



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

Published
28/10/2020

National Disease Control Centre

Avian Influenza Update

Number 11 of 2020

28/10/2020

Avian Influenza Alert Number 11 of 2020

High Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 in The Netherlands

- On October 20th, The Netherlands confirmed Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI H5N8) in a Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) which was found dead in a wetland area in the Greone Hart region of Central Netherlands (see figure 1 below)
- A second case of H5N8 was confirmed in a Eurasian widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) found in the coastal area of the country on 26th October (see figure 2 below)
- This are the first cases of Avian influenza confirmed in The Netherlands in 2020
- HPAI H5N8 was last detected in Ireland in 2016/2017 when 12 wild birds were confirmed with the disease including Eurasian widgeons, mute and whooper swans and a grey heron.

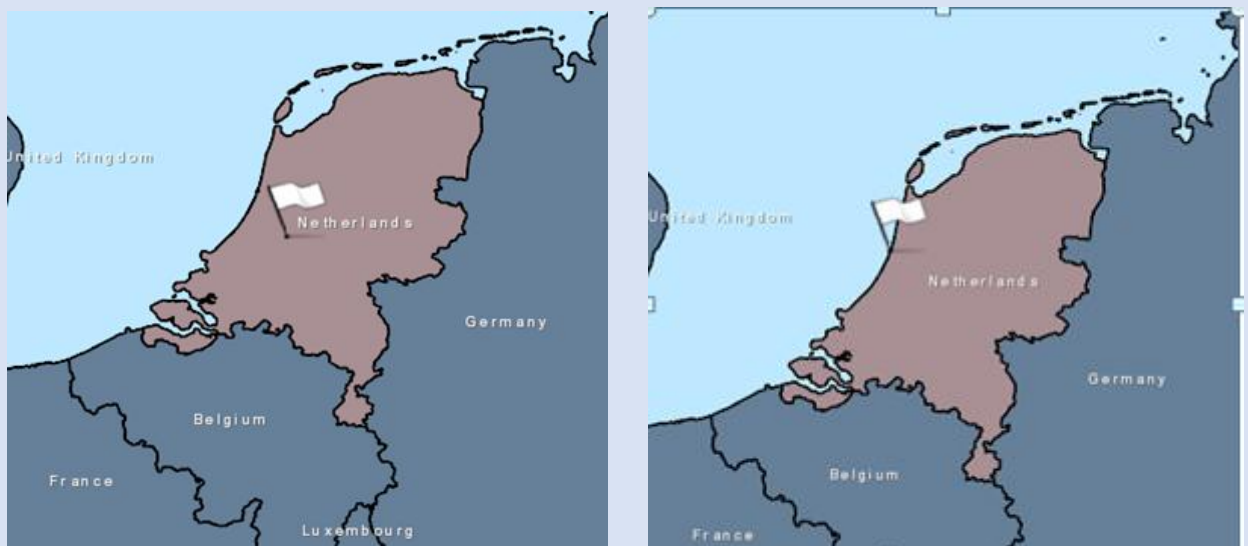
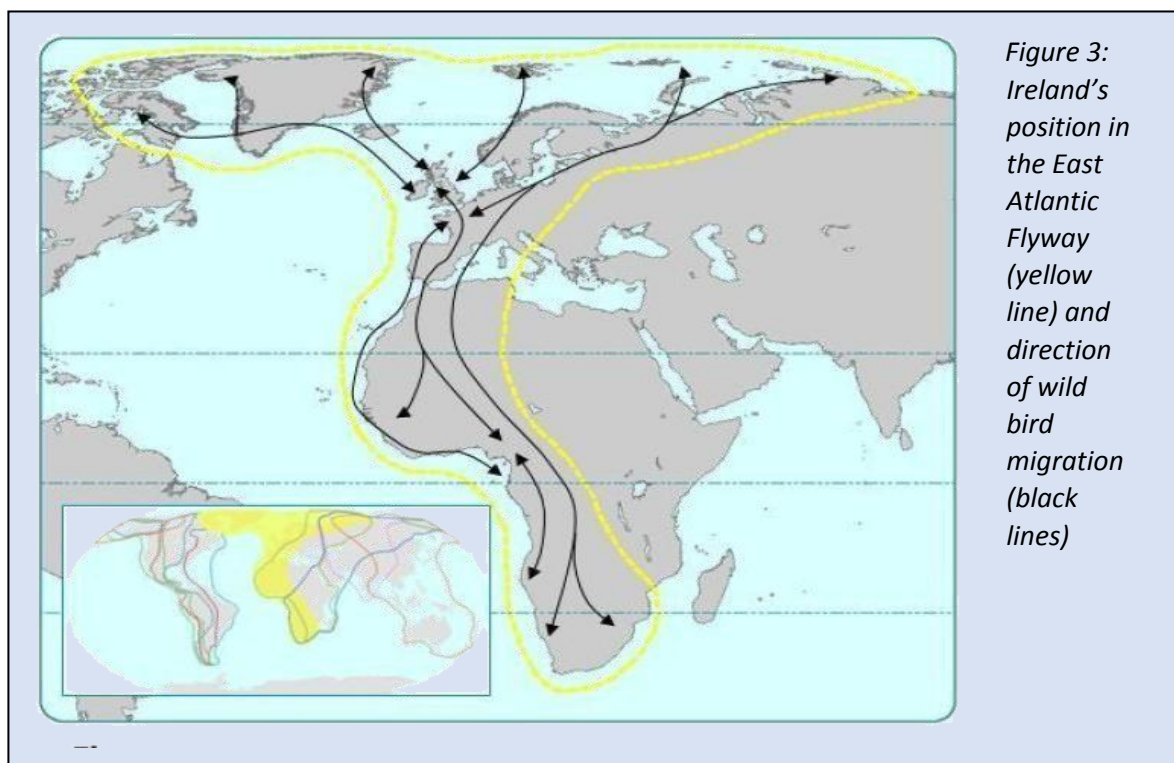


Figure 1 Above Left: Location of first case of HPAI H5N8 in a mute swan in The Netherlands in 2020. Figure 2 Above Right: Location of second case of HPAI H5N8 in a Eurasian Widgeon in The Netherlands in 2020. (Courtesy of European Commission ADNS system)

Risk to Ireland regarding HPAI H5N8

- October onwards, represents the high-risk period for avian influenza in Ireland due to the fact that migratory wild birds, the natural hosts of many avian influenza viruses, start to arrive in large numbers to overwinter. Figure 3 below shows the East Atlantic Flyway which is the migration route used by about 90 million wild birds annually, passing from their breeding areas in United States Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Siberia and northern Europe to wintering areas in Western Europe and southern Africa
- Once here, the birds congregate on Ireland's many wetland areas where they mix with resident wild bird species with the potential for both transmission of disease to resident birds and contamination of the environment
- Migratory wild birds are known to carry the H5N8 subtype of Avian influenza and this can increase the level of risk for a potential outbreak of Avian influenza in Ireland
- Colder weather and decreasing daylight can extend the survival time of Avian influenza viruses in the environment
- HPAI H5N8 is a notifiable disease both in Ireland and to the European Commission and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
- Any potential outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in poultry in Ireland would impact our international trade for poultry and poultry products
- The disease is highly contagious for birds, but risk of transmission to humans is considered low
- The disease poses no food safety risk for consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs are safe to eat.



Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza H6N1

- Following on from Avian Influenza update No. 10 of 2020, there have been no further outbreaks of Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza H6N1 in Ireland

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
- Blue discolouration of combs, wattles, neck and throat
- Diarrhoea
- Reduced egg production or no egg production

2. **Biosecurity** is key, here is the advice:

People

- 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

- Minimise access to the flock by wild birds
- Feed and water birds inside or at least under cover
- Clean up any waste feed in outdoor areas frequently
- Consider using 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 if possible
- Register your birds with DAFM so you can receive important information in the event of an increased risk.

What is DAFM doing to reduce the risk of avian influenza?

DAFM has well established early warning systems and contingency measures in place for avian influenza. A summary of these measures can be found at:

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/contingencyplanning/

Further information:

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

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/biosecurityadvice/

To register a poultry flock please see:

https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/avian_influenza/poultryregistration/

RVO contact details

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>

List of target species of wild birds for AI surveillance

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/avianinfluenzabirdflu/informationonwildbirds/ListOfWildBirdSpeciesForTargetedAIsurveillance170118.pdf>

European Commission

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/avian-influenza_en

National Disease Control Centre

28/10/2020