

*Periodic global update on exceptional disease events of terrestrial wildlife reported to WOAH
Situation report period covered – September 2023*

Recent exceptional disease events in terrestrial wildlife (which were reported for the month covered by this report: September 2023)

In total 504 new outbreaks with 2,492 cases of [exceptional disease events](#)¹ (Figure 2) were reported in terrestrial wildlife during the period, through WOAH's early warning system.

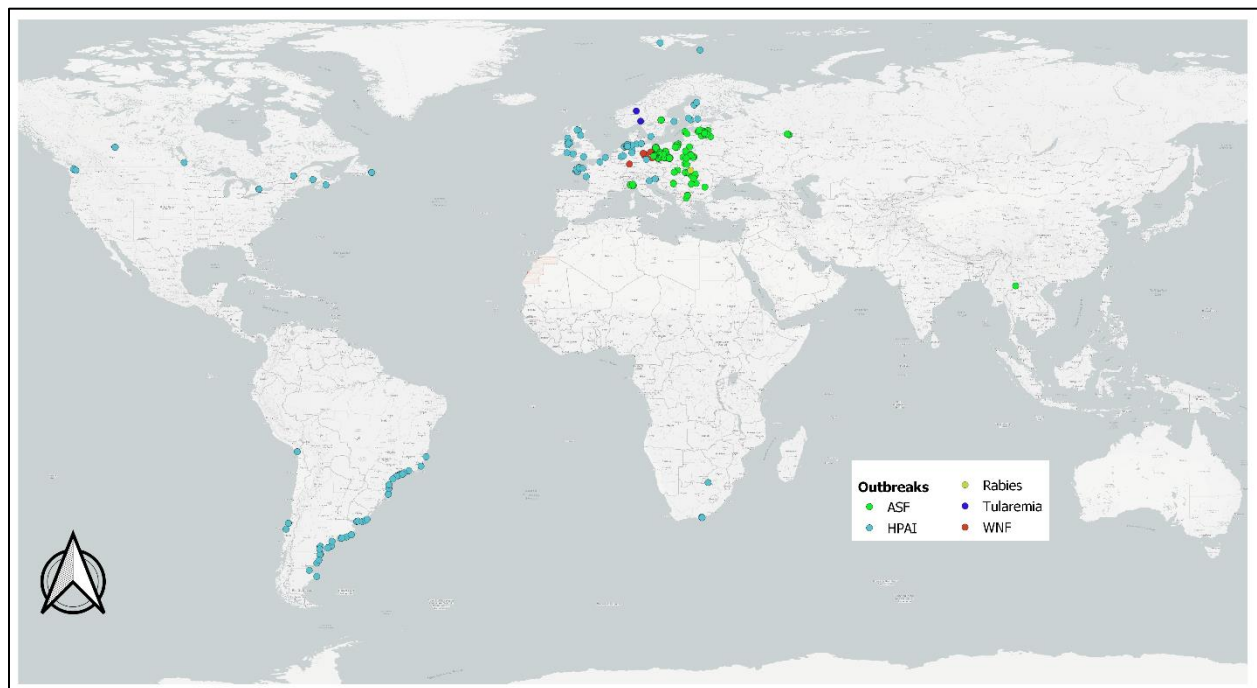


Figure 1. New outbreaks of exceptional disease events reported during the period in terrestrial wildlife. ASF= infection with African swine fever, HPAI = Infection of birds other than poultry, including wild birds, with influenza A viruses of high pathogenicity, WNF = West Nile Fever.

Outbreaks were reported in countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe (Figure 3), specifically, infection with African swine fever (ASF), Infection of birds other than poultry, including wild birds, with influenza A viruses of high pathogenicity (HPAI), Infection with rabies virus, Tularemia, and West Nile Fever (WNF). A higher density of outbreaks was reported in the Europe Region, possibly related to more extensive wildlife surveillance and/or reporting in the Region. Several outbreaks were also reported in South America, linked to the spread of HPAI in the Region. The diseases with the highest number of outbreaks reported

¹ Based on the criteria listed in Article 1.1.3.1 of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code

were ASF and HPAI, followed by Rabies, Tularemia and WNF with few outbreaks reported for each disease. Cases were reported in 62 different wild species belonging to 15 orders (Table 1, Table 2, and Annex 1).

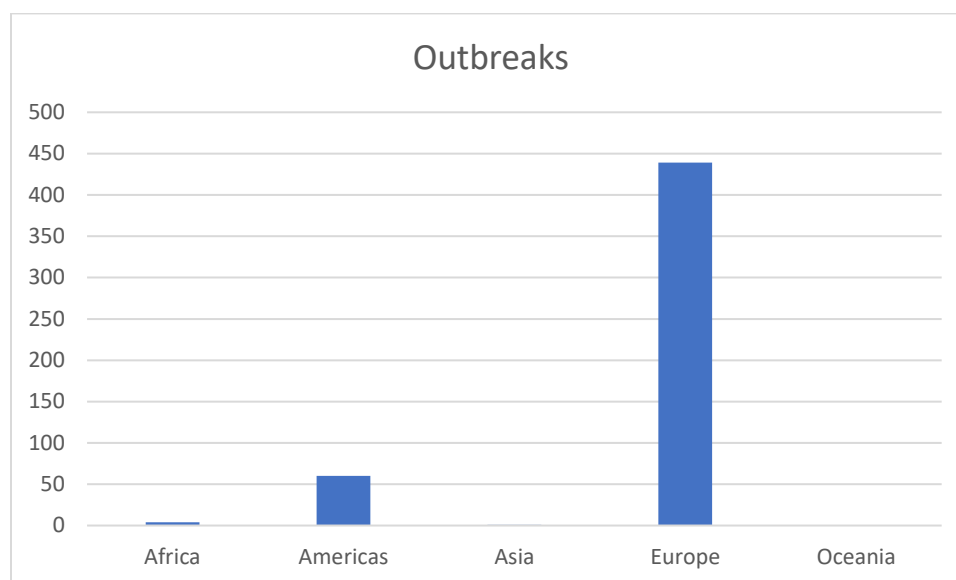


Figure 2: Number of outbreaks reported during the period and split by world region

Table 1 – Number of outbreaks reported by disease and information on zoonotic potential of the disease.

Disease	Outbreaks reported	Zoonotic disease
ASF	368	No
HPAI	124	Yes
Rabies	2	Yes
Tularemia	2	Yes
WNF	8	Yes

Table 2 - Number of cases reported by order, and animal species; conservation status of each species, based on IUCN red list of threatened species (database accessed on 06 July 2023) This table provides the list of species with threatened status. The full list of species reported is provided in annex 1.

Disease	Sum of cases	Order	Species (scientific name)	Species (common name)	Endangered status*
HPAI	1	Psittaciformes	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>	Sooty Shearwater	NT
HPAI	1	Charadriiformes	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Atlantic Puffin	VU
HPAI	3	Trogoniformes	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	Cape cormorant	EN
HPAI	1	Trogoniformes	<i>Phalacrocorax gaimardi</i>	Red-legged Cormorant	NT
HPAI	2	Charadriiformes	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Black-legged Kittiwake	VU
HPAI	1	Anseriformes	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Common Eider	NT

*NT=Near threatened; VU=vulnerable; EN: endangered

Global and regional impact

Reporting and impact on biodiversity

Out of the 62 species for which cases were reported, 6 of them (10%) have a threatened status according to the IUCN classification. In particular, three are classified as “Near threaten” (NT), two as “Vulnerable” (VU), and one as “Endangered” (EN) (figure 4). Out of the five reported diseases, HPAI is the only one with impact on the six species with threatened status, highlighting the relevant impact of this disease on biodiversity conservation, and the conservation risk represented by the further spread of the virus in the Antarctic region.

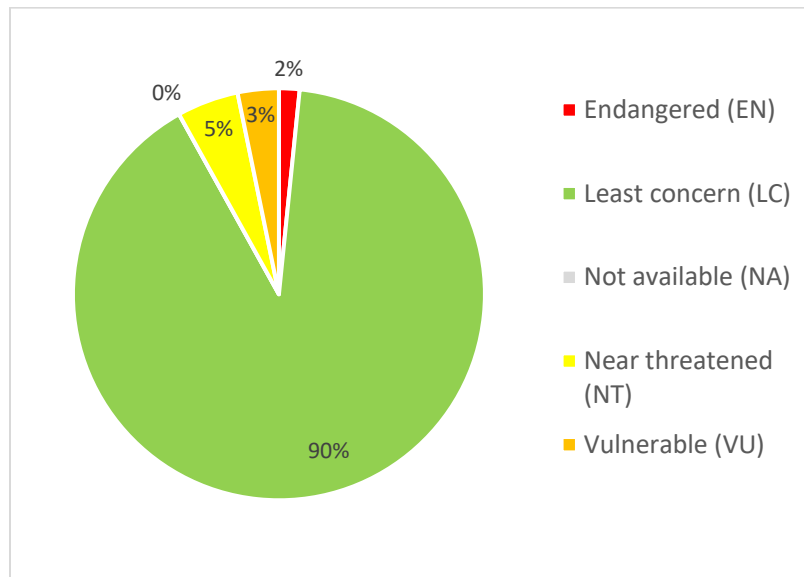


Figure 3: percentage of reported species falling under the different IUCN categories

In particular, regarding the species with endangered status, HPAI was detected in three **wild** Trogoniformes (Cape cormorant - *Phalacrocorax capensis*) in South Africa and all these died from the infection. Cape cormorant has a population with a decreasing trend estimated at 234,000 mature individuals; located in Southern Africa². The WOAHP statement on HPAI in wild mammals highlighted the need for better surveillance, reporting, control and genetic sequence sharing³ to better anticipate the consequences of the ongoing outbreaks.

Finally, ASF has not been reported in any endangered wild species, but it could potentially threaten endemic wild pig species leading to local population extinction, and generate tension for top predators that rely on wild boar as a main source of food.

Reporting and impact on Public health

HPAI has a recognised zoonotic potential. In particular, the occurrence of HPAI cases in seven “unusual hosts”, belonging to Carnivora orders (domestic cat, fisher, huillin, racoon (Northern raccoon), red fox, South-American sea lion, striped Skunk), highlights the increased risk of transmission to mammals (including humans). It is interesting to notice that the carnivores affected could be scavengers or predators of infected birds. This confirms a trend (increased number of HPAI cases reported in unusual hosts)

² <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22696806/132594943>

³ <https://www.woah.org/en/statement-on-avian-influenza-and-mammals/>

observed since 2021 (for additional information, see the [HPAI situation reports](#)). This trend has led to a [statement of WOA](#) on avian influenza in mammals to increase awareness, monitoring and analysis of wild mammals, acknowledging the risk that H5N1 avian influenza may become better and better adapted to mammals⁴.

Reporting and impact on domestic animal's health and welfare

During the period most of the outbreaks of non-zoonotic diseases reported were related to the occurrence of African swine fever in wild boar in Europe. African swine fever represents one of the main animal diseases that currently threaten livestock and food security at the global level (for additional information please see also the [African swine fever situation reports](#)). The major impact of African swine fever is linked to the establishment of a wildlife cycle that makes disease eradication challenging. Reduction of wild boar density may have indirect effects also on increased predation of livestock⁵.

Regarding the occurrence of HPAI, it is relevant to highlight that the dynamics of the disease at the poultry/wildlife interface can also impact food security (for additional information please see also the [HPAI situation reports](#)).

Key messages

For a century, WOA has managed repositories for animal health disease monitoring data from its Members. By providing a common tool through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), that is homogenous across countries, and based on shared definitions and standards, we ensure that reporting is standardised and centralised. The information provided in this report on surveillance implementation in terrestrial wildlife shows major gaps in several parts of the world, which suggests that the number of cases reported to WOA is significantly under-detected and underestimated. This summary however provides a picture of what has been detected and is useful to the international community.

The information provided in this monthly situation report highlights that:

- Surveillance activities reported in wildlife are largely variable among countries and regions.
- The reporting of exceptional events affecting wildlife in June concerned mainly ASF and HPAI in several regions.

⁴ [Statement on avian influenza and mammals - World Organisation for Animal Health \(woah.org\)](#)

⁵ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1470160X21010840>

- Several countries reported outbreaks of ASF and HPAI, which shows the widespread existence of surveillance activities for these two diseases.
- Deaths and cases in several species with critical conservation status have been reported by countries, highlighting the importance of diseases for the conservation of biodiversity.
- The widespread detection of ASF and HPAI in wildlife represents a threat to biodiversity conservation (especially HPAI in fragmented bird and mammal populations), livestock, food security, and potentially human health at the global level.

More information and resources

- [Statement on avian influenza and mammals](#)
- [Avian Influenza and Wildlife: Risk Management for People Working with Wild Birds](#)
- [African swine fever in wild boar ecology and biosecurity](#)
- [African swine fever awareness and technical resources](#)
- [In-country wildlife disease surveillance report 2021](#)
- [In-country wildlife data management survey dashboard 2023](#)

For any press inquiry on diseases in wildlife, you can email us at media@woah.org

Annex 1

Complete list of species for which cases were reported in September 2023 are available on demand at epi@woah.org.