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National Disease Control Centre

Avian Influenza Update

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in a wild bird in Ireland

- Ireland has confirmed **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus subtype H5N8 in a wild bird** (Peregrine Falcon - *Falco peregrinus*) in County Limerick (see Figure 1 below for location).
- The bird was submitted as part of the Avian Influenza wild bird surveillance programme to Limerick Regional Veterinary Laboratory, confirmatory testing in the Central Veterinary Research Laboratory confirmed subtype H5N8 on November 6th.

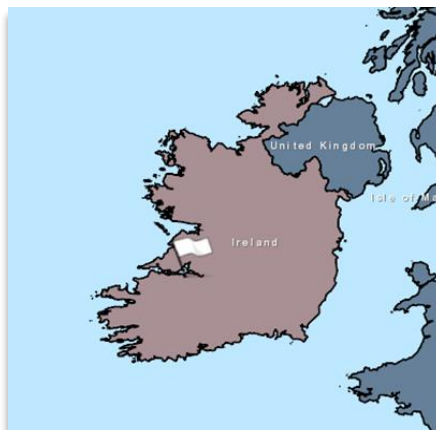


Figure 1 Left:
Location of
confirmed
case of HPAI
H5N8 in a
peregrine
falcon on 6th
November
Courtesy of
ADNS

Risk to Ireland regarding HPAI H5N8

- The disease is **highly contagious for birds**
- The risk to Irish poultry flocks from Avian Influenza has increased following the confirmation of HPAI H5N8 in a wild bird.
- The disease poses **no food safety risk for consumers**. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs are safe to eat.
- **Strict biosecurity measures are needed** to prevent the introduction of AI 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. Please report sick or dead wild birds to the local Regional Veterinary Office or contact the DAFM disease hotline on 1850 200456.**

The importance of biosecurity in poultry flocks at this time cannot be overstated. This applies to ALL flocks, irrespective of size.

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. Increase Biosecurity

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

- 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 vital information in the event of an increased risk.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 in The EU and UK

United Kingdom

HPAI H5N8 was confirmed on 8th November in a group of 5 wild birds in the Gloucestershire area of England.

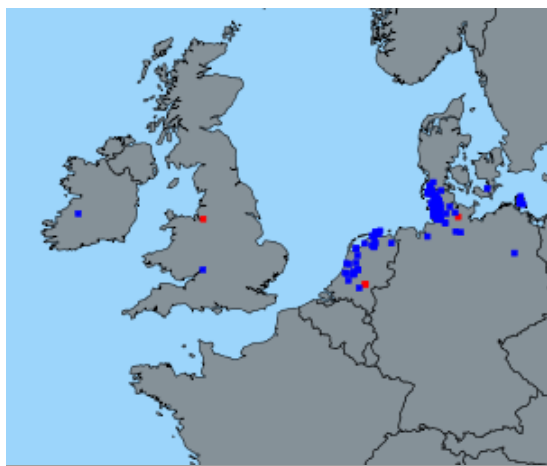
Mainland Europe

On 5th November, **The Netherlands** confirmed a second outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in the province of Gelderland on a farm where 100,000 laying hens were kept, within the 3Km radius from the previously infected holding in Altforst, notified on 29th October 2020. One other poultry farm was located within the 1km zone around the infected premises. It concerns a holding with 115.000 rearing laying hens. The birds at this holding will be pre-emptively culled. A third outbreak of HPAI H5N8 was confirmed in a poultry flock of approx.47,000 birds today in the North of the country. In addition, Dutch authorities confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza **H5N1** subtype in wild birds in widgeons on 27th October and in a curlew, greylag goose, and a teal on 6th November 2020.

On 4th November 2020, **Germany** confirmed HPAI H5N8 in a small backyard flock in North Frisia in Schleswig-Holstein. In addition, on 9th November 2020 HPAI H5N8 was confirmed in a small poultry farm in Segeberg containing 3 pheasants, 12 mallards and 21 laying hens.

Several species of wild birds have been confirmed with HPAI H5N8 in **The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark** including, for example, Northern Goshawk, White-tailed sea eagle, peregrine falcon, cormorant, greylag goose, barnacle goose, cane goose, bean goose, curlew, mallard, teal, gulls, European buzzard, short eared owl, kestrel, European widgeons and mute swans.

Figure 2 below: HPAI wild bird cases (blue) and HPAI outbreaks in poultry (red) from 1st August 2020 to date (ADNS)



Further information for poultry owners and stakeholder groups

Fact sheets giving biosecurity advice for each of the main poultry categories are available at the following link:

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

To register a poultry flock please see:

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

RVO contact details [Regional Veterinary Office](#) .

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

DAFM Contingency Planning for 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/legislationcontingencyplanning/

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