



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
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Food and the Marine

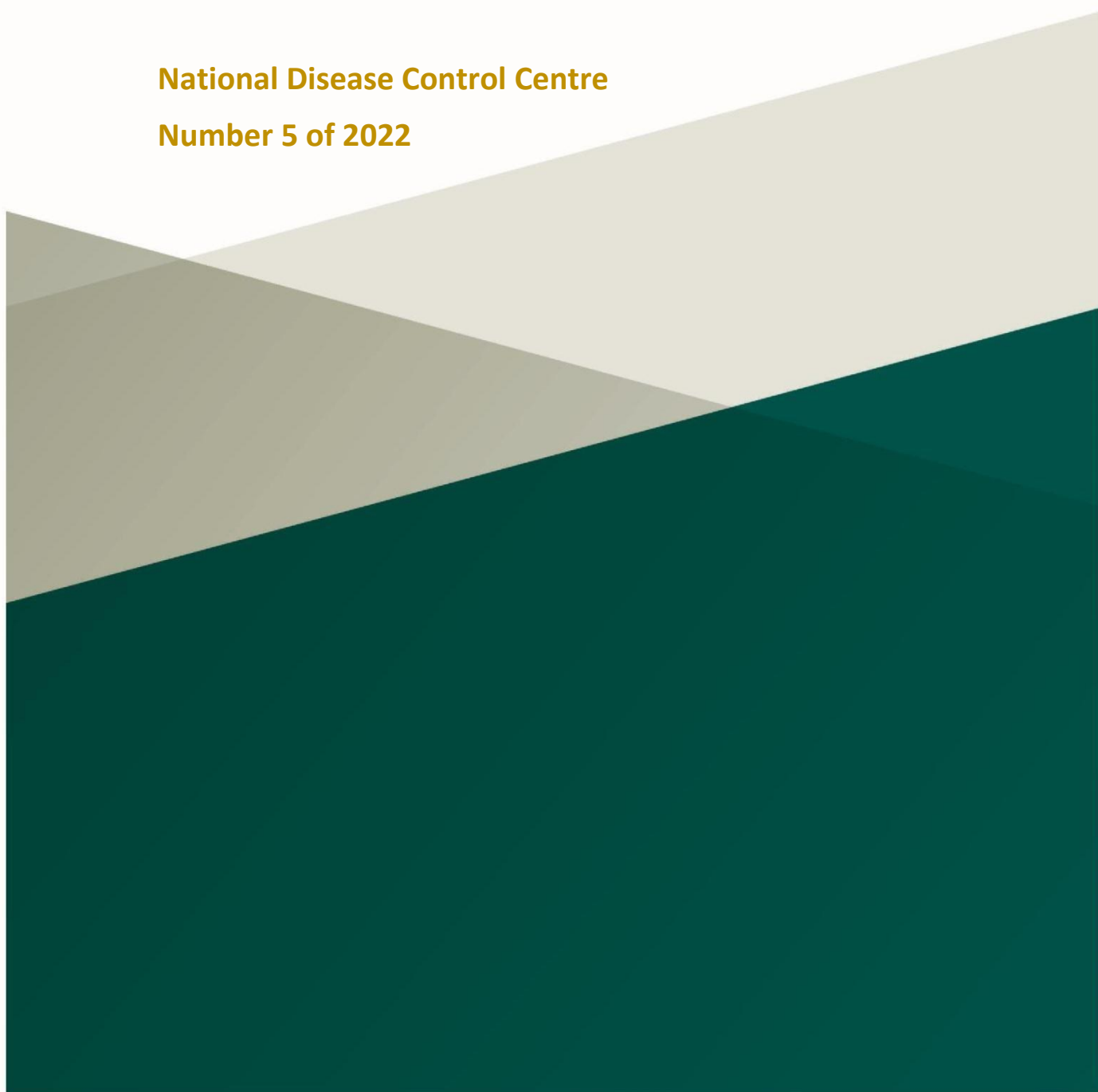
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# Avian Influenza Update

26<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**National Disease Control Centre**

**Number 5 of 2022**



## Precautionary Confinement of Birds (Housing Order) to be lifted on 29th April 2022

- Regulations introduced in November 2021 which require the **confinement of poultry and captive birds** are to be **lifted from 29th April 2022** (Statutory Instrument No. 607 of 2021). All flock owners intending to allow birds to have outdoor access from this date must take action now to ensure those areas conform to best biosecurity practice. This will help minimise the potential for poultry and captive birds to come into contact with wild birds and potential environmental contamination with avian influenza viruses
- Additional **biosecurity regulations** introduced in November 2021 to help protect poultry and captive birds from avian influenza **remain in force** (Statutory Instrument No. 593 of 2021). High standards of biosecurity remain essential as infection can survive for weeks and may still be present in the environment. A related guidance document is available to view on the [www.gov.ie/birdflu](https://www.gov.ie/birdflu)
- A **ban on bird gatherings, marts and assemblies** for the purposes of show or sale also **remains in place** (Statutory Instrument No. 592 of 2021).

**NB. The highest levels of biosecurity are imperative during this period in all flocks irrespective of size.**

### Risk to Ireland regarding HPAI

- Avian Influenza is **highly contagious for birds**. The virus may be present in the environment and can be transmitted to your flock by wild birds. It is **vital that outdoor areas are prepared** ahead of the 29<sup>th</sup> of April to mitigate the risk
- Flock owners should continue to **maintain strict biosecurity** to prevent the introduction of avian influenza into poultry and captive bird flocks. The risk has reduced sufficiently to allow the housing requirement to be lifted; however, there is **still a risk of incursion**
- The reduction in the risk level is based on a number of parameters which include decreasing wild bird infection pressure, reducing numbers of migratory waterfowl and increasing environmental temperatures and daylight hours
- Flock owners should **remain vigilant for any 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 01 492 8026 (outside of 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>.

## Avian Influenza – Current Situation in Poultry

- There have been no further outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in poultry or captive birds since 18<sup>th</sup> December 2021.
- Ireland's self-declared disease-free status for avian influenza was published by the OIE on 31<sup>st</sup> 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
- National legislation to help mitigate the risk of avian influenza outbreaks remains in force including:
  - [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](http://www.gov.ie/birdflu)

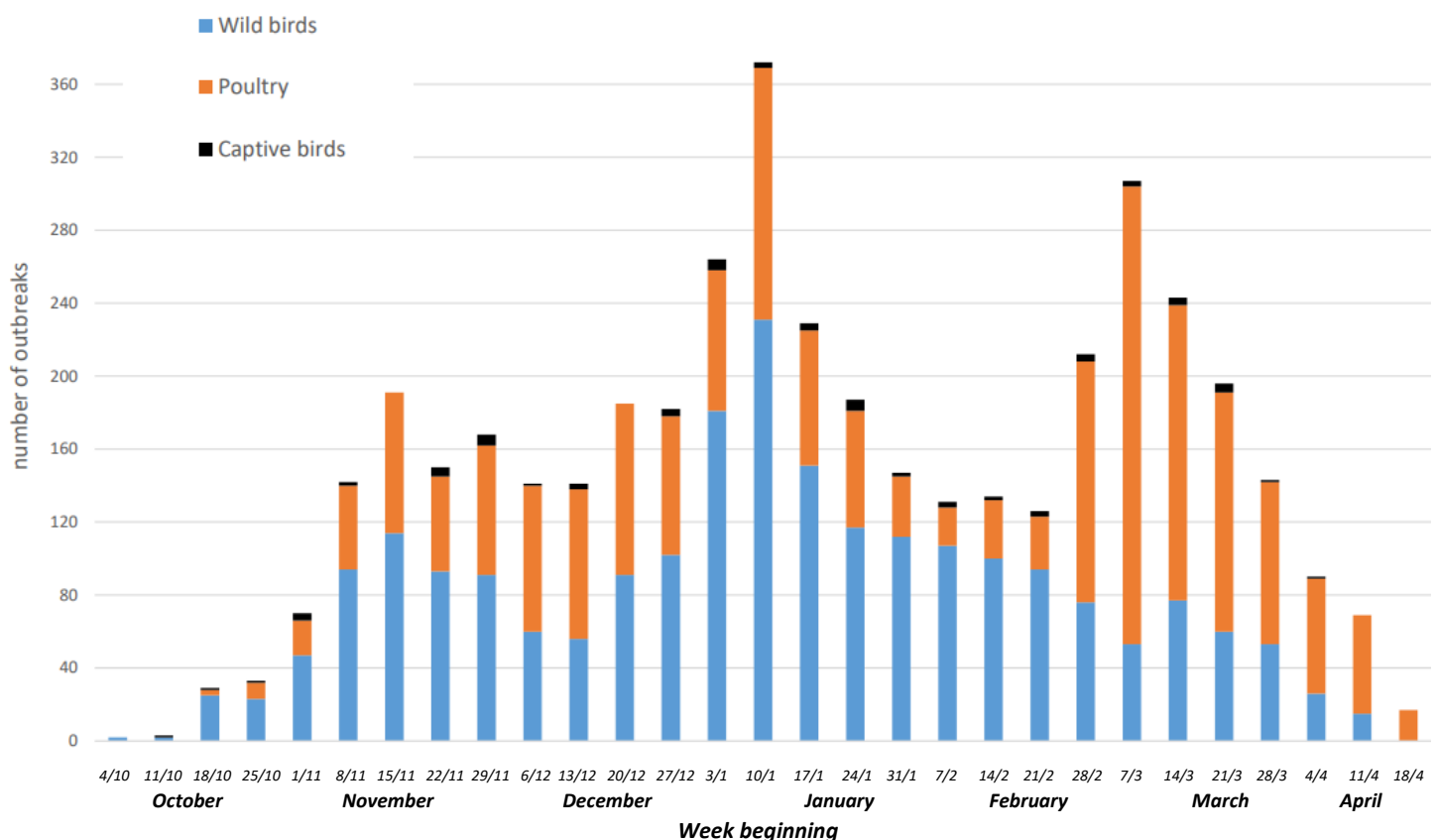
## Current Situation in Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland has confirmed six outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry
- DAERA have produced an interactive map viewer displaying locations of cases of avian influenza in wild birds in Northern Ireland which is available to view [here](#).

## Current Situation in the Rest of Europe

- England has confirmed 96 outbreaks of avian influenza H5N1. Wales and Scotland have reported 5 and 9 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 2,000 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	H5N2	H5N8	Total
Albania				3	4
Belgium		4			4
Bulgaria	11	2			13
Croatia		2			2
Czech Republic		19			19
Denmark		6		1	7
Estonia				1	1
France	12	1225			1237
Germany		72			72
Hungary		128			128
Ireland		6			6
Italy	2	315			317
Kosovo*				3	3
Moldova		1			1
Netherlands		36			36
Norway		2			2
Poland		92	1		93
Portugal		8			8
Romania		3			3
Slovakia		3			3
Slovenia		1			1
Spain		31			31
Sweden		3			3
United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)		6			6
Total	25	1965	1	8	2000

Table 2. Number of confirmed outbreaks of HPAI in poultry in the EU since 01/10/2021 (Source: ADIS).

## Current global Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza situation

- The global distribution of avian influenza outbreaks can be viewed in Fig. 3.

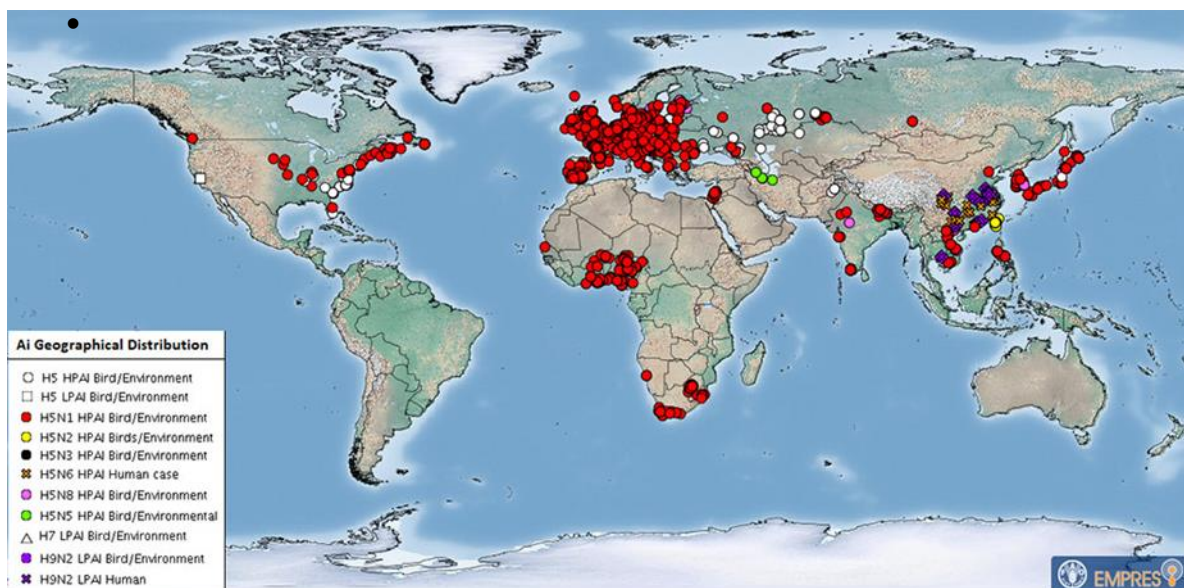


Fig. 3. Global distribution of confirmed avian influenza outbreaks and cases during the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 – 23<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (Source: [FAO](#)).

## Avian Influenza in wild birds in Ireland

- Since 3rd November 2021, 80 wild birds in Ireland have tested positive for avian influenza
- Avian influenza has been found in wild birds in the following 16 counties: Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Longford, Louth, Leitrim, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, 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 goose, swans (mute & whooper), merlin, waterrail, magpie, kestrel, herring gull, corvidae, common buzzard, grey heron, barn owl and cormorant.
- 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

- Barn Owl
- Barnacle Goose
- Brent Goose
- Buzzard
- Corvidae
- Greenland White-Fronted Goose
- Greylag Goose
- Heron
- Herring Gull
- Kestrel
- Magpie
- Merlin
- Mute Swan
- Peregrine Falcon
- Swan
- Water Rail
- White Tailed Sea Eagle
- Whooper Swan



Figure 3. Map of Ireland indicating locations involved in confirmed avian influenza subtype H5N1 cases in wild birds from 1<sup>st</sup> October - 8<sup>th</sup> 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):

Barnacle Goose, Mute swan, Greylag goose, Anatidae, Common Buzzard, Cygnus, Dalmatian Pelican, Mallard duck, European Herring Gull, Ardeidae, Eurasian Wigeon, Canada goose, Laridae, White Stork, Whooper Swan, Black-headed Gull, Grey Heron, Accipiter, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Greater White-fronted Goose, Western Great Egret, Great Black-backed Gull, Coot, Unspecified wild bird, Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Eurasian Magpie, Common Shelduck, Corvidae, Charadriidae, Yellow-legged Gull, Pheasant, Gadwall, Long-Eared Owl, White-tailed eagle, Grey-headed Gull, Common Teal, Great Cormorant, Eurasian curlew, Numenius, Strigiformes, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, European crane, Barn Owl, Rook, Sanderling, Sparrowhawk, Egyptian Goose, Tundra bean goose, Oystercatcher, Brant Goose, Mew Gull, Ciconiidae, Red Knot, Great Blue Heron, Ciconia, Scolopacidae, Muscovy duck, Caspian gull, Great White Pelican, Pink-footed Goose, Red kite, Great crested grebe, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Common woodpigeon, Lesser black backed gull, Rough-legged Hawk, Falco, Spotted Harrier, Collared Dove, X104 Pied Avocet, Pelican, Taiga Bean Goose, Northern Pintail, Larus, Merlin, Black Swan, Ruddy turnstone, Little Owl, Jackdaw, Passeridae, Little grebe, Western Gull, Columbidae, Bonelli's Eagle, Water rail, Ural Owl, Common Eider, Western Sandpiper, Haematopodidae, Ferruginous Duck, Swan goose, Northern Fulmar, Tawny Owl, Eurasian Jay, Common redshank, Green Sandpiper (Source: [Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie](https://www.istitutozooprofilattico.it/)).

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

- The Precautionary Confinement of Birds (Housing Order) will be lifted on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April
- All flock owners are reminded to continue implementing the highest levels of biosecurity. Biosecurity still remains the #1 method in preventing and controlling the spread of disease.

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

- Regulations on the restriction on assembly of live birds (S.I. No. 592 of 2021) and the biosecurity measures (S.I. No. 593 of 2021) introduced in November 2021 remain in place
- These regulations 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](https://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**

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2022**