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National Disease Control Centre

Avian Influenza Update

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in wild birds in Ireland

- Ireland first confirmed **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus subtype H5N8 in a wild bird** (Peregrine Falcon - *Falco peregrinus*) in County Limerick on November 6th (see Figure 1 below for location)

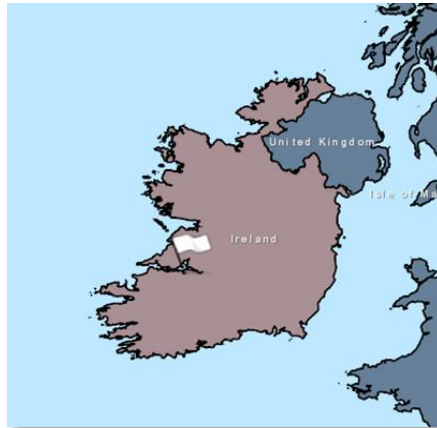


Figure 1 Left: Location of confirmed case of HPAI H5N8 in a peregrine falcon on 6th November
Courtesy of ADNS

- Two further wild bird cases of H5N8 have been confirmed in a Mute swan, *Cygnus olor* in Monaghan (see Figure 2) and a Curlew, *Numenius arquata* in Mayo (see figure 3) today. Pathogenicity test results are pending to determine if they are highly pathogenic.

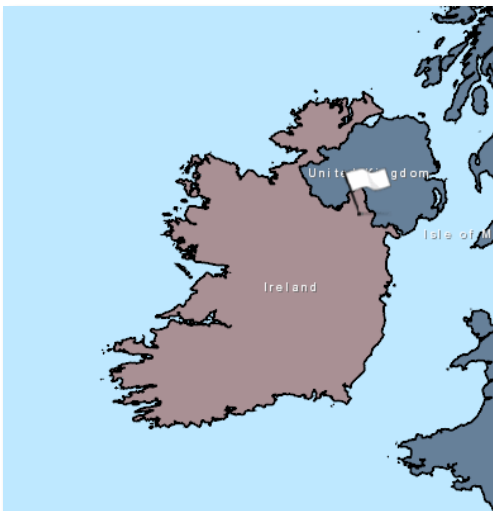


Figure 2 Above: Location of confirmed case of HPAI H5N8 in a Mute swan on 18th November
(Courtesy of ADNS)

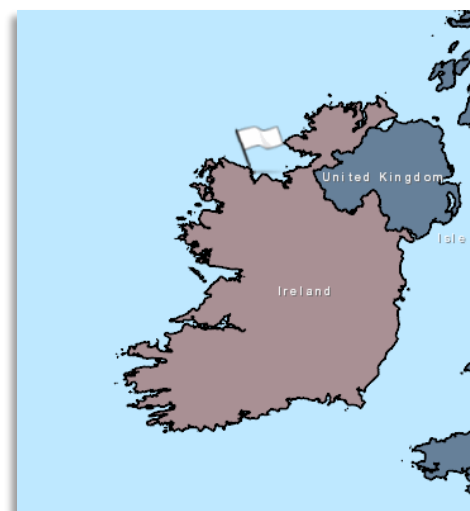


Figure 3 Above: Location of confirmed HPAI H5N8 in a Curlew on 18th November
(Courtesy of ADNS)

- There have been no outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in poultry in Ireland this year to date.

Risk to Ireland regarding HPAI H5N8

- The disease is **highly contagious for birds**.
- The risk to Irish poultry flocks from Avian Influenza has increased following the confirmation of H5N8 in three wild birds in Ireland.
- The disease poses **no food safety risk for consumers**. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs are safe to eat.
- **Strict biosecurity measures are needed** to prevent the introduction of AI into poultry and captive bird flocks.
- Flock owners should **remain vigilant for any signs of disease** in their flocks, and report any disease suspicion to their nearest [Regional Veterinary Office](#) .
- **Members of the public are advised not to handle sick or dead wild birds. Please report sick or dead wild birds to the local Regional Veterinary Office or contact the DAFM disease hotline on 1850 200456.**

The importance of biosecurity in poultry flocks at this time cannot be overstated. This applies to ALL flocks, irrespective of size.

What can poultry owners do to reduce the risk of avian influenza?

- 1. Be vigilant-** Monitor your birds carefully for any clinical signs of disease. If in doubt contact your veterinary practitioner for advice. Signs of avian influenza include:

- Death/high mortalities in a flock
- Depression/lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling, rattling
- Blue discolouration of combs, wattles, neck and throat
- Diarrhoea
- Reduced egg production or no egg production

2. Increase Biosecurity

Personnel and Visitors

- Wear disposable or dedicated outer clothing when in contact with your birds
- Wear boots that can be disinfected, disposable gloves and wash hands after contact with poultry
- Only allow essential personnel access to your birds.

Buildings and Equipment

- Regularly clean and disinfect hard surfaces such as paths and walkways
- Provide clean boot washing and disinfection facilities at all entrances/exits and ensure that people use them
- Clean and disinfect any vehicles or equipment that comes into contact with the birds after use
- Have suitable pest control in place.

Wild Birds

- Minimise access to the flock by wild birds
- Feed and water birds inside or at least under cover
- Clean up any waste feed in outdoor areas frequently
Consider using netting or wild bird decoys or deterrents to keep wild birds away from poultry areas.

Management

- Keep ducks and geese separate to other poultry species if possible
Register your birds with DAFM so you can receive vital information in the event of an increased risk.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 in The EU and UK

HPAI H5N8 has been confirmed in two poultry flocks (Herefordshire and Cheshire) and in 3 regions in wild birds in England (5 wild black swans in Devon, a group of 5 wild birds in Gloucestershire, and a Canadian goose in Devon).

Northern Ireland confirmed its first case of HPAI H5N8 in a mute swan near Lough Beg, County Derry on 17th November.

There have been outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 in poultry in several European Union countries and the United Kingdom, please see the table below for more detail.

HPAI H5N8 outbreaks in poultry

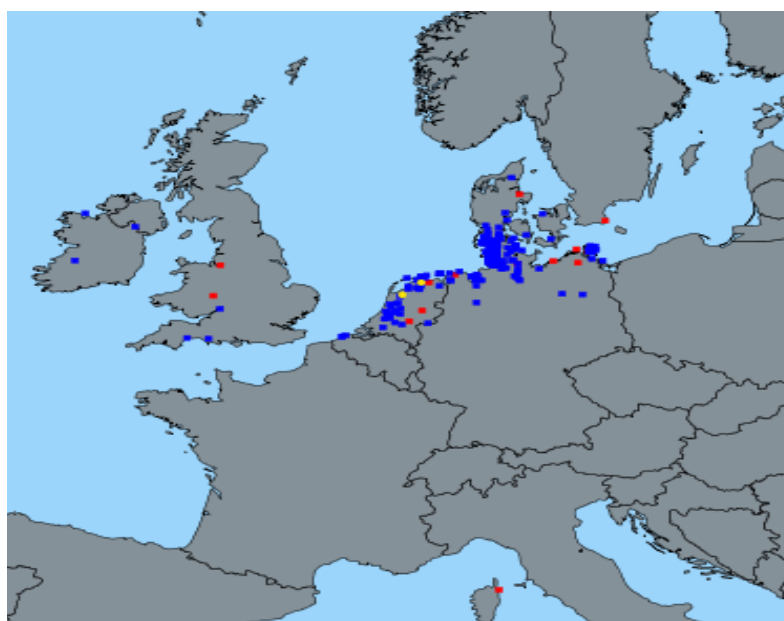
Country	Number of Outbreaks	Date of First outbreak	Date of most recent outbreak	Categories of Poultry
The Netherlands	4	29/10/2020	13/11/2020	Poultry (not specified)
Germany	9	04/11/2020	17/11/2020	Backyard, Breeding Turkeys, Fattening Turkeys, Laying Hens, Fattening geese
United Kingdom	2	02/11/2020	12/11/2020	Laying Hens, broiler breeders
Denmark	1	16/11/2020	16/11/2020	Commercial flock
France	1	16/11/2020	16/11/2020	Commercial petstore
Sweden	1	16/11/2020	16/11/2020	Fattening turkeys

HPAI H5N8 cases in wild birds

All H5N8 has been found in a large number of wild birds throughout Europe in the species listed in the table below

Countries	Species
Germany The Netherlands Poland, Denmark, Belgium (and Ireland)	Northern Goshawk, White-tailed sea eagle, peregrine falcon, cormorant, greylag goose, barnacle goose, cane goose, bean goose, curlew, mallard, teal, gulls, European buzzard, short eared owl, kestrel, European widgeons, mute swans, eagle owl, crane, oystercatcher, Canada goose, common eider, Eurasian sparrowhawk

Figure 4: HPAI wild bird cases (blue) and HPAI outbreaks in poultry (red) and captive birds (yellow) from 1st November 2020 to date (ADNS)



Further information for poultry owners and stakeholder groups

Fact sheets giving biosecurity advice for each of the main poultry categories are available at the following link:

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/clinicalsignsandleaflets/

To register a poultry flock please see:

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/poultryregistration/

RVO contact details [Regional Veterinary Office](#) .

List of target species of wild birds for AI surveillance

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/avianinfluenzabirdflu/informationonwildbirds/ListOfWildBirdSpeciesForTargetedAIsurveillance170118.pdf>

European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/avian-influenza_en

DAFM Contingency Planning for Avian influenza

DAFM has well established early warning systems and contingency measures in place for avian influenza. A summary of these measures can be found at:

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/legislationcontingencyplanning/

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