



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Avian Influenza – key messages for partners

Last updated - 08/12/21

Latest situation – see gov.uk - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bird-flu-latest-situation-avian-influenza-prevention-zone-declared-across-great-britain>

For assistance with press enquiries - contact newsdesk@defra.gov.uk, Out of hours call 0345 051 8486 and ask for the duty press officer.

For social media advice contact: apha.corporatecommunications@apha.gov.uk

For social media content:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nfl9ghlwwumu9py/AAA6ixRGIp_0LHe2fCwfMmaha?dl=0

For operational issues - for advice and guidance on animal health and public access please contact your local Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) team by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301 and choose the relevant option for APHA.

Key messages:

- The government has introduced mandatory housing measures for all captive birds and poultry to limit the spread of avian influenza in the UK.
- The housing measures mean that it is now a legal requirement for all bird keepers across the UK to keep their birds indoors and to follow strict biosecurity measures in order to limit the spread of the disease.
- Whether you keep just a few birds or thousands, you are now legally required to do this on your farm or small holding. It is in your interests to do so in order to protect your birds from this highly infectious disease.
- Wild birds migrating to the UK from mainland Europe during the winter months can carry the disease and where wild birds are allowed to mix with domestic poultry this can lead to the disease spreading to captive birds.
- UK Health Security Agency has confirmed that the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said that bird flu poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers and it does not affect the consumption of poultry or eggs.
- Bird keepers should remain alert for any signs of disease, report suspected disease immediately and ensure they are maintaining good biosecurity on their premises.

- If you find dead swans, geese or ducks or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77. **Do not touch or pick up** any dead or visibly sick birds that you find. For further information see our [advice to the public](#).
- The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) carries out year-round avian influenza surveillance of dead wild birds submitted via public reports and warden patrols.
- All bird keepers (whether you have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) must keep a close watch on them for signs of disease and maintain good biosecurity at all times. If you have any concerns about the health of your birds, seek prompt advice from your vet.
- Avian Influenza is in no way connected to the COVID-19 pandemic which is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which is not carried in poultry.

Biosecurity actions for poultry keepers (both commercial and recreational/back yard keepers)

There are some simple measures that all poultry keepers should take to protect their birds against the threat of avian flu. These apply to people running a large commercial farm, keeping a few hens in their back garden and those rearing game birds.

These include:

- Keep the area where birds live clean and tidy, control rats and mice and regularly clean and disinfect any hard surfaces
- Keep chickens and turkeys completely separate from ducks and geese
- Conduct regular maintenance checks on their sheds
- Clean moss off the roofs, empty gutters and remove vegetation between sheds where birds are kept
- Draw up contingency plans for storing bedding and dealing with pests
- Place birds' feed and water in fully enclosed areas that are protected from wild birds, and remove any spilled feed regularly
- Put fencing around outdoor areas where birds are allowed and limit their access to ponds or areas visited by wild waterfowl
- Clean and disinfect footwear before and after entering premises where birds are kept

Bird keepers should report suspicion of disease in captive birds to the Animal and Plant Health Agency on 03000 200 301.

Bird keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian influenza advice](#).

Download and display [this poster](#) for advice to bird keepers, also copied below.

Do you keep chickens, ducks, geese...?

Help protect your birds from the risk of **#birdflu**

Did you know?
There is a constant risk of bird flu in the UK from wild birds. As it's highly contagious take action to protect your birds from catching it.

Remember
Any very sick birds, or unexplained deaths, must be assessed by your vet. By law suspicion of bird flu is notifiable and can affect poultry movement and trade.


Tip 1: Cleaning
Clean footwear before and after visiting your birds. Keep areas clean and tidy, and regularly disinfect hard surfaces. Humanely control rats and mice.

Tip 2: Feeding
Place your birds' food and water in fully enclosed areas that are protected from wild birds, and remove any spilled feed regularly.

Tip 3: Fencing
Keep your birds separate from wildlife and wild waterfowl by putting suitable fencing around the outdoor areas they access.

Tip 4: Register
www.gov.uk/guidance/poultry-registration Register your birds online and get alerts on any outbreaks of bird flu

Supported by:



SPOTTED A DEAD WILD BIRD?

✓ Report it to the Defra helpline 03459 33 55 77, option 7.
In Northern Ireland call: 0300 200 7840

#BIRDFLU

Animal & Plant Health Agency

SEARCH FOR 'AVIAN INFLUENZA' AT GOV.UK

