



AVIAN INFLUENZA – VOLUNTEER GUIDANCE

Avian Influenza (AI) or bird flu is a highly contagious family of viruses that impacts particularly on captive birds, such as turkeys and hens but is also carried and spread by wild birds, particularly wildfowl and gulls. Wild birds are known to be an important vector and spreader of AI – this risk is clearly heightened during periods of bird migration.

AI is a notifiable disease and therefore any suspected cases are required to be reported to the relevant government agency.

At the time of writing AI has been discovered in several poultry units across England and from dead wild birds in both England and Northern Ireland. In response to this all infected flocks have been culled and Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) declared in all UK countries. These measures are largely based around enhanced farm biosecurity and the prevention of the movement of at risk birds. AIPZ therefore apply across the whole of the UK.

Where an actual outbreak is confirmed within a poultry/captive bird unit then a more stringent Control Zone system is put in place. These are usually made up of a central 1km Restriction Zone and Controlled Zones of 3 and 10km. Within these areas culling of poultry may take place and there are enhanced movement and biosecurity precautions as well as inspections of poultry/captive bird units and enhanced surveillance of wild birds.

There is also a UK wide AI Wild Bird Surveillance programme in place across the UK and this presently includes the collection and testing of dead or sick wild birds for AI.

Clearly there is the potential for dead wild birds to be found on Woodland Trust land – sites with water bodies being the most likely. There are however no proven cases of humans catching the disease from wild birds. Therefore, the risk to public health from dead wild birds is very low.

The virus is spread through faeces and nasal secretions and as such the key biosecurity measure is to avoid directly touching sick birds or carcasses.

There is no evidence that any type of AI has passed from avian species to dogs. So should any visitor dog or your own dog find or touch any dead bird there is no evidence the dog will be at risk but clearly any concerns should be dealt with through discussion with a vet.

Please do not attempt to move any dead or dying birds you may come across. We are asking volunteers not to deliberately come into contact with dead or dying birds.

REPORTING DEAD BIRDS

While on site should you come across or have reported to you dead or clearly sick bird(s) that fall into the following category these require reporting.

- one or more dead gulls, waders, ducks, geese and swans (basically any bird with webbed feet, long legs or long neck) or birds of prey.
- Any other single dead birds, such as song birds, do not need to be reported. However, if more than five dead birds, of any species/type, are found in one locality that should also be reported.



Reporting Practice:

If it is a member of the public who brings this to your attention politely request that they show you exactly where the bird(s) is so that you can confirm a report is needed and can complete the reporting accurately.

Use the contact numbers given in below. We ask that you report the dead bird(s) yourself as you will have the first-hand knowledge of the location and bird(s). If you can't make the report from site, then you should complete your planned tasks and report as soon as is practically possible.

- Remember that any government staff will need to be able to find the birds so collate as much details as you can to ensure you can provide suitable details to aid the identify the location. Where possible GPS locate the carcass – look to pass on GR and/or What Three Words.
- You should confirm the land is owned by the Woodland Trust and you can also provide your WT Site Manager contact number should you be asked to provide landowner details.
- Ask that they confirm with you that the bird(s) are to be collected.
- Ensure that your WT Site Manager is made aware as soon as you are able of both the location and the likely outcome of your reporting.
- It is possible that the government officer may request you meet them to show them the location of the birds, we appreciate not everyone may be able to do this, please discuss this with your Site Manager.
- Please inform your Site Manager of your discovery and confirm you have reported it to the appropriate government via the details below.

Country specific information sources and contact details reference AI

Northern Ireland	0300 200 7840
Wales	03459 33 55 77
Scotland	03459 33 55 77
England	03459 33 55 77

MANAGEMENT ACCESS ROUTES / WORK AREAS ADJACENT TO POULTRY UNITS

When planning or undertaking activity on WT land if it becomes apparent that your intended access route or work area are adjacent to captive bird / poultry units this should be brought to the attention of your WT Site Manager who will discuss with you the requirement for any additional control measures you need to put in place to undertake this work. Activity should be delayed until this discussion has taken place.

If in doubt or you need further advice please contact your Site Manager.

