 22 migratory bird species and threatened species including the Australasian bittern; waterbird breeding and drought refuge areas; significant magpie goose populations; brolga flocking habitat; and large congregations of ducks and swans.

Limestone Coast region H5 bird flu priority sites



Lower Limestone Coast Coastal sites

The Lower Limestone Coast Coastal Sites include a large stretch of South Australia's southeastern coastline, incorporating coastal wetlands, marine habitats, offshore islands freshwater springs, and the beach dune system. The diversity of habitats supports numerous species of birds, as well as other animals including several threatened mammals. The permanent waterbodies act as key drought refugia and the long shoreline provides habitat for migratory and resident shorebirds.

Key features: important habitat for migratory and resident shorebirds, including key coastal bird areas around Port MacDonnell and Beachport; large seabird breeding sites; habitat for threatened species including the fairy tern, hooded plover and little tern; Australian sea lions and other marine mammals inhabit the coastal waters; and areas of important drought refugia.

Piccaninnie Ponds Karst Wetlands

Located on the coast near Mount Gambier, Piccaninnie Ponds Karst Wetlands is a Ramsar-listed wetland containing one of the few remaining permanent freshwater wetlands in South Australia's lower southeast. The site preserves rare karst rising springs and fen wetlands which have been nationally listed as threatened ecological communities.

Key features: permanent fresh-water source; rare and remnant ecological communities; habitat for nationally and internationally threatened species of flora and fauna including the critically endangered orange-bellied parrot; refugia and resources for nearly 150 bird species.

Cultural significance and key stakeholders

First Nations connections

The Limestone Coast region is home to the Traditional Owners and custodians of Country, including the Ngarrindjeri, Bunganditj and Meintangk peoples. The region's wetlands, coastlines, freshwater springs and cultural landscapes 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, Limestone Coast Landscape Board, First Nations peoples of the South East, Burrandies Aboriginal Corporation, Traditional Owner groups, local councils, BirdLife Australia, Friends of Parks and Nature South Australia, Birds SA, Conservation Council SA, landholders and leaseholders, conservation organisations and volunteers, commercial tourism operators, researchers and community groups.

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 Department for Environment and Water-led project reducing predator activity protecting nesting sites of key species. 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 Limestone Coast 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.

- Australian sea lion
- Australasian bittern
- brolga
- curlew sandpiper
- fairy tern
- far eastern curlew
- red knot
- hooded plover
- lesser sand plover
- magpie goose
- orange-bellied parrot



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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