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Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
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# Avian Influenza Update

*19<sup>th</sup> August 2021*

**National Disease Control Centre**

**Number 4 of 2021**

## OIE publishes Ireland's self declaration for the recovery of country freedom from Avian Influenza in poultry in Ireland

OIE has published Ireland's self- declaration of disease freedom from Avian Influenza in poultry as of March 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 which can be found [here](#)

## Additional Biosecurity Regulations introduced last December have now been revoked

Further to our last update of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 which announced that that the Precautionary Confinement of Birds (Housing Order) was to be withdrawn on April 9<sup>th</sup>, the remaining measures introduced to mitigate the risk of spread of avian influenza have also been removed

- Biosecurity regulations introduced in December to help protect poultry and captive birds from avian influenza (*SI No.566 of 2020 - Avian Influenza (Biosecurity Measures) Regulations*) were withdrawn on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021
- A ban on bird gatherings, marts and assemblies for the purposes of show or sale was also withdrawn (*SI No.567 of 2020 – Avian Influenza (Restriction on Assembly of Live Birds) Regulations*) on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021
- High biosecurity standards should remain as best practice, and help to protect your flock against all poultry disease, not just Avian Influenza (see Biosecurity Advice below)

## Avian Influenza – Current Situation in Poultry

### Ireland

- There have been no further outbreaks of high pathogenicity avian influenza H5N8 (HPAI H5N8) confirmed in poultry or captive birds in the Republic of Ireland since a single outbreak which occurred on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The restriction zones put in place following that outbreak were lifted on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### Northern Ireland

- No further outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 have been confirmed in poultry or captive birds in Northern Ireland since the two separate cases confirmed in County Antrim on January 7<sup>th</sup> and January 11<sup>th</sup>. All restriction zones placed following those outbreaks have since been lifted

## Avian influenza in wild birds in Ireland (2020-2021)

- The most recent case of HPAI H5N8 in a wild bird in Ireland was confirmed on February 16<sup>th</sup> 2021
- A total of 28 wild birds have been confirmed with Avian Influenza subtype H5N8 since it was first detected on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020. 2 further birds were confirmed with HPAI H5N3 on January 19<sup>th</sup> 2021. This has been the only confirmed incidence of that particular avian influenza subtype in Ireland this year (see figures 1 and 2 below)
- Wild bird species confirmed with HPAI H5N8 since November 2020 in Ireland include the following: whooper swan (17), mute swan (5), barnacle goose (1), curlew (1), cormorant (1) and peregrine falcon (3)
- Wild bird HPAI cases have been confirmed in counties: Cavan, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kildare, Limerick, Louth, Mayo, Monaghan, Wexford and Wicklow



*Figure 1(above):  
Map of confirmed HPAI H5N8 cases  
in wild birds in Ireland since 10<sup>th</sup>  
November 2020*



*Figure 2 (above):  
Map of confirmed HPAI H5N3 cases in  
wild birds in Ireland in 2021*

## Avian Influenza elsewhere in Europe

- Numbers of outbreaks of HPAI have been declining steadily across Europe, from a peak in the first week of March (see table 1 and figure 3 below). However, sporadic cases of HPAI H5N8 continue to be reported in poultry in France, Poland, Czech Republic and Denmark
- No new cases of HPAI in poultry or captive birds have been reported in poultry in the UK since March 2021

- Great skua found dead on the Shetland and Flannan Islands of the UK have confirmed to have been infected with HPAI H5N1. Cases of this subtype in wild birds have also been reported in Finland and Germany
- The recent confirmed cases of HPAI H5N1 virus detected in the UK are belonging to the 2.3.4.4.b clade. This clade has acquired gene segments from low pathogenic viruses and is not related to pathogenic viruses. **This HPAI H5N1 subtype is not related to Influenza A (H5N1) viruses of clade 2.3.2.1c, which have been responsible for human infections outside of Europe**
- Although cases have decreased greatly since the peak in March, HPAI H5 subtypes continue to be reported in wild water birds along the Baltic coasts, including Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Sweden and Belgium



*Great Skua (Stercorarius Skua)*

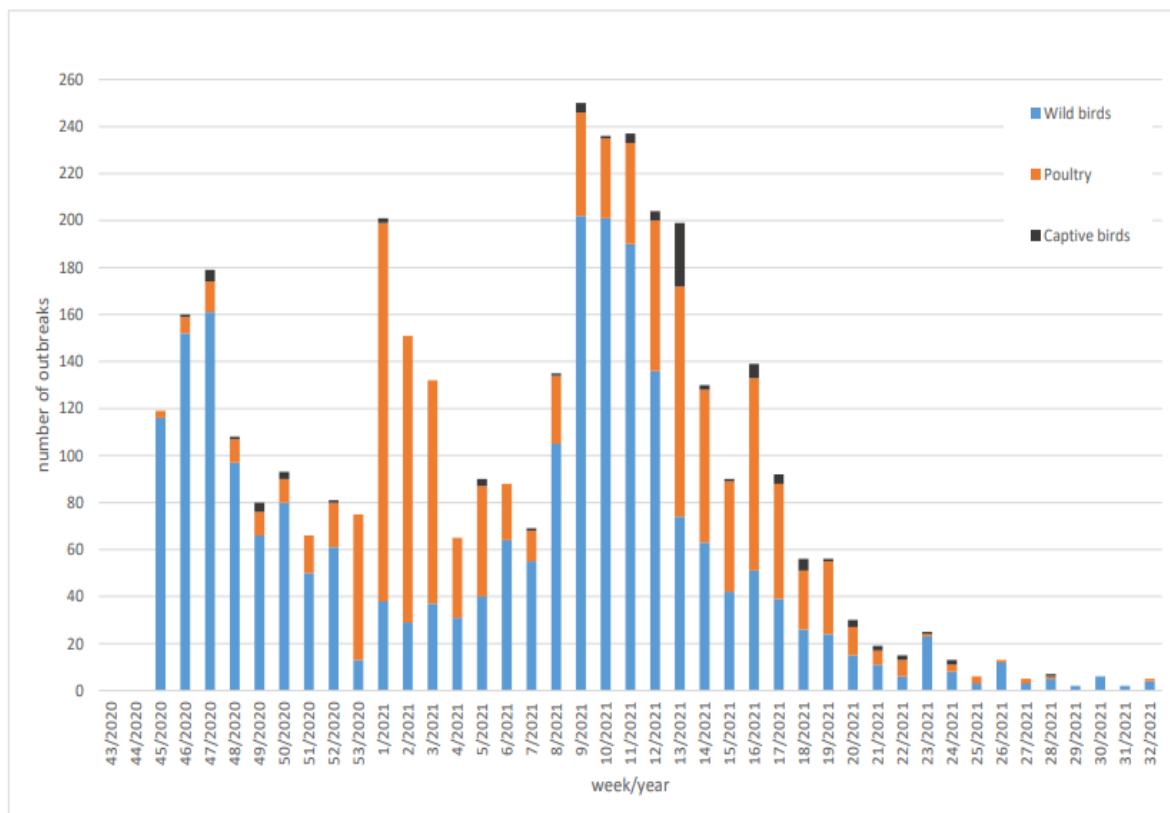
*Table 1 High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Events in Europe 1st October 2020 to 13th August 2021\**

Country	Poultry	Captive birds	Wild birds	Total
Germany	237	42	1305	1584
France	493	1	20	514
Poland	359	2	92	453
United Kingdom	22	2	320	344
Denmark	14	3	315	332
Netherlands	13	12	103	128
Sweden	17	7	103	127
Lithuania	41	15	12	68
Czech Republic	37	1	27	65
Finland	1	0	38	39
Latvia	0	0	38	38
Norway	0	1	37	38
Estonia	3	0	33	36
Belgium	2	5	25	32
Austria	0	1	29	30
Ireland	1	0	27	28
Romania	14	0	8	22
Italy	3	0	19	22
Ukraine	14	0	4	18
Hungary	7	0	3	10
Bulgaria	8	0	2	10
Slovakia	2	1	5	8
Kosovo	7	0	0	7
Slovenia	0	0	6	6
Greece	0	0	4	4
Croatia	1	0	3	4
Spain	0	0	3	3

<b>Albania</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Republic of Serbia</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1294</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>2360</b>	<b>3747</b>

\* European countries which report to EU (ADIS) and IZSV (EURL for Avian Influenza) and OIE (UK)

Figure 3: Weekly Reports of HPAI Events Notified in Europe to EU (ADIS) and IZSV (EURL) 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 13th August 2021 – Wild Birds (Blue), Poultry (Orange) and Captive Birds (Black)\*



\* Excludes UK avian influenza events

## Avian Influenza Risk to Ireland

- DAFM continues to monitor the situation and submits dead wild birds which are on the target species list for avian influenza surveillance for testing at the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory on a year round basis
- 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](#)
- **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**

Sick or dead wild birds can also be reported to DAFM using the Avian Check - Wild Bird App <https://aviancheck.apps.rhos.agriculture.gov.ie/>.

## 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

## 2. Biosecurity

[Biosecurity guidance to help prevent avian influenza](#) including clinical signs and leaflets can be found on the Gov.ie website

### 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.
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### 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

- 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 to 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. Guidance on how to register your poultry can be found at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/984df6-poultry-register/>

- Use an [approved disinfectant](#) against Avian influenza in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- Implement the measures detailed in the avian influenza regulations detailed above.

**National Disease Control Centre**

***19<sup>th</sup> August 2021***