

## DISCLAIMER

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE), after performing an administrative and technical screening of a self-declaration concerning the disease-free status of a country, a zone or a compartment (“self-declaration”), as described in the standard operating procedures for self-declarations, reserves the right to publish or not the self-declaration on its website. There shall be no right of appeal from this decision nor any recourse of any kind.

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## Self-declaration of freedom from High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza in poultry compartments in India

**Declaration sent to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) on 26 July 2023 by Dr Alka Upadhyaya, WOAHP Delegate for India, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, India.**

### 1 Introduction

The objective of the self-declaration is to declare freedom from infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) in poultry in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 4.4 and 4.5 and Articles 10.4.4. and 1.4.6 of the WOAHP *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)*. The self-declaration covers 26 compartments described in [Annexure II](#).

The starting date of the self-declaration is 20 July 2023.

### 2 Evidence that the disease is notifiable

#### 2.1 Veterinary Services in India

At the central level, Veterinary Services in India are overseen by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying within the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying. This Department is led by a Cabinet Minister in the Union Government. It is responsible for making key policy decisions on behalf of the Government of India.

India, as a vast country, is divided into 28 States and 8 Union Territories for administrative purposes. In addition to the Central Government, each State and Union Territory has its own independent Government under the framework of the Indian constitution. The division of responsibilities is shared between the Central Government and State & Union Territory Governments. The domain of Prevention and Control of Animal Diseases falls within the purview of the State Governments. To cater to this, each State and Union Territory Government operates its own Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department.

At the State level, Veterinary services are provided through State Veterinary hospitals, dispensaries, and mobile Veterinary clinics. These facilities are staffed by veterinary graduates holding a degree in Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry that is duly recognized by the Veterinary Council of India

**a. Evidence that the disease is a notifiable disease in the entire country**

The 'Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009' (refer to [Annexure V](#)) is a central legislation in place to provide legal support for the management and eradication of livestock and poultry diseases, including Avian Influenza, across the country. According to the provisions of this Act, if a livestock owner or any other individual, whether from the government or private sector, becomes aware of an outbreak of an infectious disease in livestock, they are obligated to promptly inform the nearest veterinary dispensary, hospital, or veterinary aid center. This information then gets relayed to the Veterinary Officer or surgeon and subsequently to the Director of Veterinary Services or Chief Veterinarian of the respective State.

The State Director is responsible for sending a monthly report to the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) of the Government of India. This data is compiled into a monthly Animal Disease Surveillance Bulletin, which is distributed nationwide and also communicated to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) in the form of immediate notifications and six-monthly reports. The country has an integrated Disease Surveillance System, encompassing a total of 68,693 institutions dedicated to disease surveillance, reporting, control, and containment. This network comprises 12,452 Veterinary Hospitals and Polyclinics, 26,451 Veterinary Dispensaries, and 29,790 Veterinary Aid Centers and Mobile Veterinary clinics.

For managing Avian Influenza specifically, the National Action Plan for Preparedness Control and Containment of Avian Influenza 2021 (see [Annexure VI](#)) is followed to guide the necessary actions and responses.

**3 History of absence or eradication of the disease in the compartments**

**b. Compartments**

Zoning and compartmentalization are tools to establish and maintain groups of animals with a specific health status for the purposes of international trade and disease prevention or control. Compartmentalization entails the definition of an animal sub-population of specified health status within the national territory. This status is maintained through management and husbandry practices related to biosecurity based on the standards in the Terrestrial Code (Chapters 4.4 and 4.5) and the recommendations in the relevant disease chapters. The National Veterinary Authority is responsible for granting, suspending and revoking the status of a compartment. The use of compartmentalization is not only a trade-facilitating measure but also a tool to improve animal health and reduce the risk of disease outbreaks within and outside the compartment.

Keeping in view the above issues, the Department started the process of declaring poultry establishments as compartments free from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5 and H7). At present the country has 26 establishments declared as compartments free from HPAI and LPAI (H5 and H7) and the details are given as [Annexure II](#). The [PVS Evaluation of India was conducted in 2018](#) during which the compartmentalization of India was awarded with the highest level of advancement, i.e., 5 and thereby fully meeting the criteria established by WOAH.

State wide number of Compartments

State	No of Compartment
Chattisgarh	6
Maharashtra	13
Tamil Nadu	5
Uttar Pradesh	2

**Application Process:**

- The poultry establishment applies to the State Animal Husbandry Department as per the checklist ([Annexure III](#)) prescribed by the Government of India, giving the details of the establishment along with the complete chain from source to marketing.
- The State Animal Husbandry Department inspects the said establishment as per the checklist.
- After satisfactory evaluation, the State Animal Husbandry Department sends the recommendation to the DAHD, Government of India, for inspection.
- The DAHD, Government of India, has its Central Expert team headed by Experts from ICAR and Veterinary University/College. ([Annexure IV](#))
- After inspection by the Central Expert Team of DAHD, Government of India issues a letter of recognition to the State Animal Husbandry Department for issuing of letter of recognition to the company. The compartment recognition is valid for three years. After a 3-year renewal is accorded after re-inspection for another period of 3 years.
- After recognition, the State Animal Husbandry through the local veterinarians inspect the compartment at six monthly intervals and samples are collected for AI surveillance and testing.

**Recognition of compartment depends on:**

- Epidemiology of the disease
- Environmental factors
- Surveillance
- Biosecurity measures
- Quality of vet services / other competent authority
- Cooperation between govt and private sector for compartments
- Migratory birds-domestic birds interface

Summary of the measures implemented including Biosecurity and Traceability

**A. Infrastructural Facility:**

- Fencing/ Proper Boundary of the establishment to prevent entry of common men and animals.
- The facilities for human entry including access control, changing area and showers.
- The vehicle entry area must have forced washing facility for vehicle with disinfection facility and security guards with CCTV surveillance and maintaining the entry and exit register.
- All the poultry sheds within the establishments must be located separately with a sufficient distance.
- The infrastructure to store feed and veterinary products.

**B. Biosecurity**

- Biosecurity at the main entry of poultry establishments, facilities for washing of car (forced washing facility).
- The entry and exit of the vehicles are recorded at the gate.
- There must be separate entry for personal at the main entry point controlled by foot dipping and hand washing and thereafter in each entry point at the poultry shed there are separate foot dipping and hand washing arrangement have been made.
- The sheds must be elevated and have good concrete floor, and nipples and valves must be fumigated and disinfected regularly.
- Periodical liming and spraying and fumigation is followed after removal of birds each time.

- Individual sheds marked with designate areas for egg storage. The sheds must be designed in such a manner that there is designated walk area between the cages and walking area are marked in yellow lines.
- The workers were provided with the masks and head gear at the time of their working in the poultry sheds.
- Quarterly medical check-up of workers.
- The workers may have different colour codes for different category of workers as well as different areas of the farm i.e., clean and unclean areas.
- The water for birds is sourced from the bore well and regularly sanitised by chlorine treatment.
- Regular plan to prevent exposure to living mechanical or biological vectors such as insects, rodents and wild birds through rodent control is in place.
- The poultry sheds and manure collection area are separated with net.
- Trimming of trees must be ensured so as to avoid the formation of fruits because fruit formations unnecessarily attracting unwanted wild birds which may lead to breach of biosecurity.

### C. Quarantine measures and movement control

- The establishments are in isolated location, which are 2 kms away from any commercial or backyard poultry or villages.
- The farm boundaries are fenced by chain-link fence buried to a depth of 18 inches and topped with barbed wire to prevent the entry of unauthorized persons and animals. Recently some units have made precast fencing walls.
- Main entry are doors and gates locked at all the times and the security guards are at gate for 24 hrs and unauthorized person are not allowed any the premises and a record of visitor entry is maintained.
- No visitor or No pet and other animals are allowed in and around the poultry housing.
- No water ponds between the sheds to avoid crane or wild birds.
- Visit youngest and clean flock first and oldest and ailing flock at last in the day to prevent cross-transmission of pathogens to young birds.
- Farm supervisor are given responsibility of one age group and while visiting different sheds he should follow all the biosecurity measures.
- When a poultry house is depopulated, all manure is removed from the house and effective cleaning and disinfection procedure is followed.
- Adequate down-time (rest period) between flock placement given. A minimum period of four weeks for growers and six weeks for laying house is followed.
- A continuous integrated program in place to control rodents and insects.
- Microbial monitoring of new litter material and shed monitoring is followed before placing new flock.
- Feed is transported in closed bulk feed tanker and stored the feed into silo in farm at Shed level. The feed remains untouched with human hand to avoid infection.
- Feed samples are tested regularly at interval of 15 days for proximal analysis like protein, Fat, Fibre, Ash, Salt, Calcium, phosphorous etc and also for the Aflatoxin, T2 toxin and Ochratoxin.
- The farms have water treatment plant and RO plant for quality water for birds. Water is tested every week for Bacterial count and hardness count and P<sup>H</sup> count. Birds get water through nipple system to avoid contamination. The water is tested for chlorine for every 4 hours.
- Disease Testing of flock- Continuously monitored for Salmonella and mycoplasma at monthly interval,

For movement restriction of the farms workers the following is done

- Restricted movement of farm worker and material within the farm premises and CCTV camera installed to check the movement of persons.

- Separate lunchroom exclusively for each shed for shed workers.
- Separate toilet facility for each shed staff
- Dress colour code for workers for separate zone like brooding growing and laying.
- Each zone is separated by putting the fencing between broodings. Growing and laying section to avoid mixing of farm workers.

#### D. Documentation

Animal movement information, the documentation included herd or flock production records, feed sources, laboratory tests, birth and death records, visitor logbook, morbidity history, medication and vaccination records, bio-security plans, training documentation and other criteria necessary for the evaluation of disease exclusion.

#### E. Surveillance for the agent or disease

- Regular surveillance for the disease particularly for Avian Influenza is carried out by the Animal Husbandry Department
- Any noticeable mortality and drop in production should be reported to the state animal husbandry department which should be intimated to the Central Government also.

#### F. Traceability system

A prerequisite for assessing the integrity of a compartment is the existence of a valid traceability system. All animals within a compartment are identified and registered flock wise and their history is audited. The eggs are also marked flock wise and flock number is also made available to the Customers. The birds are not allowed to move outside.

#### G. Other measures

- No incidence of Avian Influenza surrounding the establishment or in the State.
- The location, disease status and biosecurity of the nearest epidemiological units or other epidemiologically relevant premises are good as there is no other poultry establishment available nearby the establishment.
- There are no slaughterhouses/abattoirs, rendering plants or feed mills within the establishment or nearby areas.
- No markets, fairs, agricultural shows, sporting events, zoos, circuses and other points of animal concentration.
- The Standard operating procedures need to be signed by the company management and to be issued. The guidelines to be displayed on the suitable places in the farm so that it can be easily readable. All operational area should be named with Do's and Dont's.

#### **Responsibilities of the Veterinary Administration:**

- Veterinary Administration must document the measures taken to:
  - Identify the animal sub-population
  - Recognize its distinct health status
  - Maintain its distinct health status
- Records and surveillance of the disease
- Evaluation of surveillance and reporting by state officials.
- Evaluation and validation of Biosecurity Measures
- Hatchery monitoring
- Health status in adjoining area
- Providing veterinary services Laboratory services

- Regular inspection of the compartment
- Disease surveillance in the adjoining animal and bird population
- Any outbreak in commercial birds especially of viral etiology in past 3-6 months and steps taken to contain further spread
- Any ongoing problem in migratory birds in nearby areas or high mortality recorded in wild/migratory birds

**Poultry establishment responsibility:**

- Application of Biosecurity Measures
- Quality Assurance Scheme if any
- Surveillance in-farm for AIV and other commonly encountered diseases of viral aetiology
- Health of the birds
- Hatchery Monitoring
- Documentations of corrective actions
- Sanitary procedures including waste management and dead bird disposal system in the compartment
- Health monitoring of manpower
- Biosecurity training of farm personal.

**c. Summary of the disease in the country as well as compartments**

India is a country with 851 million poultry birds as per the Livestock Census -2019. The poultry industry in India is severely affected by disease outbreaks particularly Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. (HPAI).

Based on the surveillance carried out in these compartments, there have been no reports of HPAI in the past 12 months in accordance with Article 10.4.3 of the WOAH *Terrestrial Code*. Further, there have also been no reported outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in a 10 Km radius of the compartments mentioned in [Annexure II](#), and these compartments never experienced any outbreaks of HPAI since they were officially approved as a compartment.

The disease HPAI was first detected in India in the State of Maharashtra in February 2006. Since then, every year, the country has experienced outbreaks of HPAI in different parts, contributing to serious economic losses. Between February 2006 and April 2023, 344 HPAI (277 H5N1 and 67 H5N8) outbreaks in poultry and other birds have been reported from 24 States/UTs of the country, and over 9 million birds died or were culled to control the disease.

India follows “detect and culling” policy for control of HPAI in domestic poultry as per the National action plan for Prevention, control and containment of Avian Influenza (revised - 2021), DAHD, Government of India. The response includes humane destruction of all infected and exposed animals, eggs, feed, litter and other contaminated materials, restriction on movement of poultry and poultry products to and from the areas of outbreaks, disinfection and cleaning up of infected premises, and Post-Operative Surveillance Plan to trace the potentially infected or exposed poultry. No vaccination policy for HPAI in poultry.

Vaccination against HPAI has not been allowed in India, and hence, the birds maintained in the compartments are not vaccinated against HPAI.

#### **4 Surveillance, including an early warning system for all compartments**

**a. Laboratory Network**

India has got a WOAH reference laboratory for Avian Influenza i.e., ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Disease, Bhopal. This laboratory has been designed by the Department to confirm any case of Avian Influenza in the country. To support the screening of samples and for preliminary diagnosis, 5 Regional Disease Diagnostic laboratories i.e., Northern, North Eastern, Eastern, Southern and Western located at Jalandhar, Guwahati, Kolkata, Bangalore and

Pune, respectively. The Central Disease Diagnostic Laboratory i.e., CDDL, Bareilly is also designated as a laboratory for preliminary screening of samples. If any sample is detected positive by these laboratories, the sample is sent to the WOA Reference laboratory at ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal, for confirmation.

#### **b. Early warning system**

Within the framework of the Livestock Health and Disease Control Programme (LHDCP) scheme, a specific component exists known as "Assistance to States for Control of Animal Diseases (ASCAD)". This component is dedicated to providing assistance to States/Union Territories (UTs) in conducting Awareness cum Animal Health Camps at both the block and district levels. Under this component, training is also conducted for veterinarians and para-veterinarians across the States and UTs, which includes ongoing veterinary education. During 2021-22, 385 vets and 1280 para-professionals have been trained and during 2022-23, 1117 Vets and 1732 para-professionals have been trained. The officially recognized compartments also conduct regular training sessions for workers, facilitated in designated training halls or rooms.

The Department utilizes its social media platforms, such as Twitter (@Dept\_of\_AHD), Facebook (DeptofAHD), Instagram (<https://Instagram.com/p/Cve3mnYujYA>), YouTube (@DOAHDINDIA), KOO ([http://www.kooapp.com/profile/dept\\_of\\_ahd](http://www.kooapp.com/profile/dept_of_ahd)), and LinkedIn ((Department-of-animal-husbandry-and-dairying), to disseminate information pertaining to disease management and the reporting of any instances of unusual mortality or symptoms in livestock and poultry. Furthermore, the Department has developed a Biosecurity Manual for poultry farms [https://farmer.gov.in/dadf/Biosecurity/Revised\\_Poultry\\_Biosecurity\\_Guidelines\\_Aug\\_2015\\_\(English\\_Version\).pdf](https://farmer.gov.in/dadf/Biosecurity/Revised_Poultry_Biosecurity_Guidelines_Aug_2015_(English_Version).pdf) and Poultry Farm Manual (<https://dahd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Excerpts%20of%20Poultry%20Farm%20Manual.pdf>). The States and UTs receive regular advisories, prompting them to implement adequate biosecurity measures to prevent diseases in livestock. If relevant data is available, it is incorporated into these efforts.

The approval letter issued by the Department for the official recognition of compartments highlights a clause emphasizing the mandatory reporting/intimation of any noticeable mortality and decline in production. Although no instances of unusual mortality have been reported from these compartments to date, the reporting system remains in place.

Additionally, the Department conducts surveillance for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) to ensure early detection and effective control measures (see next section).

#### **c. Surveillance for HPAI**

##### **i. Background**

- The avian influenza surveillance programme includes an early warning system throughout the production, marketing, and processing chain for reporting suspicious cases.
- Surveillance is aimed at identification of disease and infection and should cover all the susceptible poultry species within the country, zone or compartment.
- Regular surveillance including active and passive surveillance for Avian Influenza
- Surveillance should be composed of random and targeted approaches using clinical, virological, and serological methods.
- Special emphasis is given on surveillance in Live Bird Markets (LBMs), wetlands, border areas, areas with high bird density and areas inhabited by wild and migratory birds to rule out any possibility of new or low pathogenic virus strains.
- Surveillance strategy
- The surveillance strategy may be divided into following parts:
  - Part I: Regular Surveillance (in the absence of Outbreak)
  - Part II: Surveillance during the Outbreak

Part III: Surveillance for 60 days after the completion of control and containment operation (Post Operation Surveillance Plan)

**ii. Passive Surveillance**

All stakeholders/ poultry producers/ entrepreneurs, associations, private veterinary practitioners, community organizations, wildlife officials, NGO participatory groups, veterinary institutions and village animal health workers are required to report to the nearest veterinary authority for any unusual sickness or mortality in poultry and other species of birds. This information gets recorded by the veterinary authorities at the block level, and the information is submitted to the State and finally reaches the National level in the form of an Animal Disease Surveillance Report.

**iii. Active Surveillance**

The detailed Active surveillance plan followed in the country is given in the National Action Plan for Preparedness Control and Containment of Avian Influenza 2021 ([Annexure-VI](#)). The number of samples screened under active surveillance during the last 3 years is given in Figure 1.

**iv. Surveillance in Wild/Migratory birds**

Dead bird surveillance is carried out in all identified wildlife sanctuaries/ water bodies & buffer zone around such areas, especially in case of abnormal mortality of wild birds/ in poultry farms nearby. Fresh faecal samples of wild birds are collected from their nesting places and waterbodies. Wildlife officials, conservation organizations, participatory groups and the public residing in the vicinity of water bodies are advised to report dead birds to the District Animal Husbandry Officer for sampling and shipment to the designated laboratory. Migratory waterfowl are sampled by collecting fresh wet faeces from areas used overnight by the birds. An adequate number of faecal samples are taken once monthly at each designated wildlife sanctuaries/water bodies during the wild bird migration season from September to March of each year. During the last 3 years, a total of samples have been screened, and the details are given in Figure 2.

**v. In the compartments**

In each of the officially designated compartment the following surveillance protocol is adopted i.e., samples for Avian Influenza surveillance are collected at every one-month intervals when the country remains free from Avian Influenza and 21 days intervals when the country is positive for Avian Influenza. Samples i.e., Serum Samples 20, Cloacal and Tracheal Swabs 10 each are collected every 30 days intervals (21 days when the country is positive for Avian Influenza) from each of the compartments and are sent to Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratories (National Reference Laboratories) for testing against HPAI. The test employed in case of serum is. ELISA and for swabs Real Time Reverse Transcriptase PCR is employed. Feed samples and water samples are also submitted for testing at monthly intervals. As per the results, there has been no positive samples detected in any of the 26 compartments as per [Annexure II](#) in the last 12 months.

In addition, any noticeable mortality and drop in egg production is reported to the Veterinary authorities for immediate action. The State Animal Husbandry Department carries out regular surveillance as mentioned above and carries out inspection of these establishments every 6 months interval.



Fig. 1 Surveillance in domesticated poultry birds

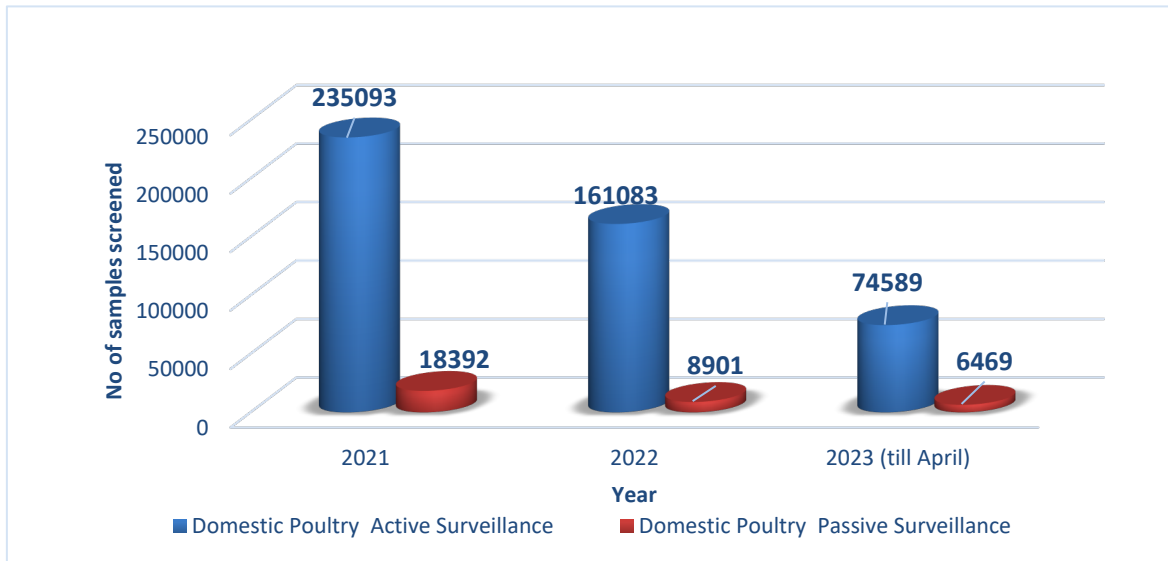
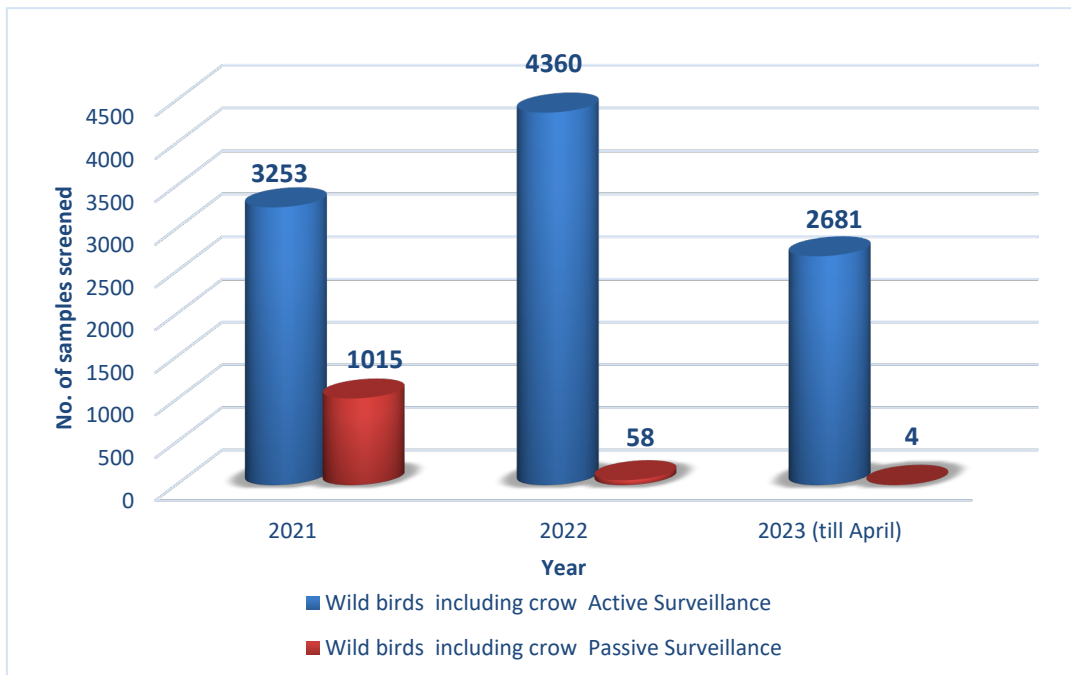


Fig. 2 Surveillance in wild/ migratory birds



## 5 Measures implemented to maintain freedom in the compartment-

In order to maintain the freedom status in the compartment the following measures are adopted.

- The Farm management shall allow the state government to collect the samples for avian influenza surveillance at every one-month intervals when the country remains free from avian influenza and 21 days intervals when the country is positive for avian influenza.
- The records for sample collection/surveillance should be maintained and the same should be made available at the time of inspection.
- All other records to be maintained regularly and the bio-security operating procedure as detailed at Section IIIa should be maintained and followed.
- Any noticeable mortality and drop in production should be reported to the state animal husbandry department which should be intimated to the Central Government also.
- The State Government should carry out regular surveillance as mentioned above and detailed inspection to be carried out on a half-yearly basis.

## 6 Conclusion

Considering that:

- Infection with HPAI is notifiable in the entire country.
- Surveillance has been carried out in accordance with Articles 10.4.26. to 10.4.30. of the *Terrestrial Code*.
- There are regular ongoing awareness programs in place on avian influenza to encourage prompt reporting of HPAI suspicions.
- Compartments are defined in accordance with Chapters 4.4. and 4.5. of the *Terrestrial Code*.
- Surveillance has demonstrated absence of infection with HPAI in the 26 compartments included in this declaration for the past 12 months.

**The WOAH Delegate of India declares that 26 compartments included in this report, comply with the requirements for freedom from HPAI in poultry as of 20 July 2023, in accordance with the provisions of Chapters 1.6, 4.4, 4.5, and Article 10.4.4. of the *Terrestrial Code*.**

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## List of Annexures

- I. [Statement of the Delegate](#)
- II. [List of valid compartments as on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023](#)
- III. [Checklist for declaring a compartment](#)
- IV. [Expert Committee for recognition of compartment](#)
- V. [‘The Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009’](#)
- VI. [National Action Plan for Preparedness Control and Containment of Avian Influenza 2021](#)

## Annexure 1: Statement to be included in the self-declaration document


I, the undersigned, Ms. Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary AHD and Delegate of INDIA to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), takes responsibility for the self-declaration of freedom from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in the poultry establishments declared as compartments as per Annexure II

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Drawn up on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023

  
Signature of the Delegate:

**अलका उपाध्याय / ALKA UPADHYAYA**  
सचिव / Secretary  
भारत सरकार / Govt. of India  
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन एवं डेयरी मंत्रालय  
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