



Birds of Prey-Risk Management Plan

Procedural step	Hazards	Risks	R1*	Risk controls	R2**
Rescue bird	Working out of doors	Exposure to sun.	3	Wear appropriate sun protection including long sleeved shirt, long pants, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen.	4
		Exposure to climatic extremes - heat, cold, rain, wind, storms.	3	Check weather forecast for possible sudden changes to weather conditions. Wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions. Eliminate activity in dangerous weather conditions such as severe thunderstorms, hail storms or extreme bushfire danger.	5
		Location /Trip Hazards-uneven ground, snakes, traffic hazards	3	Make thorough inspection of terrain for these and any other particular hazards. Proceed with caution. Do not run with nets etc	5
	Working after dark	Becoming lost / disoriented.	3	Rescuers must not work alone after dark. Obtain clear directions before proceeding to rescue location. Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio. Take a map of the area or reliable GPS navigator. In the event of becoming lost or disoriented, cease the activity and regain bearings or call for assistance.	5
		Trip hazards exacerbated.	2	Take a fully charged torch. Wear suitable protective clothing, including long sleeved shirt, long pants and covered footwear with	4



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				non-slip soles.	
	Working in rural / remote areas	Lack of reliable communication (e.g. mobile phone coverage). Becoming lost / disoriented.	4 3	Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio. Branches to encourage a 'buddy' system to despatch rescuers in pairs, especially where one is inexperienced. As above	5
	Working alone	Physical overexertion. Potential psychological stress.	2 3	Eliminate the activity if the rescue will exceed the physical capability of the rescuer. Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio. Branches to encourage a 'buddy' system to despatch rescuers in pairs, especially where one is inexperienced	5 4
	Hazards specific to rescue site, e.g. water bodies, cliffs, steep slopes, dense timber, falling branches, powerlines.	Slips, trips, fall, collisions, drowning.	3	Rescuers must thoroughly examine the site for potential hazards prior to attempting the rescue. Eliminate the activity or seek assistance if the risk is perceived as too great.	5
	Barbed wire	Skin and eye injuries	3	Two person rescue, long sleeves, protective eyewear and gloves to be worn	5
	Bites, talon injures from rescued bird	Cuts, bruises, abrasions, broken bones, eye injury.	3	Rescuers must be trained in appropriate capture and handling techniques. Branches must ensure that rescuers are equipped with specialised rescue equipment as necessary. Wear appropriate protective clothing including long	5



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		Disease transmission.	4	sleeved shirt, long pants, covered footwear, eye protection. Wear long padded gloves if necessary Maintain a quiet environment at the rescue site to minimise the risk of the bird panicking. Rescuer must ensure tetanus vaccination is up to date.	5
	Contact with the birds body fluids, e.g. blood, urine, faeces, saliva,	Disease transmission	2	Use appropriate PPE, which could include impervious gloves masks and disposable overalls. Carry a means of washing / disinfecting contaminated skin, e.g. a container of water for hand washing or waterless hand cleaner	4
	Emotional trauma	Psychological stress resulting from the sights, sounds and smells of injured and distressed animals.	3	Read Stress and Post Traumatic Stress section under WHS tab	4
Transport bird	Bird not appropriately restrained in vehicle	Injury to driver &/or passengers. Motor vehicle accident.	2	Bird is to be securely restrained in a container suitable to the, age and size of the bird. Consider having a second person in the vehicle to manage the bird to relieve the driver of this task.	4
Rehabilitate bird	Zoonotic diseases	Illness	3	Refer to RICC manual and Raptor manual and disease section, which follows. Consider vaccination where a vaccine is available e.g. Influenza vaccine Maintain hygiene appropriate to the species / age of the bird. Provide washing / hygiene facilities for bird bedding	4



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				and feeding utensils separate from those used by the household.	
	Manual handling of bird (e.g. for administration of fluids / medication or weighing)	Strains, sprains, manual handling injuries	3	Refer to RICC and Raptor manuals	4
	Administration of rehydration fluids or medications	Needle stick injury. Poisoning.	2	Refer to WHS section of RICC /Raptor manual and information under the WHS tab.	4
	Storage of animal medications	Poisoning	2	Animal medications must be kept in a secure storage area out of the reach of children. Storage area must be separate from areas used to store household foodstuffs.	4
	Preparation of animal foodstuffs	Potential contamination of human food preparation areas.	3	Animal food preparation areas must be separate from household food preparation areas.	5
	Storage of animal foodstuffs	Potential contamination of foodstuffs for human consumption	4	Animal foodstuffs involving meat products, insects, 'live' prey (e.g. mice, rats) and vegetative materials must be stored separately from human foodstuffs and out of the reach of children and domestic animals.	6
	Gathering natural foodstuffs	Manual handling injury.	3	Appropriate personal protective equipment to be worn. This should include long pants, long sleeved shirt, covered footwear and gloves. Where browse is to be cut from trees above head height, eye protection must be worn. Consider use of a hard hat where large branches are being lopped.	4
		Injury from sharp tools e.g. secateurs, loppers.			
		Insect bites and stings.	3	Use personal insect repellent	5



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	Maintain hygiene	<p>Allergic reactions to hygiene products, potentially leading to anaphylaxis (e.g. disinfectants, latex gloves).</p> <p>Disease transmission from collection of animal faeces.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Carers must read product labels and Safety Data sheets for any products used. Label directions regarding usage, rates of application and safety precautions must be strictly adhered to.</p> <p>Wear appropriate PPE, e.g. impervious gloves. Dispose of collected faeces in a suitable area, away from possible contact by children, household pets or human food sources (e.g. vegetable garden)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>4</p>
	Emotional trauma	Psychological stress from death of animals in care or prolonged nursing of sick / injured animals.	3	Refer to the interpersonal issues section under the WHS tab.	4
	Use of electrical equipment, e.g. heat pads, heat boxes	<p>Potential ignition source.</p> <p>Potential for electrocution.</p>	2	<p>Consider requirement to “test and tag” electrical equipment used for animal rehabilitation.</p> <p>Electrical cabling in close proximity to animals (e.g. electrical leads for heat pads) must be located so as to prevent animals from tangling in them or chewing on them.</p>	3
Release bird	Capture bird for release	Manual handling injury.	3	Consider having another person assisting with capture.	5



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		Bites and scratches, talon injuries (can be severe)	2	Use PPE when capturing, protective headgear/closed shoes, long pants and long sleeved shirt, gloves if necessary preferably padded.	
	Apply marking devices	Injury from tagging devices	4	Suitably qualified personnel must train carers in the use of these devices. Tagging devices must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.	6
	Transport animal to release site	Injury to driver or passengers from inappropriately restrained animal	2	Bird must be securely restrained in a container suitable to the size/ species of the bird.	4
		Motor vehicle accident	3	Container housing the bird should be secured within the car with a seat belt	5
	Release bird	Injury to persons at or near the release site from humanised birds	3	Discuss with State Raptor Coordinator prior to any release of suspect bird. Raptors must not be released if there is any possibility of them approaching humans or allow humans to approach them.	5

* R1 = risk before risk controls are implemented

** R2 Residual risk after risk controls are implemented



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Risk Matrix

1. How severely could it hurt someone OR How ill could it make them?	2. How likely is it to be that bad?			
	Very Likely Could happen at any time	Likely Could happen sometime	Unlikely Could happen but very rarely	Very Unlikely Could happen but probably never will
!!!! Kill or cause permanent disability or ill health	1	1	2	3
!!! Long term illness or serious injury	1	2	3	4
!! Medical attention and several days off work	2	3	4	5
! First aid needed	3	4	5	6

Hazards with a risk rating of **1 or 2** are considered – **High Priority** – Controls that are higher up the hierarchy should be considered

Hazards with a risk rating of **3 or 4** are considered – **Medium priority** – Controls that are at the top to the middle of the hierarchy should be considered

Hazards with a risk rating of **5 or 6** are considered – **Low priority** – PPE or administrative controls options should be considered



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Birds of Prey-Typical Handling Risks by species

Type	Examples	Handling Risk
Owls (<i>Ninox</i>)	Southern Boobook Owl, Barking Owl, Powerful Owl	High – powerful beaks with sharp hook, likely to try and strike out Head can rotate 270 degrees. May struggle when held Strong legs and feet with v large talons Powerful owl talons can do serious damage.
Owls (<i>Tyto</i>)	Barn Owl Grass Owl, Sooty Owl, Masked Owl	Medium –once restrained are usually compliant, may display threatening behaviour but not aggressive
Falcons (<i>Falco in var.</i>)	Kestrel, Hobby, Brown, Black and Peregrine Falcons	High – aggressive, and powerful, esp. Peregrine falcon . All will sit back on tail and strike hard with talons, will bite and be very vocal Struggle when held, may try to attack handler to escape.
Hawks (<i>Accipiter</i>) Pacific Baza aka crested hawk (<i>Aviceda subcristata</i>)	Brown Goshawk, Grey Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk	Medium – smaller birds so lower risk, but fast esp. with feet, very sharp talons. Tend not to bite. Easy to handle once restrained. Compliant in care. Medium-Low timid bird easy to handle
Wedge-tailed Eagle (<i>Aquila audax</i>) Little Eagle (<i>Hieraetus morphnoides</i>) White bellied Sea Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>)	Little Eagle, Wedge Tailed Eagle Though technically a kite, behaves like true Eagle	High until covered-very strong beak and talons . Once securely held, are usually calm. WTE may need two people to capture due to size. Little Eagle may faint/feign death when approached. High -As for Eagles above
Kites in var.(<i>Elanus/Milvus/Haliastur</i>)	Black Shouldered Kite, Letter-wing Kite, Brahminy Kite, Whistling Kite, Black Kite	Medium – not aggressive, can feign death. Beware of outstretched talons when picking up Quiet when held.



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Infectious Diseases

Psittacosis (*Ornithosis, Chlamydiosis*)

Psittacosis is a disease caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia psittaci* and is common in wild birds

Source of infection in people

Infected birds, especially ones displaying symptoms such as diarrhoea, respiratory signs, conjunctivitis and nasal discharge, are highly contagious to other birds and to humans.

Transmission

The disease is spread by direct or from contact with exudative materials, e.g. pus, secretions or faeces.

Direct contact with the bird is not necessary.

Disease in people

Seven to fourteen days after exposure, an infected person may develop a respiratory illness of varying severity, from flu-like symptoms in mild cases to pneumonia in more significant infections.

Serious cases can result in extensive pneumonia, hepatitis, myocarditis, thrombophlebitis and encephalitis. It is responsive to antibiotic therapy and relapses may occur in untreated infections.

Avian Tuberculosis

Caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium avium* and Newcastle disease, caused by *Paramyxovirus*.

Both pose a potential hazard, as both diseases are associated with chickens and wild birds.

Transmission

The disease is transmitted by contact or inhalation of infective aerosols.

As in other species, Salmonella and other enteric pathogens can cause disease in humans.



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Aspergillosis

Aspergillosis is the name given to a wide variety of diseases caused by infection by fungi of the genus *Aspergillus*. The most common forms are allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis, pulmonary aspergilloma, and invasive aspergillosis.

Most people inhale *Aspergillus* spores everyday; Aspergillosis develops mainly in individuals who are immunocompromised.

Albeit relatively rare in humans, aspergillosis is a common and dangerous infection in birds.

Bird Flu (*Avian influenza*)

Bird flu also known as avian influenza, is a type A influenza virus. It is lethal to poultry and is potentially fatal in humans.

Bird flu spreads between both wild and domesticated birds; it has also been passed from birds to humans who are in close contact with poultry or other birds.

There is no clear evidence that the virus can be transmitted human to human. However, this may have happened in rare cases, where a person has become ill after caring for a sick family member.

Bird flu in Australia

There are no reports of the current bird flu strain in Australia, either among birds or people.

There have been five previous bird flu outbreaks in Australia among commercial flocks, all of which were contained and eradicated.

How the virus is spread

Water birds such as wild ducks are believed to be carriers of all avian influenza type A viruses. The viruses are carried inside the birds' intestines and are distributed into the environment via bird faeces.

Migratory birds infected with the virus could potentially spread the bird flu to any of the countries they visit.

Wild birds don't usually show symptoms of bird flu, although the currently circulating H5N1 strain has caused illness and death in some wild birds.



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Humans that have close contact with sick birds are at risk of infection with bird flu. For example a person may handle a sick bird, contaminate their hands with faeces and forget to wash their hands before eating, they will then ingest the infected bird faeces.

This is the most common way for a human to contract bird flu. The virus can also survive in raw poultry meat but is destroyed during normal cooking.

Symptoms in birds

Symptoms in birds differ according to the species but may include diarrhoea, breathing difficulties, swollen head and death.

Symptoms in humans

Although there have been too few human cases to determine the exact incubation period of bird flu, it would be expected to be from three to ten days.

The symptoms of bird flu in humans are similar to those of regular influenza and include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Headaches
- Aching muscles

Seek medical advice immediately if you suspect that you may be suffering from bird flu.

Treatment and vaccines

Several antiviral medications used to treat human influenza are also effective for bird flu. These could be used if a person developed symptoms after possible exposure to avian influenza, or to prevent illness in a person who was in close contact with avian influenza.

The Australian government is stockpiling Relenza and Tamiflu, two drugs that may be used in the treatment of human cases of bird flu.

A vaccine against bird flu is in development but is not currently available.

The current influenza vaccines will not protect humans against bird flu. However, people who may be exposed to bird flu should consider being vaccinated against human influenza viruses to reduce the risk of viruses “mixing” to form a new flu strain.



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Things to remember

- Bird flu is spread between birds and from birds to humans
- Exposure to birds, bird faeces or feathers is the most likely way for a human to catch bird flu.

Acknowledgments: state Government of Victoria Department of Health



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Allergies

Various bird proteins have been identified as a source of antigens involved in both allergic reactions and hypersensitivity pneumonitis.

Hypersensitivity pneumonitis is a lung condition with symptoms that mimic pneumonia. Symptoms develop after repeated exposure to a specific antigen found in birds.

Major Safety Points

Anyone that handles birds and faeces are at risk.

Scratches or cuts involving birds or injuries from objects contaminated with body fluids or faeces from birds require immediate first aid and medical attention.

Response to injury

1. Wash any injured site with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
2. Control bleeding by applying direct pressure with a sterile gauze or bandage
3. Cover wound with clean bandage – do not apply ointment or spray
4. Seek medical treatment if required
5. Report the incident to your branch safety officer

Acknowledgments: University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)