



# The Falconer

DECEMBER 2016

## Bird Flu - Urgent Notice - Revision

The advice posted earlier today (7 December) from the Chairman of the Hawk Board after discussion with DEFRA, has been replaced with the following, more proportionate information, in the form of a Q&A, from APHA. The text of the DEFRA Press Release is reproduced on pages 3 and 4.

### OTHER CAPTIVE BIRDS

#### Q. Does this apply to pigeon fanciers, aviaries and zoos?

- The prevention Zone conditions apply to all captive birds. Many zoos already house their birds or have aviaries that keep captive birds separate from wild birds. .
- We do not feel it is proportionate to extend any measures to sport and recreational pursuits. We keep all options under review.
- Pigeons are not of significance in the transmission of this strain of avian influenza.
- It is currently the closed season for racing pigeons and racing is not scheduled to begin again until April
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

#### Q. Can I fly my birds of prey?

- You can still fly birds of prey but you should avoid contact with wildfowl as they are susceptible to avian influenza themselves.
- Hawks don't usually predate grounded birds. They are therefore less likely to indirectly contact a source of virus such as infected faeces.
- You should make sure the birds are healthy, clean and report any clinical signs to APHA
- General advice is to avoid unnecessary contact between captive birds and wild birds.

### GATHERINGS AND SHOWS

#### Q. Am I still able to show birds as they will be kept in baskets and cages, etc?

- Gatherings of poultry and other captive birds have not been banned or restricted.
- You should ensure you maintain good biosecurity

*Sport and friendship*

- *Birds should be well and fit for the intended journey.*
- *Birds and containers should be kept clean as far as possible*

*Q. Should I cancel shows/fairs/school visits etc?*

- *Not necessarily. Provided that your birds are kept separate from wild birds such events can still go ahead.*

The Defra website is being update regularly, so please keep an eye on the website and the news for the latest developments.

## DEFRA Press Release

### New measures to protect poultry against Avian Flu

The Chief Veterinary Officer has declared a Prevention Zone to help protect poultry from a strain of Avian Flu in Europe.

The Government Chief Vet has declared a Prevention Zone introducing enhanced biosecurity requirements for poultry and captive birds, helping protect them from a strain of avian flu circulating in mainland Europe.

The zone covers England and will remain in place for 30 days. Declarations have also been made by the Scottish Government and Welsh Government.

Keepers of poultry and other captive birds are now required to keep their birds indoors, or take appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds.

Outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N8) have been confirmed in poultry and wild birds in several countries across Europe. No cases of H5N8 have been found in the UK and this order is a precautionary measure to help prevent potential infection from wild birds.

Public Health England (PHE) advises that the threat to human health remains very low.

Defra is continuing to monitor the situation closely and has increased its surveillance activity, while keepers are being urged to reinforce biosecurity measures on their premises.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

“While no cases of H5N8 avian flu have been found in the UK, and PHE advises the public health threat is low, we are closely monitoring the situation across Europe and have scaled up surveillance in response to the heightened risk.

“As a precaution, and to allow time for poultry and captive bird keepers to put in place appropriate biosecurity measures, we have declared a 30-day Prevention Zone to reduce the risk of infection from wild birds.

“Even when birds are housed a risk of infection remains so this must be coupled with good biosecurity - for example disinfecting clothing and equipment, reducing poultry movement and minimising contact between poultry and wild birds.”

Poultry keepers are advised to be vigilant for any signs of disease in their birds and any wild birds, and seek prompt advice from their vet if they have any concerns. They can help prevent avian flu by maintaining good biosecurity on their premises, including:

- cleansing and disinfecting clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reducing the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry are kept to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products and using effective vermin control

- thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting housing at the end of a production cycle
- keeping fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all points where people should use it, such as farm entrances and before entering poultry housing or enclosures
- minimising direct and indirect contact between poultry and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds.

For further information, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-protect-poultry-against-avian-flu>