An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

17th November 2026

NDCC Disease Update 5 of 2026 - Avian Influenza

1. Current situation in Ireland

Ireland is in the higher risk period for HPAI. The arrival of migratory birds and colder temperatures increases the risk and allows the virus to survive in the environment for longer periods of time.

While no cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) have been detected in poultry on the territory Ireland during 2026 (to date), an outbreak of HPAI has occurred in a commercial poultry flock in Co. Tyrone (16th November) and a HPAI positive wild-bird was detected in Co. Derry on 13th November, providing evidence that the virus is circulating on the island of Ireland.
There have been no detections of HPAI in wild birds in Ireland since March 2026.

An increase in HPAI outbreaks on commercial poultry farms and in captive and wild birds in the UK and Europe (see point 3), indicates that the risk to Irish poultry flocks is increasing.



Figure 1 detailing the location of the HPAI outbreak in commercial poultry in Coagh, Co. Tyrone and the location of the wild bird HPAI positive in Co. Derry.

2. Mandatory Biosecurity Regulations for bird keepers

- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Martin Heydon T.D., announced the introduction of biosecurity regulations which will require all flock keepers to apply specific biosecurity measures at establishments keeping poultry and other captive birds - Press Release
- These measures will come into effect on **Wednesday 18 November 2026**. It is vital that all who keep poultry, whether commercial holdings or those who have some backyard hens, adhere to the biosecurity measures and take every precaution to prevent contact with, or contamination from, wild birds.
- Biosecurity is the single most effective way to prevent the virus spreading from wild birds into poultry, or between poultry flocks.
- The regulation lays out the most appropriate biosecurity advice which must be followed to reduce the risk of an outbreak in Irish poultry and captive bird flocks. A guidance document on biosecurity measures for poultry and captive bird keepers is available here (gov.ie/birdflu) and in the Annex to this Update.
- It is extremely important at this time that high biosecurity standards are followed and that all poultry holdings are registered with DAFM, whether commercial farms or those who have one or two backyard hens. Apart from being a legal requirement, it is also essential to help protect

poultry flocks and farmers' livelihoods from the impacts which an outbreak of this disease would bring.

- 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.
- The introduction of a compulsory poultry housing order is under active consideration and the Department is monitoring the epidemiological situation closely.

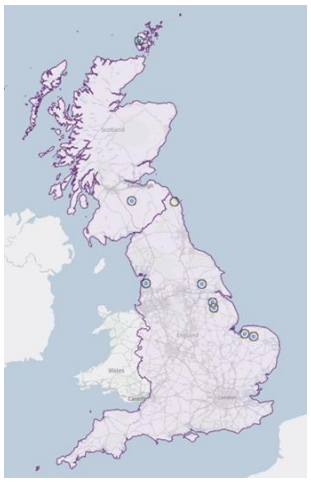
Biosecurity continues to remain the #1 method in disease prevention and control
BE VIGILANT FOR THE CLINICAL SIGNS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN YOUR FLOCK

3. HPAI Situation Summary across UK and Europe

- The number of cases in poultry and wild birds in the UK and the rest of Europe, although much lower than in the same period in 2025, is currently increasing.
- For the latest information on HPAI in Great Britain in 2026, please visit: Bird flu (avian influenza): latest situation in England - GOV.UK
- The Bird Flu Radar, a tool developed for the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) as a spatiotemporal risk assessment model details the risks of HPAI outbreaks in wild birds in Ireland.

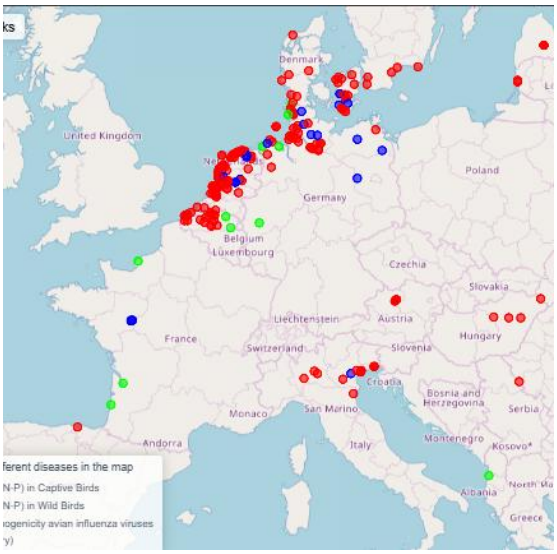
Metric	Details
Confirmed cases	❖ Since 1st September 2026, there have been 10 outbreaks of HPAI in domestic poultry in Great Britain *(Figure 2).* 3 in Scotland and 7 in England. 357 cases in wild birds. ❖ Since 1st September 2026, there have been 284 outbreaks of HPAI in Europe; 33 in poultry flocks, 239 outbreaks in wild birds and 12 captive birds across Europe reported to the European Commission *(Figure 3).* ❖ 1 case in a backyard flock in the Isle of Man (*near Douglas)*

Figure 2 detailing the current HPAI control zones and cases of HPAI in the UK (01/09/2026- 16/11/2026)



Sources: APHA Interactive Avian Influenza Disease Map, Bird flu (avian influenza): latest situation in

Figure 3 HPAI outbreaks in captive birds, wild birds and poultry flocks across Europe (01/09/2026-16/11/2026)



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

📞 4. How to report a suspect outbreak in poultry:

Report a suspect to your Regional Veterinary Office during normal office hours or the National Disease Emergency Hotline at 01 4928026 (outside of normal office hours) without delay.

5. How to report sightings of sick or dead wild birds:

If you find a sick or dead wild bird which is included on the List of Target Species for Avian Influenza Surveillance, you can report it using the Avian Influenza Wild Bird reporting App (AvianCheck). Even where birds are not collected, reports of dead wild birds is important and useful to understand the disease situation in wild bird populations and to inform stakeholders of avian influenza risks.

Advice for members of the public regarding wild birds

1.	**Do not touch sick or dead wild birds.**
2.	Do not touch wild bird feathers or droppings.
3.	Avoid contact with surfaces contaminated with wild bird droppings.
4.	Maintain good hand hygiene practices.
5.	If you are travelling from an area known or suspected to be affected with avian influenza or where wild birds have been found dead, do not make contact with poultry or captive birds without prior cleaning and disinfection of clothing and footwear and do not bring sick wild birds' home, particularly if you own or work with poultry or other captive birds.

6.	Where handling sick or dead wild birds is unavoidable, you must wear gloves. Dispose of your gloves appropriately. If you do not have immediate access to a bin they should be placed inside a plastic bag and brought with you. Wash your hands and arms with hot soapy water afterwards.
7.	Keep pet dogs on a leash in areas where there are sick or dead wild birds.

**The HSE-HPSC has advised that the risk to public health from the strain of avian influenza currently circulating (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza subtype H5N1) is considered low for the public, and low to medium for occupationally exposed people.*

6. Further information

Further information on Avian Influenza and biosecurity guidance here

Regional Veterinary Office / National Disease Emergency Hotline on 01-492-8026

This update is designed to keep you informed and help protect Ireland's bird populations and livelihoods. The cooperation of all stakeholders is crucial in the protection of the health and welfare of Irish poultry flocks.

National Disease Control Centre

17th November 2026

ANNEX

Avian Influenza (Biosecurity measures) Regulations 2026

Guidance Document for Schedules 1 & 2

Why has this Regulation been adopted?

An increasing number of cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) subtypes H5N1 and H5N5 or 'bird flu' cases have been confirmed in wild birds, poultry and captive birds in mainland Europe, Iceland and Great Britain in the past weeks. This coincides with the arrival of the winter migratory birds, that could carry the virus, and colder temperatures that allow the survival of the virus in the environment, which increases the risk of spreading avian influenza from the wildlife to poultry and captive bird flocks in Ireland.

DAFM continually advises that all poultry and captive birds' keepers (irrespective of flock size) should adopt strict biosecurity standards at all times, in order to help protect their flocks against diseases including avian influenza.

This regulation makes that advice a mandatory requirement, to help protect poultry and captive birds from avian influenza at this period when the risk of bird flu outbreaks is higher. This regulation lays out the most appropriate biosecurity advice which must be followed to reduce the risk of an outbreak in Irish poultry and captive bird flocks.

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity refers to practices, whether physical or through management, that help to prevent introduction of disease into a flock, spread within the flock and to leave the flock to infect other animals.

Maintaining high biosecurity measures on farm, is key to protecting Ireland's poultry industry from avian influenza and the serious consequences of an outbreak. Biosecurity is everybody's responsibility: from flock owners in the first instance, to transporters, food producers, slaughterhouses, veterinarians and others involved in animal production and trade.

Where do these rules apply?

For the purposes of this regulation, 'poultry' means birds which are kept for meat or egg production, game birds used as re-stocking supplies, and any birds kept in order to breed these categories of birds.

'Other captive birds' are any birds other than poultry which are kept in captivity.

Schedule 1 – applies to all land/premises that keep poultry or other captive birds

Schedule 2 – in addition to schedule 1, schedule 2 also applies to land/premises with over 350 poultry or other captive birds.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR SCHEDULE 1

Applicable to ALL land/premises keeping poultry and captive birds.



Wild Birds

One of the most important biosecurity measures is to prevent contact between wild birds and poultry or captive birds. Poultry can become infected with avian influenza (bird flu) by being in close contact with a wild bird or from contact with an infected bird's droppings or feathers. This is the reason we must not only prevent wild bird access to poultry and captive birds themselves but also to their environment.

- Outdoor areas where poultry and captive birds have access to *must* be fenced or surrounded by netting. This will prevent contact between wild birds and poultry and prevent outdoor areas becoming contaminated with bird droppings/feathers. If wild birds do gain access to poultry areas any droppings/feathers should be removed.

- Poultry should not have access to open water, standing water or waterlogged areas as this will attract wild fowl. Keep these areas well fenced or use netting.

- Avoid attracting wild birds to your holding. Locate all feeding and watering points indoors. Feeding birds outside, not clearing up spilled feed and fallen fruit will all entice wild birds as well as rodents.

- Discourage wild birds from your holding with the use of deterrents such as bird scarers, flutter tape, scarecrows etc.

- Sick and dead wild birds could be carriers of avian influenza. Poultry and captive birds must not be in contact with wild bird carcasses. If you find a sick or dead wild bird, remove your poultry from the area and contact your Regional Veterinary Office who will arrange to collect the bird and submit it for testing, where appropriate. Sick or dead wild birds can also be reported via the Wild Bird-Avian Check App:
  https://aviancheck.apps.services.agriculture.gov.ie/report

- Sick wild birds must not be handled or brought to a premises where poultry or other birds are kept.

- Avoid any contact with wild birds, their carcasses, droppings or feathers where possible. Where this is not possible, ensure that you wear gloves. When removing your gloves, turn them inside-out as you remove them and dispose of them in your household bin. Wash your

hands and forearms with hot soapy water. Where water is not immediately available use hand sanitiser until hands can be washed. Clean and disinfect your footwear afterwards, shower and change your clothes.



Environment

- All poultry houses should be bird and rodent-proof, and always keep the doors closed. Wild birds, especially pigeons and waterfowl, are a particular risk for spreading bird diseases. Bird-proof netting should have apertures no larger than 25mm.

- Check regularly for any holes or leaking in roofs, guttering and downpipes.

- Diseases can be carried on contaminated vehicles. For this reason, staff and service vehicles etc. should be parked outside the perimeter. Only allow essential vehicles onto the site. Insist that all vehicles that do need to enter the site have been cleaned and disinfected beforehand.

- Keep the environment clean and unattractive to wild birds. This includes removal of any spilled feed or fallen fruit, fencing/netting any standing water and preventing overgrown vegetation.

- Removing all visible dirt and contamination can remove up to 99% of disease-causing agents.

- Regular cleansing and disinfection (C&D) should be carried out on all concrete walkways, paths and similar surfaces to which poultry and wild birds could have access. C&D should also be carried out when birds are removed from their housing i.e. at the end of a production cycle. This is good practice which will reduce the level of disease-causing agents in your bird/poultry housing and should help keep your birds healthier in general.

- Provide footbaths containing DAFM Registered Disinfectants outside each poultry house. Ensure that the disinfectant is used at the manufacturer's recommended dilution rate and change the disinfectant frequently, especially when the liquid has become visibly dirty.

- Poultry should not be exposed to manure or slurry which could contain bird flu viruses.

- No other animals including pets are to be permitted into poultry/captive bird housing



Personnel and Equipment

- Keep movements of visitors, vehicles and equipment onto your holding to a minimum. The less movements onto your holding, the lower the risk of introducing any disease including bird flu.

- Equipment should not be shared between farms as this may lead to spread of disease e.g. trolleys, pallets. Ensure that all equipment used on the farm or for the collection of eggs has been cleaned thoroughly and disinfected with DAFM Registered Disinfectants made up according to the manufacturer's instructions before each use.

- Do not re-use plastic egg trays which are not thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and do not re-use disposable egg trays as they cannot be properly disinfected.

- It is recommended that anyone with poultry or captive birds at home is not in contact with poultry at any another premises.

- Only allow essential visitors to have access to the poultry site and provide farm or disposable overalls and footwear for visitors and staff. Provide hand-washing facilities and insist that these are used by staff and visitors.

- Use designated clothing and footwear for attending and looking after your birds.

- Where there is more than one poultry house on a holding, personnel must prevent spreading any disease from one house to another. Footwear, clothing and any equipment should be cleaned and disinfected between poultry houses.

- If you have staff, give them the information and training they need to maintain good standards of hygiene (an important aspect of biosecurity) at all times. If they keep their own birds at home, they will need to be extra vigilant for signs of disease and even more careful about biosecurity both at home and on your farm.

Feed & Bedding

- Feed and bedding must be stored where animals in particular wild birds cannot gain access. This is to prevent animals from contaminating feed and bedding with their droppings which could be a source of disease.

- Feed and water your birds indoors or under cover so that wild birds and vermin will not be attracted to the area. Remember to clean up any spillages of feed.

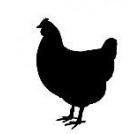
- Provide clean drinkable water for your birds. Don't allow them to drink from places which may have become contaminated with wild bird droppings as this could lead to the spread of diseases including bird flu.



Records

- Record all visitors and vehicles that enter your holding, or any premises where poultry or captive birds are kept. In the event of a confirmed case of bird flu in a holding, this would enable DAFM to trace where infection may have come from and track where it may have spread to (track and trace system). This would be a vital part of containing the outbreak. An easy way to do this is by keeping a 'Visitors book' that anyone visiting the farm must sign and date. Remember to include vehicle registration numbers as these can also carry viruses should they become contaminated with bird droppings etc.

- Record any movements of birds or eggs on and off the holding. You should include the number, species of bird or type of egg, date of movement, destination of the eggs/birds and the name and address of the person to which they are going. This is to allow tracking and tracing in the event of a bird flu outbreak.



Poultry

- Only buy birds from a known reputable source - isolate any newly introduced poultry for 2 weeks if possible and attend to your own birds before the new birds.

- Ducks and geese tend not to develop as severe signs of bird flu as poultry such as chickens and turkeys (although this is not always the case). Keep ducks and geese apart from other poultry as they could be carriers of disease without showing signs.

- Poultry or other captive birds must not be able to mix with birds from another holding.

- Check your birds regularly for signs of illness. You can find information on signs of bird flu here. If you have any suspicion that your birds may be affected by bird flu, you are legally obliged to notify DAFM. You may do this by alerting your Regional Veterinary Office

***Please note that this document is for guidance only and is not a legal text.**

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR SCHEDULE 2

For ALL land/premises with over 350 poultry or other captive birds, *both* Schedules 1 and 2 apply.

Land & Premises where poultry or other captive birds are kept must be divided into 3 separate parts:

1. **Live bird housing/accommodation**
   - Only essential personnel are allowed access.
   - All personnel must change clothing and footwear before entering and on exit.
   - All vehicles, in particular wheels and wheel arches, and any equipment must be cleaned and disinfected with DAFM Registered Disinfectants *both* when they leave and on their return to the holding.
   - Records must be maintained of all vehicles and people who enter or exit the holding.
2. **Ancillary Areas including Storage (feed, water, equipment etc)**
   - This area must be fully and clearly separated from the live bird housing/accommodation area.
   - Only essential personnel are to be granted access following all the usual biosecurity protocols including changing clothing and footwear on both entry and exit.
   - Waste and carcasses are to be kept in this area of the premises, where no other animals or vermin can gain access. A suitable lidded (lockable) bin kept outside the perimeter of the holding is ideal so that unnecessary movement of collection vehicles onto the premises is avoided. All vehicles, in particular wheels and wheel arches, and any equipment must be cleaned and disinfected with DAFM Registered Disinfectants *both* when they leave and on their return to the holding.
   - Do not re-use plastic egg trays which have not been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and do not re-use disposable egg trays.
   - The packaging, handling and storage of second quality eggs must be managed in a biosecure manner.
3. **Restricted access area with a biosecure barrier**
   - Only essential personnel are to be granted access following all the usual biosecurity protocols including changing clothing and footwear on both entry and exit.
   - Non-essential vehicles are not permitted access.

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