

Avian Influenza/Bird Flu

Please be on the lookout for signs of sick and ill birds, particularly wildfowl and water birds.

The UK is experiencing a severe and widespread outbreak of Avian Influenza (HPAI H5) this winter. The disease is affecting both wildlife and farmed birds. All captive birds must legally be kept indoors currently. The disease is a major concern for chicken farmers et al and our fragile wild bird populations, especially with regard to migratory species.

The disease has been found across the entire British Isles and appears to particularly effect wildfowl such as ducks, geese, swans and gulls. Possibly the worst current wild outbreak is affecting the Solway Firth where the WWT estimate up to 20% of the Svalbard Barnacle Goose population have been lost October to December alone. More [here](#). A Peregrine in Ireland is confirmed to have died of Bird Flu, with others suspected, as has a White-tailed Eagle in Scotland

Last week 5 dead Canada Geese were reported at Hillsborough Park and Bird Flu must be suspected. As birders we must be on the look out for events were multiple dead birds are found, be that in our parks and ponds or in the wider landscape. See [here](#).

If you find any dead wild birds DO NOT TOUCH them – the UK Health Security Agency rates the risk to human health as “very low” but the disease is easily spread so don’t go near the birds. Please report them immediately to DEFRA on 03459335577. Then report them to the local council Sheffield [here](#) 01142500500 and Rotherham [here](#). State clearly that you SUSPECT AVIAN INFLUENZA. They council must dispose of the birds promptly as a health hazard. **Insist & check they do so.** Let us SBSG know via social media channels so we can track the disease in our area and warn others.

It is not yet fully understood the extent to which the disease affects smaller birds of our woodlands, farmland and gardens.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#public>

<https://twitter.com/KaneBrides/status/1477590088607490050>

<https://twitter.com/GarrityPete/status/1481227482808340482>

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/pollution-nuisance/report-dead-animal.html>

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/transport-streets/report-dead-animal-public-road-path-pavement/1>

CG 16/1/2022