

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING AVIAN INFLUENZA IN THE ANTARCTIC

As passionate guardians of this pristine region, we want to share some important information to ensure the safety of Antarctic and sub-Antarctic unique and delicate wildlife.

In recent years, concerns have arisen due to the impact of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks on seabirds and marine mammals worldwide. This has led to a collective effort among Antarctic Treaty parties, scientists, National Programs, and the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) to proactively prevent the spread of avian influenza to Antarctica.

Our shared goal is to maintain the integrity of this remarkable ecosystem. We're doubling down on our protective measures to safeguard Antarctica from potential threats. Here's how you can play a crucial role:

Before You Go:

As you prepare for your journey, take a moment to ensure that anything you're bringing with you—clothing, gear, and equipment—is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Our “Don't Pack a Pest” guidance will assist you in this process. This small step can make a big difference in keeping the Antarctic environment healthy.

Shore visits during your expedition:

Once you've arrived, you'll have the incredible opportunity to witness Antarctica's wildlife up close. To ensure their well-being, we have established some essential guidelines:

- **Stay on your feet:** While exploring, please refrain from sitting, kneeling, or laying down on the ground. This minimises any potential disruption to the environment and its inhabitants.
- **Equipment care:** Avoid placing any equipment on the ground or snow. This simple action helps prevent the introduction of foreign elements to this delicate ecosystem.
- **Adaptable exploration:** In the interest of safeguarding the unique wildlife of Antarctica, there may be instances where affected landing sites are temporarily closed. These proactive measures are taken to prevent the potential transmission of avian influenza and to ensure the long-term health of the fragile Antarctic ecosystem. If closures are encountered on your expedition, please know that we remain dedicated to offering alternative landing sites that are equally remarkable and that prioritise environmentally responsible tourism.
- **Seek guidance:** If you're unsure about any action, don't hesitate to ask your Expedition Team for guidance. They're always there to assist you in ensuring a safe and environmentally conscious visit throughout your Antarctic voyage.

Onboard the Ocean Endeavour during our 2023/24 Antarctic season, we will be hosting avian influenza scientists from the Antarctic Wildlife Health Network, providing them with unprecedented access to the Antarctic Peninsula. This access will enable them to conduct further research on the effects of avian influenza, which is crucial for our understanding and the management of this issue going forward. By gaining a better understanding of the problem, we all become better equipped to contribute to the protection of Antarctica's remarkable wildlife. For more information about avian influenza, please visit: <https://www.oie.int/en/disease/avian-influenza/>

We greatly appreciate your cooperation in maintaining the pristine beauty and ecological balance of Antarctica. By collectively taking these steps, we can make a positive impact and help preserve this unique and valuable part of our planet. Thank you for being a responsible visitor.