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National Disease Control Centre

Avian Influenza Update

Number 17 of 2020

Avian influenza (Precautionary Confinement of Birds) Regulations come into effect in Ireland

- From today, December 21st 2020, new regulations come into force which require flock keepers to confine all poultry and captive birds in their possession or under their control in a secure building
- These regulations entitled **Avian Influenza (Precautionary Confinement of Birds) Regulations 2020** provide for precautionary measures against avian influenza (bird flu).
- All flock owners are reminded to continue implementing the highest levels of biosecurity. Housing of poultry and captive birds alone will not protect birds from the threat of avian influenza virus. Biosecurity still remains the #1 method in preventing and controlling the spread of disease.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Ireland

- Since the last update on December 13th, there have been 3 further cases of avian influenza in wild birds in Ireland. Laboratory tests are still ongoing to confirm the strain and pathogenicity of the virus involved in these cases. There have been a total of 10 confirmed HPAI H5N8 cases in wild birds in 2020 to date.
- A 3 km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone remain in place surrounding an area in which avian influenza H5N8 was confirmed in a turkey flock on December 10th.

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

Figure 1: Map of Protection Zone (red) and Surveillance Zone (green) in area where H5N8 was confirmed in a turkey flock on 10th December 2020.

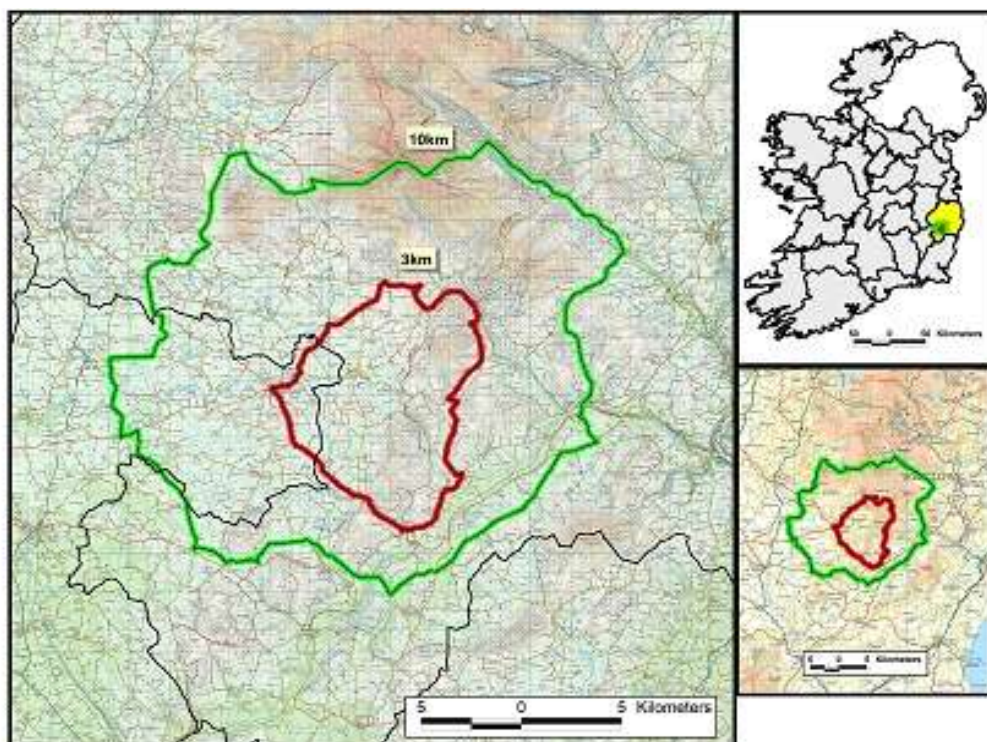




Figure 2. Map of confirmed cases of HPAI N5N8 in wild birds in Ireland in 2020 to date (18/12/2020)

	Limerick	Peregrine falcon
	Monaghan	Mute swan #1
	Mayo	Curlew
	Cork	Peregrine falcon
	Monaghan	Mute swan #2
	Kildare	Mute swan #3
	Wicklow	Whooper swan #1
	Mayo	Peregrine falcon
	Cork	Barnacle goose
	Wexford	Mute swan #4

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 a small turkey flock Wicklow.
- 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
- Swelling and blue discolouration of combs, wattles, neck and throat
- Diarrhoea
- Reduced egg production or no egg production

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 in the EU and UK

- The UK has confirmed HPAI H5N8 in 10 poultry flocks (Leicestershire x 2, Herefordshire, Cheshire, North Yorkshire x 2, Norfolk x 2, Dorset and the Orkney Islands).
- The UK has also had 2 outbreaks of H5N8 in captive birds (Gloustershire and Worcestershire County).
- The UK continues to report large numbers of outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 in wild birds with 85 separate reporting events this year to date. There have also been outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in unspecified wild birds and 6 reports of H5N5 also in wild birds.
- On December 18th, H5N1 was detected in a backyard flocks comprised of 20 chickens in North Yorkshire. The virus strain is still undergoing laboratory tests. The H5N1 strain found in wild birds in the UK is genetically different and not related to the H5N1 subtype that circulated in Europe in 2006 which caused human infections.
- H5N8 outbreaks in poultry flocks continue to be reported from France and The Netherlands within the past week, as well as in captive birds in the Netherlands.
- Please see tables below for details of all poultry outbreaks and more information on cases in wild birds.

HPAI H5N8 outbreaks in poultry in the rest of EU and the UK

Country	Number of Outbreaks	Date of First outbreak	Date of most recent outbreak	Categories of Poultry
Poland	45	31/12/2019	16/12/2020	Commercial flocks, geese, turkey broilers, laying hens
The Netherlands	9	29/10/2020	14/12/2020	Poultry
Germany	15	07/02/2020	1/12/2020	Backyard (4), Breeding Turkeys (2), Fattening Turkeys(2), Laying Hens (4), fattening geese (3)
United Kingdom	11	02/11/2020	19/12/2020	Poultry, Fattening turkeys, Laying Hens, broiler breeders, Theme park farm, Backyard farm with 3 chickens, 2 ducks and 45 falcons)
Denmark	1	16/11/2020	16/11/2020	Commercial flock
France	14	16/11/2020	16/12/2020	Commercial pet stores, fattening ducks, chickens, Muscovy ducks
Sweden	1	16/11/2020	16/11/2020	Fattening turkeys
Croatia	1	21/11/2020	21/11/2020	Fattening turkeys
Ukraine	3	19/1/2020	11/12/2020	Poultry, backyard

Ireland	1	10/12/2020	10/12/2020	Turkeys
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HPAI H5N1 cases in poultry

Country	Number of Outbreaks	Date of First outbreak	Date of most recent outbreak	Categories of Poultry	Details
The Netherlands	1	14/12/2020	14/12/2020	Poultry	27681 birds
UK	1	18/12/2020	18/12/2020	Poultry	20 (backyard)

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

Countries	Species
France, Germany The Netherlands Poland, United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, Norway	cane goose, Canada goose, common eider, common kestrel, common moorhen, common coot, common buzzard, common pheasant, common wood pigeon, cormorant, curlew, curlew sandpiper, crane, Brent goose, greylag goose, barnacle goose, bean goose, pink-footed goose, mallard, teal, gulls, European buzzard, short eared owl, eagle owl, tawny owl, kestrel, European widgeons, mute swans, whooper swan, oystercatcher, Eurasian sparrowhawk, shelduck, Gadwall (duck), magpie, northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, white-tailed sea eagle, great crested grebe, Eurasian eagle owl, northern gannet, great egret, lesser black backed gull, grey heron, little grebe

HPAI H5N1 cases in wild birds

Country	No. of outbreaks	Date of first outbreak	Date of last outbreak	Species
The Netherlands	4	27/10/2020	5/11/2020	Eurasian widgeon x 4, curlew, grey goose, teal
Italy	2	4/12/2020	10/12/2020	Widgeon, Common teal
UK*	1	9/12/2020		Mute swan

*The HPAI H5N1 virus isolated from the mute swan in the UK belongs to the 2.3.4.4B clade. This clade has acquired gene segments from low-pathogenic viruses and is not related to A (H5N1) viruses of e.g., clade 2.3.2.1c which is known to cause human infections outside of Europe (see OIE report dated 17/12/2020 epidemiological comments). The HPAI H5N1 virus isolated from the outbreak in the UK in the poultry flock is also thought to belong to the 2.3.4.4B clade but further tests are ongoing to confirm.

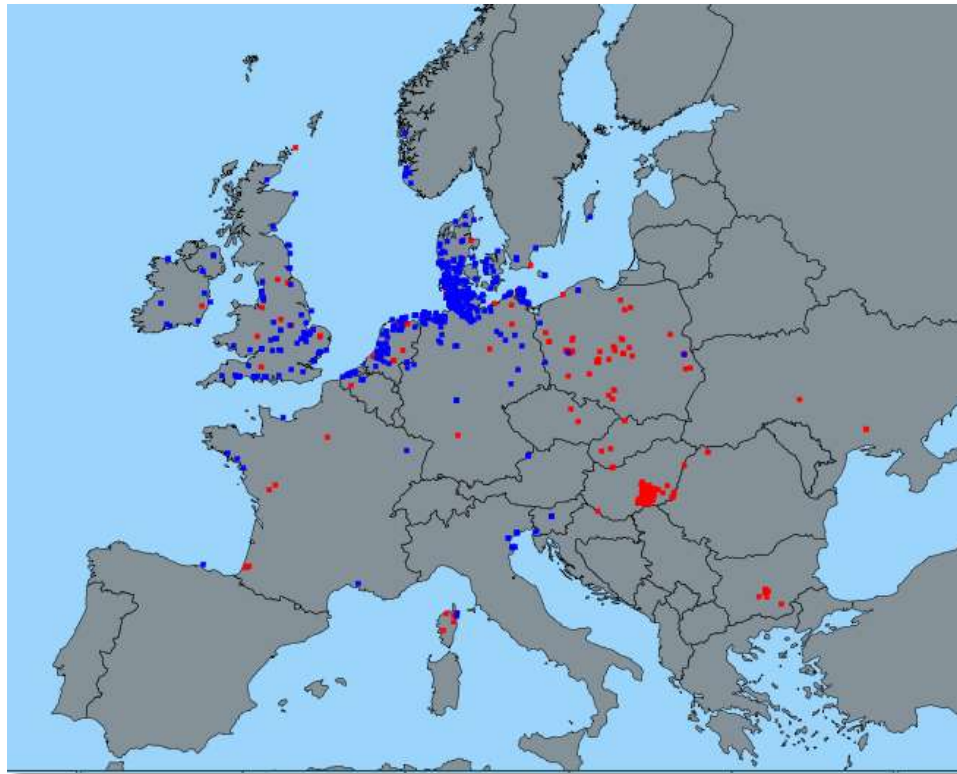


Figure 4: HPAI wild bird cases (blue) and HPAI outbreaks in poultry (red) (from 1st November 2020 to 15:00 18th December 2020 reported to ADNS)

List of wild birds to be targeted for AI surveillance (H5 HPAI) in Ireland

Based on passive surveillance data 2005-2017, produced by EFSA* and amended by NPWS.

Family	Sub Family tribe or genus	Species Common name used in Ireland and scientific name
Ducks geese and swans (anatidae)	Diving ducks (Aythyini)	Tufted duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>)
		Greater scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>)
		Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>)
	Dabbling ducks (Anatinae)	Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)
		Widgeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)
		Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)
		Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)
		Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)
	Seaducks (Mergini)	Goosander (<i>Mergus merganser</i>)
		Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)
		Smew (<i>Mergus albellus</i>)
		Eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>)
	Shelducks (Tadorninae)	Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)
		Egyptian goose

		<i>(Alopochen aegyptiacus)**</i>
	True Geese	Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)
		Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis**</i>)
		Pink-footed Goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>)
		Brent goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>)
		White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons</i>)
		Bean Goose (<i>Anser fabalis</i>)
	Swans (<i>Cygnus</i>)	Black Swan (<i>Cygnus atratus**</i>)
		Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>)
		Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)
Grebes (Podicipedidae)		Black-necked Grebe (<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>)
		Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)
		Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>)
Hérons (Ardeidae)		Little Egret (<i>Egretta garzetta</i>)
		Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)
		Great White Egret (<i>Egretta alba</i>)
Cormorants and shags (Phalacrocoracidae)		Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)
Raptors (Accipitridae, Falconidae, Strigidae)		White-tailed eagle (<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>)
		Goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>)
		Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>)
		Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)
		Rough-legged buzzard (<i>Buteo lagopus**</i>)
		Eurasian Eagle-owl (<i>Bubo bubo**</i>)
Sandpipers (Scolopacidae)		Green Sandpiper (<i>Tringa ochropus</i>)
		Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)
Gulls, Terns and allies (Lardiae)		Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)

		Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)
		Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)
		Black-headed gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)
Corvids (Corvidae)		Magpie (<i>Pica pica</i>)
Thrushes (Turdidae)		Fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>)

* European Food Safety Association

** Feral birds or escapees that may occur in the wild in Ireland

- **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.**

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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