

Updated Outbreak Assessment #10

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

30 September 2026

Disease report

Since our [previous outbreak assessment](#) on 7 August 2026, there have been just 5 further cases of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds in Great Britain. The total number of wild bird cases in Great Britain since the start of the HPAI season on 1 October 2025 is now 940. Of these 940, 924 have been confirmed as HPAI H5N1, 12 as HPAI H5Nx and 4 as HPAI H5N5 (see Map 2 for wild bird cases). The 5 further cases include 3 gulls in south-east England, 1 Canada goose in north Wales and 1 mallard duck in eastern Scotland. There have been no cases in seabirds (gannets, skuas and auks) around Great Britain over the summer as has been observed in recent years. Given 606 found-dead wild birds have been collected and sampled since our [previous outbreak assessment](#) on 7 August 2026, we are confident that the wild bird risk level in Great Britain has remained at LOW (rare but does occur) over the summer. However, given the ongoing detections of HPAI H5N1 in wild geese and other waterbirds in Norway, Iceland and the Netherlands through which many migratory wild ducks, geese and swans will be flying into Great Britain to overwinter, it is considered that the wild bird risk should now be increased from low to MEDIUM and that implementing and maintaining biosecurity measures to prevent exposure of poultry and other kept birds to the infectious agent are of increasing importance.

From a poultry perspective, since our [previous outbreak assessment](#) on 7 August 2026, there have been no further confirmed detections of HPAI H5 clade 2.3.4.4b in domestic poultry in Great Britain. The last IP with stringent biosecurity was on 01 December 2025 and the last IP was on 17 April 2026. However, given the anticipated increase in the wild bird risk, there is now more uncertainty in the low risk level for poultry with suboptimal biosecurity and the uncertainty in this low risk level is therefore increased from low to medium. We propose the risk level in Great Britain for HPAI H5 incursion in poultry:

- With non-stringent or suboptimal biosecurity is maintained at LOW but that the uncertainty is elevated from low to medium; and
- With stringent biosecurity is maintained at VERY LOW with low 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 [previous outbreak assessment](#) on 7 August 2026, there have been no new Infected Premises (IP) confirmed with HPAI H5N1 in poultry (to 30 September 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

April 2026 with none since mid-April (see Figure 1).

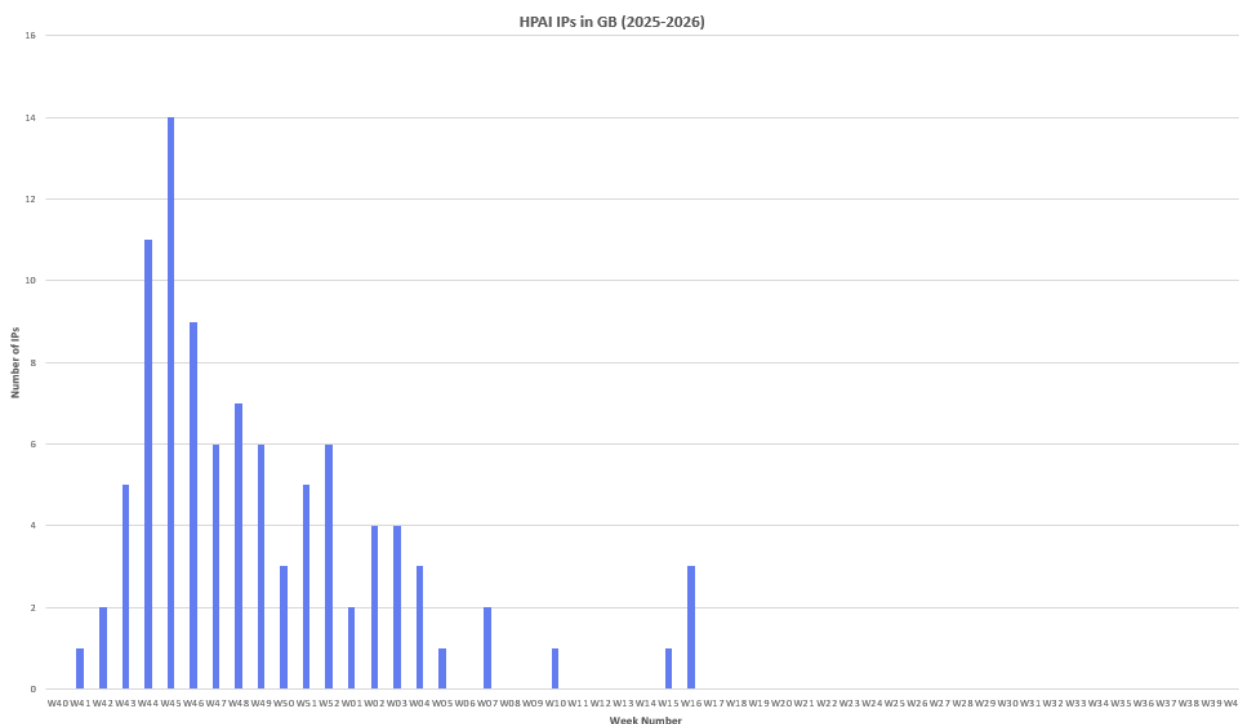
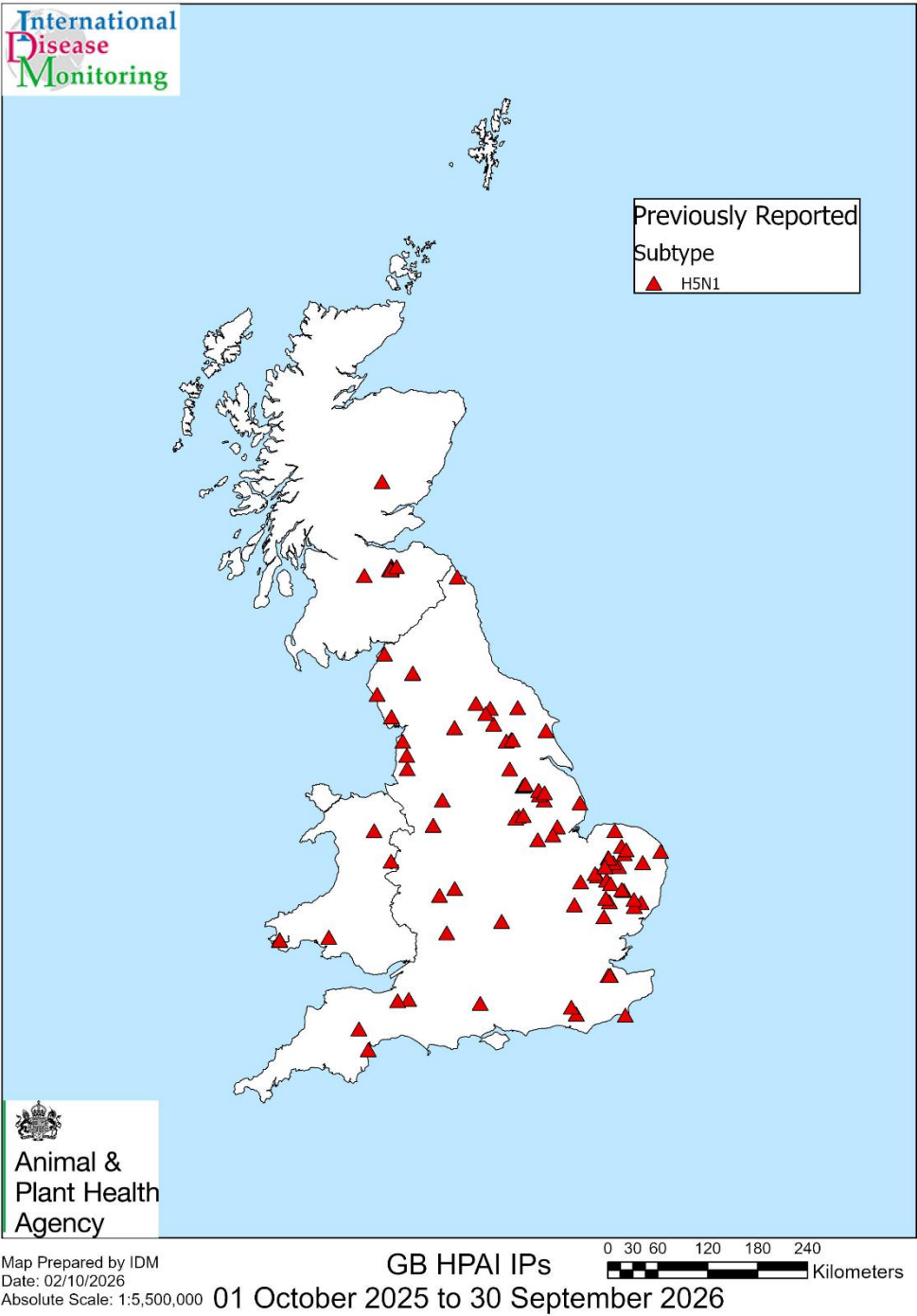


Figure 1: Number of HPAI H5N1-infected premises (IPs) in Great Britain each week from 28 September 2025 to 30 September 2026. Graph shows the weekly number of IPs reducing from a peak of 14 per week in early November 2025 to less than 1 per week on average in March and April 2026 and then none through May to the end of September 2026 at week 40.

All IPs across Great Britain from 01 October 2025 are shown in Map 1.



Map 1. Showing HPAI H5Nx Infected Premises (IPs) across Great Britain from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026. As discussed in body of report, there have been no IPs since mid-April 2026.

Wild birds

The weekly number of HPAI H5-positive wild bird cases in Great Britain is shown in Figure 2. Between 7 August 2026 and 23 September 2026 (based on laboratory testing date), HPAI H5 has been detected in 5 found-dead wild birds, including 3 wild bird species (data available <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds>) across 4 counties. All 5 of the positive wild bird cases reported since 7 August 26 were collected from coastal locations; 1 in northeast Scotland, 2 in north Wales, and the other 3 in southeast England. There were no cases in south-west England (Map 2). In total, there were 3 wild bird cases in England, 1 in Wales and 1 in Scotland (based on laboratory testing date).

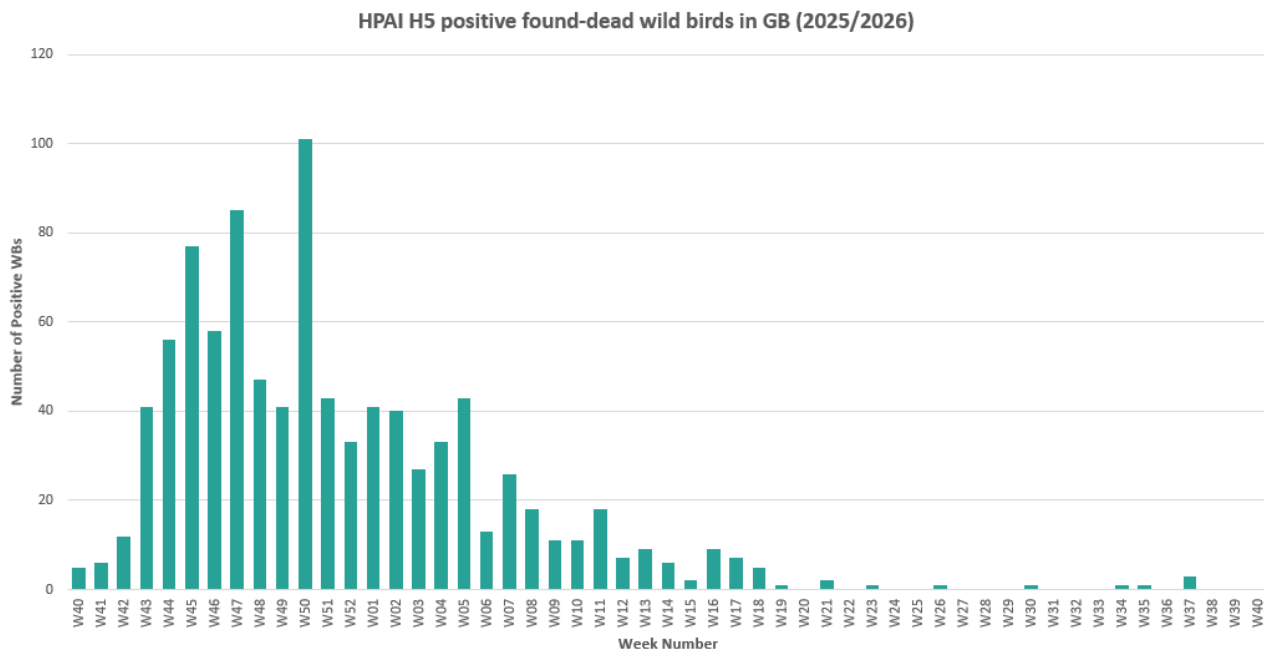
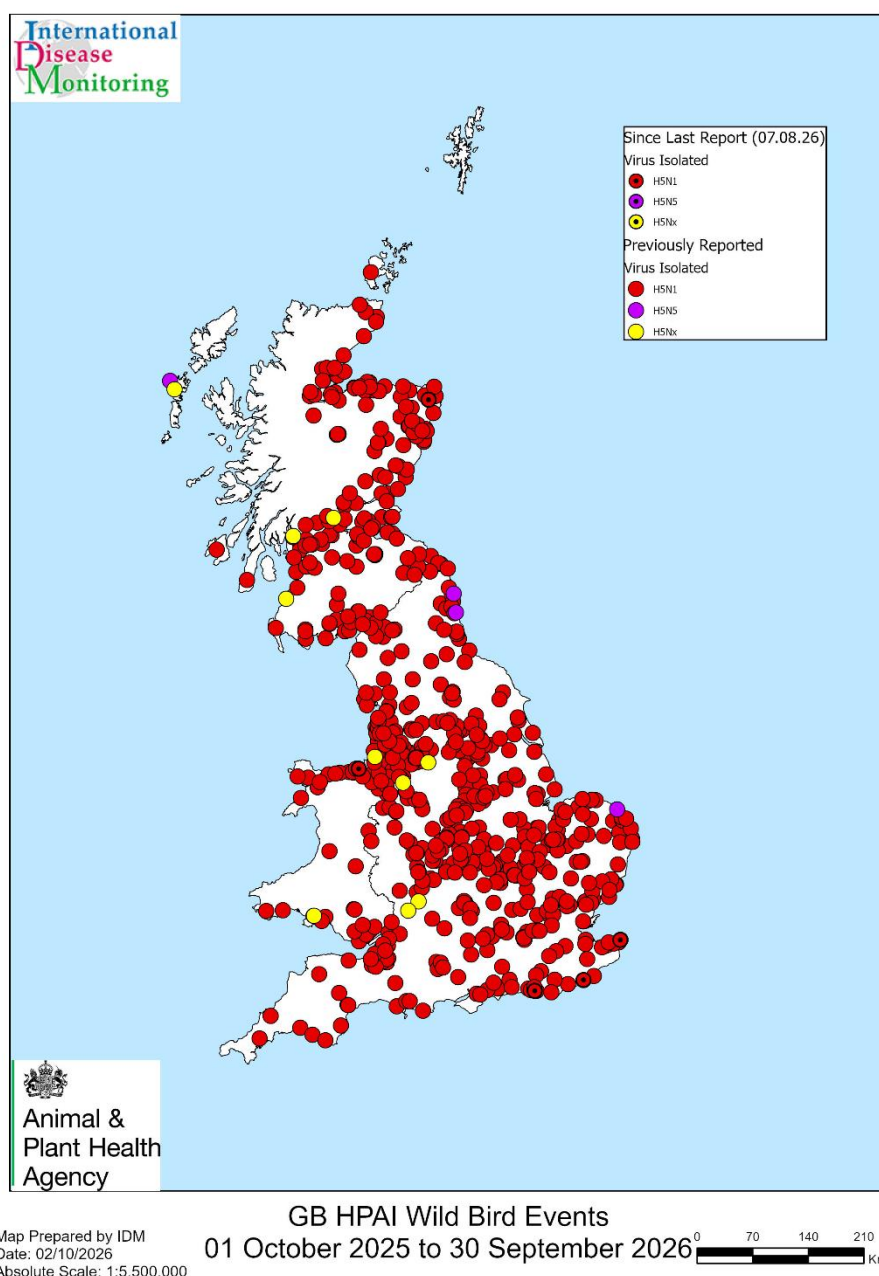


Figure 2: Detections per week of HPAI H5 positive found-dead wild birds in Great Britain since 28 September 2025 to 30 September 2026 (based on test date). The graph shows a steady decline in the number of detections per week from mid-December 2025 to early May 2026 with only sporadic cases from mid-May 2026 through into September 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 also 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 01 October 2025 to 30 September 2026 (based on laboratory testing date). The symbols with black dots are the wild bird cases since our last report (7 August 2026).

Non-avian wildlife

Since 7 August 2026, there have 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 in Europe according to data from IZSve (2026) has remained at around 10 reports per week through July falling to around 5 per week in August (Figure 3). This represents a marked reduction since the peaks of almost 320 cases per week in February. The number of wild bird cases in September has fallen to very low numbers.

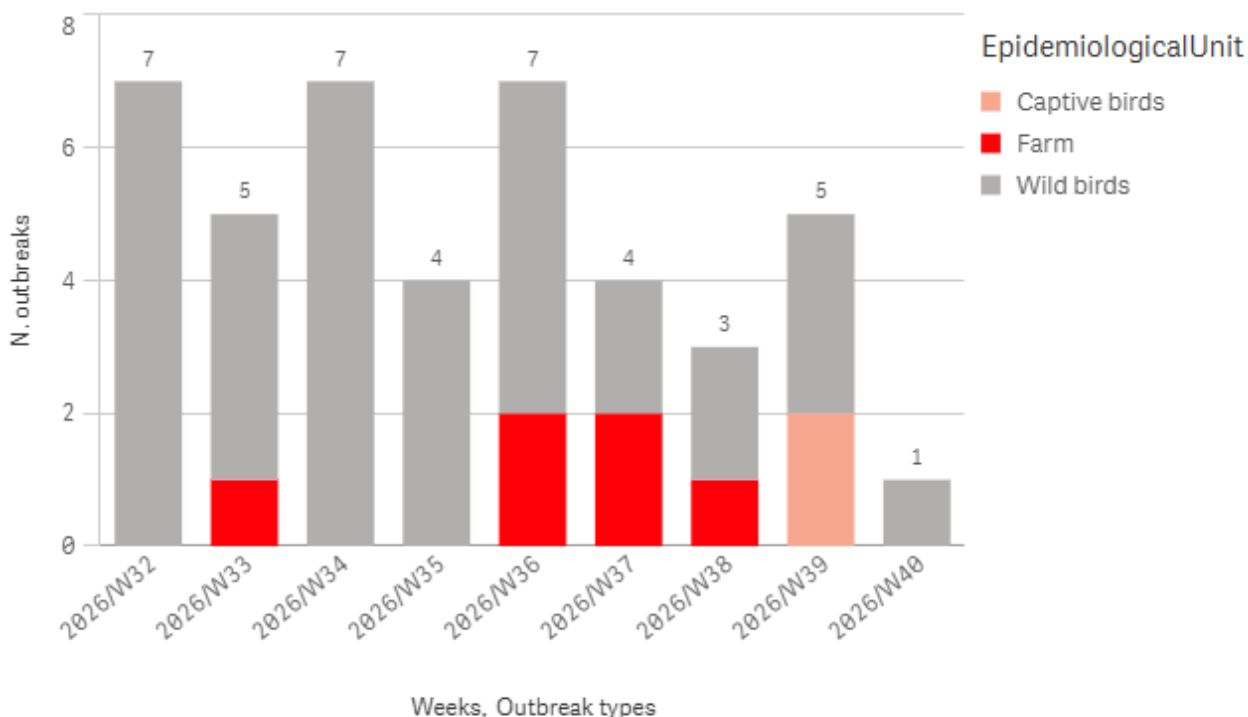
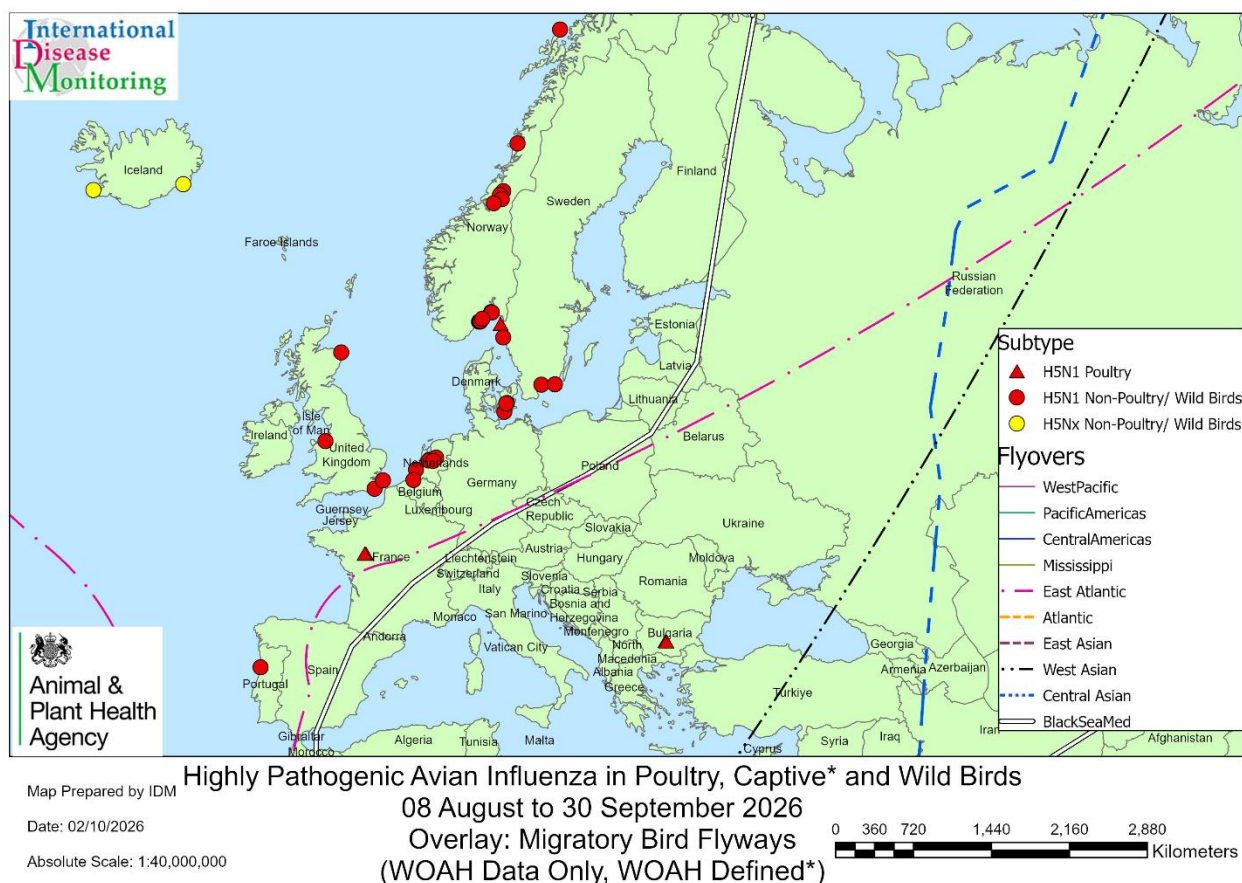


Figure 3: Weekly numbers of HPAI H5 positive reports in Europe according to data from IZSve (2026) from early August 2026 to the end of September 2026. The figure shows levels at around 10 positive reports per week through July before decreasing to around 5 reports per week through August and into September. Wild bird cases in grey predominate over poultry outbreaks in red and purple until September as discussed in the text. It should be noted there may be more reports to follow for weeks 37 and 38.

The number of wild bird cases in Europe being reported on ADIS (2026) remains at very low levels with 1 HPAI H5N1 wild bird case in Germany and 2 HPAI H5Nx cases in Iceland in the week to 16 September 2026 in addition to 1 poultry outbreak in Bulgaria. In the week to 23 September 2026 there were 2 cases of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds in Sweden and 1 in Norway.



Map 3. HPAI events in domestic poultry and wild birds in Europe reported to WOA between 07 August 2026 and 30 September 2026 (WOAH, 2026). Wild bird cases and poultry outbreaks continue across parts of north-east Europe with south-west Europe now relatively unaffected as described in the main body of this report. 5 of the 35 events in the map were detected prior to August 2026, including the 2 wild bird cases in Iceland which were from February and April 2026.

Between 7 August 2026 and 30 September 2026 there were a total of 35 HPAI H5 events in domestic poultry, captive birds and non-poultry including wild birds across Europe reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Of these reports on WOA, 29 were in wild birds, 0 were in non-commercial poultry and 6 were commercial poultry outbreaks. All reports were HPAI H5N1 except for the 2 cases of HPAI H5Nx in wild birds (raven and pink-footed goose) in Iceland from February and April respectively.

Map 3 shows the HPAI H5 reports from WOA across Europe from 07 August 2026 to 30 September 2026. The reports in France are 3 poultry outbreaks (1 in August and 2 September) and the reports in Bulgaria are 2 poultry outbreaks (1 in August and 1 in September). Other than these 5 poultry outbreaks and the 1 case in a yellow-legged gull in Portugal, all the positive reports since our [previous outbreak assessment](#) are in northern Europe and are wild bird cases with the exception of the poultry outbreak in Sweden in August. In August, Denmark reported 1 case in a marsh harrier and 1 case in pheasants in

August, and also 1 case in a greylag goose in September. The 6 cases in the Netherlands include 1 pink-footed goose, 1 greylag goose, 1 Canada goose, 1 mute swan, and 1 great-crested grebe in July and August, and then 1 greylag goose in September. The wild bird cases in Norway include 6 swans and 2 greylag geese in August and a further 5 greylag geese in September. Wild bird cases in Sweden include 1 Canada goose in July, 1 white-tailed eagle in August and 1 greylag goose in September.

Implications for Great Britain

There have been 5 wild bird cases in Great Britain since our [previous assessment](#) on 7 August 2026. These include 3 gulls in the south-east of England, namely 2 herring gulls (collected 25 August and 8 September) in East Sussex and 1 herring gull (collected on 9 September) in Kent. These 3 gull cases followed 2 gull cases in south-east England in June and July (see our [previous assessment](#) on 7 August 2026). Of greater concern in terms of the risk to poultry were the 2 cases in resident waterbirds, namely the Canada goose in Flintshire in north Wales and the mallard duck in Aberdeenshire. First, while the risk to poultry is typically decoupled from the detection of HPAI H5N1 in gulls during the summer, detection and spread of HPAI H5N1 in resident waterbirds is associated with a direct risk to poultry. Second, the cases in resident waterbirds could indicate new incursions of HPAI H5N1 from the Continent at the beginning of the autumn migration. Genotyping confirmed the Canada goose in north Wales was D1.2.1 and the same as that circulating in Great Britain over the 2025 to 2026 season. Genotype data are not yet available for the mallard duck which although it is considered most likely a resident bird was collected on the east coast of Scotland where migratory waterbirds arrive in high numbers at this time of year.

The 3 cases in herring gulls in south-eastern England collected in early September suggest the continuation of low level circulation of HPAI H5N1 in Great Britain and or spill-over from wild birds in Continental Europe and in particular Belgium and the Netherlands where HPAI H5N1 has circulated at low levels over the summer (see our [previous assessment](#) on 7 August 2026). Through September, gulls are dispersing and even if these gull cases were not from the Netherlands or Belgium there is no evidence to suggest a new specific wild bird disease process has started in Great Britain over the summer.

The number of HPAI H5 positive reports in Europe has continued at very low levels averaging around 5 per week over the last 5 weeks (Figure 3). These include 2 poultry outbreaks in the Loire region of France which may represent a separate disease process. However, greylag geese are still testing positive in Norway which is on the migration route for barnacle geese from Svalbard to Scotland. Furthermore, there has been an increase in cases in greylag geese reported on WOA in Norway with 5 cases in September and also cases in greylag geese in Sweden and Denmark in September, which are also on the migration route to Great Britain. HPAI H5 was reported in pink-footed geese in April and a raven in February in Iceland which is a migration route for many geese and swans into northern Scotland. The detection of just 5 wild bird cases since 7 August is consistent with

an on-going low risk level for wild birds in Great Britain over the summer. There have not even been any more cases in raptors which are very sensitive sentinels to the levels of infection in wild birds particularly game birds and waterfowl. However, it is anticipated that the risk to waterfowl in Great Britain is about to increase significantly. The autumn wild bird migration of ducks, geese and swans into Great Britain is now (late September to early October) reaching its peak rate and will continue into November. Many of these migratory waterbirds will fly through Norway, Sweden and Denmark where HPAI H5N1 is increasing in greylag geese while others will fly into Scotland through Iceland where HPAI H5N1 was reported this spring. While the number of reports in Europe remains quite low (Figure 3) disease is still circulating, and weeks 38 and 39 (i.e. mid to late September) have in previous years been when an increase in disease and positive reports have been detected. It is therefore considered that the risk of a new HPAI H5N1 incursion into Great Britain through wild birds is increasing considerably at the present time (late September) given the now high rate of movement of migratory birds into Great Britain and the ongoing detections of HPAI H5 in wild geese in northern Europe. The wild bird risk level is therefore increased from low to MEDIUM, noting that this is the risk of a new incursion in waterbirds in Great Britain from the Continent, in addition to the ongoing low risk from sporadic detections of HPAI H5N1 currently circulating in wild birds in Great Britain.

Conclusion

Since our [previous outbreak assessment](#) on 7 August 2026, the number of cases of HPAI H5Nx in wild birds in Great Britain has continued albeit a low, sporadic levels (Figure 2) with just 5 cases including 3 gulls in south-eastern England, 1 Canada goose in north Wales and 1 mallard duck in eastern Scotland (Map 2). However, given the ongoing peak migration rate of waterbirds into Great Britain through areas in Europe where HPAI H5 is still being detected in wild waterbirds, it is considered that the risk level for wild birds in Great Britain has increased from low to MEDIUM (occurs regularly).

An increase in the wild bird risk, particularly in resident waterbirds, is associated with an increase in the risk to poultry particularly where biosecurity is sub-optimal. Therefore, the uncertainty in the LOW (rare but does occur) risk level currently for poultry with suboptimal biosecurity is increased from low to medium. It is considered that the risk level for poultry with stringent biosecurity is still at VERY LOW (very rare but cannot be excluded) with low uncertainty.

It should be stressed that low and very low risk levels do not mean no risk and, in addition to the residual HPAI H5 still circulating at low levels in wild birds in Great Britain, there is now the increased risk from the arrival of migratory waterbirds. Therefore, the measures in an AIPZ should be seen as good practice. It is important that stringent adherence to good biosecurity practices is maintained.

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 Britain in Europe and to review the risk.

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 WOA, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) International Reference Laboratory and the UK National Reference Laboratory at APHA 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 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.

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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 \(woah.org\)](#)



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