

# Avian influenza prevention zone declared in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex

Following a number of detections of avian influenza in both poultry and wild birds across Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex, the United Kingdom's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer has declared an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) across the region to mitigate the risk of further outbreaks of disease occurring.

This means that from midday on Tuesday 27 September it will be a legal requirement for all bird keepers in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex to follow strict biosecurity measures to help protect their flocks, of whatever type or size. Bird keepers are advised to consult the [interactive map](#) to check if they are impacted and should then read the [AIPZ declaration](#) which sets out the requirements in a regional AIPZ.

All bird keepers, including hobby and backyard poultry keepers and anyone who keeps chickens, ducks and geese as pets must take [steps](#) to limit the risk of the disease spreading to their animals.

Additionally, keepers with more than 500 birds will need to restrict access for non-essential people on their sites, workers will need to change clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and site vehicles will need to be cleaned and disinfected regularly to limit the risk of the disease spreading. There is also a mandatory requirement to keep records and to make them available on request.

The UK Health Security Agency continue to advise that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency advice remains unchanged, that avian influenzas pose a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

The UK has faced its largest ever outbreak of bird flu with over 150 cases confirmed across the country since late October 2021. The introduction of this regional AIPZ comes after the disease was detected in kept birds at 10 premises in the affected regions since the beginning of September, as well as several reports in wild birds.

The United Kingdom's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Richard Irvine said:

Following an increased number of detections of avian influenza we have declared an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone across Suffolk, Norfolk and parts of Essex. This means that all bird keepers in the region must urgently take action now to both prevent disease getting in to flocks and it spreading any further.

Whether you keep just a few birds or thousands, you are now legally required to introduce stricter biosecurity standards on your farm or small holding. It is in your interests to do so in order to protect your birds from this highly infectious and devastating disease.

The introduction of an AIPZ follows the recent increase in cases of bird flu in poultry and other captive birds in the area and increased reports of mass mortality in wild birds.

The regionalised AIPZ now in force does not include a requirement to house birds. However, this is being kept under constant review. Further disease control measures will be based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice.

The Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) means bird keepers in the affected regions must:

- Cleanse and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products, and use effective vermin control
- keep records of mortality, movement of poultry and poultry products and any changes in production
- thoroughly cleanse and disinfect housing on a continuous basis
- keep fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all farm and poultry housing entry and exit points
- minimise direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds
- prevent access by poultry to ponds and watercourses and ensure that birds are kept in fenced or enclosed areas

The AIPZ will be in place until further notice, and will be kept under regular review as part of the government's work to monitor and manage the risks of bird flu.

Bird keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to Defra's national dead wild bird helpline on 03459 33 55 77 and keepers should report suspicion of disease in their birds to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian influenza advice](#).

Defra has also set out practical guidance to support land managers, the public and ornithological and environmental organisations in their response to the growing threat of avian influenza to wild birds. The ['Mitigation Strategy for Avian Influenza in Wild Birds in England and Wales'](#) sets out how these groups, together with the government and its delivery partners, can mitigate the impact of avian influenza on wild bird populations whilst protecting public health, the wider environment and the rural economy.