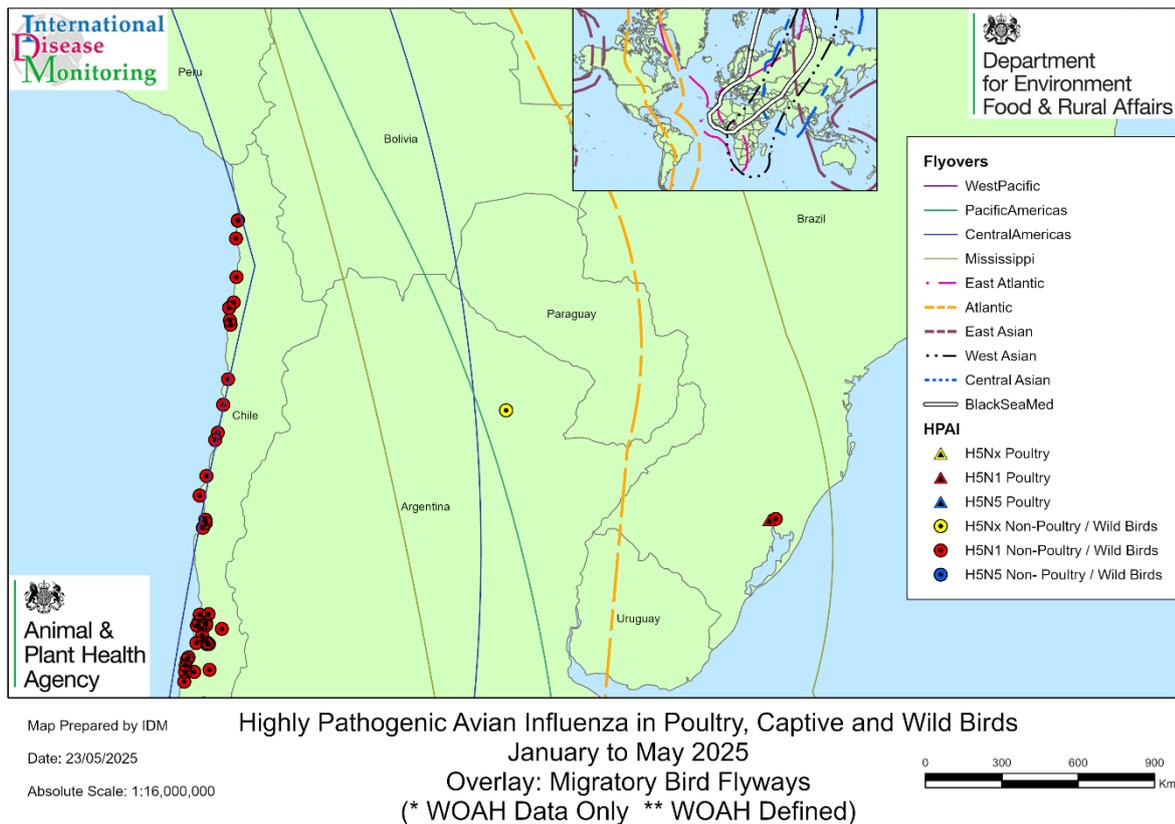


High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Brazil

22 May 2025

Disease report

On 16 May 2025, Brazil made an immediate notification of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). According to WOAH, this is the first report of HPAI in commercial poultry in Brazil. From epidemiological comments, the Official Veterinary Services in Brazil received a notification of acute mortality, along with neurological and gastro-intestinal clinical signs in the birds. The outbreak was reported in Montenegro, a southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul (see Map), on a breeder farm housing 17,025 birds. From the [Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock](#), as of 20 May, disinfection of the farm still needs to be completed, which has led to a delay in the 28 day observation period for international HPAI protocols. Laboratory analysis has identified the virus to be HPAIV H5N1 virus clade 2.3.4.4b, which is currently the main virus circulating in Europe, Great Britain (GB) and the United States. It is interesting to note that this is the first report of HPAI H5N1 on the eastern coast of South America this year with many more reports along the west coast and Chile in particular (see Map). In the mid-Atlantic Ocean, HPAI H5N1 has been detected in seabirds (brown skuas) on the island of Tristan da Cunha, St. Helena.



Map: Map of South America displaying HPAI events in domestic poultry and wild birds reported by WOAHA since 1 January 2025 to 22 May 2025.

Situation assessment

HPAI has been circulating in wild birds, non-commercial, non-poultry and wild mammals in Brazil since May 2023 ([WOAHA](#)). In the summer and autumn of 2023 there were many records of H5N1 in seabird species along much of the eastern coast of Brazil with 62 cases in Cabot's tern, 54 cases in Royal terns, 14 cases in South American terns, 10 cases in Common terns, and 4 cases in Manx shearwaters. The first confirmed report of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds in Brazil was on 15 May 2023 with 164 cases to date ([Avian Respiratory and Nervous Syndrome \(ARS\) - dashboard](#)). According to WOAHA there were 148 wild bird cases in 2023 and 15 in 2024. The reason for the decline in 2024 and the first detection in poultry in May 2025 is not clear.

Brazil are undertaking further genomic analysis of the virus to determine if wild birds may have been the likely source of infection for the outbreak in poultry. HPAI has also been confirmed in wild birds nearby at the Sapucaia do Sul Zoo on 15 May 2025. In total, 20 birds were affected including Black Swans and Black-necked Swans. The zoo is around 50km away from the confirmed outbreak and has been closed to the public to prevent further spread within the zoo.

[Measures that have been implemented](#) include a 3km protection zones and 10km surveillance zone, with all poultry farms falling within the 3km zone being inspected. As of 19 May, 238 of the 510 registered holdings within the 10km zone have undergone inspection too. On the affected farm, all poultry have been culled and eggs destroyed and cleaning and disinfection procedures underway. Tracings of eggs originating from the farm have been conducted and their destruction underway, after which disinfection procedures will begin at these hatcheries. Animal movement control checkpoints and disinfection barriers have also been set up to help prevent the spread of disease.

Implications for Great Britain

The only species of wild bird which migrate from northern Europe to South America are certain species of seabirds, including Manx Shearwaters and small number of Great Shearwaters. While Manx shearwaters breed on certain small islands (such as Skomer island off west Wales) around Great Britain, great shearwaters rarely, if ever, land in Great Britain. They breed on islands in the south Atlantic Ocean, including Tristan da Cunha. Both species fly down to Brazil in the winter although they always remain at sea. While transmission of H5N1 to Manx shearwaters could occur from gulls and other seabirds such as gannets in the summer in Great Britain because the birds could have close contacts at the breeding sites, transmission to these shearwaters would be less likely to occur in Brazilian waters because they always remain at sea with low contacts with other seabirds, although it is noted that 4 cases of HPAI H5N1 have been detected in Manx shearwaters in Brazil (see above). Therefore, there is no direct route from Brazil to Great Britain through wild migratory birds. No land species of wild bird migrates from North America to Great Britain, let alone from South America because the Atlantic Ocean is too large to be crossed in both directions on an annual basis particularly with the jet stream.

Conclusion

There have been no consignments of live poultry, ratites or gamebirds from Brazil in 2025. The import of fresh poultry, meat products that have not undergone heat treatment, breeding poultry, day old chicks and hatching eggs has now been suspended from the state of Rio Grande do Sul due to the outbreak. Due to the suspension of trade and the absence of direct wild bird migration routes from South America to Great Britain the risk of incursion from Brazil to Great Britain is considered to be very low. Much lower than the current risk levels in Great Britain, where detections of HPAI are ongoing.

The current HPAI H5 risk levels in Great Britain remain at high for wild birds and for poultry:

- low with high uncertainty for stringent biosecurity
- medium with high uncertainty for non-stringent or suboptimal biosecurity

For more information on the situation in Europe, see our [most recent update on Avian influenza \(bird flu\) in Europe, Russia and the UK](#).

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

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 is available for:

- England on [GOV.UK's guidance for bird flu \(avian influenza\)](#)
- Wales on the [Welsh Government's avian influenza page](#)
- Scotland on the [Scottish Government's avian influenza \(bird flu\) page](#)
- Northern Ireland on [DAERA's avian influenza page](#)

We will continue to monitor the situation.

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References

WOAH (2025) [WAHIS](#)

[Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Brazil \(2025\)](#)



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