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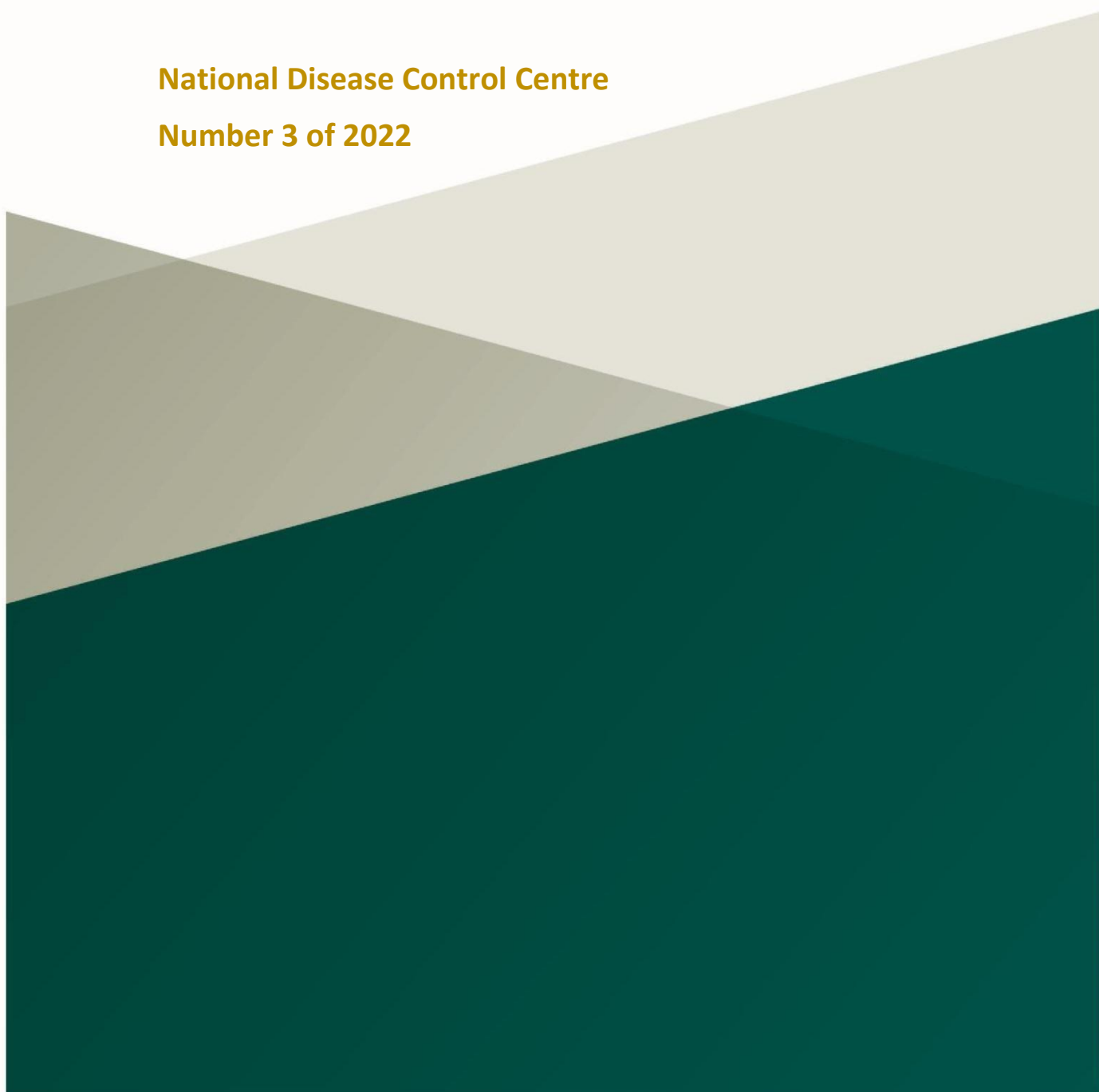
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Avian Influenza Update

10th February 2022

National Disease Control Centre

Number 3 of 2022



Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in poultry in Ireland

- There have been no further outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in poultry or captive birds since 18th December 2021.
- Ireland's self-declared disease-free status for avian influenza was published by the OIE on 21st January 2022. Maintenance of this status which is important for international movements and trade of poultry and poultry products will remain dependent on the absence of any further outbreaks of avian influenza in poultry in Ireland
- Six cases of avian influenza in wild birds were confirmed since the last Avian Influenza Update (25th January 2022). The continued detection of avian influenza positive cases in wild birds indicates that there is still a significant risk from circulating virus in wild birds and the environment, and poultry owners should continue to implement stringent biosecurity measures to prevent further outbreaks
- National legislation to help mitigate the risk of avian influenza outbreaks remains in force including:
 - [Avian Influenza \(Precautionary Confinement of Birds\) Regulations 2021 \(Statutory Instrument No. 607 of 2021\)](#)
 - [Avian Influenza \(Biosecurity Measures\) Regulations 2021 \(Statutory Instrument No. 593 of 2021\)](#)
 - [Avian Influenza \(Restriction on Assembly of Live Birds\) Regulations 2021 \(Statutory Instrument No. 592 of 2021\)](#)
- An interactive map (for illustrative purposes) courtesy of the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis (CVERA) displaying the locations of avian influenza cases in wild birds is available at the following link <https://arcg.is/19zHrf0>

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 themselves 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

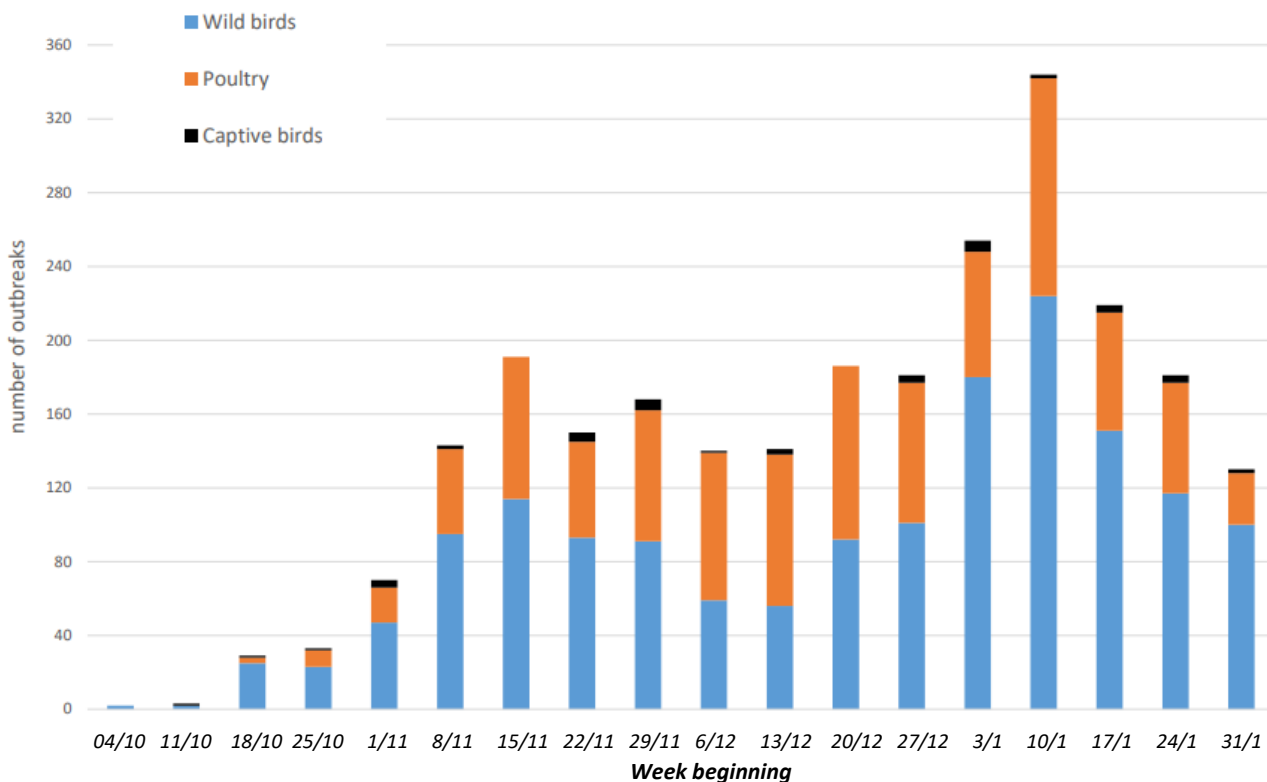
Current Situation in Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland has confirmed six outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry
- On the 8th February 2022, an outbreak of HPAI was confirmed in Co. Fermanagh, protection and surveillance zones are now in place
- DAERA have produced an interactive map viewer displaying locations of cases of avian influenza in wild birds and restriction zones in Northern Ireland which is available to view [here](#).

Current Situation in the Rest of Europe

- England has confirmed 77 outbreaks of avian influenza H5N1. Wales and Scotland have reported 3 and 6 outbreaks, respectively
- The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have developed an interactive map of restriction zones in England, Scotland and Wales, which is available to view [here](#)
- A total of 973 outbreaks of HPAI have been confirmed in poultry throughout the EU, the affected EU countries can be found in Table 2
- Over 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 confirmed HPAI cases/outbreaks in wild birds, poultry and captive birds in Europe per week (since 4/10/2021)



(Source: [Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie](#))

Figure 2. The number of confirmed cases/ outbreaks of HPAI in wild birds, poultry and captive birds in Europe per week (since 4/10/2021)

Outbreaks of HPAI in Poultry in the EU (since 01/10/2021)				
Country/Territory	H5	H5N1	H5N8	Total
Belgium		3		3
Bulgaria	9			9
Croatia		2		2
Czech Republic		15		15
Denmark		5	1	6
Estonia			1	1
France	12	304		316
Germany		58		58
Hungary		113		113
Ireland		6		6
Italy	8	301		309
Kosovo			3	3
Moldova		1		1
Netherlands		23		23
Norway		2		2
Poland		83		83
Portugal		4		4
Slovakia		3		3
Slovenia		1		1
Spain		6		6
Sweden		3		3
United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)		6		6
Total	29	939	5	973

Table 2. Number of confirmed outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the EU since 01/10/2021.

Current global Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza situation

- Since 23 December 2021, 1,050 outbreaks of HPAI have been reported in four geographic regions (Africa, Americas, Asia, and Europe).
- The global distribution of avian influenza outbreaks can be viewed in Fig. 3.

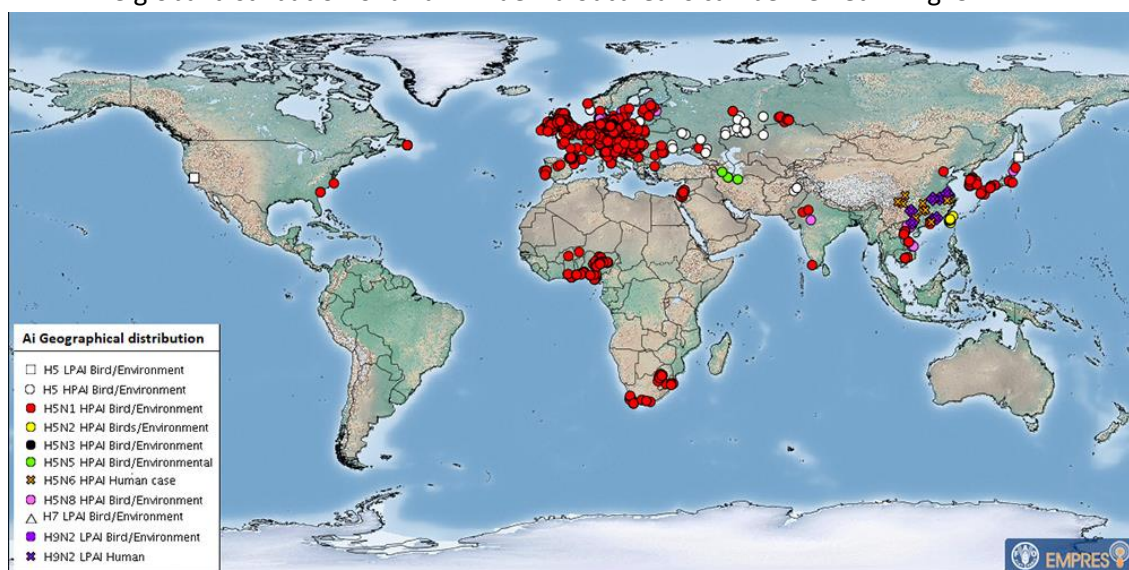


Fig. 3. Global distribution of confirmed avian influenza outbreaks and cases during the period 1st October 2021 – 26th January 2022 (Source: [FAO](#)).

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

- Since 3rd November 2021, 69 wild birds in Ireland have tested positive for HPAI H5N1
- HPAI H5N1 has been found in wild birds in the following 13 counties: Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Longford, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.
- The species of wild birds affected include peregrine falcon, white tailed sea eagle, brent goose, barnacle goose, greater white fronted goose, greylag geese, swans (mute & whooper), merlin, waterrail, magpie, kestrel, herring gull, corvidae, common buzzard, and grey heron.
- 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.
- An interactive map (for illustrative purposes) courtesy of the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis (CVERA) displaying the locations of avian influenza cases in wild birds is available at the following link <https://arcg.is/19zHrf0>.

HPAI +ve Wild Birds

- Mute swan
- Greylag goose
- Whooper swan
- Peregrine Falcon
- Swan
- Brent goose
- Buzzard
- Corvidae
- Greenland White-fronted goose
- Herring Gull



Figure 3. Map of Ireland indicating locations involved in confirmed avian influenza subtype H5N1 cases in wild birds from 1st October - 8th February 2022. (Source: CVERA)

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, Semipalmated sandpiper, 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, Muscovy duck, Numenius, Northern Goshawk, European crane, Tundra bean goose, Long eared owl, Peregrine Falcon, Charadriidae, Gadwall, Sparrowhawk, Caspian gull, 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, Grey Headed Gull, Merlin, Common redshank, Water rail, Pied Avocet, Northern Pintail, Falco, Great Blue Heron, Grey-headed Gull, Scolopacidae, Red Knot, great cormorant Egyptian Goose, Ural Owl, Barn Owl, Little Owl, White Stork, Eurasian Curlew, Pigeon, Lesser Black Backed Gull, Strigiformes, Ciconiidae, Mew Gull, House Sparrow, Taiga Bean Goose, Black Swan, Lesser White Fronted Goose, Red Kite, Cormorant, Rook, Columbidae, Little Grebe, Dalmation Pelican, Green Sandpiper, Larus, Collared Dove, Crested Grebe, Western Sandpiper (Source: [Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie](#)).

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

- On 22nd 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 17th 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

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

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

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