

## Updated Outbreak Assessment #8

# High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe

12 May 2025

### Disease report

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 18 March 2025 ([HPAI in Europe #7](#)) there have been 14 reports of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5 clade 2.3.4.4b in domestic poultry in Great Britain. All reports have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1.

There have also been cases of HPAI H5 clade 2.3.4.4b events involving “found-dead” wild birds in Great Britain, with 616 since 1 October 2024. Of these, 547 have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1, 41 as HPAI H5N5 and 28 as HPAI H5Nx (see map 1 for wild bird cases collected since 1 October 2024). The majority of cases were confirmed over the winter period, with a decrease in cases seen since mid-April. The number of cases has declined steadily, from 205 in February to 172 in March, 109 in April and just 19 so far in May (figure 1). The wild bird risk level across Great Britain has been reduced to High.

The risk level for HPAI H5 incursion in poultry:

- with stringent biosecurity has been reduced to low with high uncertainty and
- with non-stringent or suboptimal biosecurity has been reduced to medium with high uncertainty

Outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry have continued, although at lower rates, across Europe with 118 reports between 18 March and 12 May 2025. Wild bird cases have also decreased with 146 reports between 18 March and 12 May 2025. The Wadden Sea area of northern Europe remains the most affected area with HPAI with 32 wild bird cases of H5N1 in the Netherlands, 31 cases of H5N1 in Germany and 24 H5N1 cases in Poland since our last assessment.

There have also been 3 reports of HPAI H5 in mammals in Europe including both H5N5 and H5N1.

## **Situation assessment**

Here, an HPAI H5Nx event refers to a report of HPAI in poultry, or a location with at least one HPAI H5Nx positive wild bird. Individual HPAI H5Nx positive wild birds are referred to as cases.

### **Great Britain**

#### **Poultry Infected Premises**

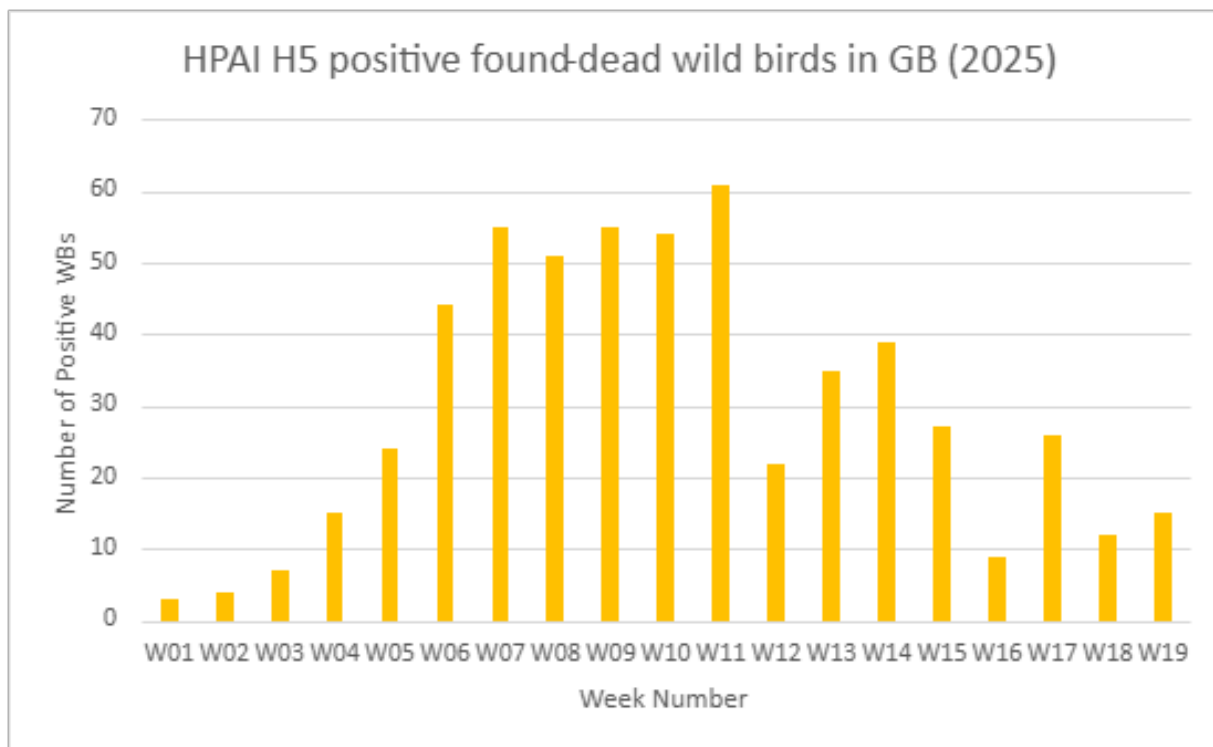
Since our last outbreak assessment on 18 March 2025 (to 12 May 2025) there have been 14 Infected Premises (IPs) confirmed with HPAI H5N1 in poultry. These have been reported in a mixture of backyard and commercial premises housing poultry, as single species and mixed species holdings. There have also been a number of cases in kept collections of birds which do not always include just poultry species. Of these, 8 occurred in March and 6 in April. See map 1 for approximate locations.

As of 12 May 2025, there have been no confirmed IPs since 14 April 2025. An AIPZ (Avian Influenza Prevention Zone) has been in effect since 25 January 2025, implementing enhanced biosecurity measures to limit spread of the disease. In addition, regional housing orders have been enforced in affected areas, requiring poultry to be kept indoors.

All poultry on the infected premises are humanely culled and a 3 km protection zone and 10 km surveillance zone are put in place surrounding the premises. Check [updates on the latest situation in England](#).

#### **Wild birds**

Between 18 March and 12 May 2025, HPAI H5 has been detected in 185 found-dead wild birds in 115 separate locations in Great Britain, including 25 wild bird species (data available <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds> ) across 52 counties. Wild bird cases since 18 March have been reported at both coastal and inland locations across Great Britain (map 2). The majority of the findings were in England (106), with 70 in Scotland and 9 in Wales.



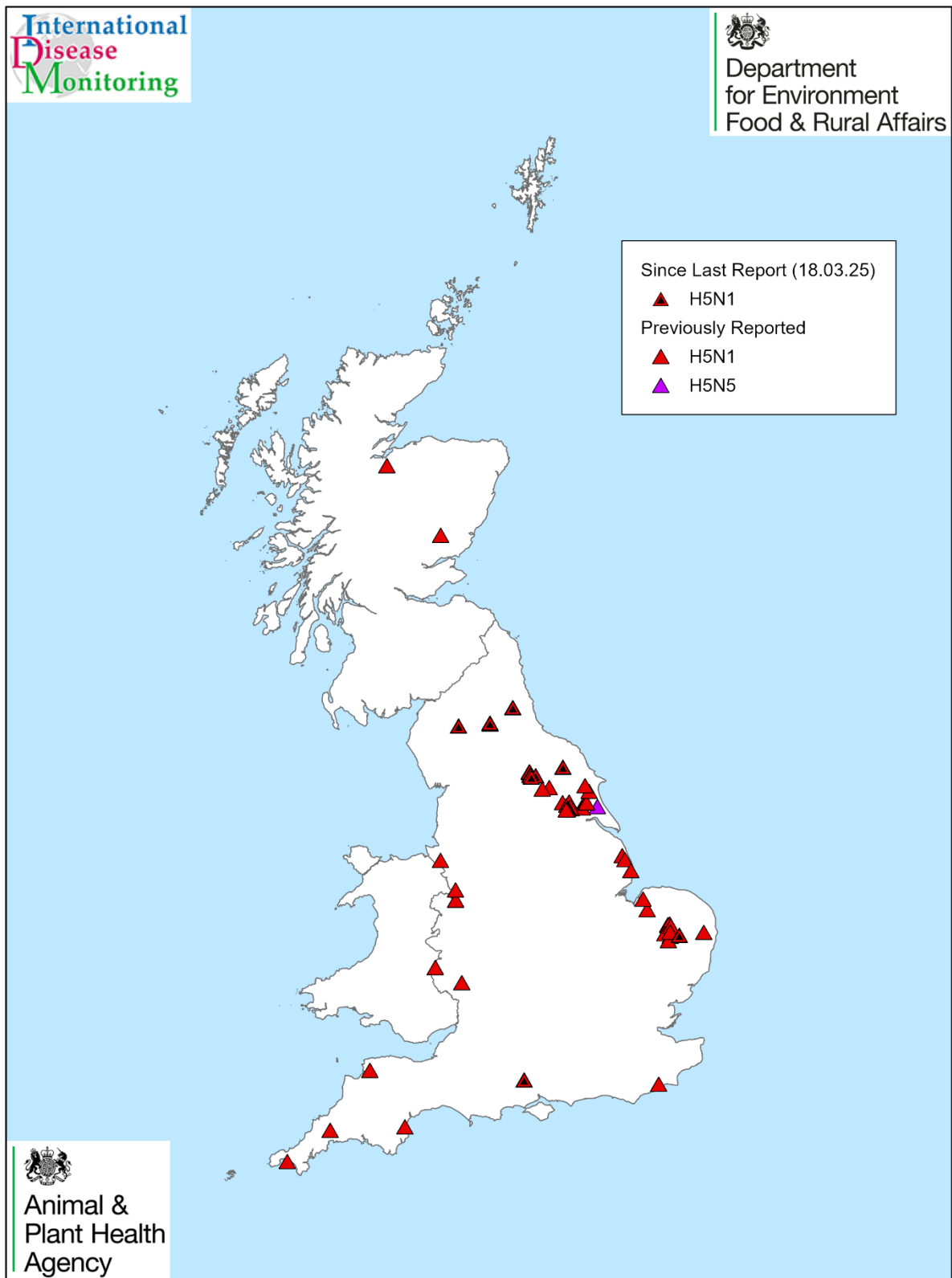
**Figure 1: Detections of HPAI H5 positive found-dead wild bird in Great Britain since 1 January to 12 May 2025 per week. Discussed in body of report.**

It should be noted that there is a variable lag period between the collection of found-dead wild birds to sampling, testing, and the reporting of results.

It is important to note that these surveillance figures for Great Britain are based on passive surveillance of found dead birds reported to Defra by the general public and as such, may be affected by several factors including frequency of visitors accessing areas with bird populations, the potential for immunity in the wild bird population (which may result in fewer birds developing clinical disease and or dying with HPAI), variable surveillance system sensitivity, as well as the size, location and accessibility of carcasses, meaning that this wild bird surveillance does not necessarily capture all of the cases that occur. We will continue to monitor the situation closely. For further details, see the report (updated weekly) on findings of [HPAI in wild birds in Great Britain](#) and [HPAI in wild birds in Northern Ireland](#).

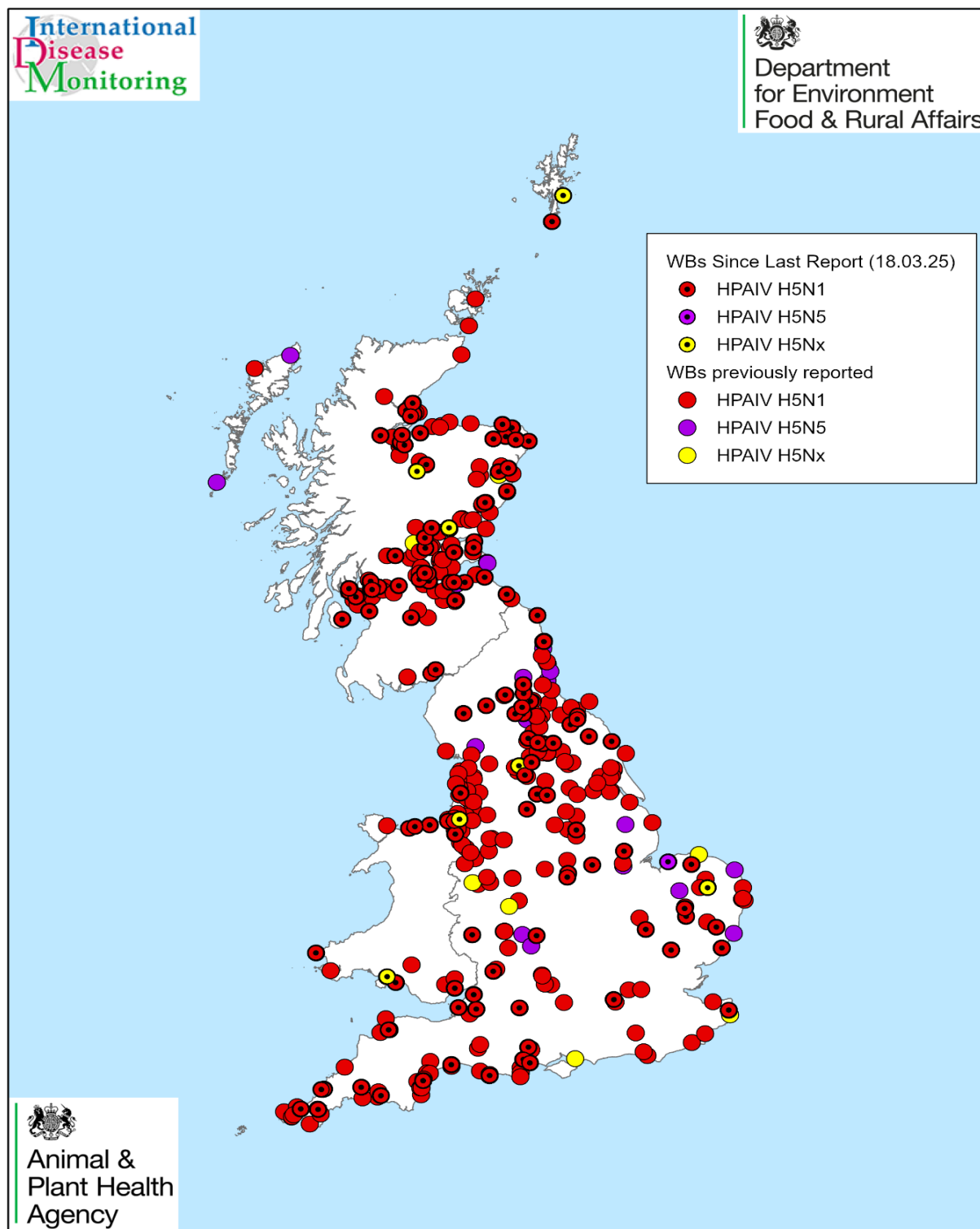
### **Non-avian wildlife**

Since 18 March, there has been 1 further positive HPAI H5 detection in non-avian wildlife in Great Britain. The event involved an otter in the Highlands, Scotland that tested positive for HPAIV H5N1. For further details and for previously reported detections in non-avian wildlife, see the report on [findings of HPAI in non-avian wildlife in Great Britain](#).



Map Prepared by IDM  
Date: 12/05/2025  
Absolute Scale: 1:5,500,000

**Map 1. Showing HPAI H5Nx Infected Premises across Great Britain from 1 October 2024 to 12 May 2025. Discussed in body of report.**



Map Prepared by IDM  
Date: 12/05/2025  
Absolute Scale: 1:5,500,000

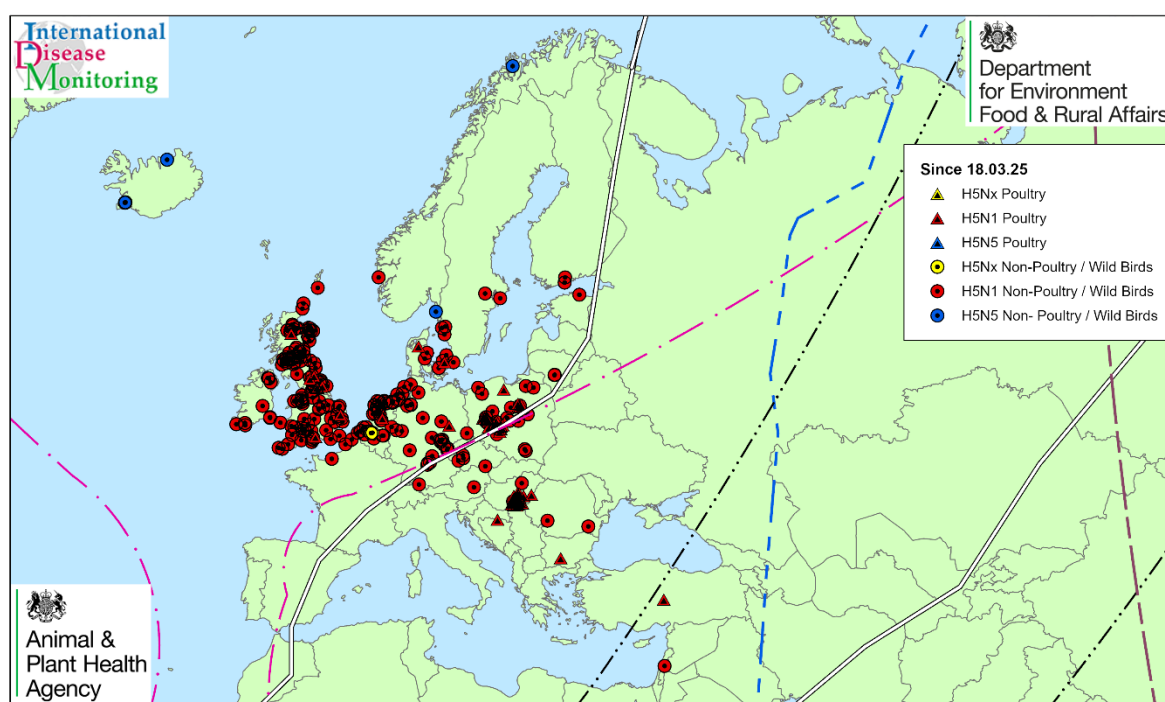
## GB HPAI Wild Bird Events October 2024 to May 2025

0 70 140 210  
Km

**Map 2. Wild bird positive detections for HPAI reports across Great Britain from 1 October 2024 to 12 May 2025. Discussed in body of report.**

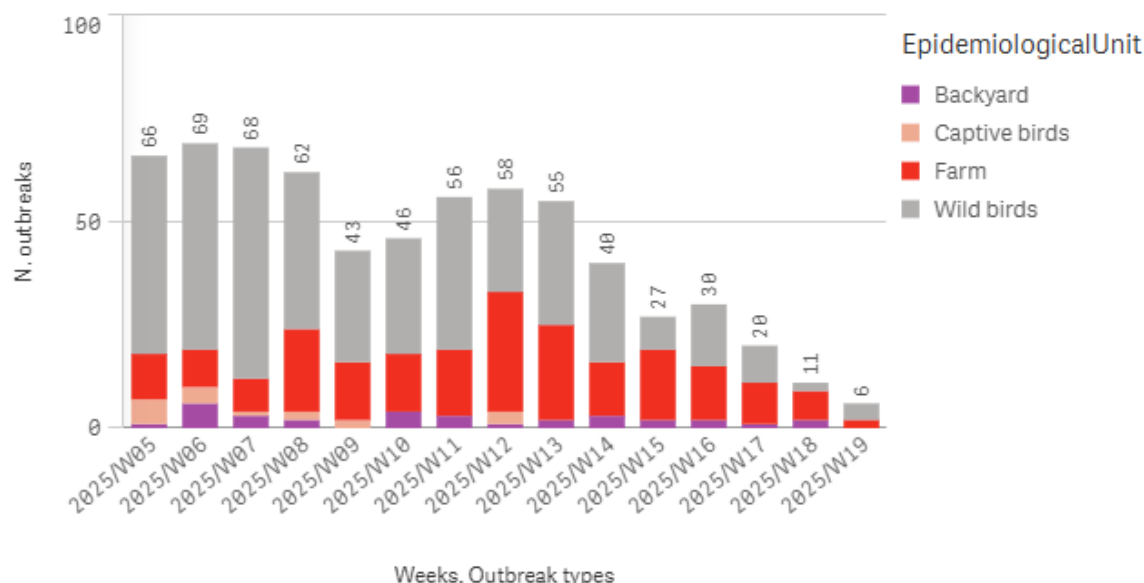
## Europe

Currently, there is no inward migration of substantial populations of waterfowl from Europe, sufficient to produce large aggregations in the UK. Map 3 shows the HPAI H5 reports across Europe from 1 October 2024, with the reports since our previous assessment on 18 March 2025 discerned with dotted centres. Reports of HPAI H5N5 since our previous assessment have been localised to Iceland and the extreme north of Norway. HPAI H5N1 has continued in the Wadden Sea area around Denmark and northern Germany into the Netherlands, and there have been a few wild bird cases ongoing in northern France. The Iberian Peninsula and central France have been largely unaffected. Central Europe continue to report detections, although at lower rates than in our last report. Since our previous report there have been a few wild bird detections in southern Norway, Sweden and Finland.



**Map 3. HPAI events in domestic poultry and wild birds in Europe reported by WOA between 18 March and 12 May 2025 (WOAH, 2025) cases and outbreaks are observed across Europe, as described in the main body of this report.**

## Epidemiological curvers



**Figure 2: Weekly numbers of HPAI H5 positive reports in Europe according to data from IZSve (2025). Shows between 60 to 71 positive reports per week from late January through to end of February with signs of a decrease in late March extending into April and May as discussed in text below.**

The total positive HPAI reports per week according to IZSve (2025) remained high at between 61 and 71 per week from late January through February after appearing to fall through December and into early January (figure 2). Around two-thirds of the reports were due to wild bird cases which increased markedly at the end of January, with poultry farm outbreaks increasing at the end of February. It is noted that in the first 2 weeks of March there appears to be the start of a fall in wild bird cases in Europe. However, there is a slight rise in mid-April, followed by a decline in late April and into early May.

Between 18 March and 12 May 2025, there were a total of 264 HPAI H5 events in domestic poultry, captive birds and non-poultry including wild birds across Europe reported by WOA. In total, there were 146 reports on WOA in wild birds and 118 poultry outbreaks. The countries with the highest number of poultry outbreaks were Hungary (74) and Poland (38), with only 1 or 2 outbreaks in each of Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. Overall, there has been a decrease in poultry outbreaks across Europe.

There has been a higher number of outbreaks in Poland reported this season in comparison to previous seasons, and an increase in reports of Newcastle Disease. This prompted an [EU Veterinary Emergency Team Mission](#) to evaluate the epidemiological situation of HPAI in the country. Recommendations provided included adopting further restricted zones (as well as 3km protection and 10km surveillance zones, prohibiting thinning, a delay in restocking, prohibiting multi-aged farms and ensuring timely reporting of suspect cases. Poland have responded and introduced these additional measures in

their most recent [presentation in April](#). From [Hungary's presentation to the EU](#), current mitigation measures include stamping out, awareness campaigns, an enlarged restriction zone and a housing order in high-risk counties. Farms that have had more than one HPAI outbreak in recent years will be audited to ensure enhanced biosecurity and monitoring before they can restock. Further planned measures, though not yet implemented, include the possibility of financial support for farms that are unable to meet biosecurity requirements, provided they cease operations for a period of 3 years. Additionally, a legal requirement will be introduced to enforce minimum distances between poultry farms, aiming to prevent the clustering of holdings in high-risk areas and reduce regional poultry density. Finally, a potential revision of the compensation mechanism for affected producers is under consideration.

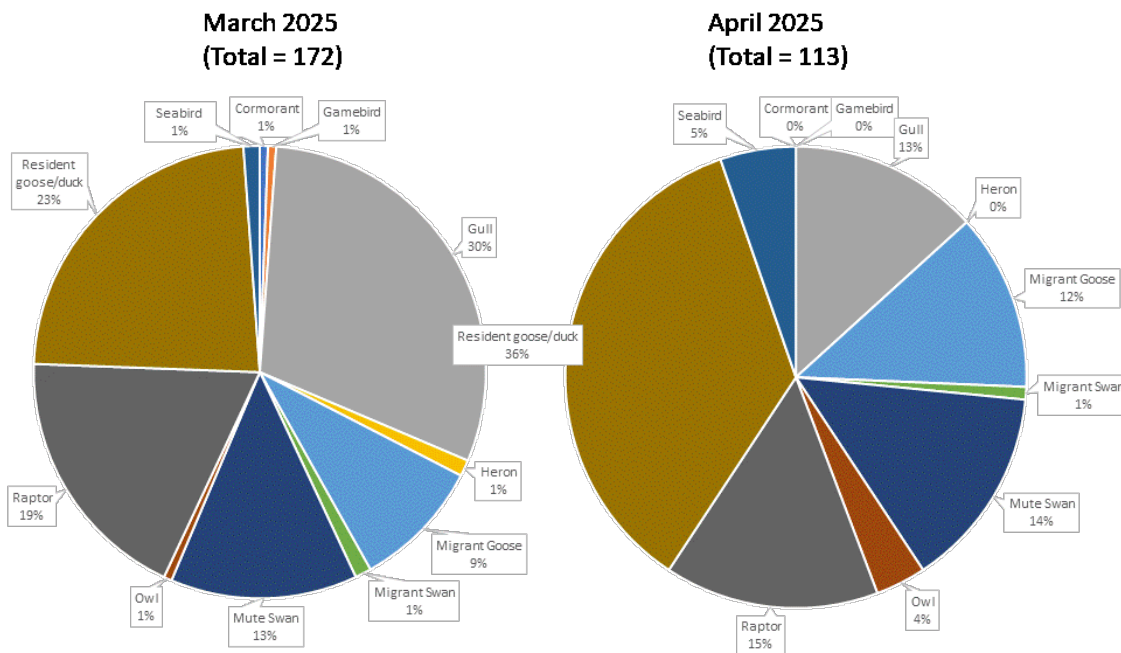
Wild bird cases positive for HPAI H5 across Europe reported on WOAHP since our last update are also reducing. In total there were 146 cases of HPAI H5. Of these, 138 cases were H5N1, 6 were H5N5 and 2 were H5Nx. The majority of cases were reported in the Netherlands (32), Germany (31), Poland (24) and Belgium (12), with other countries reporting 7 or under cases since our last report. The birds most frequently affected in Europe are waterfowl, followed by birds of prey.

There have been 3 reports of HPAI H5 in mammals in Europe since our previous update on 18 March 2025. These include HPAI H5N1 in 2 red foxes in Germany and HPAI H5N1 in a red fox in Norway.

## **Implications for Great Britain**

The number of wild bird cases week on week in Great Britain is falling albeit slowly. Most, if not all of the migratory ducks, geese and swans have now departed Great Britain for their breeding grounds in the Arctic. Although the winter aggregations of resident ducks, geese and swans have dispersed for breeding, the ongoing detection of cases in these groups including mute swans, mallard ducks, greylag geese and Canada geese in March and into April (see figure 2) is unexpected. Of more reassurance is the fall in the number and proportion of gull cases between March and April (figure 3), although the number of seabird cases has increased slightly with several gannet cases in April. In previous seasons when transmission has continued in gulls and seabirds over the summer, the risk in wild birds has been decoupled from the risk to poultry. There have been very high numbers of wild bird cases into April and early May, though the last poultry IP was 4 weeks ago (13 April 2025). Furthermore, the environmental conditions, namely higher temperature and increased ultraviolet light intensities, increase virus decay in the environment and the fall in wild bird cases is expected to continue through May albeit with a long tail as is being seen in Europe (figure 2) which typically leads Great Britain. Taking all these points into consideration it is appropriate now to reduce the wild bird risk from very high to high. Given the fall in the wild bird infection pressure, and the lack of IPs for 4 weeks, it is also appropriate to reduce the poultry risks at this time.





**Figure 3: Proportions of HPAI H5 wild bird positive by species or order in March and April in Great Britain. Shows pie charts for March 2025 and April 2025 with increasing resident goose and duck cases between March and April.**

## Conclusion

Since our last assessment on 18 March 2025, the number of found dead wild bird cases of HPAI H5 reported per week has decreased and has remained at lower levels compared to February in Great Britain. Report cases in Europe continue to decline though there will be variation in surveillance plans across Europe. Similarly, although HPAI H5 is still present in wild birds in Europe, with reports predominantly in the Wadden Sea area (the Netherlands, Denmark and north-west Germany), Hungary and Poland, we are not expecting wild bird movements from these areas of Europe into Great Britain at this time of year. It is expected that all of the migratory water bird species have now departed Great Britain, with the possible exception of small numbers of migratory waterfowl remaining in Scotland.

Cases in resident waterfowl (mute swans, Canada geese, greylag geese, and mallard ducks) and gulls have continued to be reported in recent weeks in Great Britain indicating a long tail in the epidemic this year. HPAI H5 has been reported in seabirds, albeit still at low levels, and it is not clear if this will continue over the summer. The increase in reports in gulls earlier this year has eased off with fewer gull cases in April although it is not known how gull cases will continue over the summer as in previous years. Currently there is downward trajectory of HPAI H5 cases in wild birds in Great Britain, there has been no IPs for 4 weeks, we are at the end of outward wild bird migration and environmental conditions are less suitable for HPAI virus survival in coming months.

Therefore, it is concluded that the national risk level for HPAI H5 in wild birds can be lowered from VERY HIGH (occurs almost certainly) to HIGH (occurs very often). There have been no IPs in Great Britain for the last 4 weeks, with low numbers reported in the weeks preceding that. The risk of infection of poultry in GB with stringent biosecurity is therefore lowered to LOW (rare but does occur) with high uncertainty. The risk to poultry with suboptimal biosecurity in Great Britain is also lowered, to MEDIUM (occurs regularly) with high uncertainty.

[Additional biosecurity measures came into force on 13 December 2024 in 4 counties in England.](#) At noon on the 25 January 2025, the regional avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ) that was declared in the East Riding of Yorkshire, City of Kingston upon Hull, Norfolk and Suffolk to mitigate the risk of further outbreaks of disease occurring was extended to the whole of the [England](#) and [Scotland](#), and on 30 January 2025 in [Wales](#). This means that it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers within the zone to follow strict biosecurity measures to help protect their flocks, of whatever type or size. This does not include a requirement to house birds, unless you are also in a 3km protection zone or in a region where the [mandatory housing order](#) is in place. On 16 February 2025, a mandatory housing order is in place in Cheshire, City of Kingston Upon Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, Herefordshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Shropshire, Suffolk, Worcestershire and York. As of [7 April 2025](#), the AIPZ housing measures were extended to include County Durham, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. This is being kept under constant review.

See the [interactive map](#) for details and check the [declarations](#) for details of the restrictions.

We are continuing to closely monitor the situation in Europe and to review the risk.

It is important that stringent adherence to good biosecurity practices is maintained.

### **Advice for working with birds**

Reinforcement of good biosecurity awareness behaviours and practices should be frequently communicated to all personnel working with birds.

Any lapse of these measures could result in disease being introduced to poultry and captive birds.

This could be by direct or indirect contact with wild birds.

Direct contact includes wild birds getting into housing or onto the range.

Indirect contact with wild birds includes faecal contamination of:

- feed
- water
- bedding

- equipment
- vermin
- clothing (including footwear of people in contact with infected birds or contaminated environment including flood water)

Special consideration should be made when bringing in equipment and materials, especially bedding and outer packages which may have become contaminated following environmental exposure whilst stored outside.

If you keep poultry (including game birds or as pets), you should follow our [biosecurity best practice advice](#).

Remain vigilant for any signs of disease in your flock and report any suspicious clinical signs of avian influenza to the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Contact

- 03000 200 301 in England
- 0300 303 8268 in Wales
- your [local field services office in Scotland](#)

Further guidance about avian influenza, including updated biosecurity advice for poultry keepers in:

- [England is available on GOV.UK](#)
- Wales is available on the [Welsh Government's website](#)
- Scotland is available on the [Scottish Government's website](#)
- Northern Ireland is available on [DAERA's website](#)

The WOA, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) International Reference Laboratory and the UK National Reference Laboratory at Weybridge have the necessary diagnostic capability for strains of avian influenza virus, whether of low or high pathogenicity, and continually monitor changes in the virus on a global scale, whilst utilising international networks to gain early insights into epidemiological trends and potential emergence of new genotypes which might change the risk profile.

We will continue to report on any updates to the situation in Europe and, in particular, any changes in disease distribution or wild bird movements which may increase the risk to the UK.

In England, Scotland and Wales, any findings of the following dead wild birds found at the same location at the same time should be reported online

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds>) or to the Defra wild bird helpline on 03459 33 55 77:

- 1 or more dead birds of prey (such as an owl, hawk or buzzard)
- 1 or more dead swans, goose or duck
- 1 or more dead gulls
- 5 or more dead wild birds of any species (not including gulls)

It is advisable that you do not touch these birds.

## Authors

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- Dr Paul Gale
- Dr Lauren Perrin
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- Prof Ashley Banyard

## References

All outbreaks and cases were taken from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Note that changes in format and level of detail are due to the change of data source for this report, from EU's Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS) to World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

- IZSVE (2025) [EURL Avian Flu Data Portal \(izsvenezie.it\)](https://izsvenezie.it)
- WOAH (2025) [WAHIS \(woah.org\)](https://woah.org)



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