Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Updated Outbreak Assessment #7

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

10 April 2026

Disease report

In our previous outbreak assessment on 10 March 2026 (HPAI in Europe #6) we noted that the number of cases of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) H5 in wild birds was continuing to fall with a shift in the species of wild birds affected, namely fewer resident water birds but more gulls and seabirds together with a high proportion of raptors. This downward trend has continued into April with the number of wild bird cases halving each month since the peak in November/December (Table 1). Since our previous outbreak assessment, there have been 29 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 (Figure 2). The total number of wild bird cases in Great Britain since the start of the HPAI season on 1 October 2025 is now 908. Of these 908, 892 have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1,12 as HPAI H5Nx and 4 as HPAI H5N5 (see Map 2 for wild bird cases).

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 10 March 2026, there have been no confirmed detections of HPAI H5 clade 2.3.4.4b in domestic poultry in Great Britain. The last IP was detected on 3 March 2026, as reported in our previous outbreak assessment (HPAI in Europe #6). With no IPs in Great Britain in the last month (Figure 1), the risk level for poultry with sub-optimal biosecurity in Great Britain is lowered from medium (high uncertainty) to LOW (rare but does occur) with medium uncertainty.

The decrease in the risk to poultry with suboptimal biosecurity is consistent with a reduction in the wild bird infection pressure on poultry. Although there have been 29 new detections in wild birds based on test date since our previous assessment on 10 March 2026, there have only been 15 new detections based on collection date, which is the more important date for assessing trends. These include 1 resident goose (namely a greylag goose) and no mute swans which is encouraging in terms of the continuing trend in the reduction in the number of cases in resident waterfowl. In previous years, cases in resident waterfowl appeared to be linked to poultry risk. Of the 15 new detections, 7 were migratory geese (6 pink-footed geese and 1 brent goose) which will be departing Great Britain this month for their breeding sites in north-eastern Europe. There were 2 seabird cases, namely a shag and a kittiwake, and 1 gull (common gull). There were also 4 raptors, all buzzards. The shift from resident water birds to gulls and seabirds mentioned in our previous assessment on 10 March 2026 is therefore continuing. This decrease in wild bird cases and the apparent shift in wild bird species away from waterbirds, the lack of inward

migration into Great Britain, and the increase in daylight hours, which are less suitable for virus survivability, supports a reduction in the wild bird risk level in Great Britain from high to MEDIUM.

It should be noted that the ‘medium’ risk level (event occurs regularly) in wild birds is still very much a concern and that implementing and maintaining biosecurity measures to prevent exposure of poultry and other kept birds to the infectious agent are of great importance.

The last IP with stringent biosecurity was on 01 December 2025. The risk level in Great Britain for HPAI H5 incursion in poultry:

- With stringent biosecurity is therefore maintained at LOW but the uncertainty is reduced from medium to low; and
- With non-stringent or suboptimal biosecurity is decreased from medium with high uncertainty to LOW with medium uncertainty.

Situation assessment

Here, an HPAI H5Nx event refers to a report of HPAI in poultry, or a location with at least 1 HPAI H5Nx positive wild bird. Individual HPAI H5Nx positive wild birds are referred to as cases.

United Kingdom

Poultry Infected Premises

Since our last outbreak assessment on 10 March 2026, there have been no new Infected Premises (IP) confirmed with HPAI H5N1 in poultry (to 10 April 2026). The number of IPs per week has fallen week on week since the peak of 14 per week in early November 2025 to on average less than 1 per month in March and early April 2026 (see Figure 1).

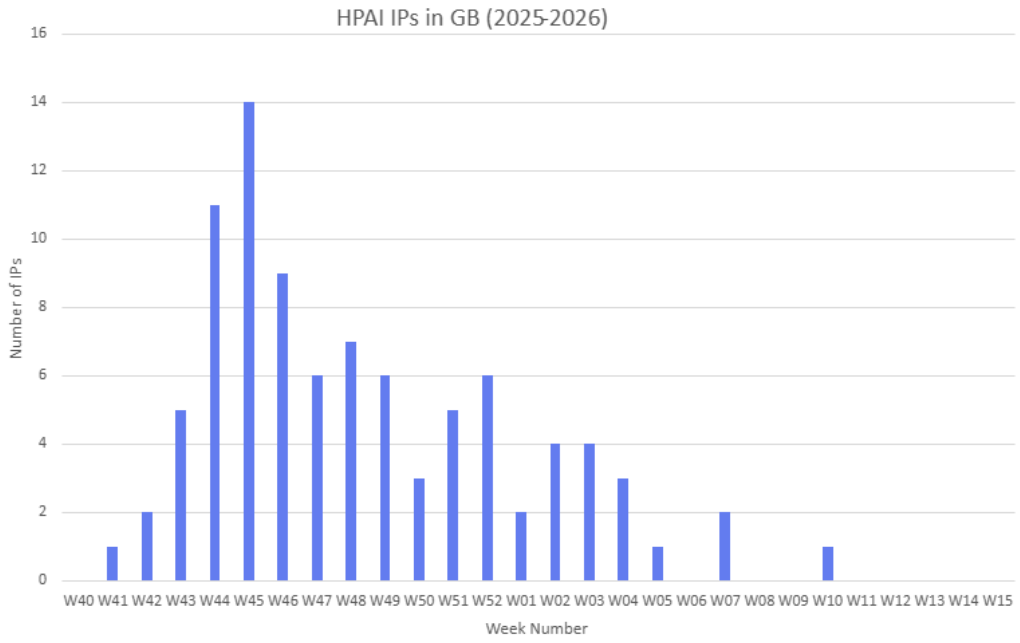
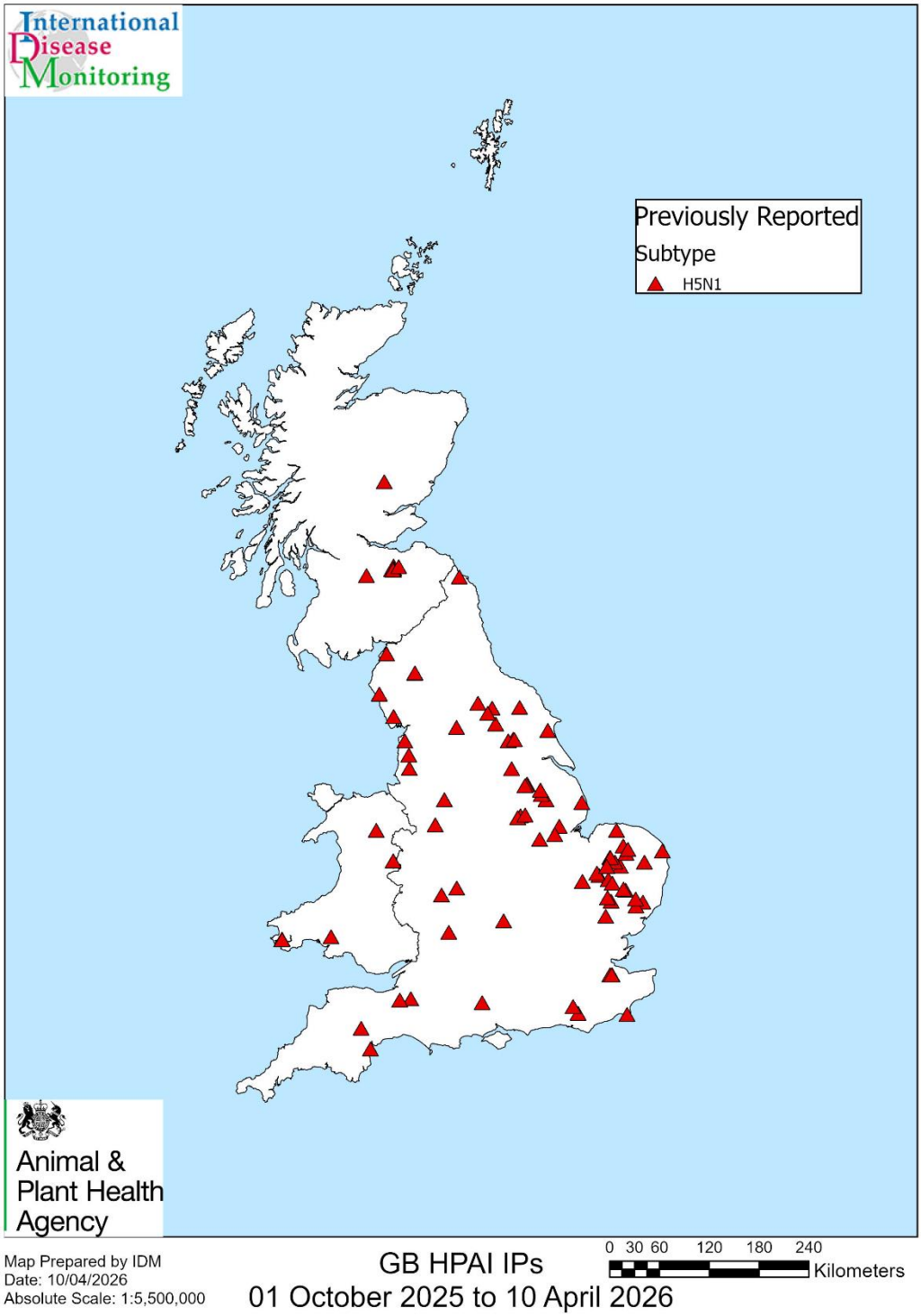


Figure 1: Number of HPAI H5N1-infected premises (IPs) in Great Britain each week from 28 September to 10 April 2026. Graph shows the weekly number of IPs reducing from a peak of 14 per week in early November 2025 to less than 1 per month on average in March and April 2026.

On 6 November 2025, a mandatory housing order to cover the whole of England was introduced for poultry flocks of more than 50 birds or those that sell or give away eggs or poultry products (National Housing Order declared to protect poultry from Avian Influenza - GOV.UK). On 13 November 2025, mandatory housing measures were introduced in Wales. This was a legal requirement for all keepers of 50 or more birds of any species and those with flocks of less than 50 birds if eggs or poultry products are sold or given away. The mandatory housing orders in England and Wales were lifted from 00.01 on 9 April 2026 except for premises in a protection zone or captive bird (monitoring) controlled zone. The Avian Influenza Prevention Zones (AIPZ) remains in place across England, Wales and Scotland.

An AIPZ was introduced in Northern Ireland from 00:01 on Saturday 1 November 2025. Following 2 confirmations of HPAI H5N1 in County Tyrone and County Fermanagh, mandatory housing measures for all kept birds and poultry came into force in Northern Ireland from 00:01, 6 November 2025.

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



Map 1. Showing HPAI H5Nx Infected Premises (IPs) across Great Britain from 1 October 2025 to 10 April 2026. There have been no new IPs since our previous assessment on 10 March 2026. Discussed in body of report.

Wild birds

The weekly number of HPAI H5-positive wild bird cases in Great Britain is shown in Figure 2. Between 10 March 2026 and 10 April 2026 (based on laboratory testing date), HPAI H5 has been detected in 29 found-dead wild birds, including 14 wild bird species (data

available https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds), across 20 counties. The 29 positive wild bird cases since 10 March were collected from both inland and coastal locations with fewer positive cases in the south-west or south of England but more in Scotland, north Wales and northern England (Map 2). In total there were 13 in England, 14 in Scotland and 2 in Wales (based on laboratory testing date).

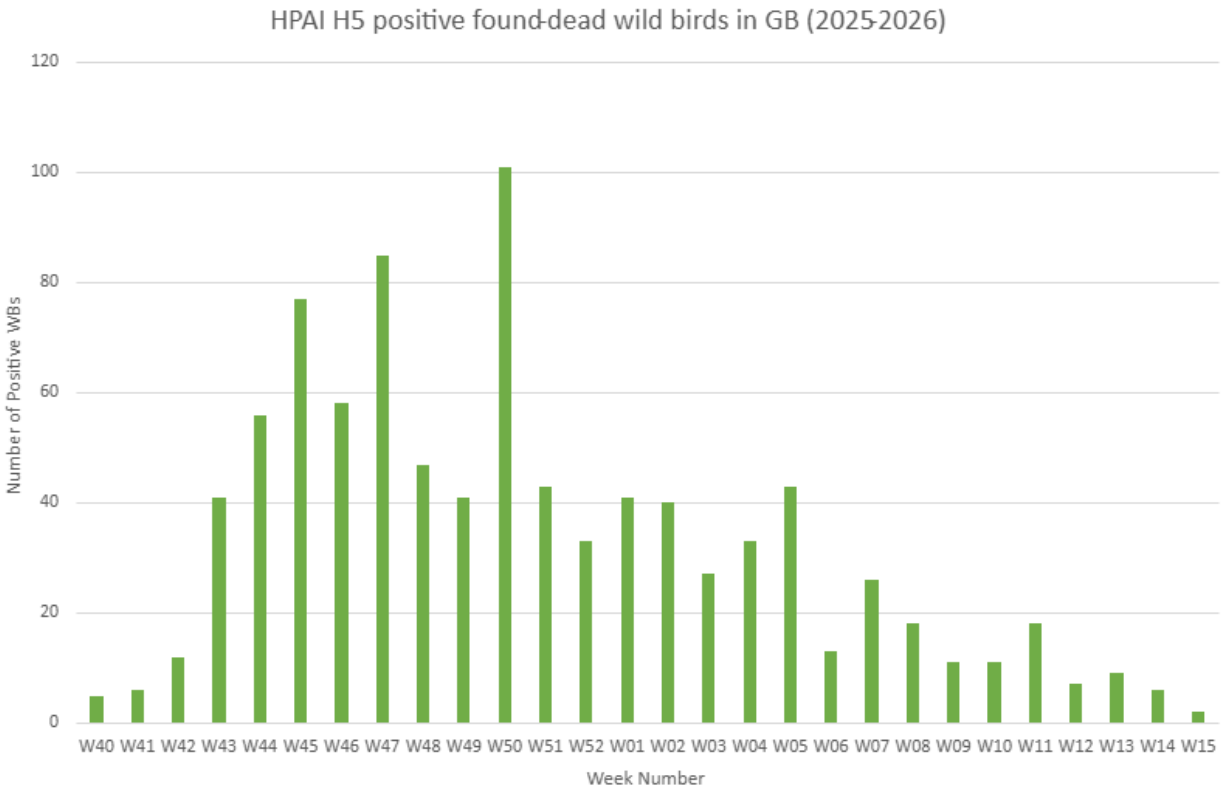
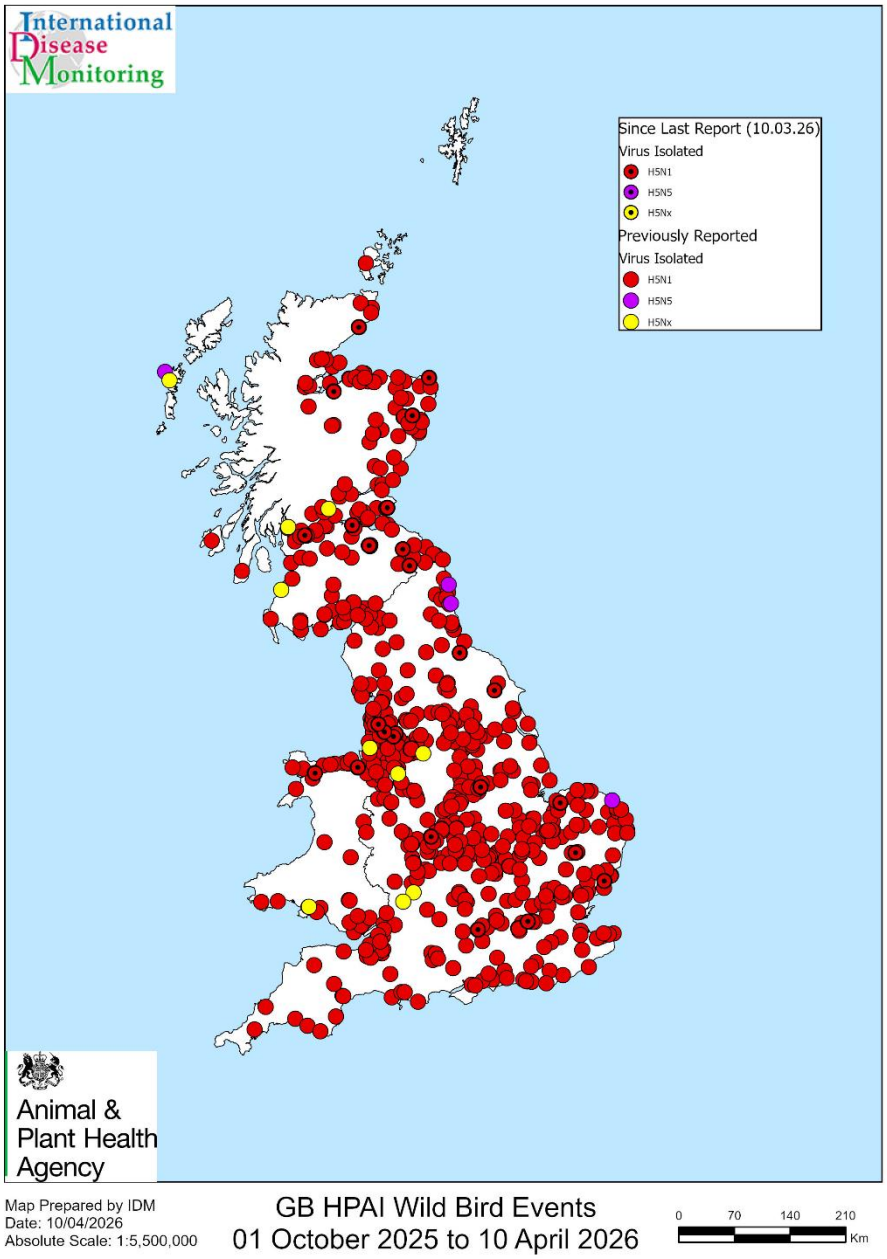


Figure 2: Detections per week of HPAI H5 positive found-dead wild birds in Great Britain since 28 September 2025 to 10 April 2026 (based on test date). The graph shows a steady decline in the number of detections per week from mid-December 2025 to early April 2026.

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 11 March 2026 to 10 April 2026 (based on laboratory testing date). The map shows most new cases in the north of Great Britain discussed in body of report.

Non-avian wildlife

Since 10 March 2026, there has been no further positive HPAI H5 detections 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

The number of positive reports of HPAI H5 according to data from IZSVe (2025) has roughly halved in late March compared to late February with around 150 reports per week from mid-March as shown in Figure 3. Reports continue to be dominated by the wild bird cases.

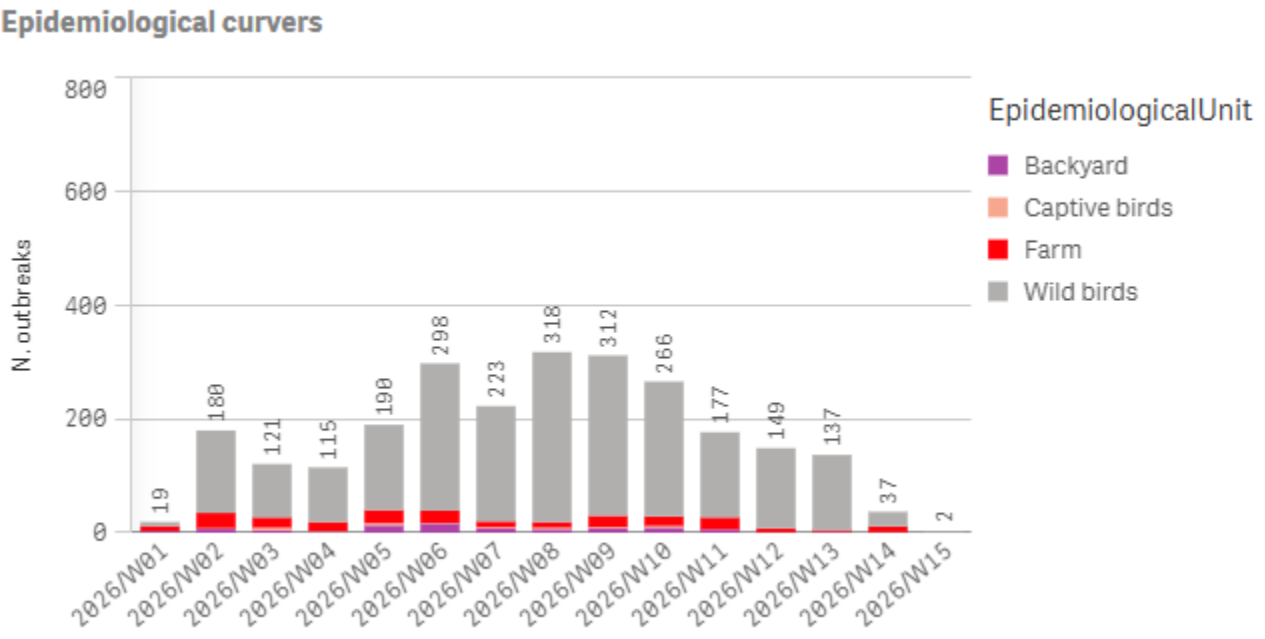
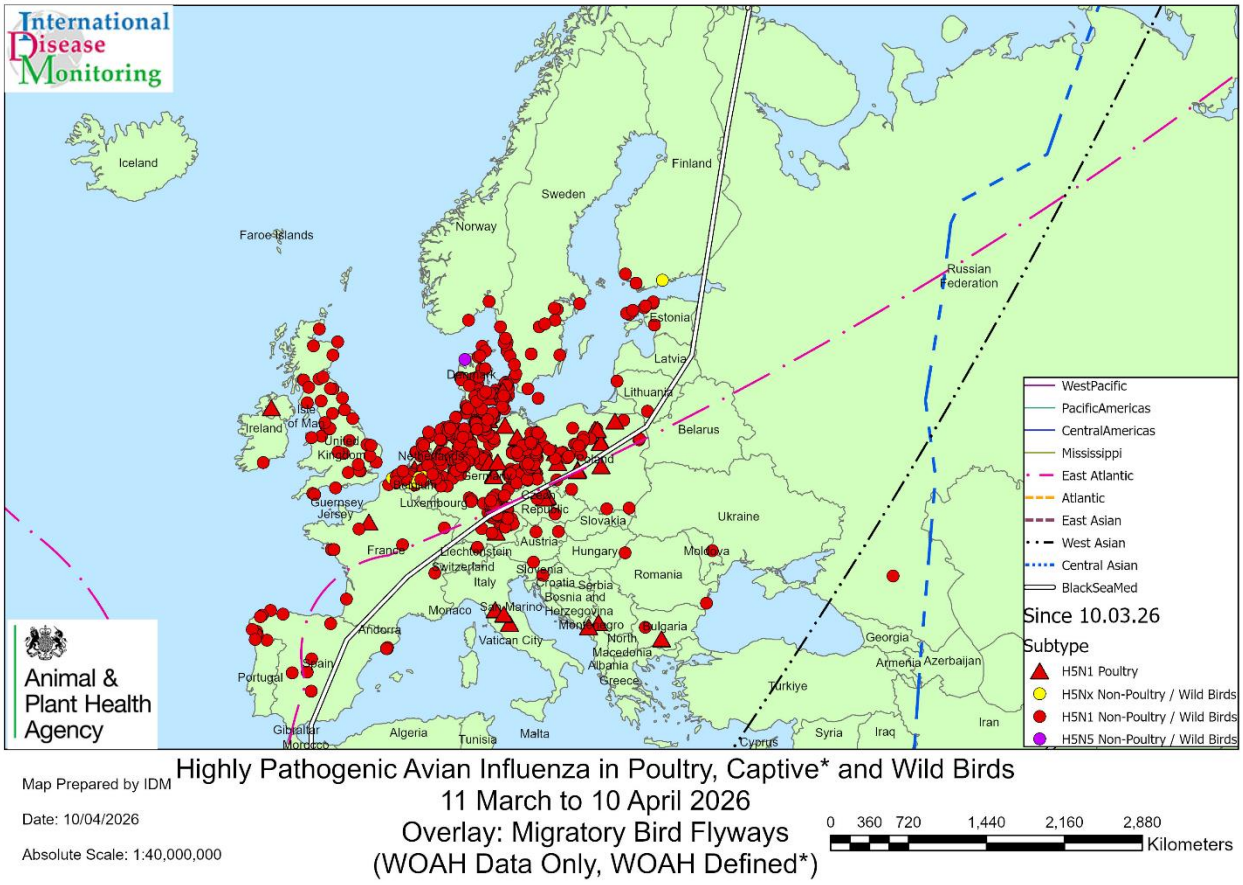


Figure 3: Weekly numbers of HPAI H5 positive reports in Europe according to data from IZSVe (2026) from January 2026 to 9 April 2026. The figure shows levels rising to over 300 positive reports per week through late February before decreasing to under 150 reports per week in late March. Wild bird cases in grey account for the major proportion relative to the poultry outbreaks in red and purple as discussed in the text. It should be noted there will be more reports to follow for week 15.

The number of wild bird cases in Europe being reported on ADIS (2026) is also falling with only 14 HPAI H5N1 cases reported in Germany, 5 in Italy and 4 in Poland in the week to 8 April 2026. For comparison, in the week to 04 March 2026 there were 213 wild bird cases in Germany reported on ADIS (2026) with 42 in Poland.



Map 3. HPAI events in domestic poultry and wild birds in Europe reported by WOAH between 11 March 2026 and 10 April 2026 (WOAH, 2026). Wild bird cases and poultry outbreaks continue across most of northern and Europe with southern Europe relatively unaffected as described in the main body of this report.

Between 11 March 2026 and 10 April 2026 there were a total of 730 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, 675 were in wild birds, 11 in non-commercial poultry and 44 were poultry outbreaks. All reports were HPAI H5N1 except for 8 cases of HPAI H5Nx in wild birds in Belgium and 1 case of HPAI H5N5 in a wild bird (black-headed gull) from January 2026 in Denmark.

Map 3 shows the HPAI H5 reports from WOAH across Europe from 11 March 2026 to 10 April 2026. HPAI H5 continues to clear from the south-west of Europe (noting that the cases in Spain were detected in late 2025 or from January and February 2026 and are included here for reference). Many of the wild bird reports on WOAH over this period are from earlier in the year. Thus of the 675 wild bird cases reported in Europe, 425 were detected in 2025 or in January and February 2026. Only 249 wild bird were detected in March 2026 across Europe. Of these detected in March, 90 were from Germany, 51 from Denmark, 36 from Poland, 19 from the Netherlands, and 12 from Belgium.

Wild bird species reported in Europe are still predominantly large numbers of waterbirds and raptors, including 258 geese and 151 swans (mainly mute swans). There were also some passerines including 1 blue tit and 2 chaffinches. There were 2 more pigeons and 2

more collared doves. Unusual species included 2 common scoters, 2 eider ducks and 1 bittern. There were 64 cases in gulls in Europe between 11 March 2026 and 10 April 2026.

Of the 44 poultry outbreaks reported in Europe on WOAH between 11 March and 10 April 2026, 38 were detected in March/April. Poultry outbreaks included 19 in Poland, 9 in Germany, 1 in Bulgaria, 4 in Czechia, 3 in Denmark, 3 in Italy, 2 in Montenegro and the Netherlands and 1 in France.

Implications for Great Britain

Wild bird cases have continued to decline from the south of England and Wales since our previous assessment on 10 March 2026 (HPAI in Europe #6) with most cases in northern England, north Wales and Scotland (see Map 2). Since our previous assessment on 10 March 2026 there have been a further 15 wild bird cases collected in March that have tested positive to 7 April 2026.

Table 1: Numbers (and percentages) of wild bird cases of HPAI H5N1 and H5Nx according to bird group in Great Britain collected from 1 January 2026 to 07 April 2026 These are based on collection date (not test date) to give information on monthly trends in wild bird cases.

Wild Bird Group	January	February	March
Gull	4 (3.1%)	7 (10.8%)	2 (5.9%)
Migrant goose/ducks	11 (8.6%)	9 (13.8%)	9 (26.5%)
Migrant swan	1 (0.8%)	0	0
Owl	3 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	0
Pigeon	3 (2.3%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (2.9%)
Raptor	26 (20.3%)	16 (24.6%)	11 (32.9%)
Resident goose/duck	34 (26.6%)	8 (12.3%)	4 (11.8%)
Resident swan	46 (35.9%)	16 (24.6%)	2 (5.9%)
Seabird	0	7 (10.8%)	5 (14.7%)
Total	128	65	34

The species of wild birds affected in Great Britain since 1 January 2026 are collated according to group for each month in Table 1 to show the monthly trends. It is interesting to note (Table 1) that resident Anseriformes (mallard ducks, Canada and greylag geese) together with the resident (mainly mute) swans in March only account for one sixth of the wild bird cases in terms of wild bird group while in January they accounted for two-thirds of wild bird cases. The number of resident waterfowl positive cases has fallen from 80 collected in January to just 6 collected (and tested by 07 April 2026) in March. Seabirds, raptors and gulls account for over 50% of the wild bird HPAI-positive cases collected in March (Table 1). While over a quarter of wild bird cases in March were migratory geese and ducks (mainly pink-footed geese but also 1 brent goose), these will have departed from Great Britain by mid-April. Also of note is the increase in the percentage of cases in raptors at almost 33% in March, up from 25% in February in Great Britain (Table 1).

Raptors, being scavengers of wild bird carcasses, are good sentinels of infection in wild birds, and typically increase in percentage terms at the end of an outbreak as they search out the remaining infected wild bird carcases.

The number of wild bird cases in Europe is falling week on week (see Figure 3) although the situation in Europe is now of little significance to Great Britain because no further migratory ducks, geese and swans will fly into Great Britain from northern Europe this season and at this time of year (mid-April) they will be flying north-east away from Great Britain. The number of wild bird cases in Great Britain peaked in November to December 2025 (HPAI in Europe #6)**.** Since November and December when monthly wild bird cases were at around 250 per month in Great Britain, the total number of cases has halved each month with 128 in January, 65 in February and now 34 in March (Table 1).

With the ongoing dispersion of the wintering aggregates of resident waterbirds into breeding pairs within Great Britain together with the completion of the departure of the migratory waterbirds, it is anticipated that the wild bird risk will fall further. It is too early to determine whether the small number of cases in seabirds each month since February represents a weak signal for HPAI H5N1's over-summering in Great Britain in 2026.

Conclusion

Since our previous assessment on 10 March 2026 (HPAI in Europe #6), the number of cases of HPAI H5Nx in wild birds in Great Britain has continued to fall (Figure 2). The risk level for wild birds is therefore reduced from high to MEDIUM. Wild bird cases are also falling in Europe (Figure 3) although at this time of year (mid-April), no wild migratory waterfowl will fly from Continental Europe into Great Britain. In terms of the species of wild bird affected in Great Britain the decline in the number of cases in resident waterfowl (mallards, Canada and greylag geese, and mute swans) continues with an increase in the percentage of cases in seabirds (Table 1). In previous years such shifts have taken the infection pressure off poultry, which is consistent with the detection of no poultry IPs in Great Britain since our previous assessment (see Figure 1). The risk to poultry with sub-optimal biosecurity is therefore reduced from medium (high uncertainty) to LOW (medium uncertainty). The risk level for poultry with stringent biosecurity is maintained at low as set out in our earlier assessment on 27 February 2026 but the uncertainty in that low risk level is now reduced from medium to low.

Although the wild bird risk level in Great Britain is now reduced from high to MEDIUM, reflecting the fall in wild bird cases and the apparent shift in wild bird species, good biosecurity practices remain of utmost importance for poultry keepers.

See the interactive map for details and check the declarations for details of the restrictions.

We are continuing to closely monitor the situation both in Great Britan 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 dead wild birds f 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.

It is advisable that you do not touch these birds.

Authors

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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).

ADIS (2026) Animal Disease Information System (ADIS) - Food Safety.

IZSVe (2026) EURL Avian Flu Data Portal (izsvenezie.it)

WOAH (2026) 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.