The Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 ("the Regulations"), Regulation 6.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe
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Declaration of an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ("the Department") has carried out a risk assessment in accordance with the provisions of regulation 6(1) of the Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 ("the Regulations").

In order to reduce the risk of incursion of avian influenza in poultry or other captive birds from wild birds or from any other source, the Department considers it necessary to declare the whole of Northern Ireland as set out in Schedule 5 as an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 6(1)(a) of the above Regulations.

In addition, a ban on galliforme, (including pheasants, partridge, quail, chickens, turkey, guinea fowl) anseriforme, (including ducks, geese, swans) and poultry gatherings will be implemented as part of this declaration.

Measures applying within the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone

Any person in charge of poultry and captive birds must take all appropriate and practicable steps to reduce the risk of transmission of avian influenza to poultry and other captive birds. The following risk mitigation measures apply within the zone.

1 All keepers of poultry and other captive birds in Northern Ireland must comply with the minimum biosecurity measures in **Schedule 1** to this declaration.

2 All keepers of 500 or more poultry or other captive birds must additionally comply with the measures in **Schedule 2** to this declaration. Keepers of poultry or other captive birds at a Zoo are exempted from the requirements of **Schedule 2**.

3 All keepers of poultry and captive birds must comply with the requirements of **Schedule 3**.

4 Keepers of poultry or other captive birds at a zoo may apply the measures in **Schedule 4**, as an alternative to complying with **Schedule 3.**

5 A keeper of racing pigeons, doves or other Columbiformes that wishes to allow birds to free fly must in addition comply with the requirements of **Schedule 5**.

6 The measures of **Schedule 6** to this declaration apply in the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone to all keepers of birds of prey or other birds trained to fly from hand or under close control in the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone.

7 These measures apply from **00:01** on **Thursday 19 November 2026** and shall remain in force until the declaration is otherwise amended or revoked by further declaration.

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8 This Declaration is made under regulation 6(1) of the Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007

Signed

Brian Dooher
Chief Veterinary Officer – Northern Ireland
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Jubilee House
Ballykelly
BT49 9HP
Time: 00:01 hrs Date: Thursday 19 November 2026

Authorised by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Failure to comply with this Declaration may be an offence under article 52 of the Diseases of Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and where found guilty of an offence shall be liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £5,000.

Notes:

"poultry" means a bird reared or kept in captivity for the production of meat or eggs for consumption, or of other products, for restocking supplies of game or for the purposes of any breeding programme for the production of such categories of birds;

"other captive bird" means a bird kept in captivity which is not poultry and includes a pet bird and a bird kept for shows, races, exhibitions, competitions, breeding or for sale;

Vehicles used to transport poultry or other captive birds shall be cleansed and disinfected in accordance with The Transport of Animals and Poultry (Cleansing and Disinfection) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007.

Nothing in this Declaration removes obligations on keepers of poultry or other captive birds from existing animal welfare requirements, and private veterinary advice should be sought by a keeper who is concerned about the suitability of housing conditions.

A self-assessment toolkit to aid a review of biosecurity arrangements and a guide to looking after housed birds is available via https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daera-ai-biosecurity-self-assessment

Guidance on housing and additional biosecurity measures of birds may be found in biosecurity guidance via Biosecurity and preventing welfare impacts in poultry and captive birds

Frequently asked questions on the Prevention Zone are available at www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/avian-influenza-ai

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Copies of this Declaration and of the Regulations are available at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/declarations and from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Jubilee House, Ballykelly, BT49 9HP.

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Schedule 1 - Minimum biosecurity measures applying to all keepers

Any keeper of poultry (including game birds and pet birds) or other captive birds, irrespective of how they are kept, must take appropriate and practicable steps, that can be demonstrated to an inspector on request, to ensure that–

(1) precautions are taken to avoid the transfer of virus contamination between premises, including cleansing and disinfection of equipment, vehicles and footwear. Place a foot dip containing an approved poultry disinfectant, at the correct concentration, at strategic points including at the entry and exit of all houses or outdoor areas where birds are kept, and footwear must be cleaned using the dips on entry and exit or alternatively footwear should be changed when moving between bird and non-bird areas;

(2) feed, water and bedding are stored to minimise the risk of virus contamination;

(3) effective vermin control is carried out in any part of the premises where poultry or other captive birds are kept;

(4) the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from the part of the premises where poultry are kept is reduced to only essential movements for looking after their welfare, collecting eggs and feeding or movements for official or inspection visits;

(5) records are kept (other than in a zoo) of all vehicles that enter any part of the premises where poultry are kept and of all people who come into any direct contact with the poultry.

(6) records of poultry, captive birds and egg movements must be kept and made available to an inspector or veterinary inspector on demand. Records should include:

- the quantity and description (including species of bird or type of egg) transported or marketed;
- the date of the movement off the premises;
- the premises of destination (if known);
- the name and address of the person to whom ownership or possession is being or has been transferred;

(7) buildings that house the birds are maintained and any defects that allow water ingress or other contamination to enter the building are rectified without undue delay.

(8) there is no direct contact with poultry or other captive birds on other neighbouring premises;

(9) ducks and geese should not be kept in the same pen or building as other poultry species.

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Schedule 2 – Enhanced biosecurity measures for premises with over 500 poultry or other captive birds

Any keeper of more than 500 poultry or other captive birds must, in addition to the minimum measures set out in Schedule 1, must apply the following enhanced biosecurity measures in these separate parts of the poultry premises–

i. **a poultry/captive bird (live-bird) part** (for example, in the Lion code this area is referred to as the 'Specific' area; and in Red Tractor as 'defined biosecure areas'); and

ii. **a private (ancillary use) part** (for example, in the Lion code this area is referred to as the 'General' area; and in Red Tractor as 'defined biosecure areas'); and

iii. **a restricted access** (biosecure barrier) part.

(1) The following measures apply to a poultry/captive bird (live-bird) part of the premises–

a) access is restricted to essential authorised personnel only;

b) keepers must operate effective barrier hygiene, including changing clothing and footwear, before entering and on exit from the live-bird part;

c) only essential equipment and vehicles are permitted to enter the live-bird part;

d) the exterior of any vehicles, including fork-lifts and pallet trolleys (particularly wheels and wheel arches) and equipment which enter or leave the live-bird part of the premises must be cleansed and disinfected on both entry and exit; and

e) thorough cleansing and disinfecting (based on industry best practice) of housing and equipment must be undertaken at the end of a production cycle and before new birds are introduced; and

f) records must be kept of vehicles and personnel entering and leaving the live-bird part.

(2) The following measures apply to a private (ancillary use) part of the premises–

a) access is limited to essential personnel only, and full biosecurity practices should be adopted on entry and exit to the part of the premises;

b) this part of the premises should be fully separated from the live-bird part with a clear demarcation;

c) waste and fallen stock must be held in appropriately biosecure facilities in this part of the premises with clear separation between both the live-bird part and the restricted access biosecure barrier part; and

d) the exterior of any vehicles (focussing on wheels and wheel arches) which enters or leaves the part must be cleansed and disinfected on both entry and exit.

e) egg producers should ensure the packing, handling and storage of second quality eggs / farm seconds is managed in a biosecure manner. Plastic egg trays must be cleansed and disinfected before use and records maintained as detailed in Schedule 1 (6).

(3) The following measures apply to the restricted access (biosecure barrier) part of the premises

a) access by the public should be controlled and only essential workers or contractors should enter this biosecure barrier part; and

b) non-essential vehicles must not enter this biosecure barrier part.

c) Keepers must regularly inspect the fabric and structural integrity of any building used to house poultry for holes and leaks, with particular emphasis on roofs, gutters and downpipes. Any holes and leaks must be repaired without undue delay as recent cases of avian influenza have been linked to water ingress and flooding.

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Schedule 3 – Requirements for keepers of poultry or other captive birds within the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone

(1) All keepers must ensure that all poultry or other captive birds are kept housed in accordance with the following conditions –

a) the buildings must be suitable for the purpose and checked/inspected regularly that they continue to be;

b) any openings must be covered with suitable mesh or netting which should be of a maximum size of 25mm mesh to prevent ingress from wild birds,

c) feed and bedding are kept indoors, where access by wild birds, pests and rodents is mitigated;

d) measures are in place to ensure that wild birds are not attracted to areas under the control of the keeper, in particular to watercourses, reservoirs, ponds or other standing water;

e) there is regular cleaning and disinfecting of all concrete walkways, paths and similar surfaces to which poultry or other captive birds or wild birds have access.

(2) Where it is not possible to house birds on welfare grounds, poultry or other captive birds must be kept in fully enclosed or netted outdoor areas subject to the following conditions–

a) the outdoor area being fully enclosed with wire mesh, netting or other material which is capable of preventing ingress of wild birds. Any mesh or netting which should be of a maximum size of 25mm (2(a) does not apply to poultry kept for restocking supplies of game);

b) access to open or permanent standing water is restricted by fencing off and netting ponds, standing water, or waterlogged land to prevent access by poultry or other captive birds;

c) there is no direct contact with poultry or other captive birds on other neighbouring premises;

d) feed and bedding are kept indoors, where access by wild birds, pests and rodents is mitigated;

e) feed and water are provided under cover where wild birds cannot gain access; and,

f) any carcases of wild birds are removed from the outdoor fenced range area;

g) there is regular cleaning and disinfecting of all concrete walkways, paths and similar surfaces to which poultry or other captive birds or wild birds have access.

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h) the range area is regularly inspected to ensure it is not contaminated with feathers or faecal material from wild birds and reasonable steps are taken to remove such contamination that may be present as soon as is practicable;

i) before placing any new structures or enclosures on land for the purpose of keeping poultry or other captive birds outdoors, the keeper must arrange for the inspection of the relevant site for feathers and faecal matter from wild birds and, if such material is discovered, remove such material;

j) measures are taken to discourage wild birds (in particular gulls and wild waterfowl) from entering the outdoor range area and that wild birds are not attracted to the vicinity of the outdoor range area

k) measures are in place to ensure that wild birds are not attracted to areas under the control of the keeper, in the vicinity of the outdoor area, in particular to watercourses, reservoirs, ponds or other standing water;

l) proactive measures (for example, bird scarers, foils, streamers) are taken to discourage wild birds, (in particular gulls and wild waterfowl), from entering the fenced outdoor areas or congregating in the vicinity of the outdoor range area, in particular to open or standing water;

m) there is regular inspection of the site and consideration that these conditions continue to be met, minimising the risk of contact with wild birds

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Schedule 4 – Zoos

(1) A keeper of poultry or other captive birds kept at a premises licensed The Zoos Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, may, as an alternative to Schedule 3, take reasonable and practicable measures to prevent potential disease spread including—

a) isolating groups of captive birds not housed or fully enclosed in outdoor areas from all other poultry and other captive birds;

b) assessing the risk of public access to indoor captive bird enclosures;

c) controlling entry to outdoor captive bird enclosures including limiting to essential persons;

d) requiring persons to wear suitable personal protective equipment in particular if in direct contact with the captive birds;

e) disinfectant mats must be installed at all points of entry and exit at the zoo that are for use by visiting members of the public, if members of the public are to be admitted to areas of the zoo in which poultry or other captive birds are kept ;

f) handwashing facilities must be made available to visiting members of the public if the public are to be admitted to areas of the zoo in which poultry or other captive birds are kept; and

g) in consultation with a private veterinarian, producing robust justification for any deviation and demonstrate the zoo has measures in place to minimize any disease spread from such un-netted outdoor enclosures.

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Schedule 5 – Release of Racing Pigeons, Doves and other *Columbiformes*

(1) A keeper of racing pigeons, doves or other *Columbiformes* may:

(a) Temporarily let their birds out briefly before feeding each day to meet bird's welfare requirements for up to an hour. Lofts must not be left open for several hours for the birds to come and go as they please. Contact between the racing pigeons, doves or other *Columbiformes* either directly or indirectly with wild birds must be minimised wherever possible.

(b) Birds from the same loft/pigeon house may also be transported to a point some distance from the home loft/pigeon house and released/liberated and allowed to return to the loft/pigeon house as part of a training and conditioning programme. The vehicle and baskets/boxes must be cleansed and disinfected using a DAERA approved disinfectant.

(c) Provided the gathering is registered with DAERA and the conditions of the General Licence are complied with, multi-loft training, pigeon racing and other *Columbiforme* competitions are permitted whilst the AIPZ is in force. Birds may be basketed, marked and transported to a liberation site and released to fly back to their home loft/pigeon house. The vehicle/transporter and baskets/boxes must be cleansed and disinfected using a Government Approved Disinfectant.

(d) Pigeons, doves and other C*olumbiformes* may be transported to another location and released to fly free at functions and events provided the birds are either gathered and returned to their home premises as soon as practicable or they fly to return to their home premises. Care should be taken to avoid locations where there are large numbers of wild birds or domestic poultry. Events where birds from more than one premises are present is a bird gathering and must be registered with DAERA and meet the conditions of the general licence for bird gatherings.

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Schedule 6 – Flying from hand or under close control of birds of prey and other species (excluding anseriformes and galliformes)

(1) Schedule 1 and Schedule 3 to this declaration are subject to the following provisions, which apply to all keepers of birds of prey or other species of bird trained to fly from hand or under close control in the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone:

(a) Keepers may temporarily let their birds out and fly them from hand each day to meet bird's welfare requirements for up to an hour each day. Lofts/bird houses must not be left open for the birds to come and go as they please. Contact between these birds either directly or indirectly with wild birds must be minimised wherever possible.

(b) A bird of prey used for pest control may be transported to another place some distance from the home premises, provided that place is not within a disease control zone declared under The Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 and flown from hand for the purposes of pest control. The vehicle used and baskets/boxes/transport must be cleansed and disinfected using a DAERA approved disinfectant.

(c) Gatherings of birds of prey or other species of bird trained to fly from hand or under close control, with the exception of gatherings of anseriformes, galliformes are permitted, provided that they meet the DAERA requirements and conditions as stipulated on the General Licence. The vehicle/transporter and baskets/boxes must be cleansed and disinfected using a government approved disinfectant.

(d) Birds of prey and other species (excluding anseriformes and galliformes) may be transported to another location and released to fly from hand or under close control at events provided the birds are gathered again and returned to their home premises as soon as practical. Care should be taken to avoid locations where there are large numbers of wild birds or domestic poultry. An event where birds from more than one premises are present is a bird gathering and must meet DAERA requirements and conditions as stipulated on the General Licence.

(e) If during any free-flying from hand or under close control, visual contact with the bird is lost for more than a minute, or the bird catches another wild bird, the bird must be isolated and closely monitored for a period of 14 days before being allowed to free-fly from hand or under close control again.

** The AIPM 66 – General Licence for Bird Gatherings Permitted under the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone can be accessed at – https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/general-licence-bird-gatherings*

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Schedule 7 - Avian Influenza Prevention Zone

The Avian Influenza Prevention Zone applies to the whole of Northern Ireland