

Notifiable Avian Diseases

Biosecurity Information for Bird Keepers



This document provides guidance for all bird keepers to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading avian disease.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



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Keys to keeping disease out

- **Scrupulous hygiene and disinfection:**
 - Clean clothes, footwear and hands thoroughly, before and after contact with birds.
 - Keep your vehicles and equipment clean.
- **Control access to your premises:**
 - Keep visitors away from your birds unless it is essential.
 - Make sure that all visitors follow your cleansing and disinfection regime.
- **Managing your flock:**
 - Buy healthy stock from reliable sources.
 - Separate and isolate new or ill stock.
 - Minimise contact with wild birds, particularly waterfowl.
 - Keep records of all birds moving on or off the premises.
- **Feed and equipment:**
 - Make sure feed and water can't be accessed by wild birds.
 - Avoid sharing equipment.
 - Cleanse and disinfect shared equipment before and after use.
 - Buy feed from a reputable mill or supplier.
- **Prepare:**
 - Train your staff to recognise disease and react to any suspicion.
 - Keep an up to date contact list of key people.
 - Develop a contingency plan.
- **React to disease:**
 - If you suspect disease, act quickly and consult your vet.

Avian influenza and Newcastle disease are notifiable diseases and suspicion of disease must be reported to your local Divisional Veterinary Office.

Register your flock

By law you must register your flock with the Department. This will enable us to contact you and to respond quickly if there is a disease outbreak.

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/bird-registration-form

Notifiable Avian Diseases

Avian influenza (bird flu) is a highly contagious disease of birds, not humans. People and other mammals can become infected but rarely are.

Low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) is typically less severe and may cause mild breathing problems in birds or minimal signs of infection.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) can develop suddenly with high mortality. It can cause:

- swollen heads
- discolouration of the comb and wattles
- dullness and unwilling to move
- decrease food and water consumption
- drop in egg production
- diarrhoea
- respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing or gurgling
- increased mortalities

Some bird species (such as ducks, geese and pigeons) may display few or no clinical signs.

Newcastle disease is a highly contagious disease of wild and captive birds. It can cause a short-term eye infection in humans.

In birds, the main clinical signs are:

- respiratory distress such as gaping beak, coughing, sneezing or gurgling
- muscular tremors
- yellowish-green watery faeces (diarrhoea)
- depression and loss of appetite

You can vaccinate your birds against Newcastle disease; ask your vet for advice.

More information on notifiable avian diseases is available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk

More things to consider

To halt the spread of disease, the Department may restrict the movement of birds and bird products. The Notifiable Epizootic Avian Disease Control Strategy provides details on the types of restrictions and zones that may be put in place.

Movement restrictions of birds/mammals and/or products may be imposed in your area.

- What would the consequences be for your business?
- Do you have contingencies and plans to cope with restrictions?

You may be required to house your birds or to isolate them from wild birds.

- Do you have the facilities to accommodate this?
- If not, what are your options or next steps?

Respond

During periods of heightened risk in Northern Ireland, there are more things you can do to protect your flock, for instance:

- Heighten vigilance - increase the frequency of flock inspections.
- Increase level of biosecurity - consider restricting access, and increase facilities for cleansing and disinfection.
- Check for news - updates will be available on the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs website.

If you believe that your flock may have any form of notifiable disease you must contact your local Divisional Veterinary Office. Failure to do so can be deemed an offence.

Useful contacts and further Information

DAERA Avian Influenza page

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/avian-influenza-ai

DAERA poultry register

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/identification-registration-and-movement-birds

The Notifiable Epizootic Avian Disease Control Strategy

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/notifiable-epizootic-avian-disease-control-strategy

Biosecurity Guidance

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/biosecurity>

Guidance - Preparing for AI-Separating Domestic Birds from Wild Birds

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/preparing-ai-separating-domestic-birds-wild-birds>

Find your local Divisional Veterinary Office

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/contacts/daera-direct-regional-offices

DAERA Helpline 0300 200 7840

If you find one or more dead gulls, waders, ducks, geese and swans (webbed feet, long legs or long neck) or five or more of any species the DAERA Helpline should be contacted at **0300 200 7840**.



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