



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

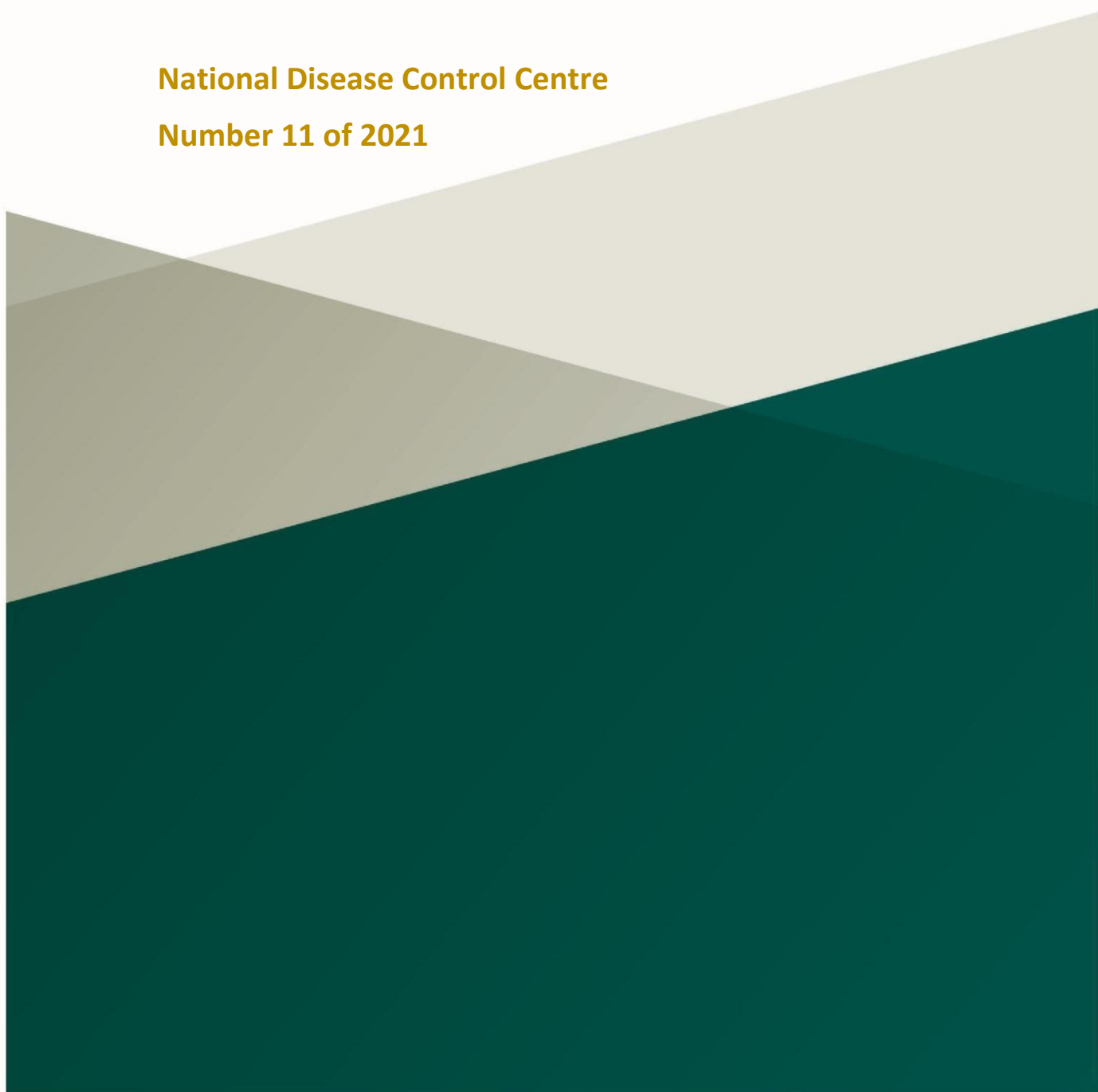
Published 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021

# Avian Influenza Update

21<sup>st</sup> December 2021

**National Disease Control Centre**

**Number 11 of 2021**



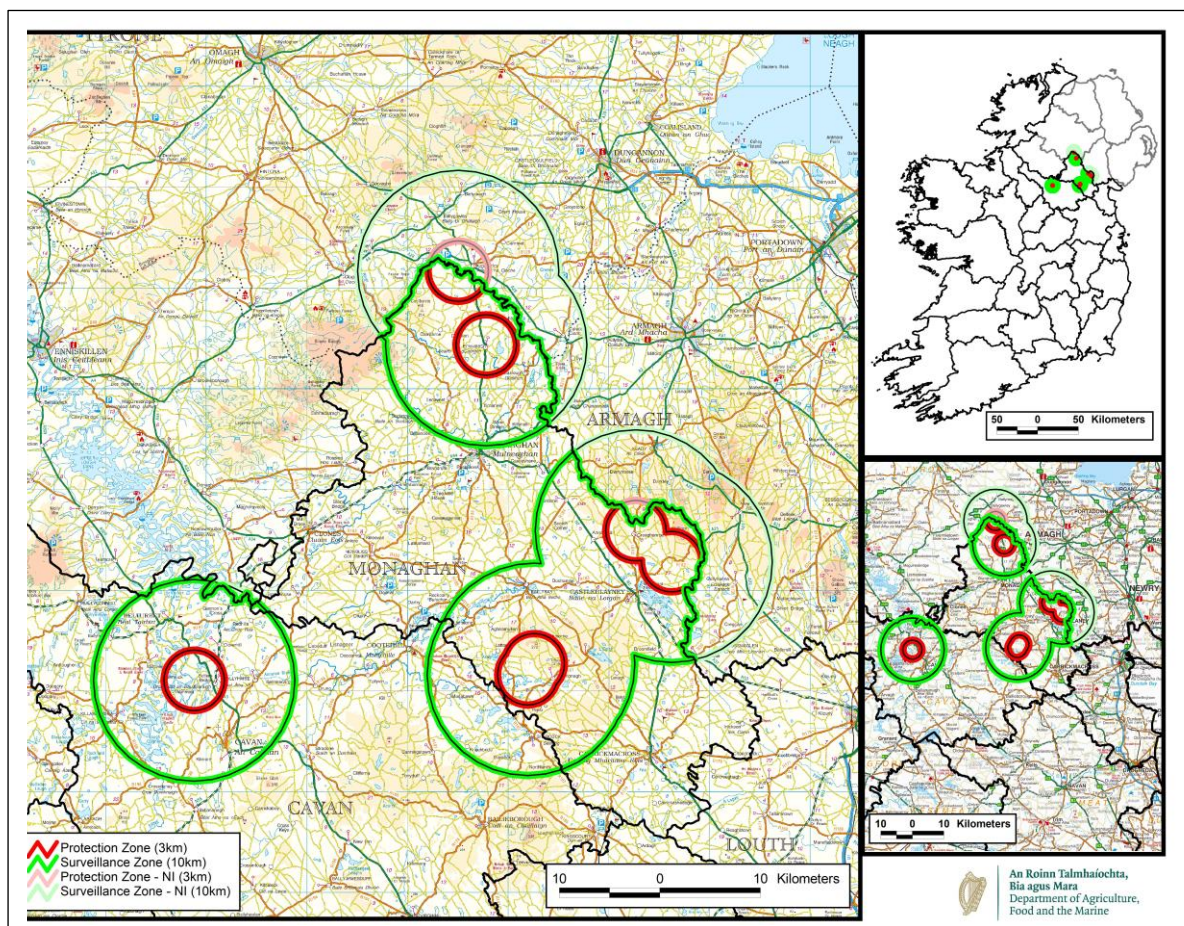
## Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in poultry in Ireland

- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 continues to affect poultry flocks and wild birds in Ireland. A significant risk of further outbreaks remains and strict biosecurity is essential on all poultry and captive bird holdings.

### Summary of Avian Influenza Outbreaks in Poultry and/or Captive Birds in Ireland (1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to date)

DATE H5N1 CONFIRMED	LOCATION	ENTERPRISE
20 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	South Co. Monaghan	Commercial Turkey Fattening Enterprise
23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021	South Co. Monaghan	Commercial Broiler Breeder Flock
30 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	North Co. Monaghan	Commercial caged layers
7 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	North Co. Cavan	Commercial turkey Fattening Enterprise
12 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	North Co. Monaghan	Commercial fattening ducks
18 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	North Co. Monaghan	Commercial fattening ducks
Protection and Surveillance Zones for all above outbreaks can be viewed on the interactive map at <a href="#">ArcGIS - HPAI Zones</a>		

- An interactive map (for illustrative purposes) courtesy of the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis (CVERA) is available at the following link <https://arcg.is/19zHrf0>
- See Figure 1 below for details of all zones currently in place



## Strict Biosecurity is Essential to Prevent Further Outbreaks

All poultry owners and keepers must implement very high levels of biosecurity on their holdings to help protect their flocks due to the current situation. All flock owners should ask self the following questions to help ensure you are implementing appropriate measures:

**1. Who has access to the poultry areas?**

Only allow essential persons access to the poultry houses e.g., husbandry, veterinary care. Ensure that dedicated clothing or disposable personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn including disposable gloves and overalls. Clean and disinfect boots before entering and immediately upon exiting each poultry house. Wash hands each time upon leaving a poultry house. Dedicated personnel should be appointed to manage each site.

**2. Have I checked the disinfectant points?**

All disinfectant points must be maintained. **Read the label** on the disinfectant which is approved for use against avian influenza. Disinfectant footbaths must be changed regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Contamination prevents the effective use of disinfectants. Footwear needs to be cleaned thoroughly before being disinfected in foot dips. **Wait the recommended contact time before entering the house.** Repeat checks with disinfectant points at entry and exit points to the premises

**3. Can wild birds get access to the poultry?**

Inspect the housing thoroughly. Ensure that there are no gaps where wild birds can enter the housing. Check the gutters and roof. Can contaminated rainwater enter the house? Can wild birds get access to or contaminate the drinking water system?

**4. Is the feed and bedding stored securely?**

Feed and bedding attract wild birds so secure storage of both is essential. If using straw, ensure it is either double wrapped and covered with a birdproof cover or stored in a shed with no wild bird access. Remove wrapping outside of the house. Feed should be stored in a secure bin and any spills cleaned up immediately. Use wild bird deterrents.

**5. What do I do about feed delivery/egg collection vehicles that have to come onto the holding?**

Disinfect wheels, wheel arches and underbody of all vehicles coming before allowing them to enter the premises and prior to leaving the premises. Do not allow any drivers to enter poultry houses. Ensure that drivers wear disposable gloves and disinfect footwear upon arrival (ensure that there is a disinfectant point near the feed bin/egg storage area).

**6. What about equipment?**

Any equipment that is used to transport poultry or poultry products must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to being used on the farm e.g., trolleys, trays, pallets, cages etc. Disposable single-use egg trays or plastic Keyes trays which are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use can be used for egg collections. Don't forget about other equipment such as feeders and watering equipment and clean and disinfect equipment and housing between bird placements.

**7. Be vigilant**

Check the feed and water intake and look for clinical signs of avian influenza. Report any suspicions immediately to DAFM and do not allow anyone on/off the premises pending investigation

These measures are not exhaustive, further biosecurity guidelines available at:

[www.gov.ie/birdflu](http://www.gov.ie/birdflu)

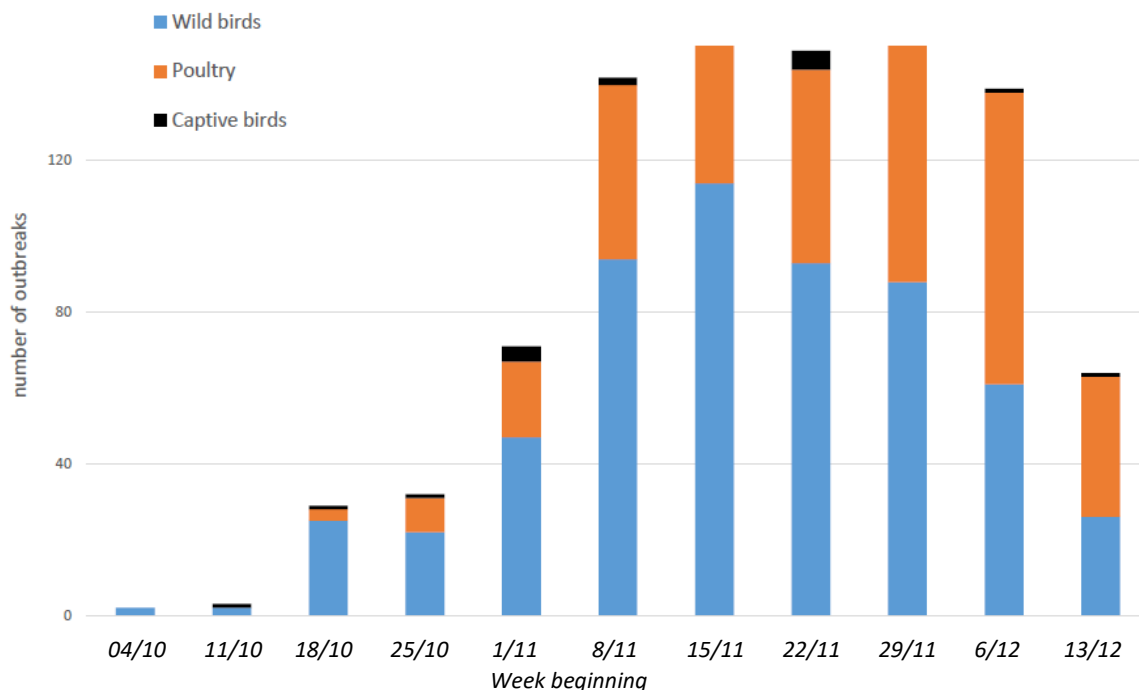
## Current Situation in Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland has confirmed four outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry
- The outbreak in a commercial duck flock in South Co. Tyrone occurred close to the border between Tyrone and Monaghan, both the 3km and 10km restriction zones extend into Monaghan where additional restrictions are now in place
- One further report is currently under investigation for notifiable avian influenza
- DAERA have produced an interactive map viewer displaying Avian Influenza Protection and Surveillance zones in Northern Ireland which is available to view [here](#).

## Current Situation in the Rest of Europe

- England has confirmed 53 outbreaks of avian influenza H5N1. Wales and Scotland have reported 3 and 5 outbreaks, respectively.
- The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have developed an interactive map of restriction zones in all three countries which is available to view [here](#).
- A total of 416 outbreaks of HPAI have been confirmed in poultry throughout the EU, the affected EU countries can be found in Table 2.
- Almost 95% of cases in wild birds have been confirmed to be of subtype H5N1, with small numbers of H5N3 and H5N8 also confirmed.

**Number of HPAI cases/outbreaks in wild birds, poultry and captive birds in Europe per week (since 4/10/2021)**



(Source: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie)

Outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the EU (since 01/10/2021)				
Country/Territory	H5	H5N1	H5N8	Total
Belgium		2		2
Bulgaria	5			5
Croatia		1		1
Czech Republic		6		6
Denmark		1		1
Estonia			1	1
France		8		8
Germany		32		32
Hungary		52		52
Ireland		5		5
Italy	61	179		240
Kosovo			1	1
Netherlands		9		9
Norway		2		2
Poland		44		44
Slovakia		1		1
Sweden		2		2
United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)		4		4
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>416</b>

Table 2. Outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the EU since 01/10/2021.

## Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza continues to be reported in wild birds in Ireland

- The first wild bird case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus subtype H5N1 was confirmed on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 in a Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) found in Co. Galway
- Since 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021, 57 wild birds in Ireland have tested positive for HPAI H5N1.
- HPAI H5N1 has been found in wild birds in the following 11 counties: Galway, Limerick, Offaly, Donegal, Roscommon, Tipperary, Wexford, Waterford, Longford, Dublin, Cavan.
- The species of wild birds affected include peregrine falcon, white tailed sea eagle, brent goose, greater white fronted goose, greylag geese, swans (mute & whooper), merlin, waterrail, magpie, kestrel, common magpie, and, corvidae.
- Faeces (droppings) of wild birds infected with Avian Influenza can contaminate the environment with the infection, which can then spread infection to poultry and captive birds. Colder weather and decreasing daylight levels can extend the survival time of avian influenza viruses in the environment





*Figure 2. Map of Ireland indicating locations involved in confirmed avian influenza subtype H5N1 cases from Oct 1<sup>st</sup> -Dec 20<sup>th</sup> 2021.*

## Wild bird species affected in Europe

- Wild bird species confirmed as affected by HPAI in Europe are (listed in order of decreasing prevalence of confirmed cases):

Mute swan, Greylag goose, Barnacle Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Mallard duck, Cygnus (Cygnus sp.), European Herring Gull, Canada goose, Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus), Common Buzzard, Coot, Black-headed Gull, Laridae, Common Shelduck, Great Black-backed Gull, Grey Heron, Ardeidae, Anatidae, Greater White-fronted Goose, Corvidae, Pheasant, , Common Teal, Accipiter, Western Great Egret, White -tailed eagle, Numenius, Northern Goshawk, European crane, Tundra bean goose, Long eared owl, Peregrine Falcon, Charadriidae, Gadwall, Pink -footed Goose, Kestrel, Eurasian Magpie, Oystercatcher, Yellow-legged Gull, Great White Pelican, Eurasian Eagle -Owl, Jackdaw, Common Eider, Grey -headed Gull, Ferruginous Duck, White -rumped sandpiper, Brant Goose, Scolopacidae, Ruddy turnstone, Merlin, Common redshank, Water rail, Pied Avocet, Northern Pintail, Falco, Great Blue Heron, Grey-headed Gull, Scolopacidae, Egyptian Goose, Ural Owl (Source: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie).

## Housing Order – Avian Influenza (Precautionary Confinement of Birds) Regulations 2021

- On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021, new regulations came 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 2021** 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.

## Restriction on Assembly of Live Birds and Biosecurity Measures Regulation

- On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, regulations were introduced which contain compulsory measures that must be taken by anyone who owns poultry. The regulations and an accompanying guidance document can be found at [www.gov.ie/birdflu](http://www.gov.ie/birdflu)

## Risk to Ireland regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1

- The disease poses no food safety risk for consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs are safe to eat
- From October onwards each year we enter into the higher risk period for Avian Influenza in Ireland. Colder weather and decreasing daylight can extend the survival time of Avian influenza viruses in the environment
- This is due to the fact that migratory wild birds, the natural hosts of many avian influenza viruses, start to arrive in large numbers to overwinter here
- Migratory wild birds are known to carry the H5N1 subtype of Avian influenza, and this can increase the level of risk for a potential outbreak of Avian influenza in Ireland
- HPAI H5N1 is a notifiable disease both in Ireland and to the European Commission and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
- Outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry in Ireland impact upon our international trade in poultry and poultry products
- The disease is highly contagious for birds, but risk of transmission to humans is considered very low

## 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](#)

**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

[Advice on biosecurity to prevent Avian Influenza](#) including clinical signs and leaflets can be found at [www.gov.ie/birdflu](http://www.gov.ie/birdflu)

### 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

- 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.
- Use an [approved disinfectant](#) against Avian influenza in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions

## DAFM surveillance for avian influenza

- DAFM implements avian influenza surveillance measures which take place right throughout the year in both wild birds and poultry and form part of our well established Early Warning System for the detection of avian influenza. The submission of dead wild birds which are on the target species list for avian influenza surveillance for testing at the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory forms part of this programme
- 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 01 607 2512 (during office hours) or 01 492 8026 (outside office hours)
- **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/>

## Further information:

DAFM has a wide variety of biosecurity resources for avian influenza- please see:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e230-poultry/>

To register a poultry flock:

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

RVO contact details:

[Regional Veterinary Office](#)

List of target species of wild birds for avian influenza surveillance:

[List of Target Species for Avian Influenza Surveillance](#)

European Commission

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/diseases-and-control-measures/avian-influenza\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/diseases-and-control-measures/avian-influenza_en)

## National Disease Control Centre

**21<sup>st</sup> December 2021**