Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment #1

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

8 October 2025

Disease report

The new reporting season for high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain started on 1 October 2025. This outbreak assessment is therefore the first for the new 2025 season although it covers the wild bird cases and poultry outbreaks since our previous outbreak assessment on 11 August 2025. This is to underpin the reasons for maintaining the risk levels for Great Britain.

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 11 August 2025 (11 August 2025: High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe) there have been 3 reports of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5 clade 2.3.4.4b in domestic poultry in Great Britain. All 3 reports have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1.

Since our previous assessment on 11 August 2025, there have also been 72 more cases of HPAI H5 clade 2.3.4.4b events involving “found-dead” wild birds (number based on laboratory testing date) in Great Britain, with 912 from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. Of these 912, 830 have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1, 41 as HPAI H5N5 and 41 as HPAI H5Nx (see Map 1 for wild bird cases). From 1 October 2025 to 8 October 2025, there have been 8 cases of HPAI in wild birds. Of these 8, 6 have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1, 1 as HPAI H5N5 and 1 as HPAI H5Nx. The number of cases (based on laboratory testing date) rose steadily over the summer peaking in the first week of August, thereafter falling week on week (see Figure 1). Despite this fall, the wild bird risk level across Great Britain remains at HIGH because of the anticipated increase in risk from wild birds flying into Great Britain from Europe this month, where HPAI is still circulating. In addition, we note that through the late summer and autumn of 2025 (see our previous outbreak assessments), the active disease process has not been restricted to coastal habitats, or found solely in gulls and colonial breeding seabirds. There has been evidence (albeit limited but continuing) of disease appearing inland in resident wildfowl (Canada geese, greylag geese, mute swans and mallards), raising concerns of a simmering disease process which might develop rapidly into a substantial infection pressure (from wild birds), as it did in the late summer of 2022.

The risk level in Great Britain for HPAI H5 incursion in poultry:

- With stringent biosecurity is maintained at LOW with medium uncertainty and;

- With non-stringent or suboptimal biosecurity is maintained at MEDIUM with low uncertainty.

Outbreaks of HPAI H5N1 in poultry are increasing, albeit from low levels, across Europe with 25 reports (between 11 August 2025 and 8 October 2025). In the 3 weeks between 21 July 2025 and 11 August 2025 in our previous assessment there were just 3 outbreaks in Europe, which were localised to the Iberian Peninsula and Republic of Ireland. Of these new 25 poultry outbreaks, 9 were in the Iberian Peninsula with 7 in Spain and 2 in Portugal. However, there were also poultry outbreaks in central Europe with 5 in Poland, 5 in Germany and 3 in Bulgaria. In addition, there was 1 in Italy, 1 in the Czech Republic and 1 in Norway. Wild bird cases of HPAI H5 have continued across in Europe but at greatly increased levels with 79 reports of HPAI H5N1, 10 cases of HPAI H5 and 3 cases of HPAI H5N5 (all in gulls in Iceland and Arctic islands in September) between 11 August 2025 and 8 October 2025. Norway, Spain and Portugal were the most affected with 27 cases of HPAI H5 in wild birds in Norway, 8 cases of HPAI H5N1 in Portugal and 33 cases of HPAI H5N1 in Spain since our last assessment. France, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands each reported 3 wild bird cases of HPAI H5 over this period with 5 cases of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds in Germany.

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.

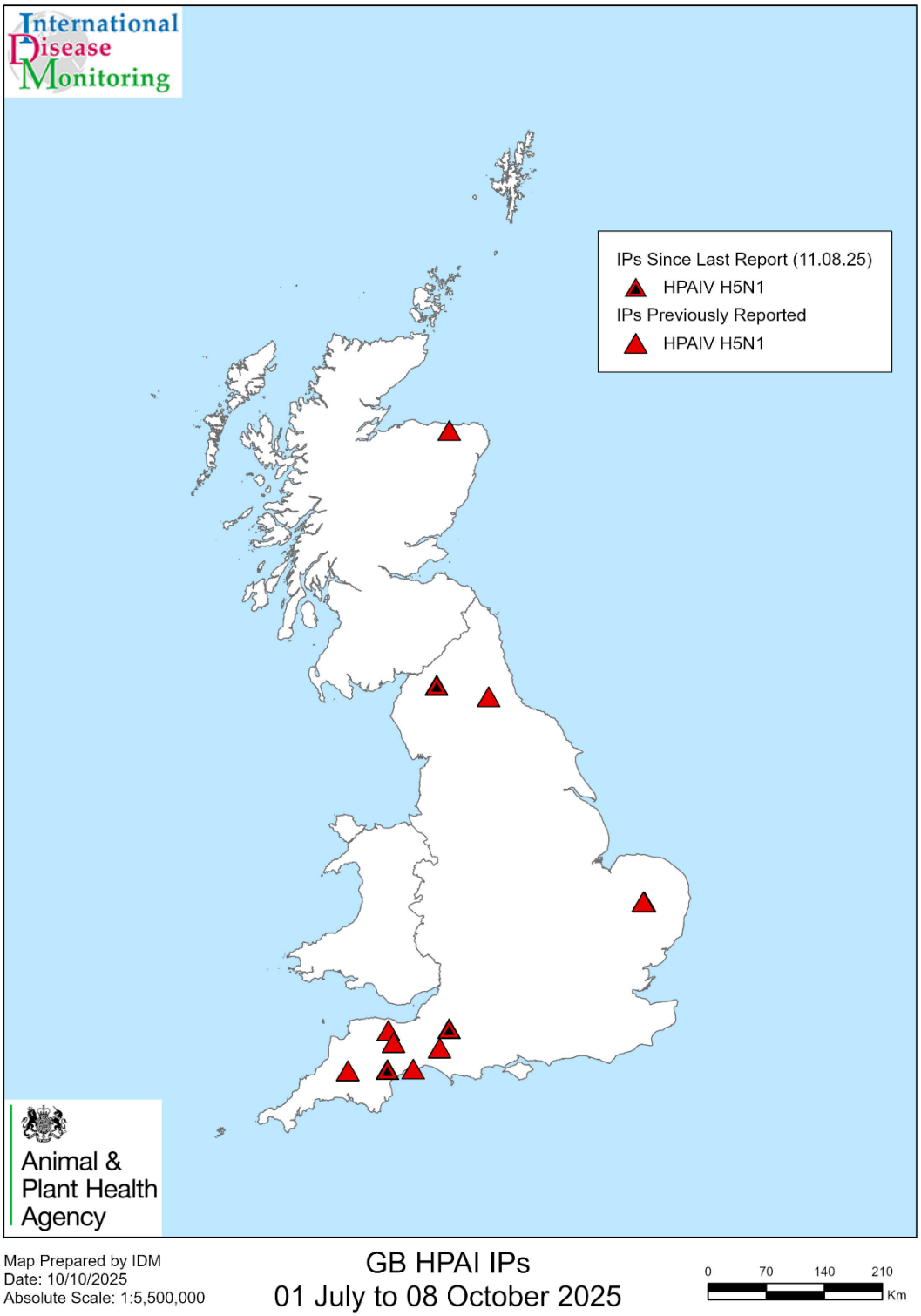
Great Britain

Poultry Infected Premises

Since our last outbreak assessment on 11 August 2025 (to 8 October 2025) there have been 3 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, gamebirds, and a backyard flock of chickens. Of these, two occurred in August and one in September. See Map 1 for approximate locations.

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.

For updates on the latest situation in England see Gov.uk.



Map 1. Showing HPAI H5Nx Infected Premises across Great Britain from 1 July 2025 to 8 October 2025. Triangles with a black triangle inside are IPs since our last report (11 August 2025) and those without are since 1 July 2025. Discussed in body of report.

Wild birds

The weekly number of HPAI H5-positive wild bird cases is shown in Figure 1. Between 11 August and 8 October 2025 (based on laboratory testing date), HPAI H5 has been detected in 72 found-dead wild birds in 47 separate locations in Great Britain, including 20 wild bird species (data available https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds), across 27 counties. Wild bird cases since 11 August have been reported at mainly coastal locations across Great Britain (Map 2). The majority of the findings were in England (52), with 16 in Scotland and 4 in Wales (based on laboratory testing date).

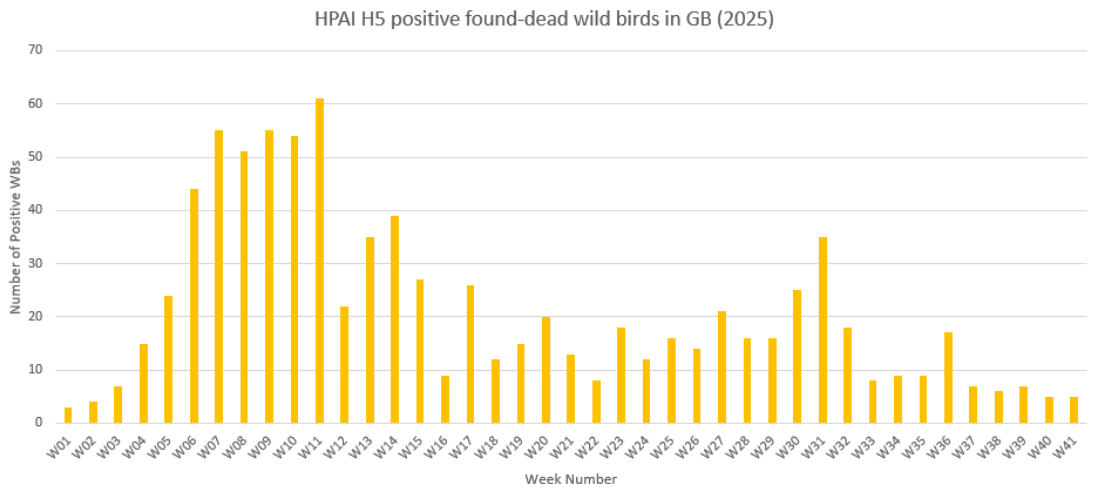
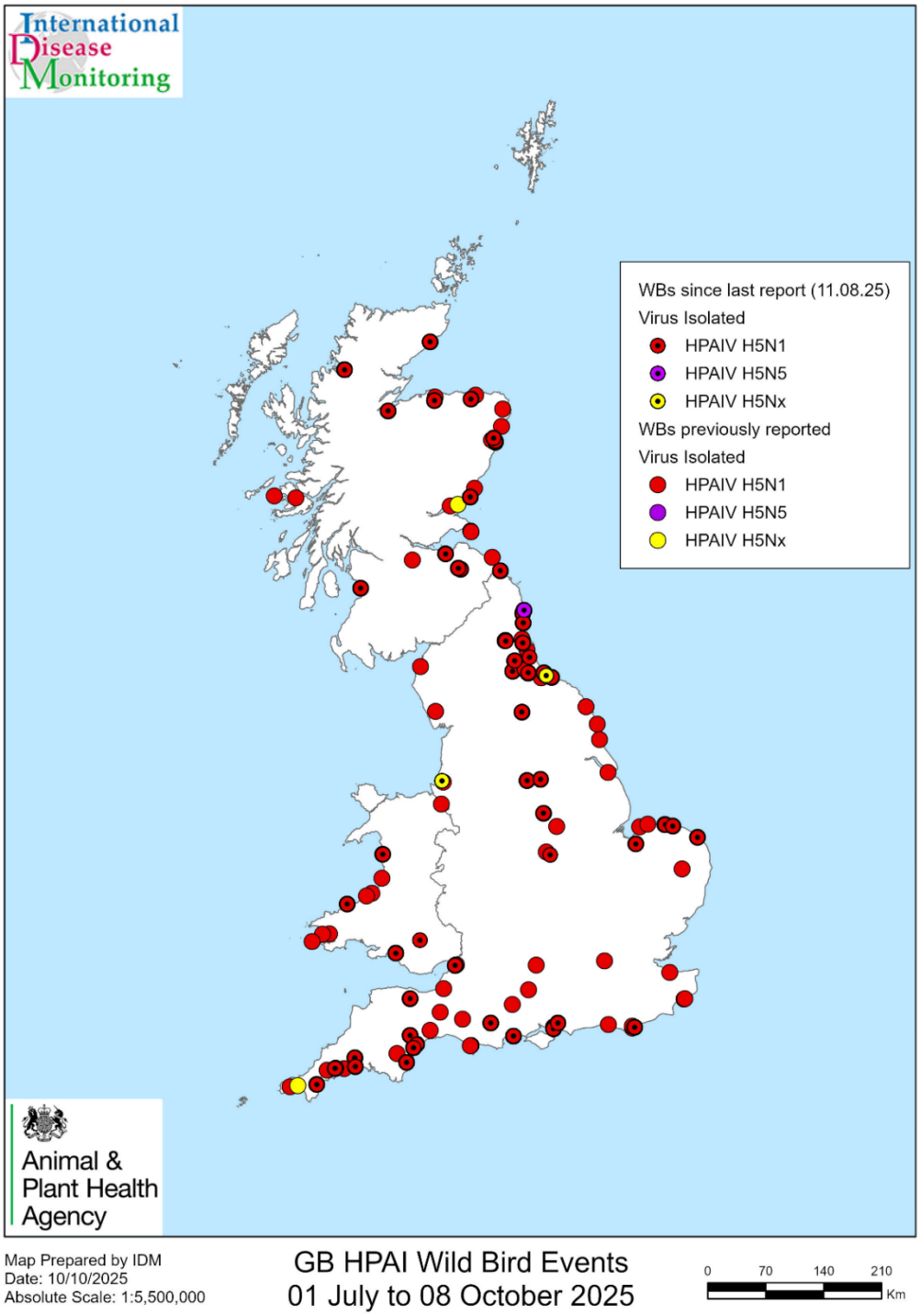


Figure 1: Detections of HPAI H5 positive found-dead wild bird in Great Britain since 1 January 2025 to 8 October 2025 per week (based on test date).

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.



Map 2. Wild bird positive detections for HPAI reports across Great Britain from 1 July 2025 to 8 October 2025 (based on laboratory testing date). Circles with a dot inside are wild bird positive detections since our last report (11 August 2025) and those without are since 1 July 2025. Discussed in body of report.

Non-avian wildlife

Since 11 August, 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.

Europe

Between 11 August 2025 and 8 October 2025 there were a total of 130 HPAI H5 events in domestic poultry, captive birds and non-poultry including wild birds across Europe reported by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Of these reports on WOAH, 105 were in wild birds and 25 were poultry outbreaks. This represents an increase in positive reports in September compared to July and August with over 10 reports per week across Europe according to data from IZSVe (2025) in Figure 2. The numbers are still relatively low compared to earlier in the year. Wild bird cases have increased slightly in September with a more notable increase in poultry farm outbreaks (Figure 2).

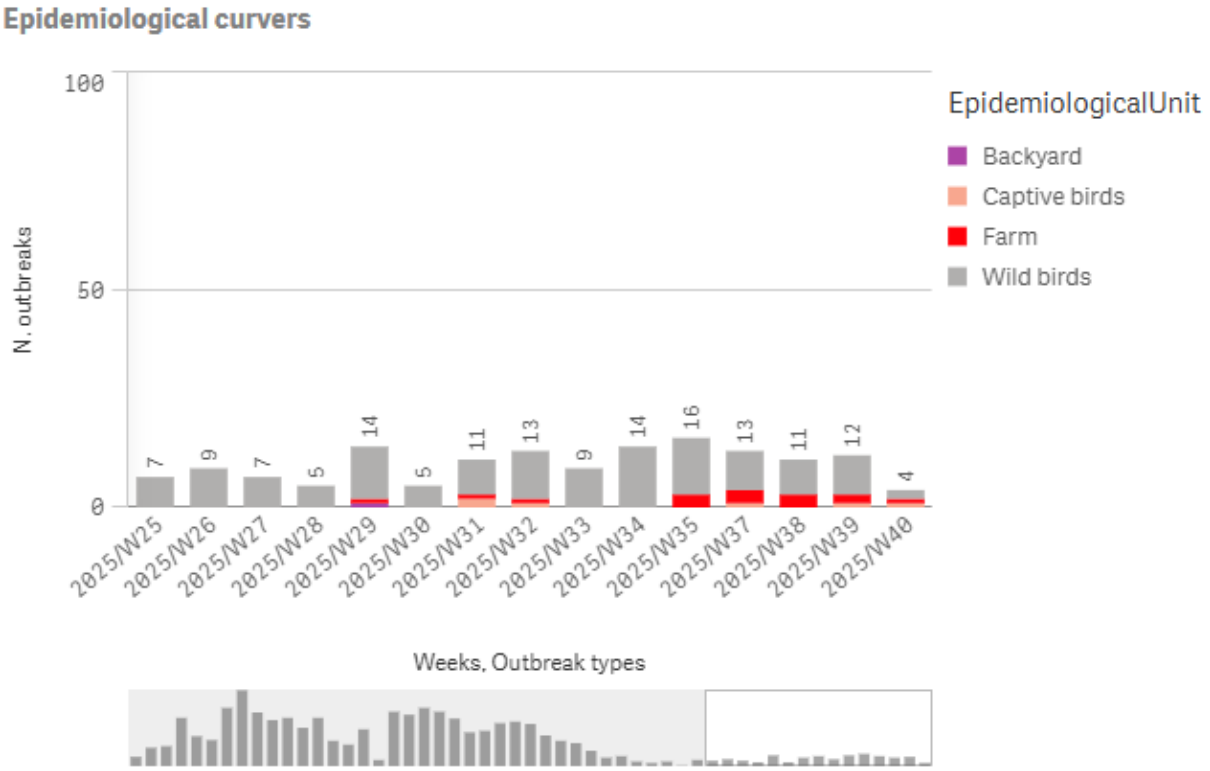


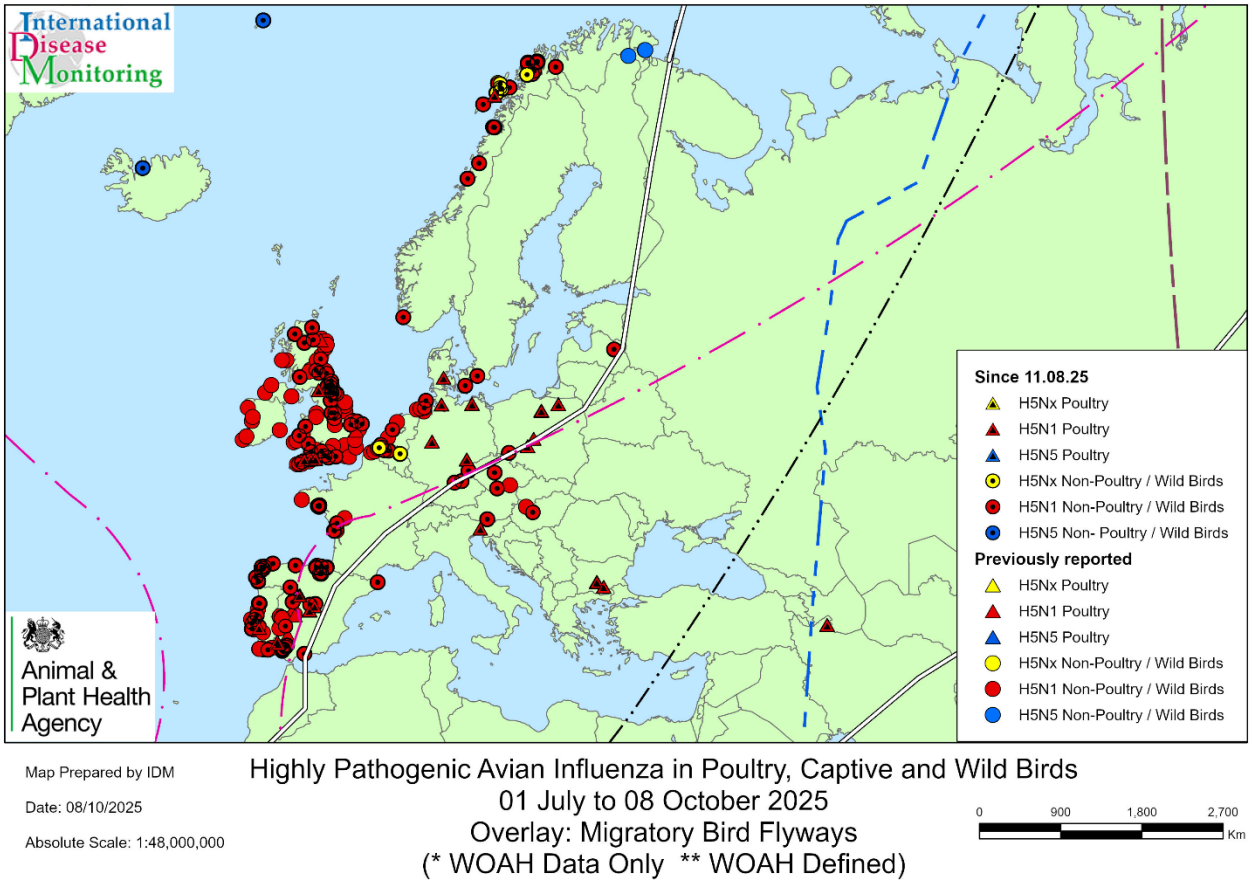
Figure 2: Weekly numbers of HPAI H5 positive reports in Europe according to data from IZSVe (2025) to 8 October 2025. The figure shows low levels in August and September around 11 to 16 per week and mainly wild birds. The number of poultry farm outbreaks in red are relatively few although occurring more consistently in September.

Map 3 shows the HPAI H5 reports across Europe from 1 July 2025 with the reports since our previous assessment on 11 August 2025 (11 August 2025: High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe) discerned with dotted centres. Comparing the maps of Europe on 11 August with that in Map 3 shows marked changes. In our previous assessment on 11 August, HPAI was confined to the extreme west of Europe with ongoing cases in Great Britain, Ireland and the Iberian Peninsula, and a greylag goose in Hungary. Map 3 now shows HPAI across the whole of Europe with the exception

of central France and western Italy. Three trends can be seen that directly affect Great Britain. The first is the increase in positive reports in eastern and central Europe including Belgium, the Netherlands and Wadden Sea area. Notably this includes an increase in cases in mute swans. In summary in August and September, Austria has detected 1 mallard and 2 mute swans, Bulgaria three poultry oubreaks, the Czech Republic 1 poultry outbreak, Denmark 1 black-headed gull, France 1 spoonbill, 2 gulls and a mute swan, Germany 2 hawks, 1 swan, 2 gulls and 5 poultry outbreaks, Hungary 1 cormorant, Italy 1 poultry outbreak, Latvia 1 whooper swan (which is a migrant), The Netherlands 2 herring gulls (and 1 common tern from July), and Poland 5 poultry outbreaks and 1 mute swan. Also, from July Belgium has late reports of a kittiwake, cormorant, gannet and mute swan. The second is the spread of HPAI H5 including H5N1 along the coast of Norway with 27 cases, all gulls except for 1 goshawk and 1 Arctic skua. The third is HPAI H5N5 in Iceland with 2 cases in gulls in September. In addition there were 2 cases of HPAI H5N5 in gulls on a remote island (Jan Mayen) between Svalbard and Iceland.

The most notable change in Europe discussed in our previous assessment on 11 August 2025 (11 August 2025: High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe) was the increase in wild bird cases on the Iberian Peninsula, with Spain reporting 8 wild bird cases and Portugal reporting 4 cases in gulls. This has continued with 41 wild bird cases and 7 poultry outbreaks in Spain and 8 wild bird cases and 2 poultry outbreaks in Portugal since the 11 August 2025. Wild bird cases in Spain included a wide range of species from marbled duck to booted eagle.

In total there have been 25 poultry outbreaks in Europe, since our previous assessment on the 11 August 2025 (11 August 2025: High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe) when there were just 3 poultry outbreaks in Europe in the 3 weeks from 21 July to 11 August 2025.



Map 3. HPAI events in domestic poultry and wild birds in Europe reported by WOAH between 1 July 2025 and 8 October 2025 (WOAH, 2025). Wild bird cases and poultry outbreaks show four trends, namely 1) central and eastern Europe, 2) north coast of Norway, 3) Iceland and 4) Iberian Peninsula as described in the main body of this report above.

Implications for Great Britain

The number of positive wild bird cases reported in Great Britain over the last month has fallen each week with fewer than 10 per week in each of the last four weeks (Figure 1). In terms of species these are much the same as over the summer (see our previous assessment 11 August 2025: High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe), namely gulls and resident geese. Gulls accounted for over half of the wild bird cases in August, falling slightly in September (Table 1) with seabirds (auks, fulmar, gannet and kittiwake) accounting for 15% in August and 8% in September. Cases in resident ducks, geese and swans (mallards, Canada and greylag geese and mute swans) continued through August and into September and there were 3 cases in pheasants after release (Table 1). Notably the percentage of found dead wild bird cases testing positive has also fallen week on week, generally being above 10-12% (and even 31%) in July/August and down to 5% in September. However, the wild bird risk level is still maintained at high because it is anticipated that the trajectory of the risk level will be up

over the next few weeks, with the ongoing return of thousands of migratory ducks, geese and swans from Europe to overwinter in Great Britain.

There are 3 areas of concern in Europe. First is the increase in wild bird cases of HPAI H5 in eastern and central Europe in September with 4 mute swan cases (2 in Austria, 1 in Germany and 1 in Poland) in the last week to 8 October 2025 on WOAH (and 1 in France in August and 1 in Belgium from July). These 4 mute swan cases in Austria, Germany and Poland were not present 4 weeks ago and represent a change, noting that there were many mute swan cases across Europe last winter. In the week to the 1 October 2025, more cases of H5N1 in wild birds have been reported on the Animal Disease Information System (ADIS) - Food Safety including 2 in Austria, 1 in Germany, 1 Spain, 1 in Hungary, 1 in Latvia, 1 in Poland and 1 in Norway. In addition there have been an increase in the number of poultry outbreaks in Europe in September including 1 in the Czech Republic, 1 in Italy, 3 in Bulgaria, 5 and Poland and 5 in northern Germany (to 8 October on WOAH). In the week to the 8 October, more poultry outbreaks of H5N1 have been reported on Animal Disease Information System (ADIS) - Food Safety with 2 in Germany, 1 in Denmark, 1 in the Netherlands, 1 in Sweden and 1 in Norway. Evidence that HPAI is coming towards Europe from the east is the recent report to WOAH of an outbreak in northern Iran near the Caspian Sea (WAHIS). Second HPAI H5N1 is increasing in wild birds along the northern coast of Norway (Map 3) which is an area through which the Svalbard barnacle geese migrate to the Solway in Scotland in the autumn. Third, HPAI H5N5 has reappeared in Iceland with two cases in gulls. Many geese and swans will come through Iceland on their way to Great Britain this autumn. Indeed a case of HPAI H5N5 has been detected in a great black-backed gull in Northumberland in Great Britain on the 7 October. HPAI H5N5 has previously circulated in wild birds in Great Britain mainly in the north and east and there has been one poultry outbreak, namely in East Riding of Yorkshire in November 2024. For these reasons the wild bird risk level in Great Britan is maintained at high. Although HPAI H5N1 continues to circulate in wild birds in the Iberian Peninsula with more cases in gulls and other wild birds, this does not directly affect the risk to Great Britain.

In the last week of September, there was one outbreak of HPAI H5N1 in poultry in Cumberland which is a hotspot site for overwintering pink-footed geese. This was the first IP since the 2 IPs detected at the end of August. With just 3 IPs since the end of August it could be argued that the risk level for poultry with suboptimal biosecurity is now low (rare but does occur). However, given the likely increase in wild bird infection pressure in the coming weeks, the risk level for poultry with sub-optimal biosecurity is maintained at medium (low uncertainty). The risk level for poultry with stringent biosecurity is maintained at low (medium uncertainty).

Table 1: Numbers (and percentages) of wild bird cases of HPAI H5N1 and H5Nx according to bird group in Great Britain collected from 11 August 2025 to 8 October. 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
August	Gamebird	3	9.1%
August	Gull	17	51.5%
August	Mute swan	1	3.0%
August	Passerine	1	3.0%
August	Raptor	1	3.0%
August	Resident Duck	3	9.1%
August	Resident Goose	2	6.1%
August	Seabird	5	15.2%
August	**Total**	**33**	**Not applicable**
September	Gull	11	42.3%
September	Resident Goose	10	38.5%
September	Seabird	2	7.7%
September	Raptor	2	7.7%
September	Mute swan	1	3.8%
September	**Total**	**26**	**Not applicable**

Conclusion

Since our last assessment on 11 August 2025 (11 August 2025: High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in Great Britain and Europe), cases of HPAI H5Nx have continued through late August and September in wild birds in Great Britain mainly in gulls and seabirds. Cases of HPAI H5N1 in resident waterbirds (Canada geese, mute swans and mallards) and also in inland wild birds including released pheasants have also continued albeit at lower levels. Although wild bird cases have fallen in September in Great Britain, the numbers of wild bird cases and poultry outbreaks in Europe are markedly increasing and there is an increasing likelihood of new introductions into Great Britain in the coming weeks through the ongoing migration of migratory ducks, geese and swans from northern and eastern Europe. Therefore, the national risk level for HPAI H5 in wild birds in Great Britain is maintained at HIGH (occurs very often).

In our previous assessment on the 11 August there were 9 new IPs in Great Britain of which 4 were in the first 10 days of August. Since then there were a further 2 IPs in August and then just 1 at the end of September, representing a decrease in poultry outbreaks in Great Britain. However, due to the ongoing migration of wild birds into Great Britain from Europe where the number of HPAI H5 cases is increasing, the risk of infection of poultry in Great Britain with suboptimal biosecurity is maintained at MEDIUM (occurs regularly) with low uncertainty. The risk to poultry with stringent biosecurity is maintained at LOW (rare but does occur) with medium uncertainty.

England is in an avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ) with mandatory biosecurity measures. (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, 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.

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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.