Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Updated Outbreak Assessment #9

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

21 July 2025

Disease report

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 12 May 2025 (HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025) there have been 6 reports of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5 clade 2.3.4.4b in domestic poultry in Great Britain. There have been no reports in domestic poultry since 24 June 2025. 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 770 since 1 October 2024. Of these, 692 have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1, 41 as HPAI H5N5 and 37 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 (based on test date) has declined steadily, from 109 in April to 60 in May, 60 in June and 53 in July so far (see Figure 1). The wild bird risk level across Great Britain remains high.

The risk level for HPAI H5 incursion in poultry:

- with stringent biosecurity is maintained at low with low uncertainty
- with non-stringent or suboptimal biosecurity has been reduced to low with high uncertainty

Outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry have continued to fall across Europe with 8 reports between 12 May and 21 July 2025. Wild bird cases have also decreased with 112 reports between 12 May and 21 July 2025. The Netherlands were the most affected country, with 23 cases in wild birds since our last assessment. All other European countries had 8 reports or fewer in this period.

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 12 May 2025 (to 21 July 2025) there have been 6 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. Of these, one occurred in May and 5 in June. See Map 1 for approximate locations.

As of 21 July 2025, there have been no confirmed IPs since 24 June 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 infected premises are humanely culled and a 3km protection zone and 10km surveillance zone are put in place surrounding the premises. Find updates on the latest situation in England on GOV.UK.

Wild birds

The weekly number of HPAI H5-positive wild bird cases is shown in Figure 1. Between 12 May and 21 July 2025 (based on laboratory testing date), HPAI H5 has been detected in 154 found-dead wild birds in 78 separate locations in Great Britain, including 24 wild bird species (data available for cases of HPAI in wild birds in Great Britain), across 39 counties. Wild bird cases since 12 May have been reported at both coastal and inland locations across Great Britain (Map 2). The majority of the findings were in England (110), with 34 in Wales and 10 in Scotland (based on test date).

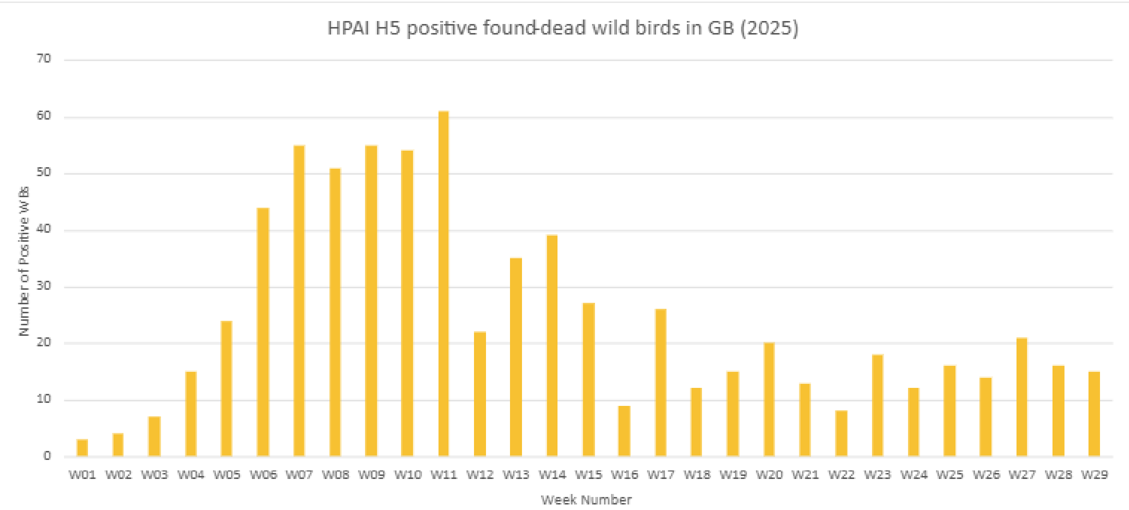


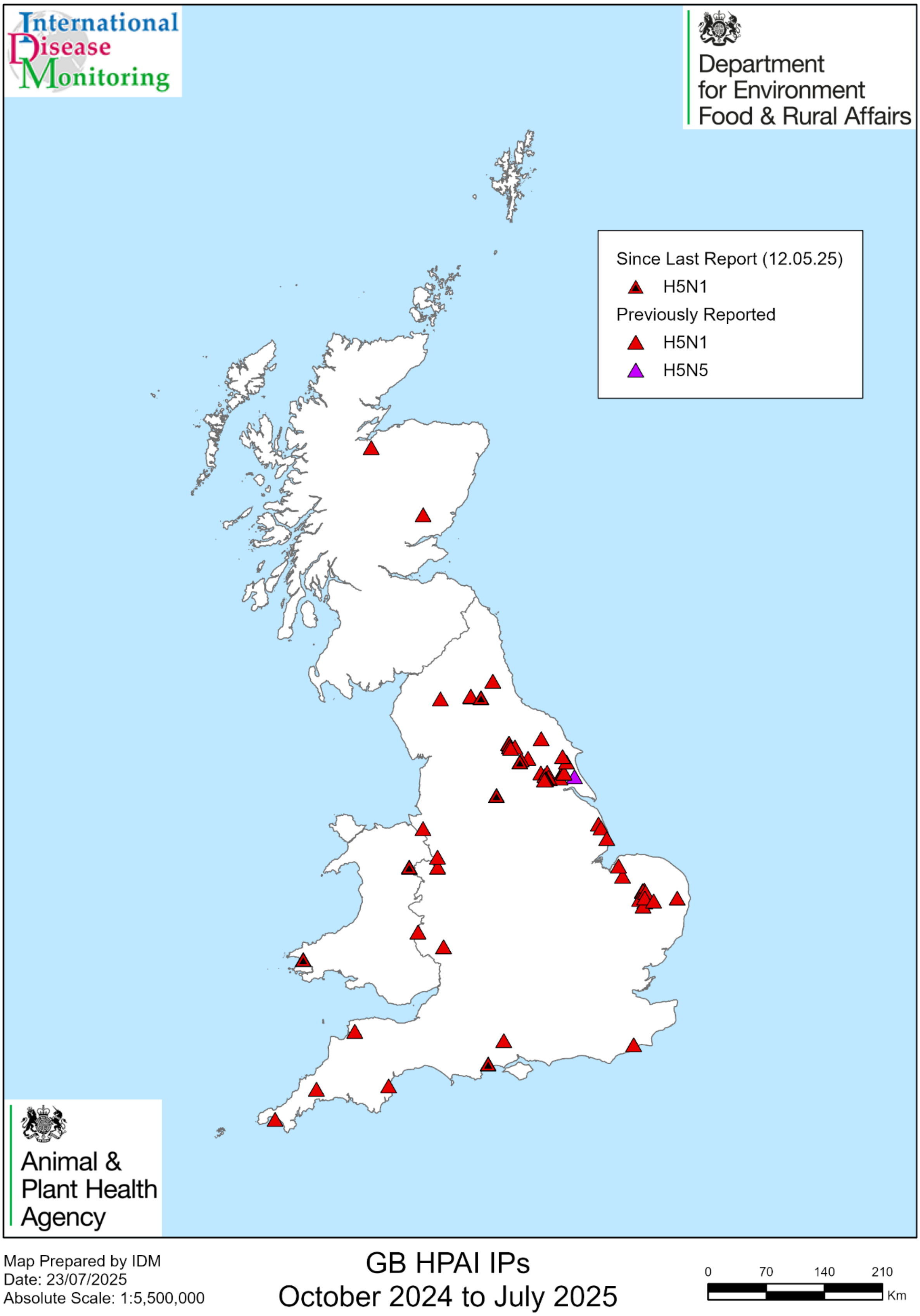
Figure 1: Detections of HPAI H5 positive found-dead wild bird in Great Britain since 1 January to 21 July 2025 per week (based on test date). Discussed in body of report.

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.

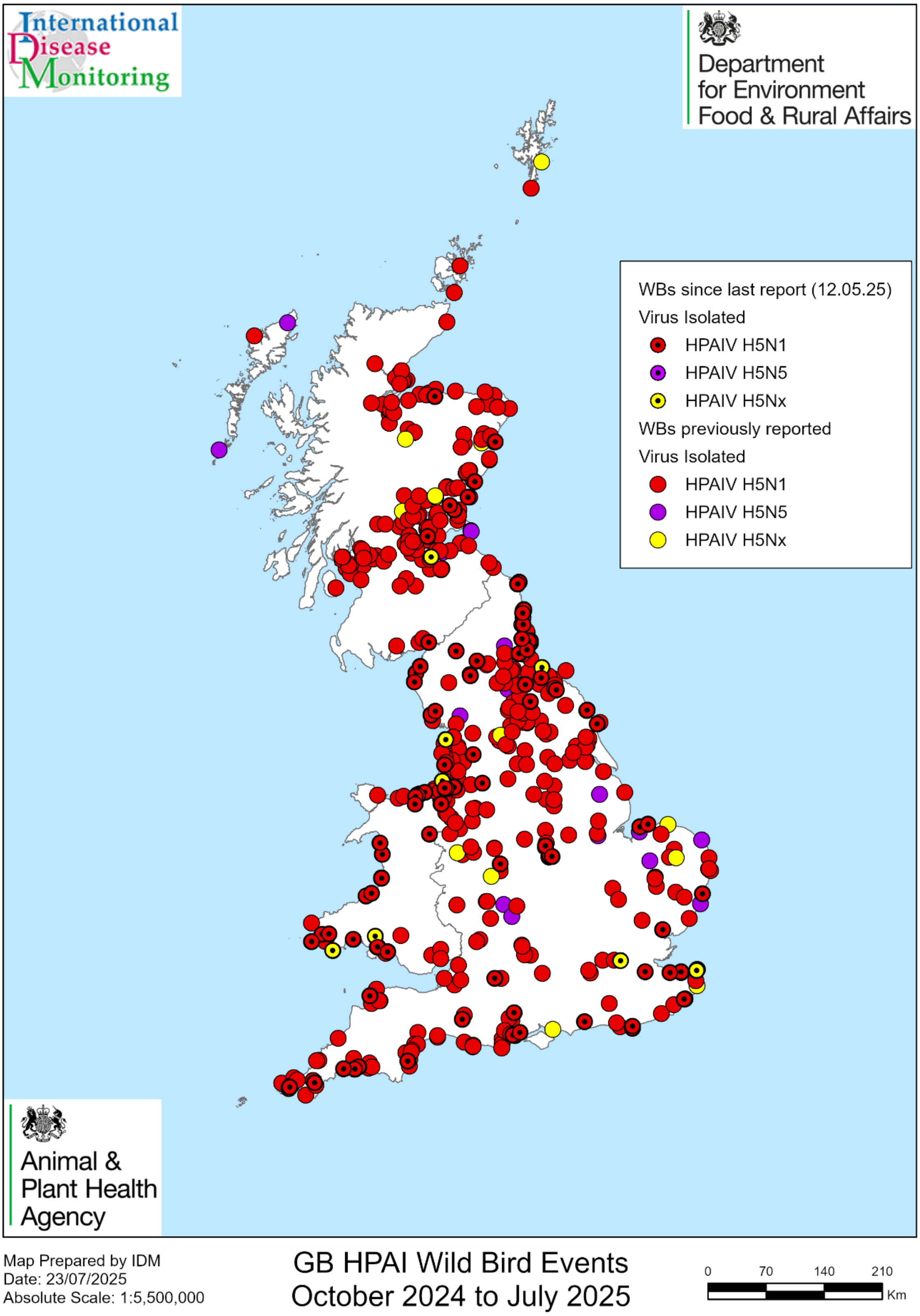
It is important to note that these surveillance figures for Great Britain are based on passive surveillance of found dead birds reported to Defra by the general public and as such, may be affected by several factors including frequency of visitors accessing areas with bird populations, the potential 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, please 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 12 May, there have been no further positive HPAI H5 detection in non-avian wildlife in Great Britain. For further details and for previously reported detections in non-avian wildlife, please see the report on findings of HPAI in non-avian wildlife in Great Britain.



Map 1. Showing HPAI H5Nx Infected Premises across Great Britain from 1 October 2024 to 21 July 2025. Discussed in body of report.



Map 2. Wild bird positive detections for HPAI reports across Great Britain from 1 October 2024 to 21 July 2025 (based on test date). Discussed in body of report.

Europe

Between 12 May and 21 July 2025, there were a total of 63 HPAI H5 events in domestic poultry, captive birds and non-poultry including wild birds across Europe reported by WOAH. In total, there were 55 reports on WOAH in wild birds and 8 poultry outbreaks. These figures exclude 14 reports from April or earlier in the year as this outbreak assessment focuses on cases since our previous assessment on 12 May 2025 (HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025). Overall, the decrease in poultry outbreaks across Europe noted in our previous outbreak assessment has continued, as shown by the data from IZSVe (2025) in Figure 2. It is interesting to note how the number of poultry outbreaks have declined more rapidly than the number of wild bird cases, indicating the poultry risk has decoupled from the wild bird risk, as we suggest is happening in Great Britain (below).

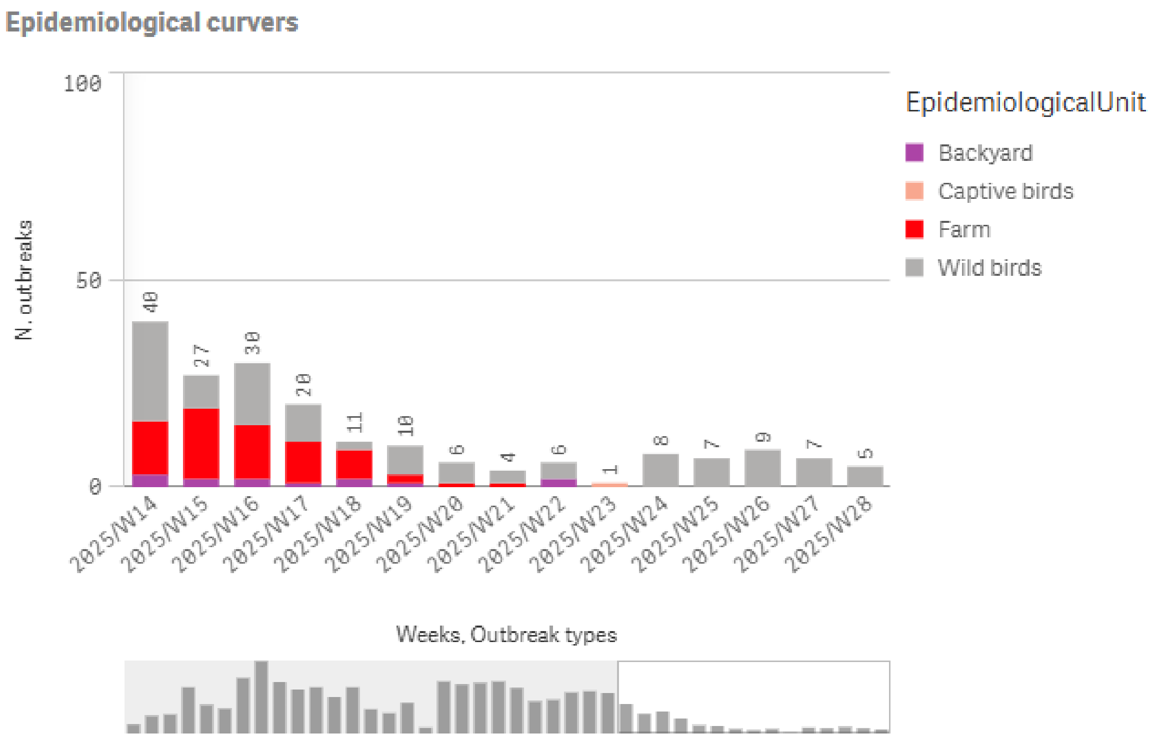
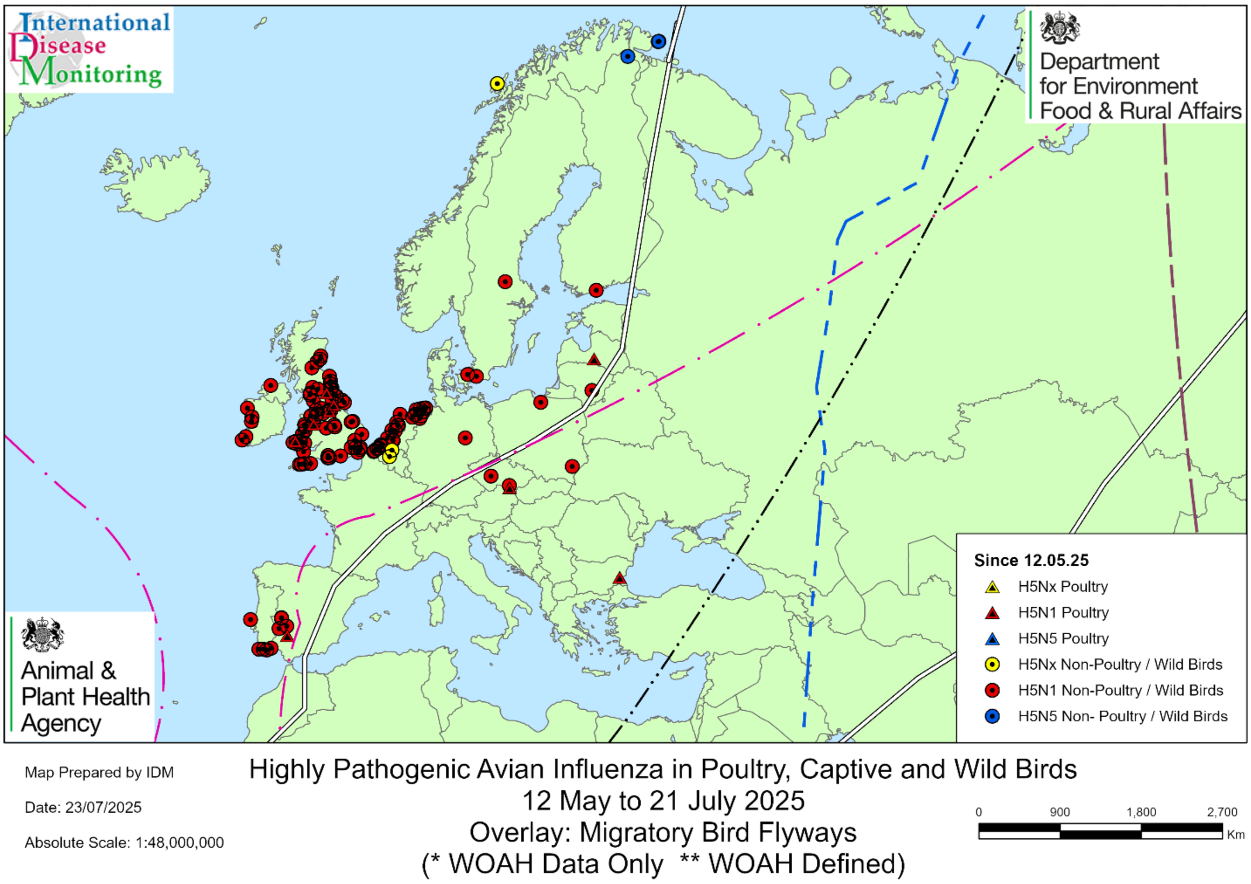


Figure 2: Weekly numbers of HPAI H5 positive reports in Europe according to data from IZSVe (2025). Shows week on week decline in number of positive reports from early April through to June with numbers levelling off at around 8 per week in July. The number of poultry farm outbreaks in red fall away by end of May leaving just wild bird cases in grey as discussed in text above.

Map 3 shows the HPAI H5 reports across Europe from 1 October 2024, with the reports since our previous assessment on 12 May 2025 (HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025) discerned with dotted centres. Reports of HPAI H5N5 since our previous assessment have been localised to the extreme north of Norway and Finland with cases in gulls, corvids and a golden eagle. Nearer to Great Britain, cases of HPAI H5N1 in wild bird species have continued along the coasts of Belgium and the Netherlands into the Wadden

Sea area around northern Germany, with a couple of cases further east in southern Sweden, eastern Denmark and into southern Finland. These have mainly been gull species with a single gannet and 3 resident geese in the Netherlands and a gannet in Germany. Most are coastal as can be seen from Map 3. Specifically Belgium has detected 6 cases of HPAI H5N1 in herring gulls in June (and a mute swan from April), Denmark a herring gull in June, Germany a heron and a gull in May and a gannet in June, and the Netherlands, 11 herring gulls, one black-headed gull, 2 lesser black-backed gulls, one gannet, 3 greylag geese, one buzzard, and one mute swan between May and July. There have been no wild bird cases in France since our previous outbreak assessment on the 12 May 2025 ([HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025]), nor across the whole of southern Europe, in keeping with the general clearance of HPAI H5N1 from the south-west of Europe through the spring and into early summer.



Map 3. HPAI events in domestic poultry and wild birds in Europe reported by WOAH between 12 May and 21 July 2025 (WOAH, 2025). Wild bird cases and poultry outbreaks are concentrated in Great Britain, Ireland and across the English Channel but only sporadic across eastern and central Europe with some cases in Spain and Portugal, as described in the main body of this report above.

Recently a cluster of cases in wild birds has been reported in the Iberian Pennisula with cases in resident geese and herons in western Spain and yellow-legged gulls in southern

Portugal (Map 3). In eastern Europe poultry outbreaks have continueds sporadically with 3 outbreaks in Czech Republic, one in Latvia, one in Lithuania and 2 in Poland. There was a single poultry outbreak in Bulgaria on the Black Sea coast. Spain also reported an outbreak of H5N1 in poultry in July.

Also of interest in Europe is the considerable number of wild bird cases of HPAI H5N1 along the west coast of the Republic of Ireland in June and July. There have been 8 in total, all seabirds (auks) and gulls.

Implications for Great Britain

Wild bird positive cases in Great Britain continued to fall from February through to May before levelling off at around 10 to 20 cases per week in July based on test date (Figure 1). From the peak of 201 cases in February there were just 52 wild bird cases in May, of which 23 (42%) were gull species (based on collection date). While the percentage of gull cases decreased from 30% to 13% between March and April (HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025), these increased markedly from 44% to 71% between May and June (Table 1). In addition, there were 2 cases in released pheasants at the end of May. The number of wild bird cases in Great Britain (based on collection date) increased from 52 in May to 69 in June. This was due to a doubling of the number of cases in gulls, with 49 gull cases accounting for 71% of the total cases. The remainder of cases in June were 17 seabirds (auks, terns and some kittiwakes), accounting for 25% of the cases, although there were also 3 cases in resident waterbirds (2 geese and a mute swan).

All of the migratory duck, geese and swans departed Great Britain by early May and most resident waterbirds had dispersed from their wintering aggregates to their breeding sites. Prior to this, in April, there was a marked increase in the proportion of cases in resident ducks and geese in Great Britain with resident ducks and geese accounting for 36% of wild bird cases in April (HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025). The detection of cases in resident ducks and geese continued in May with 4 cases in Great Britain (Table 1). The ongoing detection of cases of HPAI H5Nx in resident waterbirds at inland sites into May has been unprecedented and presented a concern in terms of potential infection pressure on inland poultry premises. In addition, there were 2 cases at inland sites in released pheasants in north Wales in May. There were no inland wild bird cases in June or July, and the last positive resident waterbird was detected on 17 June 2025 with a mute swan case in Hampshire. Wild bird cases in seabirds and gulls have however continued into July. The wild bird risk has therefore been maintained at high. It should be noted that the wild bird risk level reflects the risk level in wild birds across Great Britain rather than the specific risk level posed by wild birds to poultry.

Table 1: Numbers (and percentages) of wild bird cases of HPAI H5N1 and H5Nx according to bird group in Great Britain from 1 May 2025 to 19 July 2025. These are based on collection date (not test date) to give information on monthly trends in wild bird cases.

Month	**Wild bird group**	**Number of positive cases**	**Percentage of positive cases for the month**
May	Game bird	2	4%
May	Gull	23	44%
May	Mute Swan	11	21%
May	Raptor	2	4%
May	Resident goose or duck	4	8%
May	Seabird (including kittiwakes)	10	19%
May	**Total**	**52**	Not applicable
June	Gull	49	71%
June	Mute Swan	1	1%
June	Resident goose or duck	2	3%
June	Seabird (including kittiwakes)	17	25%
June	**Total**	**69**	Not applicable
July	Gull	17	59%
July	Seabird (including kittiwakes)	12	41%
July	**Total**	**29**	Not applicable

The most recent outbreak of HPAI H5N1 in poultry was on 22 June, on a premises with suboptimal biosecurity. Despite the high levels of HPAI H5Nx in wild birds, the wild bird risk level appears to be decoupled from the poultry risk as has been observed in previous summers when high numbers of seabird and gull cases were reported mainly around the coast. This means that the risk to poultry appears to be, in these very specific circumstances at this time, not directly related to overall wild bird risk. It is expected, as in previous years, that the risk levels in wild birds and poultry are 're-coupled' as the wintering migratory ducks, geese and swans return in the autumn.

The same decoupling appears to be occurring in northern Europe, with poultry farm outbreaks falling off in May while wild bird cases continue in gulls along the coast of Belgium, the Netherlands and northern Germany (Figure 2 and Map 3). As in Great Britain, the gull cases are mainly in herring gulls rather than in the black-headed gulls seen in previous summers. In summer most breeding herring gulls are localised to coastal ecosystems in Great Britain and Europe and may therefore have limited access and be less attracted to inland poultry premises compared to black-headed gulls, thus furthering any decoupling of the poultry risk from wild birds. The poultry holding density map for Great Britain (2024) shows the highest poultry densities of 100 to 120 per 100 km^2 are inland, although poultry holding densities range between 25 and 50 per 100 km^2 along some parts of the coasts of Cornwall, County Durham, Tyne and Wear, Lincoln, Suffolk and Norfolk, and North Yorkshire.

There have been no outbreaks in poultry with stringent biosecurity since our previous outbreak assessment on 12 May and the risk level is maintained at low with low uncertainty. Since there have been no outbreaks in poultry with suboptimal biosecurity for 4 weeks (to 21 July 2025) and all the wild bird cases are now coastal and in seabirds, the risk level for poultry with suboptimal biosecurity has been reduced from medium (with medium uncertainty) to low, albeit with high uncertainty.

The seabirds in their coastal breeding colonies will start to disperse to the sea next month so fewer cases in these birds would be expected. It is anticipated that cases of HPAI H5Nx in gulls will continue into September.

Conclusion

Since our last assessment on 12 May 2025 (HPAI in Great Britain and Europe May 2025), cases of HPAI H5Nx have continued in gulls and seabirds through June and into July. Therefore, the national risk level for HPAI H5 in wild birds is maintained at HIGH (occurs very often).

Most of the wild bird cases in the last month have been coastal and not inland. There have been no IPs in Great Britain for the last 4 weeks, with low numbers reported in the weeks preceding that. This suggests that the risk between infection in poultry and detection in wild birds is becoming decoupled as has been seen in previous years when HPAI H5 has over-summered in seabirds and gulls around the coast. The risk of infection of poultry in Great Britain with suboptimal biosecurity is therefore lowered to LOW (rare but does occur) with high uncertainty. The risk to poultry with stringent biosecurity is maintained at LOW (rare but does occur) with low uncertainty.

England is in an avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ) with mandatory biosecurity measures. The housing order was lifted on the 22 May 2025 (Bird flu: avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ) (England) - GOV.UK).

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 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 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 WOAH, 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, if you find the following dead wild birds at the same location at the same time, you should report dead wild birds online 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.

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References

All outbreaks and cases were taken from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Please 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)
- WOAH (2025) WAHIS (woah.org)

This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/animal-diseases-international-monitoring.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at iadm@apha.gov.uk.