Updated Outbreak Assessment #7

Newcastle disease (ND) in Europe

20 October 2026

Disease report

Since our previous outbreak assessment on 11 September 2026 (Newcastle Disease in Europe), which outlined the first outbreaks reported in Hungary in decades, Hungary have reported a further seven outbreaks to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) (see Figure 1). Outbreaks have been contained to the Bács-Kiskun County, central-southern Hungary.

Elsewhere, since our last assessment, Spain has reported an additional five outbreaks of ND in poultry. Poland has reported two outbreaks of ND, one in a mixed flock of 99 birds and one involving 473,000 laying hens.

There has also been one outbreak of ND in non-poultry birds in Czechia (ADIS, 2026). Small-scale birds in captivity were affected.

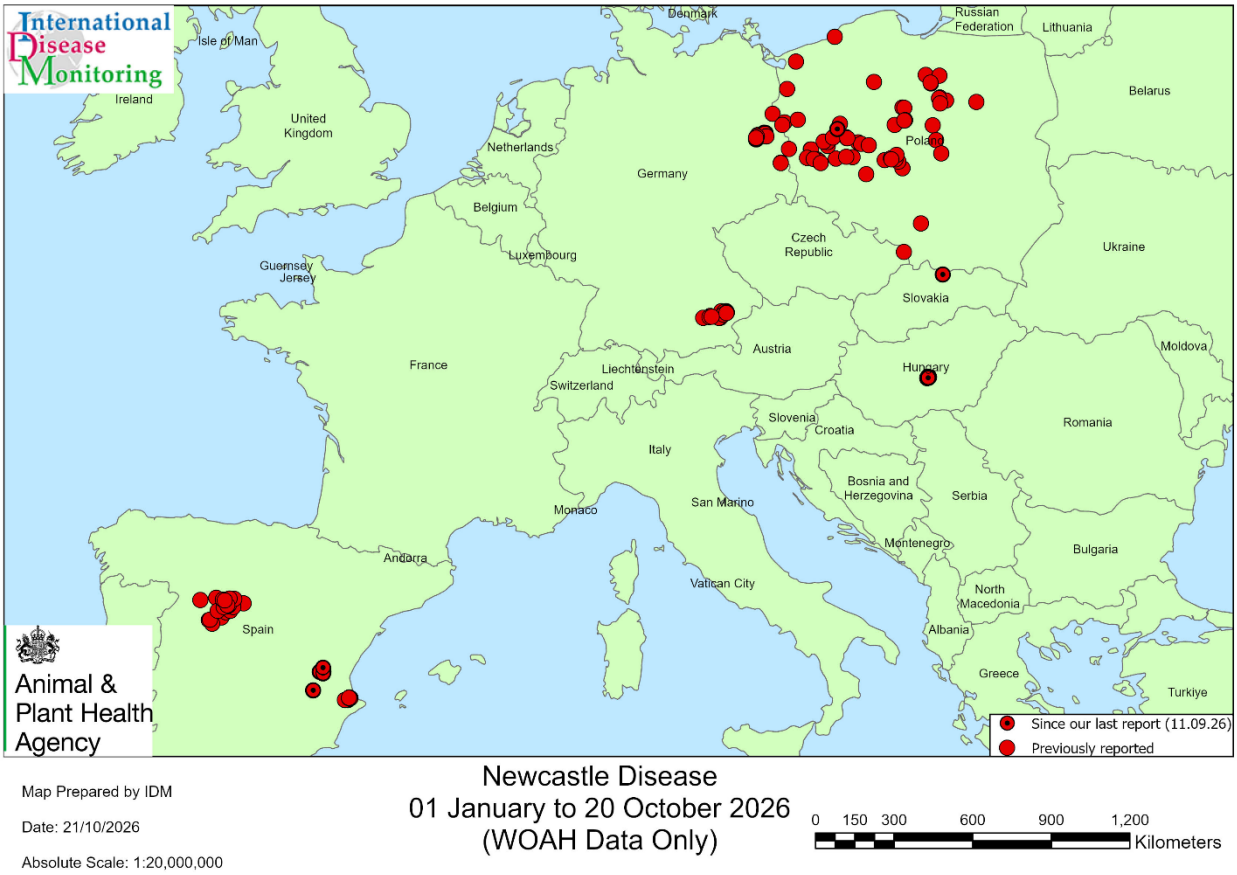


Figure 1: Map of Europe showing outbreaks of Newcastle disease in domestic poultry reported to WOAH from 1 January 2026 to 20 October 2026. Those events reported since our previous assessment on 11 September 2026 have dotted centres.

Situation assessment

Newcastle disease (ND) is a viral disease of birds caused by avian paramyxovirus serotype 1 (APMV-1). For official control purposes, ND refers specifically to the most severe forms of the disease caused by certain strains of the virus. It is considered one of the most important poultry diseases worldwide because of its significant animal welfare, trade and economic impacts. The detection of ND can trigger disease control measures and trade restrictions, with significant consequences for the poultry industry (CFSPH, 2016).

Hungary

Of the seven additional reports of ND in Hungary, five were confirmed on farms holding between 3,135 and 120,000 chickens. One farm contained 7,500 guineafowl while the remaining farm held 37 birds of unknown species. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing. All positive flocks have been culled, with a 3km protection zone and 10km

surveillance zone implemented. Within the restricted zones, movement controls apply to poultry, captive birds, and their products. Enhanced disease surveillance is also being undertaken including clinical inspections, epidemiological investigations, tracing of potentially exposed establishments, and risk-based diagnostic sampling and testing to identify any onward spread to support disease eradication. The National Food Chain Safety Office have urged farmers to ensure compliance with control measures to help prevent the spread of disease.

The genotype of the virus responsible for the outbreaks has been identified as Class II, Genotype VII and closely related to 2026 outbreaks in Slovakia (PAFF., 2026d). From recent PAFF presentations, the first three affected cases involved birds that had been vaccinated in the hatchery on 4 August, 5 August and 12 August 2026, respectively, and subsequently received booster vaccinations on 26 August, 28 August and 2 September 2026. These birds would have been expected to develop substantial immunity by mid to late September, however, they contracted ND prior to this, meaning that inadequate population-level immunity contributed to flock susceptibility.

Preventive vaccination against ND is mandatory in Hungary under Decree 163/2009 (XI. 27) FVM. This extends to chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, farmed pheasants, quails and partridges. The decree requires vaccination of day-old chicks, revaccination at 14 to 28 days of age and, for large breeding and laying flocks, additional vaccination with an inactivated vaccine. Hungary also has legal requirements relating to the implementation and monitoring of vaccination effectiveness. The timing and method of sampling depend on the applicable regulations and the vaccination programme being used. While vaccination significantly reduces the risk of clinical disease and viral transmission, vaccinated birds may still become infected (Nébih, 2026b).

Spain

Poultry outbreaks reported in Spain since December 2025 have occurred in two autonomous communities: Castile and León and the Valencian Community. However, of the outbreaks reported since our last assessment, four occurred in Valencia, and one in Castile-La Mancha, a previously unaffected region. From media reports, the farm in Castile-La Mancha housed approximately 30,000 birds, six weeks of age. At the time of the outbreak, vaccination was not mandatory in the region, until new measures were introduced on 1 October, meaning that the flock was unvaccinated.

The outbreaks in the communities of Castile and León and the Valencian Community were caused by genetically distinct viruses. The ND viruses detected in the Valencian Community between late December 2025 and early May 2026 belonged to genotype VII.1.1, whereas viruses detected in Valladolid province (Castile and León) belonged to genotype VII.2. These findings indicate that the outbreaks in the Valencian

Community and Valladolid province are not epidemiologically linked (Plateforme ESA, 2026a). It is currently unknown what genotype the outbreaks in the newly affected region belong to.

Since their beginning in 2026, outbreaks peaked in July, with 20 reports made to WOAH. They have since occurred at a rate of around three per month. Key control measures include the recommended slaughter of broiler flocks within the restricted zone and enhanced poultry-farm biosecurity to reduce direct and indirect contact with wild birds. Authorities have also reinforced passive surveillance in poultry and wild birds and established a Further Restricted Zone (FRZ). The FRZ extends beyond the standard 3 km protection and 10 km surveillance zones established around each infected premises. It comprises all the municipalities within the same units as or geographically adjacent to those affected by the outbreaks (MAPA, 2026a).

Within the FRZ, movement of poultry is prohibited unless authorised by the competent authority. Authorised movements are subject to enhanced controls, including clinical inspections, verification of biosecurity and vaccination requirements, and the cleaning and disinfection of facilities and transport vehicles. Restocking of poultry is subject to a risk assessment by the competent authority. Enhanced epidemiological surveillance is being conducted, including clinical inspections and monitoring of water and feed consumption, mortality, laying rates and other epidemiological indicators. Poultry keepers are being reminded of biosecurity requirements, and direct sales and short supply chain marketing activities for agri-food products have been temporarily suspended (MAPA, 2026a).

Vaccination against ND has also been made mandatory for poultry in the restricted areas of Valladolid province, although there have been issues with lack of available vaccines, particularly live attenuated vaccines, due to increased demand from other affected areas within the EU (MAPA, 2026b).

Poland

In Poland, the number of reported ND outbreaks peaked in December 2025, with 20 poultry outbreaks detected and more than 25 outbreaks in captive birds. However, detections have decreased since January 2026, with only two poultry outbreaks reported since our last assessment and no new outbreaks in captive birds (ADIS, 2026). To control disease spread, the authorities have ordered the culling of the affected flocks, with cleaning and disinfection of infected premises. A 3 km protection and 10 km surveillance zone has also been established around each infected premises in accordance with EU law, where poultry and captive birds are subject to movement restrictions and enhanced surveillance, including clinical inspection (WOAH, 2026c).

Recent PAFF presentations note that only six wild birds (not including pigeons) have tested positive with the virus in 2026. The outbreak discussed in our previous outbreak assessment was the first in Poland since June and led to the establishment of a crisis management team. An epidemiological investigation team has been set up, with biosecurity checks at the affected and nearby holdings. The team will also undertake serological testing at adjacent farms to assess flock immunity against ND and inspect the vaccination procedures and quality of water supplied to the affected holding.

As described in our June 2025 assessment (Newcastle disease (ND) in Poland and Europe), vaccination of chickens (broilers, layers and breeders) and turkey flocks has been mandatory in Poland since April 2025. Laboratory testing to ensure the effectiveness of the vaccination campaign is ongoing, and a pilot vaccination programme in captive birds has begun in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, in which captive birds (including all backyard poultry holdings) within 3 km of known ND outbreaks are being vaccinated (PAFF, 2026b).

Czechia

Since January 2026, all ND outbreaks reported in Czechia have been in non-poultry (captive) birds (Plateforme ESA, 2026a). The number of ND outbreak reports in Czechia peaked in February 2026, with more than 10 outbreaks detected in captive birds, compared with three outbreaks in August 2026 (Plateforme ESA, 2026a). The latest captive bird outbreak was reported on 11 September 2026 (ADIS, 2026).

All confirmed outbreaks in captive birds have been in small-scale flocks, generally with outdoor access and low biosecurity, even though in restricted zones farmers must keep poultry, water and feed indoors if possible. Wild birds are considered the most likely source of infection, and the State Veterinary Administration is currently monitoring ND in wild birds. In Czechia, vaccination is mandatory for breeding flocks of chickens, registered flocks of laying hens, pheasant breeding and rearing farms, and turkey fattening farms. Whilst vaccination is recommended, it is not mandatory for small-scale farms (PAFF, 2026c).

Implications for Great Britain

Great Britain applies disease safeguard measures and lists countries and regions approved for export of live poultry and poultry meat according to regionalisation. Therefore, no such products can be legally consigned to Great Britain from a disease restriction zone. Nevertheless, uncertainty remains regarding the factors responsible for the large number of outbreaks reported in Europe. Serological monitoring in Poland has previously found protective antibody titres to be below desired levels in broilers and turkey fattening flocks (PAFF, 2026b). The close genetic relationship between the Hungarian and Slovakian viruses highlights the potential for disease spread. The

detection of disease in neighbouring Spanish communities is consistent with local spread and is of less concern than a large geographical jump.

As discussed in our June 2026 assessment (Newcastle disease (ND) in Poland and Europe), it is well documented that outbreaks of ND can still occur in the face of vaccination. However, there is no evidence to suggest that vaccines are ineffective. Data from outbreaks in Germany suggests that vaccines were effective at preventing or reducing clinical signs in older birds but are less effective in young animals during an unavoidable period of lower immunity whilst antibodies are developing (PAFF, 2026a). Based on the available data, the first three infected flocks in Hungary had insufficient flock level immunity, therefore, vaccine efficacy remains unknown (PAFF, 2026d). Additionally, outbreaks in Czechia have been limited to small-scale flocks, which typically have lower biosecurity and for which vaccination is not mandatory (PAFF, 2026c).

At this time of year (late October), significant migration of wild birds into Great Britain is ongoing, with large numbers of birds (waders, thrushes, passerines, ducks, geese and swans) flying into or through Great Britain on their way south from their breeding grounds in Scandinavia, northern Europe and further afield. Of particular significance is the large number of winter thrushes (fieldfares and redwings) and other passerines including blackbirds and robins, together with birds like woodcock, which may come from the Baltic States and Poland through northern Germany. Thus, the current risk of ND entry into Great Britain through wild birds considers the levels of ND in Poland and Germany, where the epidemiological situation appears to be improving (with no new poultry or non-poultry outbreaks reported in Germany since our last assessment and only two (poultry) outbreaks in Poland. Birds are unlikely to fly into Great Britain from Hungary where ND has emerged this month. Any westward spread of ND into western Germany and the Netherlands could provide an early indication of increased risk to Great Britain. It is considered the risk to Great Britain is still LOW because of the low levels of disease in Poland, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium currently.

Many waterfowl species are also flying into Great Britain at this time of year. While their risk of introducing high pathogenicity avian influenza H5 virus into Great Britain is well documented, the form of APMV-1 carried by waterfowl tends to be avirulent so if it were contracted by poultry, it would not be classified as ND. The wild bird reservoir for NDV is not well understood and it is not known if it includes single or multiple orders.

Conclusion

Newcastle disease (ND) virus continues to spread among poultry and non-poultry birds in Europe. The additional poultry outbreaks reported in Hungary, along with the spread to a new community in Spain is of concern. Large numbers of migratory birds are currently flying into or through Great Britain from Scandinavia and northern

Europe. However, the risk of ND introduction into poultry in Great Britain remains **Low**. This reflects the lower number of outbreaks in Poland, the absence of long-distance geographical jumps in Hungary following the initial introduction and only limited localised spread in Spain. It also reflects the regionalisation in place to prevent introduction of ND via trade.

The main routes by which ND could be introduced into Great Britain are wild birds, illegal trade and fomites. The impact of any introduction may be increased by sub-optimal vaccination practices. There is a background ND risk to poultry from feral pigeons as potential reservoirs of the virus. Pigeon paramyxovirus type 1 (PPMV-1), a pigeon-adapted variant of APMV-1, is endemic in pigeon populations in Great Britain and Europe (Abdulrasol et al., 2025). Importantly, the association of wild birds with APMV-1 infection remains poorly understood and so, with the exception of pigeons and other Columbiformes that maintain endemic PPMV-1 cycles, the risk of ND introduction associated with different wild bird species and migratory pathways is difficult to quantify.

It is recommended that poultry keepers consider vaccinating their flocks and practice strict biosecurity. Vaccines for ND with marketing authorisations are commercially available in Great Britain and vaccination is common in most, if not all, commercial layers, layer breeders and broiler breeders. It is also common in most turkey breeders and some commercial turkeys and broilers.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

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