

Minister for Primary Industries and Water
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Mr Craig Garland MP
Member for Braddon

16 September 2026

Email: HAProcedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Garland

In Parliament on 19 August 2026, you asked the following question on behalf of your constituents:

My question is collated from several enquiries from Braddon constituents. Given that public biosecurity warnings were issued two days before the official 13 August 2026 positive test result, my constituents would like answers to the following questions: on what exact date did the Government first receive notice of the first suspected H5N1 bird flu case in the Rocky Cape region? On what date was the bird or a tissue sample sent for testing? Will the Minister release publicly the full testing and reporting dates from laboratories? What, if any, bird flu testing was done beforehand and when was it undertaken? If no testing was done beforehand, is the Minister certain that the virus was not spreading undetected in Tasmania in the weeks prior, and what is the total number of bird mortality events of five or more birds that have occurred in Tasmania in 2026? Where did they occur and what dates were these reported to Biosecurity Tasmania or Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania?

Firstly, thank you for the question on behalf of your constituents. I am aware of the keen interest and concern of all Tasmanians in relation to the evolving bird flu situation in Tasmania.

The Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline is a critical component of the response to H5 bird flu, serving as the primary mechanism for the receipt of reports of sick or dead birds and other animals.

As a centralised point of contact, the hotline supports the timely identification, assessment, and escalation of potential disease events requiring a response. Every report to the EAD hotline is assessed by veterinary, biosecurity or wildlife health experts. Where appropriate, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) may collect a bird or other animal to test for H5 bird flu. This triage process is based on priority and risk and considers a range of factors including the species involved, the number of animals affected, observed symptoms, carcass condition and the location of the report. The EAD Hotline plays a vital role in supporting the early detection, investigation, and response to H5 bird flu. By facilitating the rapid flow of information and enabling timely operational decision-making, it contributes significantly to protecting animal health, safeguarding industry interests, and maintaining public and stakeholder confidence throughout response operations.

In addition, following the detections on the mainland in June, NRE Tas stood up a pre-response Incident Management Team (IMT) to strengthen Tasmania's preparedness and response arrangements including a focus on communications. General public messaging including media releases also commenced at this time in advance of any confirmed detection to ensure the public were aware of the avoid, record, report message.

The IMT commenced targeted surveillance of identified areas of Tasmania and its islands, to monitor any signs of H5 bird flu as well as coordinating the testing of sick and dead birds reported by the public.

A previous Active Disclosure is available at the link below that provide specifics in relation to the reports taken, the species involved and details of any tests that were undertaken.

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/EAD%20Hotline%20information%20relating%20to%20Bird%20Flu.pdf>

As part of ongoing surveillance of coastal areas, on 12 August 2026, NRE Tas responded to a suspected case after being alerted to the carcass of a Brown Skua by staff from the Parks and Wildlife Service. The bird was collected and sent to the Animal Health Laboratory for testing the same day. The Government was advised of a positive result on the evening of 12 August 2026.

From the Active Disclosure noted above it is evident that there were around 16 instances where 5 or more sick or dead birds were reported through the EAD Hotline.

Nationally there has been a move to the reporting of mortality in wildlife as 'events'. An 'event' is defined as 'a noteworthy occurrence of one or more sick or dead animals clustered in space and time'.

Included as an attachment is a table showing all 37 mortality events that have occurred in Tasmania since 12 August 2026. The table defines the date of the first detection of the events, the region and locality, the species and the number of birds that have tested positive relative to the events.

It should be noted that the number of animals deceased associated with an event may be more than the number of birds that have formally tested positive. Each report is triaged to determine whether there is value in undertaking testing.

In pursuit of providing the community with clear, accurate and timely information, NRE Tas has set up a public dashboard that shows the total number of tests, the total number of positive events and the total number of reports to NRE Tas. In addition, the Department has published a Tasmanian H5 Bird Flu Interactive Map that shows positive and negative tests undertaken in Tasmania. The Department will continue to review ways to ensure the information available meets community needs. The Dashboard can be accessed at www.nre.tas.gov.au/BirdFlu

Thank you again for raising this matter on behalf of your constituents.

Yours sincerely



Hon Gavin Pearce MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Water

EVENT ID (National)	First detection	Region	Location	Bird Species	Number of birds tested positive
1	12/08/2026	North West	Rocky Cape	Brown skua	1
2	13/08/2026	King Island	Currie, Loorana, Sea Elephant, Naracoopa, Wickham, Surprise Bay	Greater crested tern	27
3	13/08/2026	King Island	Currie, Loorana, Nugara	Silver gull	10
4	15/08/2026	North West	Burnie, South Burnie, Wivenhoe	Greater crested tern	6
5	15/08/2026	North West	Sulphur Creek	Greater crested tern	1
6	17/08/2026	North West	Rocky Cape, Hellyer	Greater crested tern	2
7	18/08/2026	King Island	Loorana, Grassy, Wickham	White-fronted tern	3
8	19/08/2026	King Island	Grassy, Surprise Bay	Little penguin	4
9	23/08/2026	North	Lulworth	Greater crested tern	1
10	22/08/2026	North	Scottsdale	Greater crested tern	1
11	24/08/2026	North West	Stanley	Greater crested tern	1
12	24/08/2026	North West	Wynyard	Greater crested tern	1
13	24/08/2026	North West	Stanley	Silver gull	2
14	24/08/2026	King Island	Loorana, Egg Lagoon	Forest Raven	2
15	24/08/2026	North West	Wynyard	Pacific Gull	1
16	27/08/2026	North West	Ulverstone	Silver gull	1
17	27/08/2026	North West	Somerset	White-fronted tern	1
18	27/08/2026	East Coast	Triabuna	Forest Raven	1
19	27/08/2026	North West	Marrawah	Greater crested tern	2
20	27/08/2026	North West	Marrawah	Silver gull	1
21	28/08/2026	South	Acton Park	Greater crested tern	1
22	28/08/2026	North West	Wesley Vale	Greater crested tern	1
23	30/08/2026	North West	Kelso	Sooty Oystercatcher	1
24	30/09/2026	North West	Stanley	Forest Raven	1
25	31/08/2026	East Coast	Beaumaris	Greater crested tern	1
26	28/08/2026	King Island	Currie	Black-faced cormorant	1
27	29/08/2026	West Coast	Strahan	Silver gull	1
28	1/09/2026	North West	Brittons Swamp	Peregrine falcon	1
29	28/08/2026	King Island	Currie	Pacific gull	1
30	2/09/2026	West Coast	Strahan	Forest raven	1
31	5/09/2026	Flinders Island	Whitemark, Flinders Island	Greater crested tern	1
32	5/09/2026	North West	Mawbanna	Forest raven	1
33	7/09/2026	North	Pipers River	Peregrine falcon	1
34	7/09/2026	East Coast	Stieglitz	Greater crested tern	1
35	8/09/2026	South	Dodges Ferry	Greater crested tern	1
36	8/09/2026	North West	Stanley	White-faced storm petrel	1
37	9/09/2026	South	Hobart	Silver gull	1