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Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
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Avian Influenza Update

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National Disease Control Centre

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Avian Influenza: **Lifting of biosecurity regulations**

- [S.I. No. 666/2024 - Avian Influenza \(Biosecurity measures\) Regulations 2024](#), the 'best practice' biosecurity measures as usually advised by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine which came into force on 6th December 2024, **will be lifted on 31st May 2025**
- It is appropriate to lift measures at this time, as the risk of avian influenza outbreaks in our poultry is lower during warmer summer months than during the colder winter months.

Biosecurity continues to remain the #1 method in disease prevention and control

It is still advised that all flock owners continue implementing the highest levels of biosecurity

Maintaining high biosecurity measures on farm, is key to protecting Ireland's poultry industry from avian influenza and the serious consequences of an outbreak

- No outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) have been detected in poultry in Ireland during 2024 or 2025 (to date).
- The [Bird Flu Radar](#), a tool developed for the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) as a spatiotemporal risk assessment model, also shows a decrease in probability of HPAI outbreaks in wild birds since the beginning of April 2025.

Avian Influenza detected in wild birds in Ireland in 2025

- 20 wild birds have tested positive for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in 2025 (January-May) (*Figure 1*).
 - The latest wild bird to test positive for HPAI was on 2nd May 2025.
 - 19 wild birds have tested positive for the HPAI H5N1 subtype.
 - 1 wild bird has tested positive for the AI H5Nx subtype.
 - Wild birds that tested positive for HPAI were collected from locations countrywide.
 - Several species have tested positive for HPAI (greylag goose, peregrine falcon, white-tailed eagle, gull, buzzard, starlings and several swans).
- A map detailing the cases of Avian Influenza detected in wild birds across Ireland following surveillance testing can be viewed [here](#).
- **Members of the public are advised not to handle sick or dead wild birds of any species.**
 - ❖ **Poultry owners and those working with poultry should beware of visiting areas, both at home and abroad, where deaths of wild birds have occurred (coastal areas, bird colonies, etc.). Direct contact with sick or dead wild birds must be avoided.**
 - ❖ **Pet owners are advised to keep dogs on a leash when walking where sick or dead wild birds are, or have been, present.**
- Dead wild birds should be reported to DAFM using the Avian Check Wild Bird App:
<https://aviancheck.apps.services.agriculture.gov.ie/>

Figure 1 detailing the cases of HPAI detected in wild birds in Ireland in 2025 (as of 27/05/2025)



Source: [Wildbirds basemap](#)

Avian influenza situation in Northern Ireland

- **HPAI H5N1** was detected in three commercial poultry premises in Cookstown, Pomeroy and Dungannon Co. Tyrone in February 2025. All Surveillance Zones associated with these outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in Northern Ireland have now been lifted.
- **The Mandatory Housing Order in Northern Ireland was lifted on 10th May 2025.**
- **The Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) (similar to the disease protection measures which were in place in Ireland) and the ban on poultry gatherings will be lifted on Saturday 31st May 2025** [Avian Influenza Prevention Zone in Northern Ireland to be lifted | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Avian Influenza reported in wild birds across Northern Ireland

- Several wild birds have tested positive for HPAI across Northern Ireland.
- HPAI was reported in wild birds in a nature reserve outside Magherafelt Co. Derry, in January 2025. The 3km Captive Bird Monitoring Controlled Zone introduced on the 13th February 2025 after HPAI H5N1 was confirmed, was lifted on 5th March 2025, following the completion of all disease control activities and surveillance.
 - ➔ A map detailing the cases of Avian Influenza detected in wild birds in Northern Ireland following surveillance testing can be viewed [here](#).

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Great Britain

- HPAI continues to be detected in wild birds in Great Britain in 2025.
 - [Bird flu \(avian influenza\): cases in wild birds - GOV.UK](#)
- Since November 2024, there have been 64 confirmed outbreaks of HPAI in poultry flocks and captive birds in the UK (including Northern Ireland) (Table 1).

Table 1 detailing the cases of HPAI in poultry and captive birds in the UK November 2024-May 2025

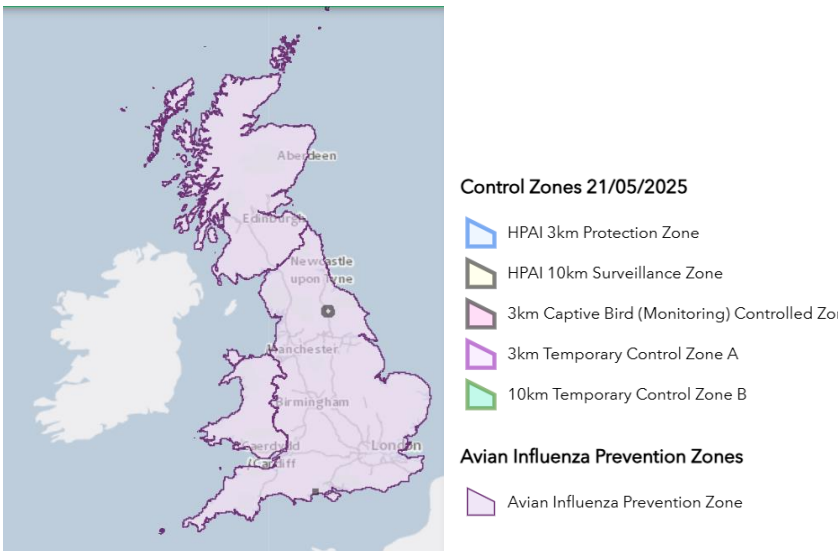
	HPAI H5N5	HPAI H5N1
England	1	57
Scotland	0	2
Wales	0	0
Northern Ireland	0	4
Total	1	63

Overall total: 64

Source: [Bird flu \(avian influenza\): latest situation in England - GOV.UK](#)

- The Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) which extends across Great Britain, with mandatory biosecurity measures continues to remain in place nationwide. This is designed to mitigate the risk of further outbreaks occurring. These measures apply to pet birds and backyard flocks as well as commercial poultry. Poultry gatherings continue to remain banned. (Figure 2).
- Mandatory housing measures have been lifted in the AIPZ in England, as of 22nd May 2025.**
- Birds can now be kept outside, unless they are in a Protection Zone or Captive Bird Monitoring (Controlled) Zone.
- The most recent case of HPAI(H5N1) in Great Britain was confirmed in captive birds at a premises near Pokesdown, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Dorset on 18th May 2025. A 3km captive bird (monitoring) controlled zone was declared surrounding the premises.

Figure 2 detailing the current HPAI control zones in Great Britain (as of 27/05/2025)



Source: [APHA Interactive Avian Influenza Disease Map](#)

Influenza of avian origin confirmed in a sheep in Yorkshire England

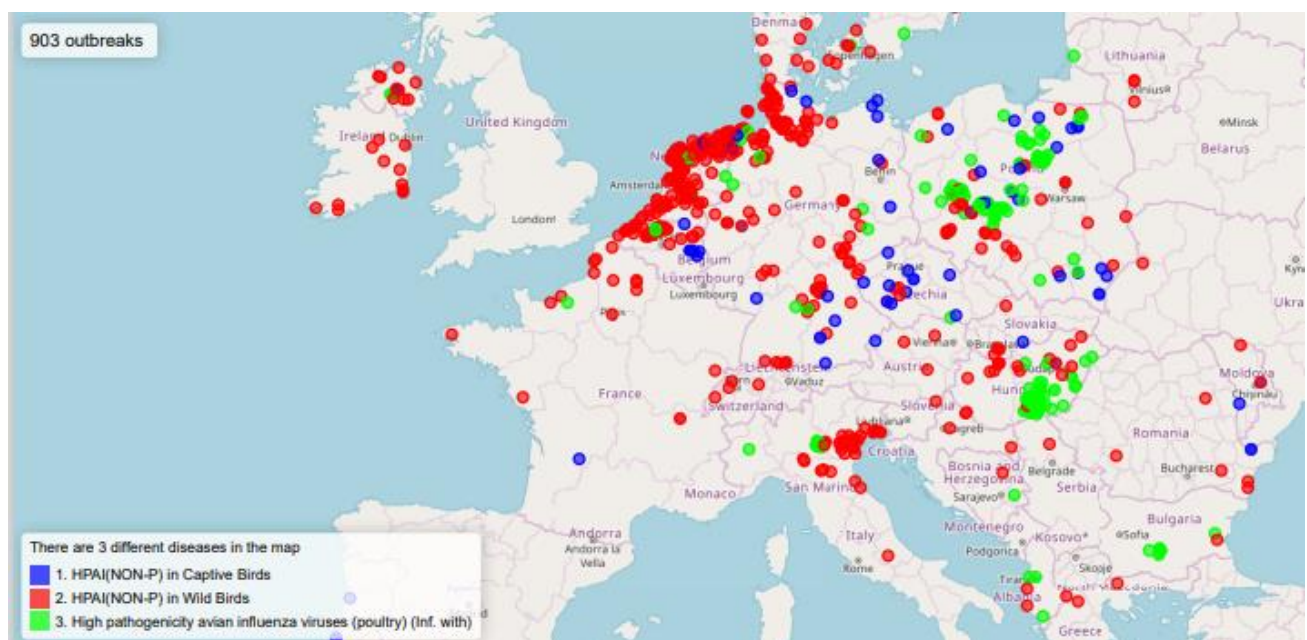
- **Influenza of avian origin (H5N1) has been detected in a sheep in England in March 2025.**
 - The case was identified following routine surveillance of farmed livestock on a premises in Yorkshire where highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) had been confirmed in other captive birds.
 - The ewe tested positive for H5 antibodies in the blood, and her milk was positive for H5 RNA by polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The ewe had been showing clinical signs of mastitis.
 - All affected birds and the infected ewe were humanely culled to mitigate the risk of further disease spread.
 - Further official testing of the remaining flock of sheep at the premises, including the lambs of the affected ewe, were negative for the presence of avian influenza virus.
 - While this is the first time avian influenza virus has been detected in a sheep, it is not the first time influenza of avian origin has been detected in livestock in other countries. There is no evidence to suggest an increased risk to the nation's livestock population.
 - Defra has introduced livestock surveillance on infected premises following the outbreaks of avian influenza in dairy cows in the US.
- ➔ Further information is available on the DEFRA website [here](#).

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Europe

Since the 1st January 2025, there have been 252 outbreaks of HPAI in poultry flocks and 651 outbreaks in wild and captive birds cross Europe reported to the European Commission (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3. HPAI outbreaks in captive birds, wild birds and poultry flocks across Europe

(01/01/2025-27/05/2025)



Source ADIS (Animal Disease Information System, European Commission).

Strict Biosecurity is Essential to Protect against Avian Influenza

Avian Influenza is highly contagious for birds

Poultry flock owners, veterinary practitioners and other relevant stakeholders should continue to remain vigilant for any signs of disease in their flocks and report any disease suspicion, without delay, to their nearest Department [Regional Veterinary Office \(RVO\)](#).

- Flock owners must ensure that the highest possible biosecurity standards are implemented consistently.
- All commercial poultry farmers, backyard keepers and those with captive birds should take action to reduce the risk of their flocks becoming infected, for the protection of the Irish poultry industry. Strict biosecurity is the single most important way to prevent disease incursion and to help protect flocks against all poultry diseases, not just avian influenza.
- Biosecurity is a comprehensive approach, encompassing different methods of prevention and containment with responsibility spread across the food chain, from the primary producer in the first instance, to transporters, food producers, slaughterhouses, veterinarians and others involved in animal production and trade.

Movement of people or equipment between poultry holdings is high risk

Strict biosecurity, cleaning and disinfection is vital to protect the flock from infection*

- A **guidance document** on biosecurity measures for poultry and captive bird keepers is available [here](#).
 - These measures give specific indications to poultry and captive bird keepers on how to improve biosecurity in their flock based on: wild birds management, flock environment, personnel and equipment, feed and bedding, records and flock management.
 - **Movement of visitors, vehicles and equipment onto farms should be kept to an absolute minimum.**
 - **Equipment should not be shared between farms.**
 - **Designated clothing and footwear should be worn when accessing poultry areas.**
 - **Disinfection footbaths should contain a DAFM [registered disinfectant](#) made up as per manufacturer's instructions should be available outside every poultry house.**

What can poultry owners do to reduce the risk of Avian Influenza?

Flock owners should remain vigilant for any unexplained signs of disease in their flocks, and report any disease suspicion to their nearest Regional Veterinary Office without delay.

1. BE VIGILANT

Monitor your birds carefully for any clinical signs of disease. If in doubt, contact your veterinary practitioner for advice and report any suspect cases promptly.

Signs of Avian Influenza may include:

- Death/high mortalities in a flock
- Depression/lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Respiratory distress (gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling, rattling)
- Swelling and blue discolouration of combs, wattles, neck and throat
- Gastrointestinal signs (inappetence, diarrhoea)
- Nervous signs
- Reduced egg production or no egg production

2. MAINTAIN HIGH BIOSECURITY STANDARDS

Personnel and Visitors

- Wear disposable or dedicated outer clothing, 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. ***Use a registered disinfectant against avian influenza in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, available to view [here](#).**
- Clean and disinfect any vehicles or equipment that encounter the birds after use.
- Have suitable pest control in place.

Wild Birds

- Feed and water birds inside or at least under cover.
- Clean up any waste feed in outdoor areas frequently.
- Use netting or wild bird decoys or deterrents to keep wild birds away from poultry areas.

Management

- Keep ducks and geese separate from other poultry species.
- **The Department also reminds all poultry owners, including those who keep only 1 or 2 birds of their legal obligation to register their premises with the Department. Registration is a legal requirement under Irish law. Legislation on registration can be found [here](#).**

Reporting of sick or dead wild birds to DAFM

- Avian influenza surveillance measures in wild birds and poultry are conducted by DAFM throughout the year. The submission and testing of dead wild birds which are on the target species list for avian influenza surveillance is a key part of this programme.
- If the Department has sufficient epidemiological surveillance information in particular geographical areas, it will not necessarily collect dead birds for testing. When dead wild birds are not required for surveillance purposes, and are present on public land, it is the responsibility of the local authority to safely dispose of the carcasses.
- Current protocols provide for the collection and sampling of dead wild birds in the following circumstances when required: if one or more bird of prey (including owls), three or more waterfowl (including gulls), five or more of any other species of bird are found.

Sick or dead wild birds can be reported to DAFM via:

→ Avian Check Wild Bird App <https://aviancheck.apps.services.agriculture.gov.ie/>

→ local [Regional Veterinary Office \(RVO\)](#) or contact the DAFM disease hotline on 01 492 8026 (outside office hours).

Further information regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

- Avian influenza poses no food safety risk for consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs are safe to eat.
- DAFM has a wide variety of biosecurity resources for avian influenza-please see: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e230-poultry/>
- DAFM avian influenza updates: [gov.ie - Avian influenza \(bird flu\) \(www.gov.ie\)](#)
- To register a poultry flock: [gov.ie - Poultry Register \(www.gov.ie\)](#)
- Regional Veterinary Office contact details: [gov.ie - Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine \(www.gov.ie\)](#)
- European Commission [Avian influenza \(europa.eu\)](#)
- World Organisation for Animal Health: [Avian Influenza - WOA - World Organisation for Animal Health](#)
- European Food Safety Authority: [Avian influenza | EFSA \(europa.eu\)](#)

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