

Updated Outbreak Assessment #6

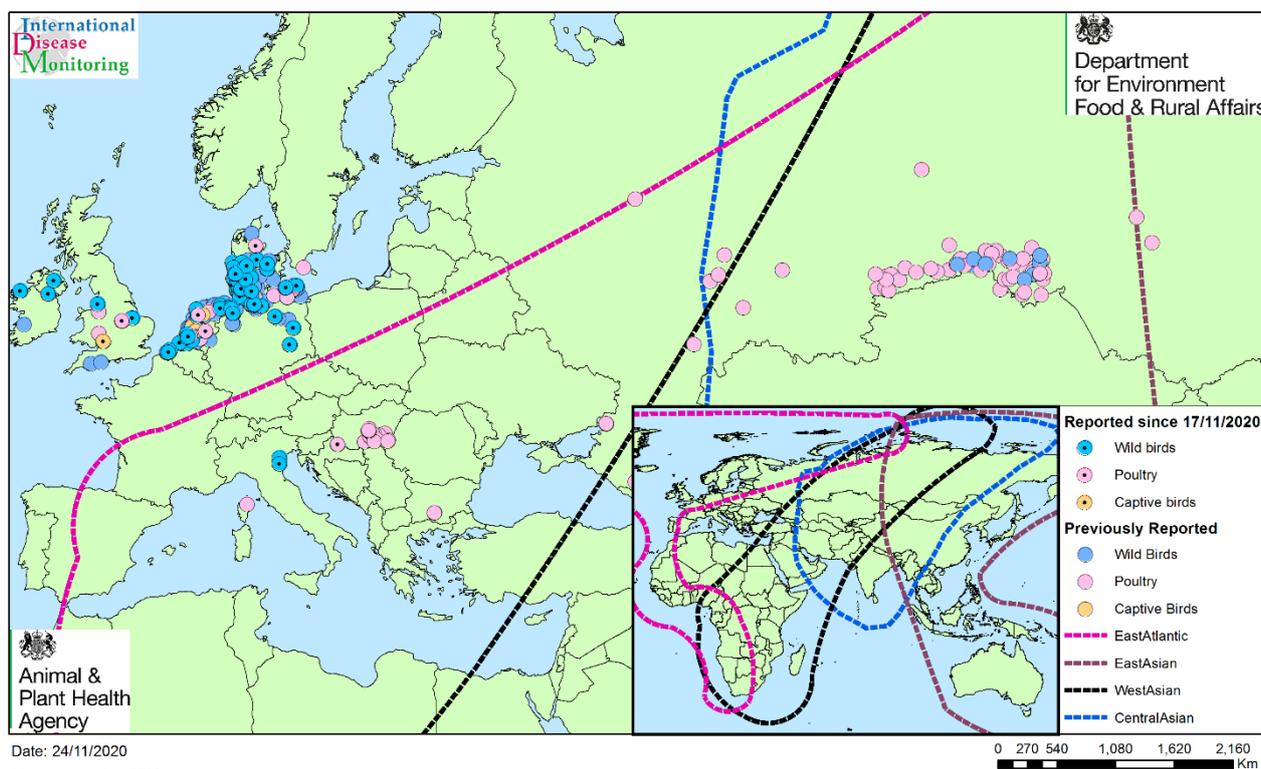
Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the UK, and Europe

24 November 2020

Ref: VITT/1200 HPAI in the UK and Europe

Disease Report

Since our last report on 17 November, in the **United Kingdom** there has been one new outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in poultry, three new reports of HPAI H5N8 in wild birds, and one new outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in captive birds. Elsewhere in Europe, H5N8 has been reported: in poultry in Croatia, Denmark, France (Corsica), Germany and Sweden; in wild birds in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands; and in captive birds in the Netherlands. HPAI H5 has been reported in wild birds in Denmark and Italy; and HPAI H5N5 in captive birds in Germany, and wild birds in the Netherlands.



Highly pathogenic avian influenza in Poultry, Captive and Wild birds
May - November 2020
Overlay: migratory bird flyways

Situation Assessment

In the **United Kingdom**, since our last report on 17 November, there have been new reports of HPAI H5N8 in poultry, wild birds and captive birds.

Following confirmation of HPAI H5N8 in captive birds, on 20 November 2020 at a wetland centre near Stroud in Gloucestershire, a 3km Captive Bird (Monitoring) Controlled Zone has been put in place around the site.

There has been one new outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in poultry. HPAI H5N8 was confirmed on 23 November in poultry and captive birds at a premises near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire: at a theme park containing multiple species, including domestic and exotic birds. A 3km and 10km Temporary Control Zone has been put in place around the premises.

In England, in Lincolnshire (near Boston), HPAI H5N8 was reported in a Eurasian Wigeon, three Brent geese, a Shelduck, a Canada goose and two Greylag geese. In a nature park in Lancashire HPAI H5N8 was confirmed in an unspecified wild bird.

In Northern Ireland, near Lough Beg (on the border between County Londonderry and Country Antrim), a Mute swan tested positive for HPAI H5N8. Lough Beg is a stopping point for migratory birds.

HPAI H5N8 in Western Europe

In **Belgium**, on 20 November, there were three reports of HPAI H5N8 along the north coast in West Flanders; in a European herring gull, a Eurasian Curlew, and a number of captive birds described as mute swans.

On 21 November, **Croatia** reported one outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in domestic poultry. Increased mortality had been observed on a large commercial premises with approximately 70,000 turkeys. The farm is in Delovi in the county of Koprivnica- Križevci. Implementation of disease control measures according to the Directive 2005/94/EC have been put in place, and epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

Since our last report on 17 November, **Denmark** has reported one outbreak of HPAI H5N8 in poultry on a commercial poultry farm, containing approximately 25,000 birds. There have also been 20 reports of HPAI H5N8 in wild birds, and two reports of HPAI H5 in wild birds. While most reports continue to be from Jutland, there were a small number from Sjaelland (Zealand). Eleven of these reports related to dead barnacle geese. Other species included a brent goose, common buzzards, peregrine falcons, a curlew and a herring gull.

France has reported one outbreak of HPAI H5N8 (as reported to the OIE) in poultry. This was in the pet department of a garden centre. This was in the French department of Haute-Corse, in the northern part of the island of Corsica (in total, there were 575 specimens of various species (poultry and ornamental birds). The birds were culled on 15 November, and the garden centre's pet facility is now closed. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

Since our last report on 17 November, in **Germany** there have been 70 further reports of HPAI H5N8 in wild birds. While the majority of outbreaks continue to be in the north, and primarily in South Jutland, isolated cases have been identified further south, through Prignitz (in north-west Brandenburg – in a bean goose), Berlin (the federal state, south-west of the city – a greylag goose), and as far south as Nordsachsen (North Saxony – a mallard duck). There have also been three reports of HPAI H5N5 in wild birds.

Also in **Germany**, three outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 were reported in poultry. One was a premises of 1339 birds (fattening geese, hens and ducks). The second was a premises of 660 birds (laying hens and fattening geese). The third was a smaller, non-commercial premises of 43 birds (layer hens and turkeys). It is reported on ADNS that following a risk assessment (and in accordance with Council Directive 2005/94/EC) restriction zones for this premises have not been put in place.

Ireland has reported two cases of HPAI H5N8 in wild birds. One was in a mute swan in the north-east (in County Monaghan), and the other a curlew in County Mayo, in Ireland's north-west.

Italy reported two cases of HPAI H5 in wild birds on 21 November. One was in the province of Venice, where a common teal was shot in a hunting area. The other was in Rovigo province, again in hunted wild birds (wigeons and mallards). The same virus was detected: HPAI H5 viruses belonging to the 2.3.4.4 B clade. The HA sequence surrounding the cleavage site is highly related to that of HPAI currently circulating in Northern Europe. Identification of the NA subtype and characterization of the full genome is in process

Since our last report on 17 November, there have been six further HPAI H5N8 cases reported in wild birds in the **Netherlands**. Species included mute swans, barnacle geese, and several buzzards. There were four reports of HPAI H5N8 in captive birds (with no details regarding species on ADNS). There was also one report of HPAI H5N5 in wild birds – in a reed (or bean) goose.

Sweden has reported one outbreak of HPAI in poultry on 18 November. This was in a premises containing 5,100 turkeys. On the premises there were two populated sheds, and only the shed containing 1,800 birds displayed symptoms. All birds on the premises were culled.

The situation is changing rapidly, and all these numbers and reports represent the official reports made to EU's ADNS system at the time of writing.

Table 1: Current outbreaks of HPAI H5N8 in domestic poultry and captive birds, and cases in wild birds since September, as of 7 am on 24/11/2020, according to official reporting sources. Note that this is a rapidly changing picture, with new disease reports being made on a daily basis.

Country	HPAI H5N8 in poultry	HPAI H5N8 in wild birds	HPAI H5N8 in captive birds	Total	First date reported	Wild bird species affected
Belgium		6		6	17/11/2020	Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) Eurasian Magpie (<i>Pica pica</i>) European Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) Greater White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons</i>) Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)
Croatia	1			1	21/11/2020	N/a
Denmark	1	27 (+1 HPAI H5N5, +2 HPAI H5)		31	05/11/2020	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) Brant Goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>) Common Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>) Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) Eurasian Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>) European Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) Gadwall (<i>Mareca strepera</i>) Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>).
France	1			1	17/11/2020	N/a

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Country	HPAI H5N8 in poultry	HPAI H5N8 in wild birds	HPAI H5N8 in captive birds	Total	First date reported	Wild bird species affected
Germany	9 (+1 HPAI H5N5)	262 (+6 HPAI H5 +6 HPAI H5N5 +1 Untyped)		285	30/10/2020	<p>Accipitridae (unidentified) (<i>Accipitridae (incognita)</i>) Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) Brant Goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>) Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>) Common Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>) Common Eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>) Common Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>) Crane (unidentified) (<i>Grus (incognita)</i>) Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) Eurasian Eagle-Owl (<i>Bubo bubo</i>) Eurasian Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) Eurasian Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>) Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) European Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>) Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) Gull (unidentified) (<i>Larus (incognita)</i>) Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>) Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) Taiga Bean Goose (<i>Anser fabalis</i>) Tawny Owl (<i>Strix aluco</i>) White-tailed Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>)</p>
Ireland		3		3	07/11/2020	<p>Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>) Peregrine Falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</p>

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Country	HPAI H5N8 in poultry	HPAI H5N8 in wild birds	HPAI H5N8 in captive birds	Total	First date reported	Wild bird species affected
Italy		2		2	21/11/2020	Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)
Netherlands	6	36 (+4 HPAI H5N1 +1 HPAI H5N5)	5	52	20/10/2020	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) Common Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>) Eurasian Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) Greater White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons</i>) Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>) Short-eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>) Taiga Bean Goose (<i>Anser fabalis</i>)
Sweden	1			1	18/11/2020	N/a
United Kingdom	3	6	1	10	02/11/2020	Black Swan (<i>Cygnus atratus</i>) Brant Goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>) Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>) Common Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) Mute Swan (<i>Cygnus olor</i>)
Total	23	363	6	392	20/10/2020	

Other HPAI H5 in Western Europe

Since our last report on 17 November, there have been no new reports of other HPAI H5 subtypes in Western Europe.

Implications for the UK

The presence of H5N8 in the UK was not unexpected given the annual autumn migration, and the rapidly developing epidemiological situation (first in southern Russia during the early autumn, and now across Western Europe as described in this report). Taken together with the findings of HPAI H5N8 in UK domestic poultry and captive birds in England, and the wide geographical distribution of the reports in wild birds, circulating HPAI H5N8 virus appears to be widespread in wild birds.

In GB, the sensitivity of surveillance has been increased, to ensure collection and analyses of targeted species of wild birds (ducks, geese, swans, gulls, and birds of prey) known to carry a risk of infection with H5 HPAI viruses. Single dead birds of target species, where possible, will be collected and tested. Several systems are in place, including working through NGOs (non-governmental organisations), and members of the public reporting wild bird mortality.

The migration season for wild waterfowl to overwinter in the UK has begun, although numbers may not peak until December/January, depending on the species and the weather conditions in Continental Europe. Generally the Netherlands has a far higher number of wintering water birds than the UK, but cold weather on the Continent can force birds to move across the North Sea to the British Isles.

Following confirmation of one Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N8 outbreak in 'Cheshire West and Chester' district of England, and one Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) H5N2 outbreak near Dover District, England; the UK is no longer free from notifiable avian influenza under the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) rules.

Where disease is confirmed, we put in place measures in accordance with Council Directive 2005/94/EC. The EU will put safeguard measures in place, meaning that no trade with the EU in live poultry or poultry products will be permitted; from either the Restricted Zone in Kent or the Protection or Surveillance Zones in Cheshire and Herefordshire.

Public Health England has confirmed that the risk to public health is very low, and the Food Standards Agency has said that avian influenza does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Conclusion

As a consequence of the H5N8 HPAI poultry outbreaks in the UK, and in Germany and the Netherlands; as well as the increasing HPAI H5N8 cases in wild birds in the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden this week, and the known migration routes on to the UK from these countries: the risk of HPAI incursion in wild birds in the UK is **HIGH**. The overall risk of infection of poultry in the UK is **MEDIUM**; although it should be noted that the risk of introduction to individual premises, depends upon the level of biosecurity implemented on farm to prevent direct or indirect contact with wild birds.

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In response to the increased risk, an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone has been declared in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) and the Chief Veterinary Officers from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are urging bird keepers across the UK to maintain and strengthen their biosecurity measures; in order to prevent further outbreaks of avian influenza in the UK.

If you keep poultry (including game birds or as pets), you should follow our biosecurity best practice advice, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#biosecurity-advice> Remain vigilant for any signs of disease in your flock and report any sign of avian influenza to Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> including updated biosecurity advice for poultry keepers for England; <https://gov.wales/avian-influenza> for Wales and; <http://gov.scot/avianinfluenza> for Scotland.

The OIE/FAO International Reference Laboratory/UK National Reference Laboratory at Weybridge has the necessary ongoing proven diagnostic capability for these strains of virus, whether low or high pathogenicity AI, and continually monitors changes in the virus. We will continue to report on any updates on the situation in Europe and, in particular, any changes in disease distribution or wild bird movements which may increase the risk to the UK.

We ask that the public use the Defra helpline (Tel: 03459 33 55 77) to report findings of any dead wild birds. In particular, any wild ducks, wild geese, swans, gulls or birds of prey.

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References

All outbreaks and cases were taken from the Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS).

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