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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 continues to be reported in wild birds in Ireland

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) was confirmed on 19th February 2025 in a common buzzard in Co. Wicklow. This detection confirms the presence of the virus in a new location and brings the total number of cases in wild birds confirmed in Ireland, in recent weeks, to six. Previous cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) confirmed in **wild birds** in Ireland since November 2024 are as follows:

- 5th December 2024: common buzzard, Co. Galway
- 30th December 2024: common buzzard, Co. Dublin
- 16th January 2025: greylag goose, Co. Donegal
- 29th January 2025: whooper swan, Co. Westmeath
- 30th January 2025: peregrine falcon, Co. Wexford.



Figure 1: Location of wild birds with confirmed HPAI infection in Ireland

- Members of the public are advised not to handle sick or dead wild birds of any species.
- 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/>

Avian influenza situation in Northern Ireland

- **Preliminary positive** results for HPAI in a commercial poultry premises near Cookstown, Co. Tyrone were obtained on the 24th February 2025. Temporary Control Zones (TCZ) of 3km and 10km have been introduced around the flock.
- **Preliminary positive** results for HPAI in a commercial poultry premises near Pomeroy, Co. Tyrone were obtained on the 23rd February 2025. Temporary Control Zones (TCZ) of 3km and 10km have been introduced around the flock.
- **HPAI H5N1** was confirmed in a flock of laying hens near Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland, on the 20th February 2025. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has introduced a 3km Protection Zone (PZ) and a 10km Surveillance Zone (SZ) around the flock from the this date.
- DAERA introduced a 3km Captive Bird Monitoring Controlled Zone on the 13th February 2025 after HPAI H5N1 was confirmed to be present at a captive bird premises in Magherafelt, Co. Derry.
- The disease control zones implemented as a result of these avian influenza outbreaks do not extend across the border of Northern Ireland.
- Previous to this, HPAI was reported in wild birds from a nature reserve outside Magherafelt, **Co Derry**, a wild goose, a buzzard and a whooper swan, found across three separate counties and submitted for official testing as part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) avian influenza wild bird surveillance programme on the 16th and 17th of January 2025. Please see a map viewer including all cases [here](#).
- Northern Ireland introduced mandatory housing measures for all kept birds and poultry on Monday 17th February 2025.
- The mandatory housing order is part of an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) which was introduced from Saturday 18th January 2025. The AIPZ places a legal requirement on all bird keepers in Northern Ireland to follow strict biosecurity measures. Further information can be found [here](#). These measures are very similar to the Biosecurity Measures Regulations introduced by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine on 6th December.

Housing Order – Avian Influenza (Precautionary Confinement of Birds and Restriction on Assembly of Live Birds) Regulations 2025

- Following on from confirmation of an avian influenza outbreak in one poultry farm and preliminary positive results in a second flock in Northern Ireland and circulation of the virus in wild birds across the island, the risk of occurrence of further outbreaks of the disease into poultry flocks in Ireland is high.

- **New regulations came into force** effective from **Monday, 17th February 2025** 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 and Restriction on Assembly of Live Birds) Regulations 2025** aim to help protect Irish poultry and captive birds 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.
- Under these regulations, it is not permitted to organise or take part in events which involve the assembly of live birds from different premises e.g. shows, fairs, markets or sales, in order to protect the birds themselves from the risk of becoming infected.

A **Frequently Asked Questions** document outlining the requirements of this regulation can be found [here](#).

Biosecurity Regulations introduced 6th December 2024 remain in force

- While no outbreaks of avian influenza have been detected in poultry in Ireland during 2024 or 2025 to date, the confirmation that this virus is circulating in wild birds means that there is an increased threat to Irish poultry of becoming exposed to, and infected with, this disease.
- ‘Best practice’ biosecurity measures as usually advised by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine remain **mandatory** for all poultry and captive bird keepers since 6th December 2024 following the introduction of **S.I. No. 666/2024 - Avian Influenza (Biosecurity Measures) Regulations 2024**.
- A **guidance document** on the measures which must be taken by poultry and captive bird keepers has been developed and 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 must be kept to an absolute minimum. Equipment should not be shared between farms. Designated clothing and footwear should be worn when accessing areas where poultry are kept; disinfection footbaths containing DAFM registered disinfectant made up as per manufacturer’s instructions should be available outside every poultry house.**

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza elsewhere

HPAI in Great Britain

- From November 2024 to date, there have been 36 confirmed outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry flocks and 4 in captive birds in England and 1 case in a poultry flock in Scotland.
- From midday on Monday 10 February 2025 bird gatherings of poultry, galliforme or anseriforme birds have been banned in England and Wales.
- Regional avian influenza prevention zones (AIPZ) with mandatory biosecurity and housing measures have been introduced in certain areas of England considered to be at higher risk of disease incursion, due to confirmation of avian influenza in poultry flocks in the area. 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. The rest of England is now under an additional AIPZ mandating enhanced biosecurity but will not enforce mandatory housing.
- An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) was declared across the whole of Scotland on the 25th of January and Wales on the 30 January 2025. These decisions were made due to the increased risk associated with the incursion of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

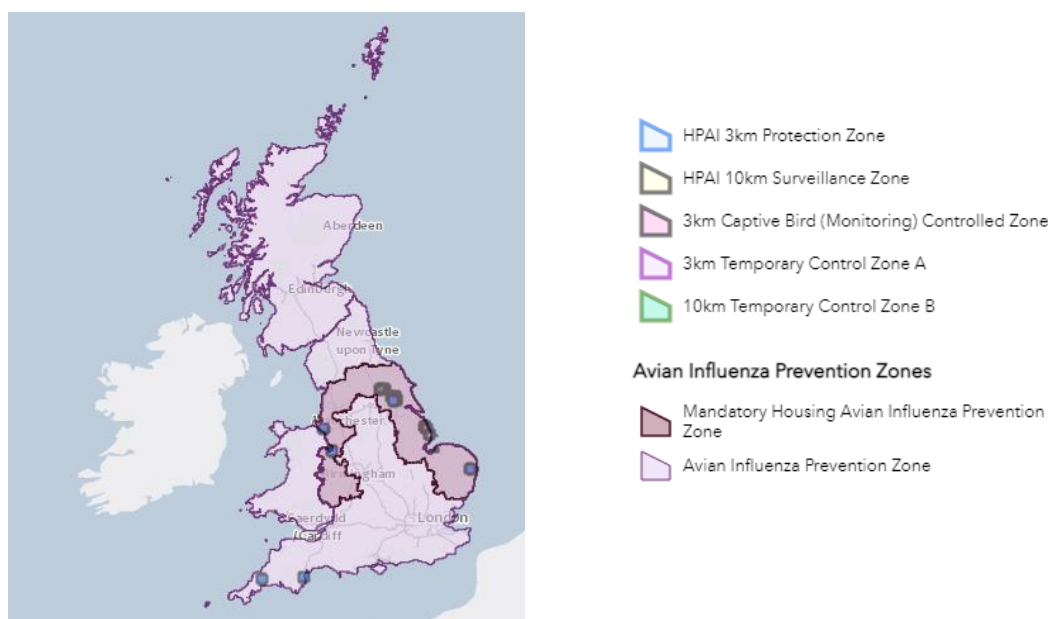


Figure 2. An interactive map indicating current Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) HPAI control zones can be found [here](#). The circular areas indicate current disease control zones around infected premises. The purple shaded area indicates the location of AIPZs with housing measures in place.

HPAI in poultry in Europe

- Since 1st October 2024, there have been 388 outbreaks of HPAI in poultry flocks across Europe reported to the European Commission.



Figure 3. HPAI outbreaks in poultry flocks reported to the European Commission (01/10/2024-25/02/2025)

Source ADIS (Animal Disease Information System).

Increased risk to Irish poultry flocks of an avian influenza incursion

- Ireland is currently within the higher-risk period for avian influenza.
- At this time of year, weather conditions and bird migration routes bring a higher risk period for incursion of avian influenza to Ireland. Colder weather and shorter daylight hours can extend the survival time of avian influenza viruses in the environment, and migratory wild birds (the natural hosts of many avian influenza viruses) arrive in large numbers to overwinter in Ireland.
- 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 \(RVO\)](#).

- **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.

Strict Biosecurity is Essential

- 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.
- Any movement of people or equipment between poultry holdings is high risk, so strict biosecurity, cleaning and disinfection is vital to protect the flock from infection.

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).

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. BIOSECURITY

A copy of the Avian Influenza (Biosecurity measures) Regulations 2024 can be found [here](#)

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](#).

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 - WOAHA - World Organisation for Animal Health](#)
- European Food Safety Authority: [Avian influenza | EFSA \(europa.eu\)](#)