

Updated Outbreak Assessment number 11

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 in the UK and Europe

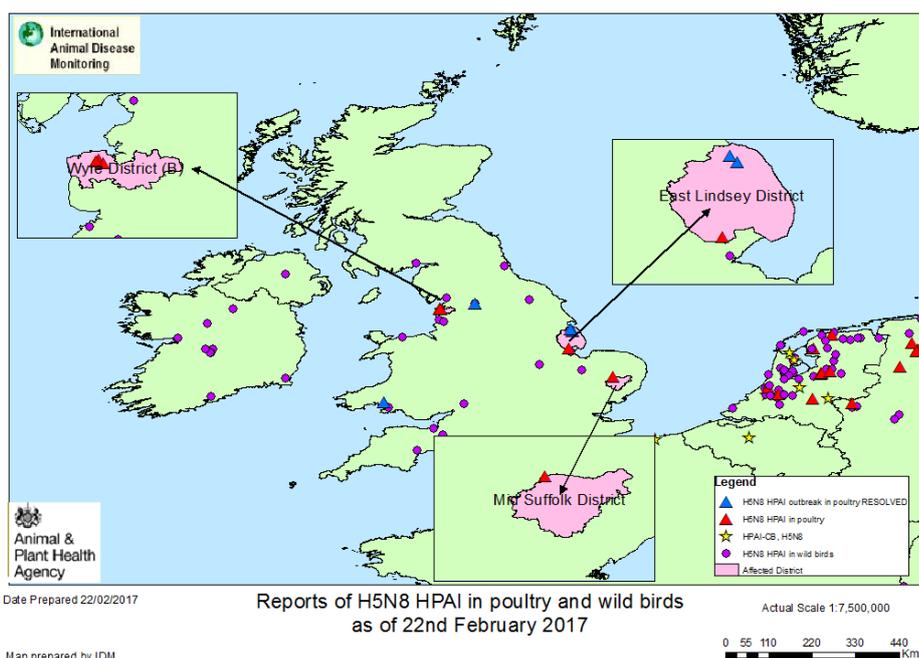
22 February 2017

Ref: VITT/1200 Avian Influenza in UK & Europe

Disease report

Since our last update on the 7th February, the zones around the premises in North Yorkshire were lifted on the 9th February. No local spread has been found during the surveillance in the zones or from tracings. In East Lindsey, Lincolnshire, the fourth outbreak, zones were merged on the 11th February and were lifted on the 21st February. For the third case in East Lindsey, the zones will be merged at 00:01 on the 22nd February. For the two gamebird premises in Wyre District, Lancashire, the Protection and Surveillance zones will be merged on Monday 27th February. The zones around IP8, in the same district and linked to these other two premises through movements of live birds before disease was detected, will be merged on the 7th March provided there is no further suspicion of disease identified from the tracings. The map has been updated to indicate that four of the infected premises are now considered resolved, and zones have been lifted, with no further spread identified following intensive epidemiological investigations.

On the 14th February, H5N8 HPAI was confirmed in a grandparent broiler breeder flock at a premises in Mid Suffolk. Twenty three thousand birds were present in three sheds, two of which contained birds with clinical signs and slowly increasing mortality over a few days. Samples taken tested positive for H5N8 HPAI by PCR and the birds were humanely culled. There had been no trade of live poultry, hatching eggs or day



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old chicks to other Member States from either this or other parts of the integrated business during the high risk window. Epidemiological investigations are continuing.

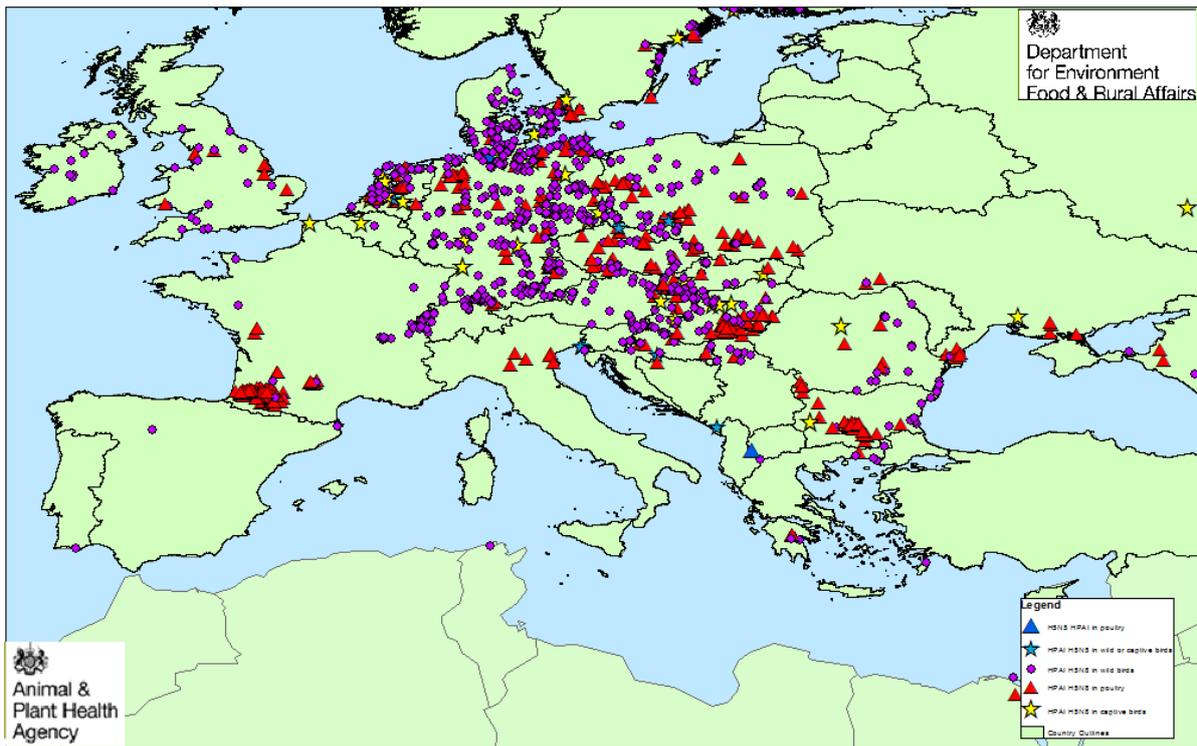
Warden patrols at a site in Norfolk, where wild bird surveillance takes place, have recently submitted two (dead) whooper swans (*Cygnus cygnus*) which have tested positive for H5N8 HPAI. This brings the total number of regions in which H5N8 positive wild birds have been found in the UK to 20, including more recently, positive whooper swans at Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland.

A GB-wide Prevention Zone remains in place until the end of February 28th. In England, a proposal for introducing Higher Risk Areas after 28th February has been made, in which it will be mandatory to house or net all poultry to prevent contact with wild birds. In other parts of England and in Scotland and Wales, a Prevention Zone will continue to operate where poultry owners, who wish to turn their birds out, must prepare the ranges to ensure there is as little faecal contamination of the environment from wild birds as possible and make sure that ponds and other large water bodies are netted (where possible) or fenced to prevent indirect contact between wild birds and poultry. Other biosecurity measures can be found in the relevant guidance at the websites for each administration. In addition, bird gatherings with poultry or captive birds of the anseriforme and galliforme orders are still prohibited. These requirements will be reviewed regularly in light of changes to the overall risk level.

All wild bird positives are published on a weekly basis on the APHA website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-in-wild-birds-winter-2016-to-2017>. Only exceptional reports in new regions or unusual wild bird findings (ie a change to the disease epidemiology) will be officially reported separately.

Situation assessment

The situation in Europe has continued with wild bird findings still being reported. However the list of species which are now testing positive involves more swans, including whooper and mute swans (*Cygnus cygnus* and *Cygnus olor* respectively). The reasons for this may be simply that as large, white birds, they are easier to spot but more importantly, these are relatively sedentary birds once they have arrived at a wintering site, so they will have greater contact with contaminated environment and therefore be more likely to become infected than a transitory visitor. Elsewhere, the number of outbreaks across Europe, the Middle East, West Africa and Asia has also continued to increase; new countries reporting H5N8 include Kuwait and Cameroon. There have been around 820 outbreaks in poultry and 38 in captive birds reported now to the EU ADNS system (which may include non-EU countries) and a small number of H5N5 reports and each day more reports are made, particularly for wild bird findings.



Date Prepared 22/02/2017

Outbreaks of H5N8 HPAI in poultry, captive and wild birds
October - February 2017

Actual Scale 1:20,000,000

Map prepared by IDM

0 137.5275 550 825 1,100
Km

As a result of the continuing reporting in the EU, the risk level for the UK is maintained at “**HIGH**” for an incursion of an infected wild bird, and as “**LOW TO MEDIUM**” for introduction of infection to poultry on individual premises dependent on the level of on-farm biosecurity. Commercial poultry premises with good or high biosecurity measures are unlikely to get disease. The widespread locations of the positive wild bird findings suggest that we should consider the whole of the UK as a risk area for wild bird infection but that areas with populations of waterfowl species may carry a greater risk proportionally in terms of risk level for poultry premises.

As a result of the increase in positive findings in wild birds in Europe, we ask that the public use the **Defra helpline (Tel: 03459 33 55 77)** to report findings of dead wild birds. In particular, any wild ducks, wild geese, swans, gulls or birds of prey and where more than five birds of any species are found dead in the same location.

Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> including updated biosecurity advice for poultry keepers which they should take note of: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#prevention-zone>

Conclusion

We continue to consider the risk level is high for further introductions via wild birds, but the risk of entry into poultry farms remains as low to medium depending on the level of biosecurity. Several EU countries have now kept birds indoors for up to 12 weeks and therefore a decision may be made for birds to be turned out to retain free range status. If

they are released onto ranges with environmental contamination then further outbreaks could occur, and in the current climate and season, virus can remain in the environment for several weeks at this time of year.

We would like to remind all poultry keepers that the clinical signs of this virus are variable and will depend on the species, but any suspicion of production drop, increased mortality, sick and depressed birds with a temperature and neurological signs should be initially discussed with their private veterinarian.

We will continue to report on the situation

Authors

International Disease Monitoring team

References

For all disease outbreaks, more information is available on the OIE website at http://www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahid.php/Diseaseinformation/WI

See also:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> ;

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/poultry/bird-gatherings-advice/?lang=en> ;

<http://gov.scot/avianinfluenza>

For up-to-date information on the situation in the EU, also see the Commission website at https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/avian-influenza_en

See our interactive map at <https://iadm.carto.com/me>



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