INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ANTARCTICA TOUR OPERATORS

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IAATO 2024-25 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.

On 25 February 2024, the first cases avian influenza were confirmed in the Antarctic Treaty Area.

The Antarctic community, from Antarctic Treaty parties to scientists, National Programs, and the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is concerned about the effect of avian influenza in Antarctica, and the serious impact it could have on the local wildlife.

IAATO members are committed to the robust procedures in place to protect Antarctica from pathogens and non-native species and with the confirmation of avian influenza in the region, we continue to have a heightened vigilance with regards to operations this season.

Here is how you can help prevent avian influenza from 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, kneel, crouch, or lay down in wildlife areas.
- Do not place any equipment on the ground or snow in wildlife areas.

Your Operator will keep you informed and if in doubt, please ask your guides for direction.

Follow the latest global information for the World Organization of Animal Health at: https://www.woah.org/en/disease/avian-influenza/

Follow the **latest information from the SCAR Antarctic Wildlife Health Working Group** at: https://scar.org/library-data/avian-flu.