

Community update for Barwon–Darling, Menindee Lakes and Lower Darling–Baaka River

Pelican Deaths – Menindee Lakes

Investigations and laboratory testing of samples from 400 dead pelican chicks and juveniles found at Lake Cawndilla on 7 August 2026 found **no evidence of H5 bird flu**, with all samples testing negative.

Members of the public should continue to report unusual events, such as multiple dead birds in a new location, sick birds, or significant increases in mortality. People should avoid handling sick or dead wildlife.

There are currently 4 confirmed cases of H5 avian influenza in NSW. Two detected from migratory giant petrels near Hawks Nest and 2 detected from Greater Crested Terns, one found near Narooma on the south coast, and the other near **Wentworth in western NSW**.

The NSW Government is continuing its preparedness and response activities for H5 bird flu with a strong focus on early detection, coordinated response, industry readiness and protecting native wildlife.

Public reporting is a critical part of the response, with increased calls to the hotline supporting early detection efforts.

If you see sick or dead wild birds, domestic birds, marine mammals or other wildlife showing signs of H5 bird flu:

- **Avoid** contact — do not touch them
- **Record** what you see
- **Report** it via the [online form](#) or the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline, 1800 675 888

What to expect following a report:

When you make a report, an officer from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development will review your report. Depending on the outcome of a risk assessment, you may receive a follow-up phone call for more information. In some cases, birds may be collected and tested for H5 bird flu or other causes of death, though **not all wild birds will be collected if the risk is assessed as low**.

Your wellbeing

Emergency responses or the threat of incursions can be stressful and may impact people's mental and emotional wellbeing. You may want to contact these supports if you are worried about your own or someone else's mental health:

- Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511
- 13YARN (24/7): 13 92 76
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
- Brother to Brother (24/7) 1800 435 799
- Lifeline: 131 114
- Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800
- MensLine: 1300 78 99 78

If you see sick or dead birds or other animals, do not touch them. For more information, please visit nsw.gov.au/emergency/h5-bird-flu

Current conditions

The most recent inflow forecast from August 6, indicated a further 5–10 GL is expected to reach Menindee Lakes to the end of September. The Northern Catchment has been dry of late, with minimal rainfall. As such, flows from northern tributaries are currently low. Upstream, flows are decreasing at Wilcannia, which is currently discharging 263 ML/day, and Bourke is discharging 269 ML/day.

Algae alerts

RED	• Ellerslie • Sunset Strip (upgraded from green)
AMBER	• Copi Hollow, Lake Pamamaroo Outlet and all Lake Wetherell sites, including Lake Tandure • Darling River at Weir 32 • Pooncarie, Tapio, Tolarno and Burtundy • Lake Menindee Outlet and Lake Cawndilla Outlet • Wilcannia
GREEN	• Darling River Pumping Station (Menindee Town)

- Bold indicates a change since our last community update.
- Residents and landholders are encouraged to sign up to the WaterNSW WaterInsights portal for automated BGA notifications or monitor the WaterNSW Algae Alerts Map.

More information

- To notify the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water of potential blackwater events email: water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au
- To view community updates issued, visit water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au/menindee-updates
- If you've got any questions regarding this update or other water matters **contact your local implementation officer, Kate McBride on 0458 945 149** or kate.mcbride@dcceew.nsw.gov.au
- To report dead fish, fish struggling or gasping at the water surface, or crayfish leaving the water please call the **NSW Department of Primary Industry Fisheries Phoneline 1800 043 536** or fill in a fish kill protocol and report form at: dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/threats/fish-kills-2019-2020/info-sheet
- Information on recent fish deaths is available at: [Fish kills in NSW](#). When reporting, please include the name of the river/waterbody, location and date of your observation and provide photographs. If possible, please also record what species are affected and an estimate of number of each species observed.
- Further information on blackwater events can be found at the [department's website](#).
- Additional information is also available on the Murray–Darling Basin Authority website at: mdba.gov.au/climate-and-river-health/water-quality/fish-deaths mdba.gov.au/water-management/infrastructure/menindee-lakes
- WaterNSW operational updates are available in [WaterInsights](#)
- Water quality data collected after the fish deaths at Menindee is available on the Environment Protection Authority web page at: epa.nsw.gov.au/working-together/community-engagement/updates-on-issues/menindee-fish-kill
- Real-time water quality data from the department – Strategic Science & Engagement monitoring buoys can be accessed from the [Darling–Baaka River Health Project dashboard](#)
- Data from the WaterNSW gauging network can be found in WaterInsights at: waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au/12104-lower-darling-regulated-river/river-data