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Department of Agriculture,
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Avian Influenza Update

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National Disease Control Centre

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza situation in Ireland

- On July 15, a case of avian influenza subtype H5N1 was confirmed in a wild bird (guillemot) in Donegal
- This follows a case of avian influenza subtype H5N1 confirmed on July 8 in a raven found off the coast of Kerry, which was the first case in Ireland since April 1, 2022
- **Poultry owners** should continue to **maintain best practice biosecurity measures** to prevent further outbreaks in poultry and captive birds as there remains an ongoing risk from HPAI virus potentially circulating in wild birds and in the environment
- Poultry owners and those working with poultry should beware of **travelling** to areas, both at home and abroad, where die-offs of wild birds have occurred. **Biosecurity precautions** must be taken before coming into contact with poultry on their return, i.e. **clothing and footwear** worn in such areas should not be brought into contact with poultry without prior cleaning and disinfection, as appropriate

Current wild bird situation in the rest of Europe

- HPAI H5N1 is currently circulating in wild birds, especially breeding seabirds around the UK's coast
- Large die-offs of several species of colonial breeding birds associated with avian influenza have been reported recently in the Netherlands, Scotland, Iceland, Norway, France, and Greece ([EFSA, 2022](#))
- 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](#)
- Over 95% of cases in wild birds have been confirmed to be of subtype H5N1, with small numbers of H5N3 and H5N8 also confirmed

Risk to Ireland regarding Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

- Avian Influenza is **highly contagious for birds**. The virus may be present in the environment and can be transmitted to poultry and captive bird flocks by wild birds
- Flock owners should continue to maintain **best practice biosecurity measures** to prevent the introduction of avian influenza into poultry and captive bird flocks
- 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**. **Pets** should be kept away from sick and dead wild birds. Dogs should be kept on a leash where sick or dead wild birds are present

DAFM surveillance for avian influenza

- 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, however not all birds will be collected for surveillance).
- Whilst all wild birds may not be collected for sampling, it is important for surveillance and risk assessment purposes that deaths are reported to DAFM.
- 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, based on a risk assessment, at the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory forms part of this programme
- 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>

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 poultry and captive birds in Ireland

- There have been no further outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in poultry or captive birds since December 18, 2021.
- Ireland's self-declared disease-free status for avian influenza was published by the OIE on January 21, 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

Current Situation in poultry and captive birds in Europe

- A total of 2,437 outbreaks of HPAI have been confirmed in poultry and captive birds throughout the EU (from October 1, 2021 to July 15, 2022). Details from countries reporting to the European Commission's Animal Disease Information System (ADIS) can be found in Table 1
- Northern Ireland had six outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry, the latest outbreak was confirmed on February 8, 2022
- England has confirmed 103 outbreaks of avian influenza H5N1. Wales and Scotland have reported 5 and 11 outbreaks, respectively
- The Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) interactive map of restriction zones in England, Scotland and Wales is available to view [here](#)

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

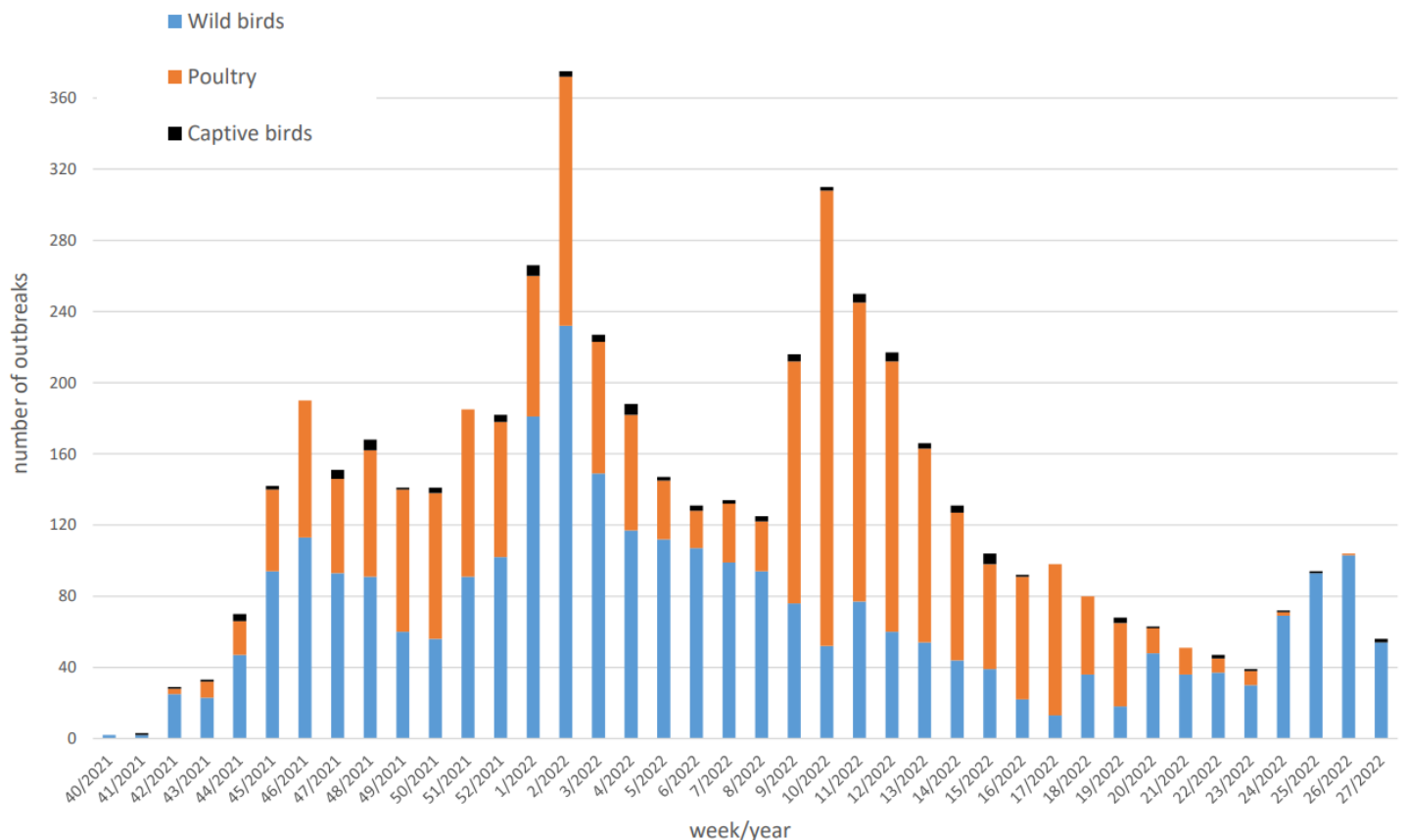


Fig. 1. The number of confirmed cases/ outbreaks of HPAI in wild birds, poultry and captive birds in Europe per week (since 4/10/2021, Source: [Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie](#))

Current global Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza situation

- HPAI continues to be reported in poultry and wild birds globally. The global distribution of outbreaks/ cases in poultry and wild birds during the period 16th March to 10th June 2022 can be found in Fig. 2.

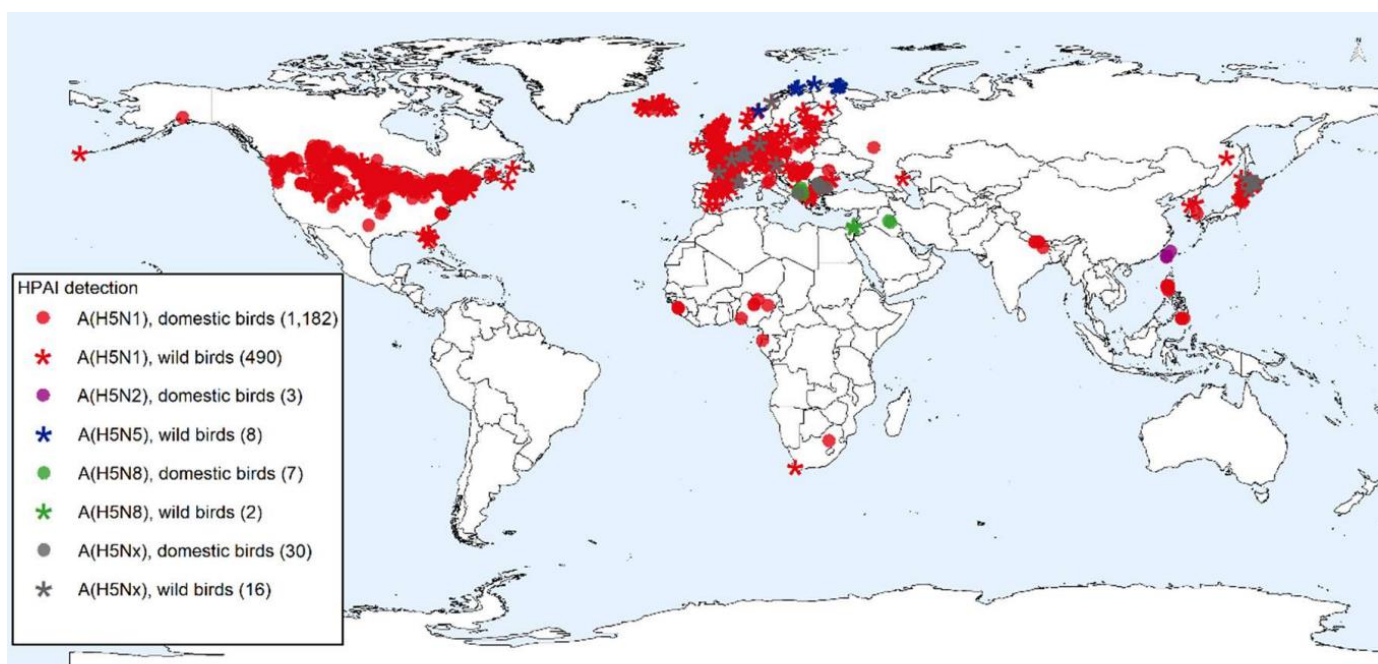


Fig. 2. Global distribution of HPAI in poultry and wild birds from 16th March to 10th June (Source: [EFSA](#))

COUNTRY	Poultry	Captive birds	Wild birds*	Total
FRANCE	1376	37	92	1505
GERMANY	74	9	1408	1491
NETHERLANDS	50	21	575	646
ITALY	317	1	22	340
HUNGARY	290	2	31	323
DENMARK	7	4	157	168
POLAND	94	0	35	129
BELGIUM	5	3	91	99
SPAIN	31	5	49	85
NORWAY	2	1	64	67
SWEDEN	4	3	58	65
IRELAND	6	0	47	53
SLOVENIA	1	0	37	38
AUSTRIA	1	3	27	31
BULGARIA	25	1	4	30
CZECH REPUBLIC	19	0	9	28
FINLAND	0	0	22	22
PORTUGAL	9	5	7	21
ICELAND	1	0	19	20
ROMANIA	3	0	16	19
NORTHERN IRELAND	6	0	10	16
GREECE	0	0	16	16
CROATIA	3	0	13	16
SLOVAKIA	4	0	9	13
ESTONIA	2	0	10	12
LITHUANIA	0	0	11	11
LUXEMBOURG	0	0	5	5
ALBANIA	4	0	1	5
SWITZERLAND	0	1	2	3
KOSOVO	3	0	0	3
NORTH MACEDONIA	0	0	2	2
MOLDOVA	2	0	0	2
UKRAINE	0	2	0	2
LATVIA	0	0	2	2
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	0	0	1	1
Total	2339	98	2852	5289

Table 1. Number of confirmed outbreaks/cases of HPAI in poultry, captive birds and wild birds reported to ADIS during the period 01/10/2021 to 15/07/2022 (Source: [Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie](#)).

Avian Influenza in wild birds in Ireland

- Two wild birds tested positive for avian influenza in July; prior to July, 85 wild birds in Ireland tested positive between November 3, 2021 and April 1, 2022
- 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 (Fig. 3).
- 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, watterail, magpie, kestrel, herring gull, corvidae, common buzzard, grey heron, barn owl, cormorant and guillemot.
- 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>.

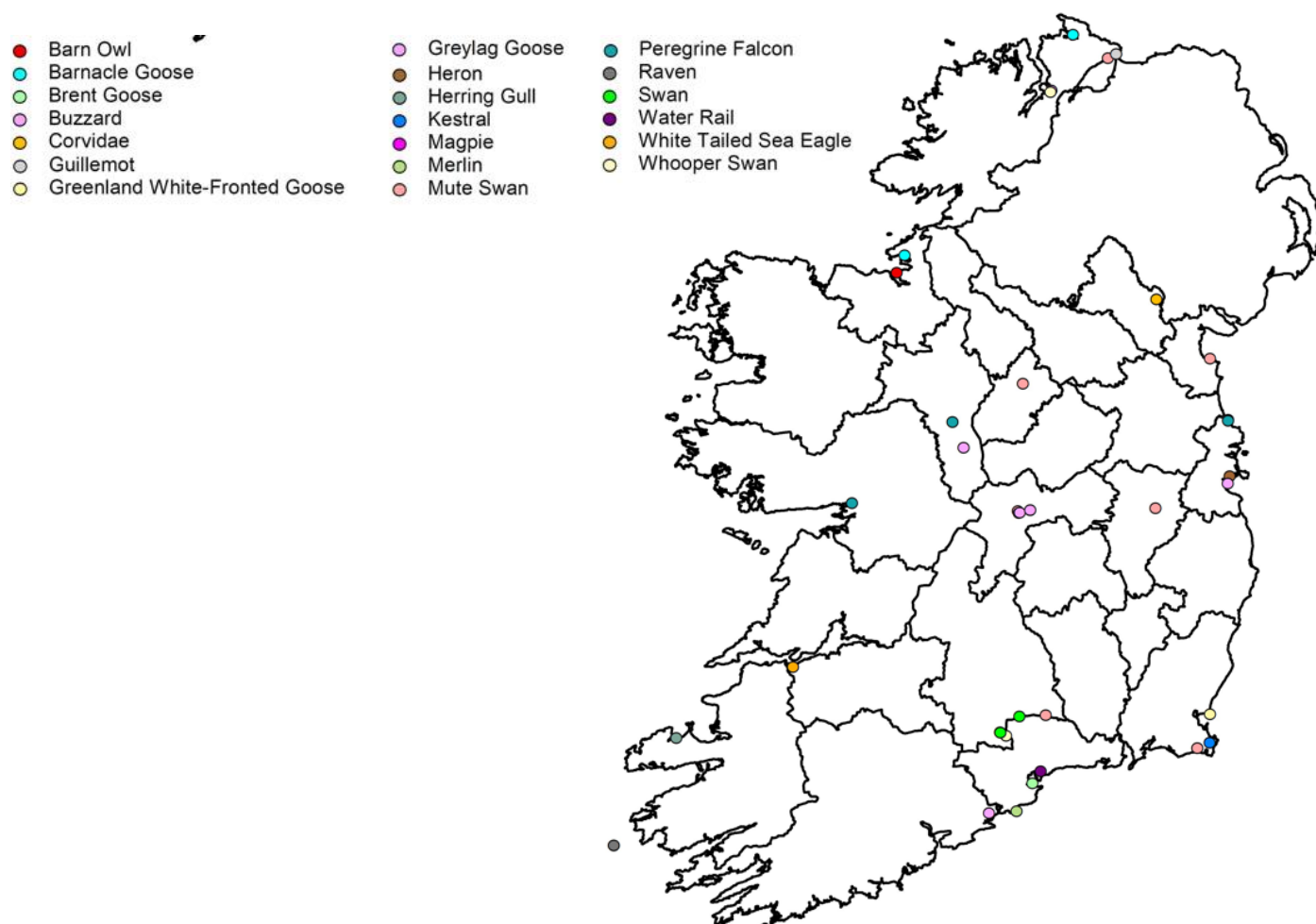


Fig. 3. Locations of cases of avian influenza H5N1 in wild birds in Ireland since 1st of November 2021.

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, during the period 1st October 2021 to 15th July 2022):

Sandwich Tern, Barnacle Goose, Greylag goose, Mute swan, European Herring Gull, Anatidae, Common Buzzard, Black-headed Gull, Cygnus, Dalmatian Pelican, Northern Gannet, Mallard duck, Laridae, White Stork, Canada goose, Ardeidae, Mew Gull, Eurasian Wigeon, Hirundinidae, Whooper Swan, White-tailed eagle, Accipiter, Grey Heron, Griffon Vulture, Great Black-backed Gull, Great Cormorant, Unspecified wild bird, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Eurasian Spoonbill, Greater White-fronted Goose, Peregrine Falcon, Egyptian Goose, Kestrel, Coot, Pheasant, Eurasian Magpie, Grey-headed Gull, Charadriidae, Anserinae, Corvidae, Common Shelduck, Sulidae, Ciconiidae, Western Great Egret, Northern Goshawk, Common tern, Goose unspecified, Yellow-legged Gull, Long-Eared Owl, Passeridae, Sparrowhawk, Common Teal, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Gadwall, Great Black-headed Gull, Eurasian curlew, Numenius, Brant Goose, Jackdaw, European crane, Ciconia, Common Raven, Strigiformes, Rook, Lesser black backed gull, Great Blue Heron, Barn Owl, Western Grebe, Passer, Little Owl, Tundra bean goose, Northern Fulmar, Oystercatcher, Great Skua, Pink-footed Goose, Caspian gull, Sanderling, Scolopacidae, Muscovy duck, Red Knot, Bearded Vulture, Tawny Owl, Great White Pelican, Falco, Mediterranean gull, Red kite, Vulture unspecified, Common woodpigeon, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Rough-legged Hawk, Great crested grebe, Sterninae, Common blackbird, House sparrow, Pied Avocet, Spotted Harrier, European greenfinch, Merlin, Columbidae, Common redshank, Bonelli's Eagle, Arctic Tern, Eurasian Jay, White-rumped sandpiper, Black Swan, Waldrapp Pigeon, Glaucous Gull, Swan goose, Western Sandpiper, Ruddy turnstone, Taiga Bean Goose, Pelican, Haematopodidae, Water rail, Common Eider, Green Sandpiper, Hooded crow, Ural Owl, Ferruginous Duck, Collared Dove, Little grebe, Song Thrush, Northern Pintail, Larus, and Western Gull.

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

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 (WOAH, formerly known as 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

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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