

HIGH PATHOGENICITY AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI)

Situation Report 81

Period covered:

March 2026

This report provides an update of the high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) situation, according to the information submitted to the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Key messages and Recommendations

The new HPAI season, which started in October 2025, continued in March 2026 with 95 outbreaks being reported in poultry and 336 outbreaks in non-poultry including wild birds and in mammals in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Americas and Europe for the reporting month. About 5,611,000 poultry birds died or were culled during the month, mostly in the Americas and Europe.

The current epidemic wave reached the highest peak of poultry outbreaks in November 2025. Since then, the number of poultry outbreaks has shown a decreasing trend in the Northern hemisphere, which is consistent with the known seasonality of HPAI in poultry. On the other hand, a significant high number of HPAI detections in wild birds (6400 outbreaks) have been reported, particularly in Europe, during the current season, as of March 2026, compared to the last two previous full epidemic seasons.

In March 2026, HPAI outbreaks in mammals were reported in Italy. Research community present on site continues to report several suspected cases of HPAI in the sub-Antarctic islands and Antarctica proper (<https://scar.org/library-data/avian-flu>). WOAHA continues to pay close attention to the situation of HPAI in all species across the world.

Given the spread of HPAI across the globe, continued surveillance in wild and domestic animal species is warranted. As this pathogen is impacting wildlife, livestock, and public health, a One Health approach to management would be beneficial. WOAHA recommends that Members maintain their surveillance efforts, implement biosecurity and preventive measures at farm level, and continue timely reporting of avian influenza outbreaks in both poultry and non-poultry species.

Considering the situation in mammals, WOAAH also recommends:

- including avian influenza as a differential diagnosis in mammals with high risk of exposure to the viruses;
- reporting to WOAAH outbreaks of avian influenza in all animal species including unusual hosts;
- sharing genetic sequences of avian influenza viruses and associated metadata in publicly available databases;
- protecting humans in close contact with sick livestock and their products, while avoiding implementing unjustified trade restrictions.

High quality of information is key to support prevention and rapid response to HPAI.

Objective of the report & limitations

Based on Chapter 1.3 of the [Terrestrial Animal Health Code \(2024\)](#), three categories of avian influenza are listed by WOAAH: 1) infection with high pathogenicity avian influenza viruses (HPAI) (in poultry, as defined in the disease-specific chapter), 2) infection of birds other than poultry, including wild birds, with HPAI, and 3) infection of domestic and captive wild birds with low pathogenicity avian influenza (LPAI) viruses having proven natural transmission to humans, associated with severe consequences. Based on Chapter 3.3.4 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Manual (2025)*, infection of bovines (*Bos taurus*) with influenza A viruses of high pathogenicity in poultry is defined as an emerging disease by WOAAH.

This report provides an update of the HPAI situation for March 2026 according to the information submitted to WOAAH through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and aims to contribute to awareness of the global situation. Although all the information used in this report is already publicly accessible via the WOAAH website, the report aims to intelligently combine these various sources of information to present WOAAH Members with the most accurate information possible, while recognising the limitations of the data available on a global scale.

This month's report covers the HPAI situation only, as WOAAH has not been informed of any exceptional event of infection of domestic and captive wild birds with LPAI viruses having proven natural transmission to humans, associated with severe consequences.

Contextual information

Since its identification in China (People's Rep. of) in 1996, there have been multiple waves of intercontinental transmission of the H5Nx Gs/GD lineage virus. HPAI has led to the death and mass slaughter of over 633 million poultry worldwide between 2005 and 2024, with an unprecedented peak of 146 million in 2022. During the peak in 2022, 84 countries and territories in the world were affected with HPAI, a number comparable to the 82 affected in 2024.

In addition, up to now, humans have been occasionally infected with several subtypes of avian influenza (mainly H5N1, H7N9, H5N6, H9N2 with more than 2500 cases since 2003)¹².

As described in the [Animal Health Situation Worldwide](#) and [The State of the World's Animal Health](#) reports presented by WOAHA during its 92nd General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2025, HPAI has been a global concern, particularly since October 2020, due to an unprecedented situation marked by:

- its global spread and the increase in the number of countries and territories affected worldwide, including an unprecedented spread to Antarctica in 2024;
- the increase in the number of outbreaks and losses in poultry, with a peak during the seasonal wave October 2021-September 2022;
- the increased impact on wildlife and biodiversity;
- the increase in the number of cases detected in domestic and wild mammals.

Seasonality of HPAI outbreaks in poultry

Figure 1 focuses on poultry outbreaks and shows the seasonality of HPAI separately for the northern and southern hemispheres. It covers the seasonal wave which started in October 2025 (October 2025 to September 2026), as well as the two previous waves for comparison.

HPAI key figures for the current seasonal wave and the two previous waves

Table 1. HPAI key figures for the current seasonal wave and the two previous waves

	01 Oct 2023 - 30 Sep 2024	01 Oct 2024 - 30 Sep 2025	01 Oct 2025 - 31 Mar 2026
Countries and territories reporting HPAI in poultry	39	51	40
No. of HPAI outbreaks in poultry	851	1,431	1,275
Countries and territories reporting HPAI in wild birds	55	55	52
No. of HPAI outbreaks in wild birds	1,076	1,926	6,447

*Please note that regarding the 'Countries and territories reporting HPAI in poultry' in the current seasonal wave, two countries reported stable situations through six monthly reports and are not covered in the "recent updates" section below.

Regarding the 'Countries and territories reporting HPAI in wild birds' in the current seasonal wave, one out of 52 countries/territories reported stable situation through six monthly reports and are not covered in the "recent updates" section below.

¹ <https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/avian-influenza/monthly-risk-assessment-summary>

² [Cumulative number of confirmed human cases for avian influenza A\(H5N1\) reported to WHO, 2003-2023, 21 December 2023](#)

Figure 1a - Northern hemisphere

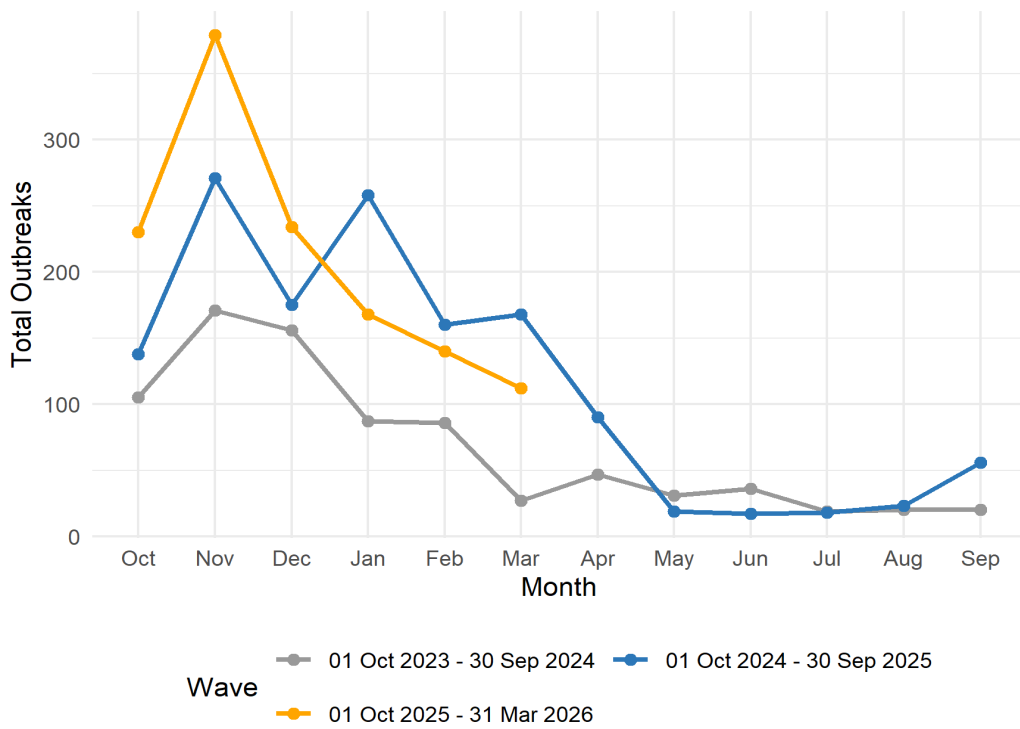


Figure 1b - Southern hemisphere

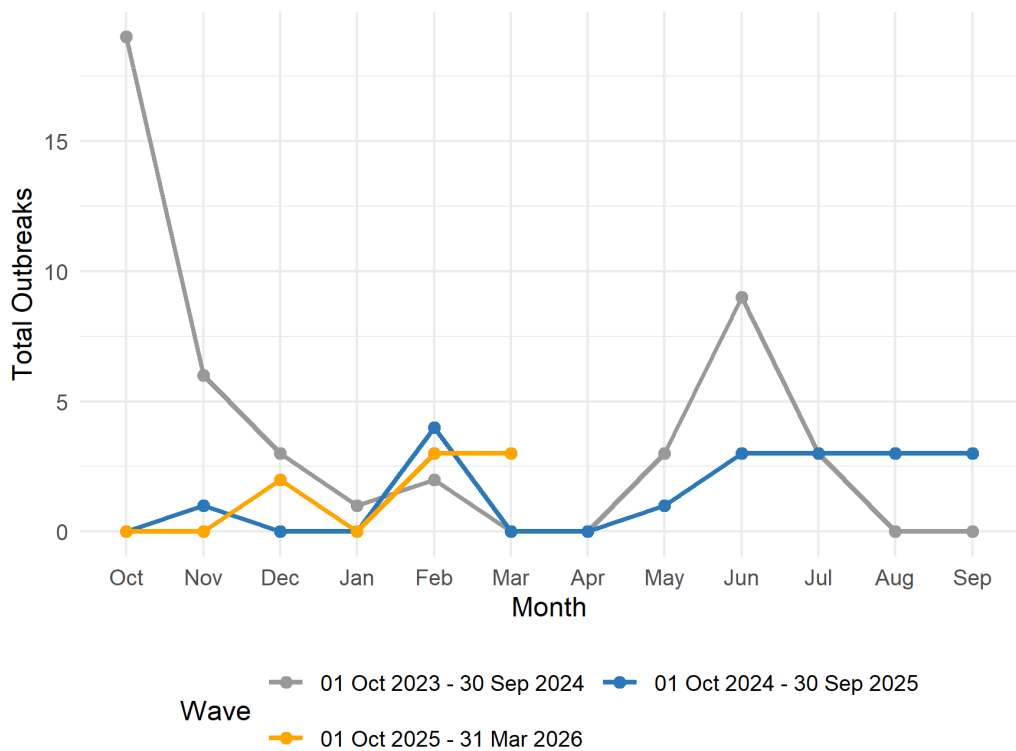


Figure 1. HPAI outbreaks of March 2026 in poultry reported to WOAHA by the seasonal waves which started in October (October 2025 to September 2026), as well as the two previous waves for comparison. Data is presented by month and by hemisphere. *For the southern hemisphere (Figure 1b), it is important to highlight that the seasonality analysis does not take into account Indonesia, which has declared a sufficiently stable situation to WOAHA to provide data aggregated by semester (and not by month). This is an important limitation, as the country reported an average of 17 outbreaks per six-month period between the second half of 2022 and the second half of 2023, which is significant for the Southern hemisphere. on a hemispheric scale.

HPAI map for the current seasonal wave (Oct 2025-Sep 2026, as of March 2026)

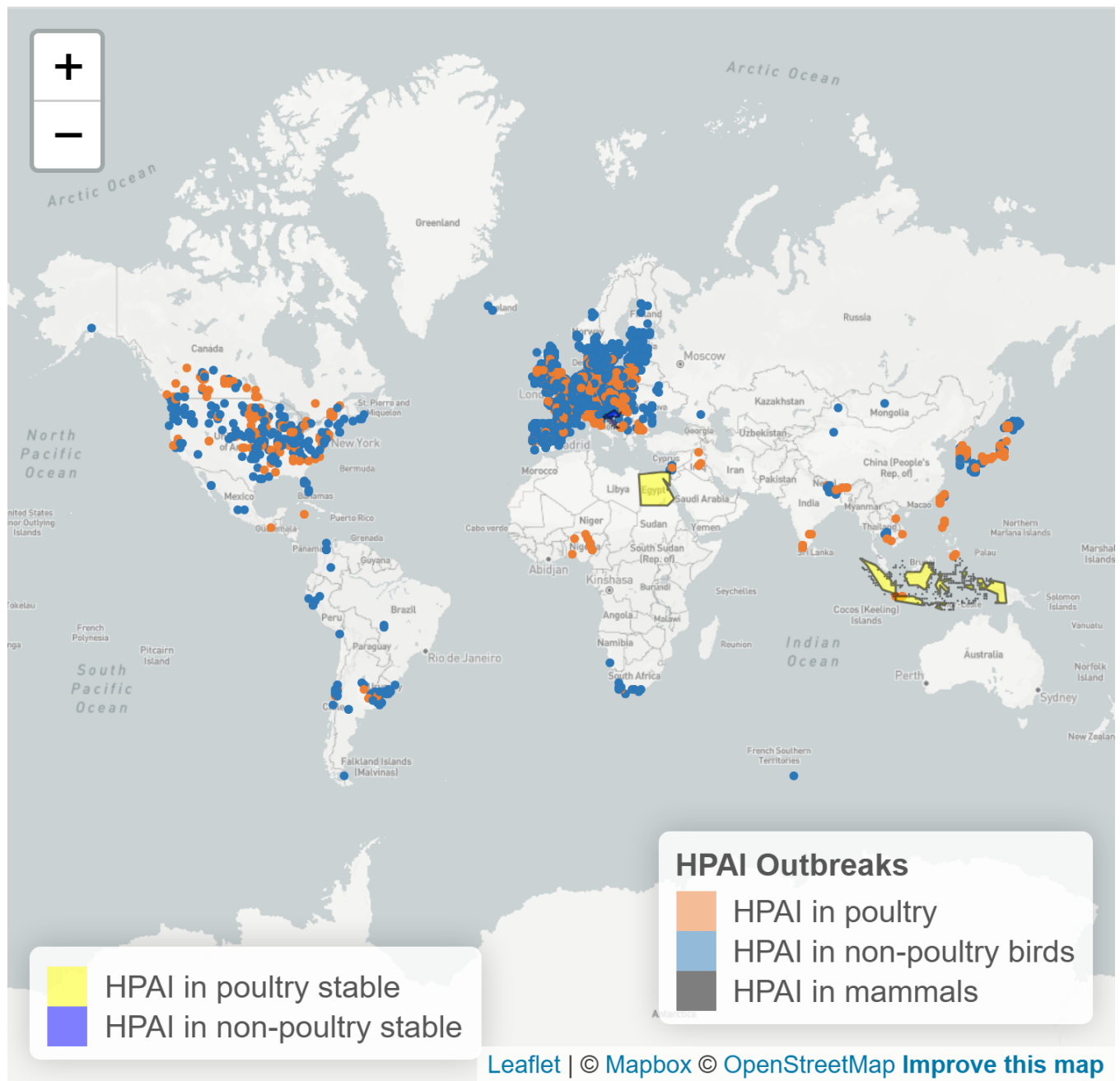


Figure 2. HPAI map for the current seasonal wave (October 2025–September 2026, as of March 2026). Please note that highlighted countries/territories in the map declared HPAI in poultry/non-poultry sufficiently stable for information to be reported on six-monthly basis without geocoordinates. The country in the purple category is Croatia (hidden by the outbreak dots that cover it).

Recent Updates (March 2026)

To describe the current disease situation of HPAI in poultry and in non-poultry birds, this section covers: (a) a list of new events³ which started in March 2026 (reported through immediate notifications); (b) information on events that started before March 2026 but were still ongoing during that period; (c) the geographic distribution of new outbreaks⁴ that started in March 2026, together with figures on numbers of outbreaks, cases, losses and animals vaccinated in response to outbreaks. The different subtypes of HPAI circulating during March 2026 are also listed below. This information is based on the immediate notifications and follow-up reports received by WOAHP through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS).

HPAI in poultry

New events by world region (reported through immediate notifications)

Region	Sub/genotype	Clade	Country/Territory	Subnational area	Event start date
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Maule	27 March 2026
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Región Metropolitana de Santiago	24 March 2026
Asia and the Pacific	H5N1		Nepal	Province 1	2 March 2026

On-going events for which there were new reported outbreaks, by world region (reported through follow-up reports):

Region	Sub/genotype	Clade	Country/territory
Africa	H5N1		Nigeria
Americas	H5N1		United States of America
Americas	H5N1		Argentina
Asia and the Pacific	H5N1	Clade 2.3.4.4b; Lineage: Fully Eurasian	Chinese Taipei
Asia and the Pacific	H5N1		Korea (Rep. of) , Japan
Asia and the Pacific	H5N9		Korea (Rep. of)
Europe	H5N1	Clade 2.3.4.4b; Lineage: Fully Eurasian	Czech Republic , France , Netherlands
Europe	H5N1		Bulgaria , Germany , Poland , Denmark , Netherlands , Italy , Hungary , Montenegro

³ As defined in [Article 11.2](#) of the WOAHP Terrestrial Animal Health Code, an “event” means a single outbreak or a group of epidemiologically related outbreaks of a given listed disease or emerging disease that is the subject of a notification. An event is specific to a pathogenic agent and strain, when appropriate, and includes all related outbreaks reported from the time of the initial notification through to the final report. Reports of an event include susceptible species, the number and geographical distribution of affected animals and epidemiological units.

⁴ As defined in the [glossary](#) of the WOAHP Terrestrial Animal Health Code, an “outbreak” means the occurrence of one or more cases in an epidemiological unit.

New outbreaks

During the period covered by this report, 95 new outbreaks in poultry were notified by 18 countries and territories (Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, United States of America). Details are presented in Figures 3 and 4.

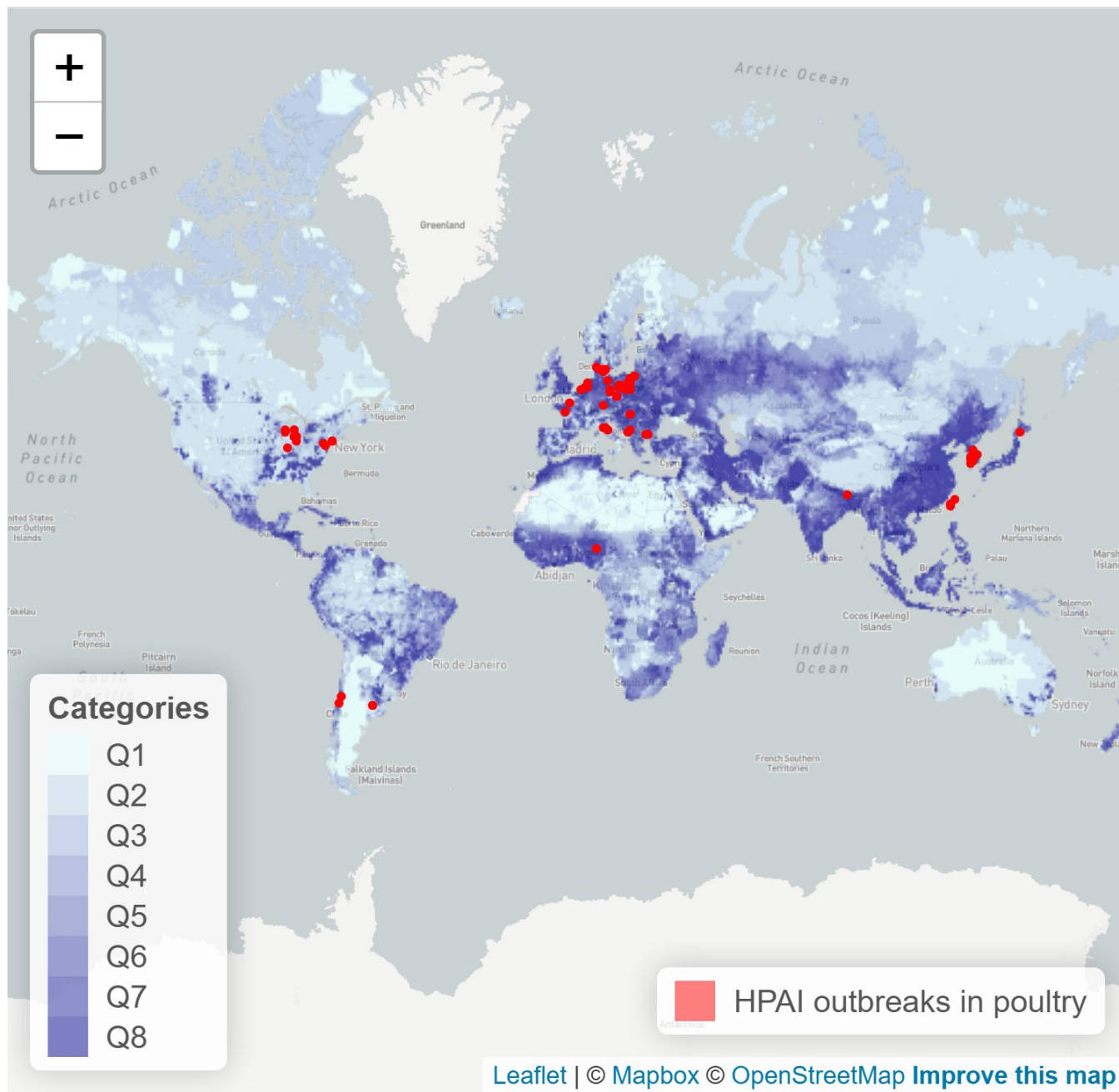


Figure 3. Distribution of HPAI new outbreaks in poultry. The outbreaks are presented on top of the chicken density layer⁵ produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) - [GLW 4: Gridded Livestock Density \(Global - 2020 - 10 km\)](#)

⁵ Layers for the distribution of other poultry species (such as ducks, turkeys, geese, etc.) are not currently available under FAO GLW 4: Gridded Livestock Density (Global - 2020 - 10 km).

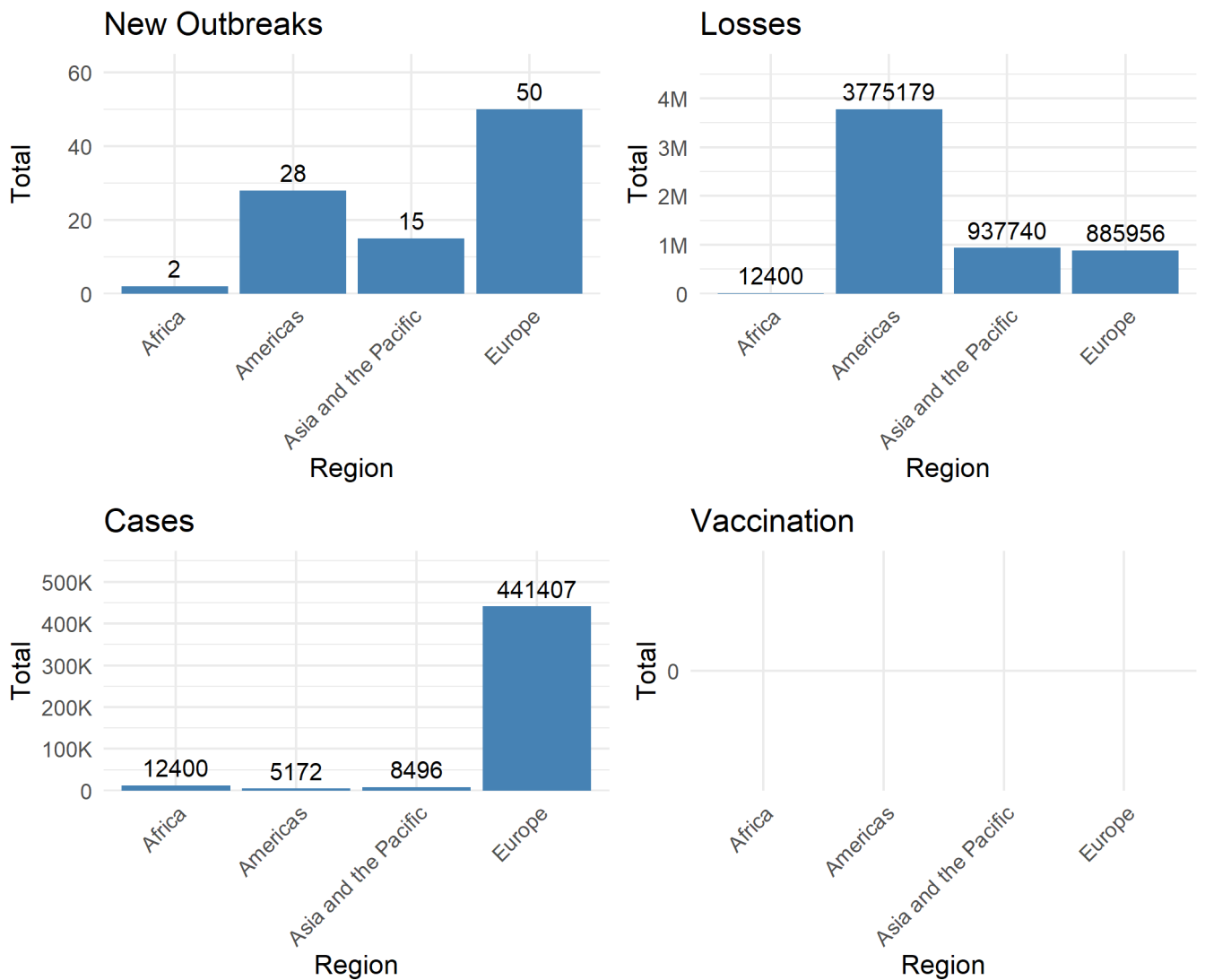


Figure 4. Number of new outbreaks, associated cases and losses (losses include animals dead and killed and disposed of within outbreaks – they do not include culling around outbreaks). It should also be noted that some countries or territories are unable to provide a precise number of cases and leave this field blank in the report.

HPAI in non-poultry

New events by world region (reported through immediate notifications)

Non-poultry birds

Region	Sub/genotype	Clade	Country/territory	Subnational area	Event start date
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Araucanía	18 March 2026
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins	12 March 2026
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins	12 March 2026
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins	12 March 2026
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Magallanes y Antártica Chilena	16 March 2026

Region	Sub/genotype	Clade	Country/territory	Subnational area	Event start date
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Valparaíso	6 March 2026
Americas	H5N1		Chile	Valparaíso	4 March 2026
Asia and the Pacific	H5N1		Cambodia	Otdar Mean Chey	25 March 2026
Asia and the Pacific	H5N1		Nepal	Bagmati Pradesh	10 March 2026
Europe	H5N1		Finland	Lounais-Suomen aluehallintovirasto	14 March 2026
Europe	H5N1		Finland	Lounais-Suomen aluehallintovirasto	14 March 2026

Mammals

Region	Sub/genotype	Species	Clade	Country/territory	Subnational area	Event start date
Europe	H5N1	Red fox		Italy	Emilia Romagna	16 Mar 2026

On-going events for which there were new reported outbreaks, by world region (reported through follow-up reports):

Non-poultry birds

Region	Sub/genotype	Clade	Country/territory
Americas	H5 (N untyped)		Peru , Uruguay
	H5N1	Clade: 2.3.4.4b - Lineage: Reassortment Eurasian and North American	Mexico
Americas	H5N1		United States of America
Americas			Argentina , Uruguay
Asia and the Pacific	H5N1		Cambodia
Europe	H5 (N untyped)		Belgium
Europe	H5N1	Clade 2.3.4.4b - Lineage: Fully Eurasian	Czech Republic , France
Europe	H5N1		Bulgaria , Germany , Denmark , Moldova , Netherlands , Norway , Lithuania , Sweden , Belgium , Poland , Austria , United Kingdom , Ireland , Israel , Estonia , Romania , Slovenia , Hungary

Antarctica

Several HPAI confirmed and suspected cases were reported in the subantarctic islands and in Antarctica proper during January 2026, affecting the following species: Adelie Penguins, Blue eyed-shags, Gentoo penguins, Skua. Details coming from the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) are available here: <https://scar.org/library-data/avian-flu>. The [Updated Biological Risk Assessment and Recommendations for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Antarctica](#) published on behalf of the SCAR Antarctic Wildlife Health Network on 18 December 2024 presents a summary of the situation as well as recommendations.

New outbreaks

During the period covered by this report, 335 new outbreaks in non-poultry were notified by 29 countries and territories (Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay)⁶. Details are presented in Figures 5 and 6.

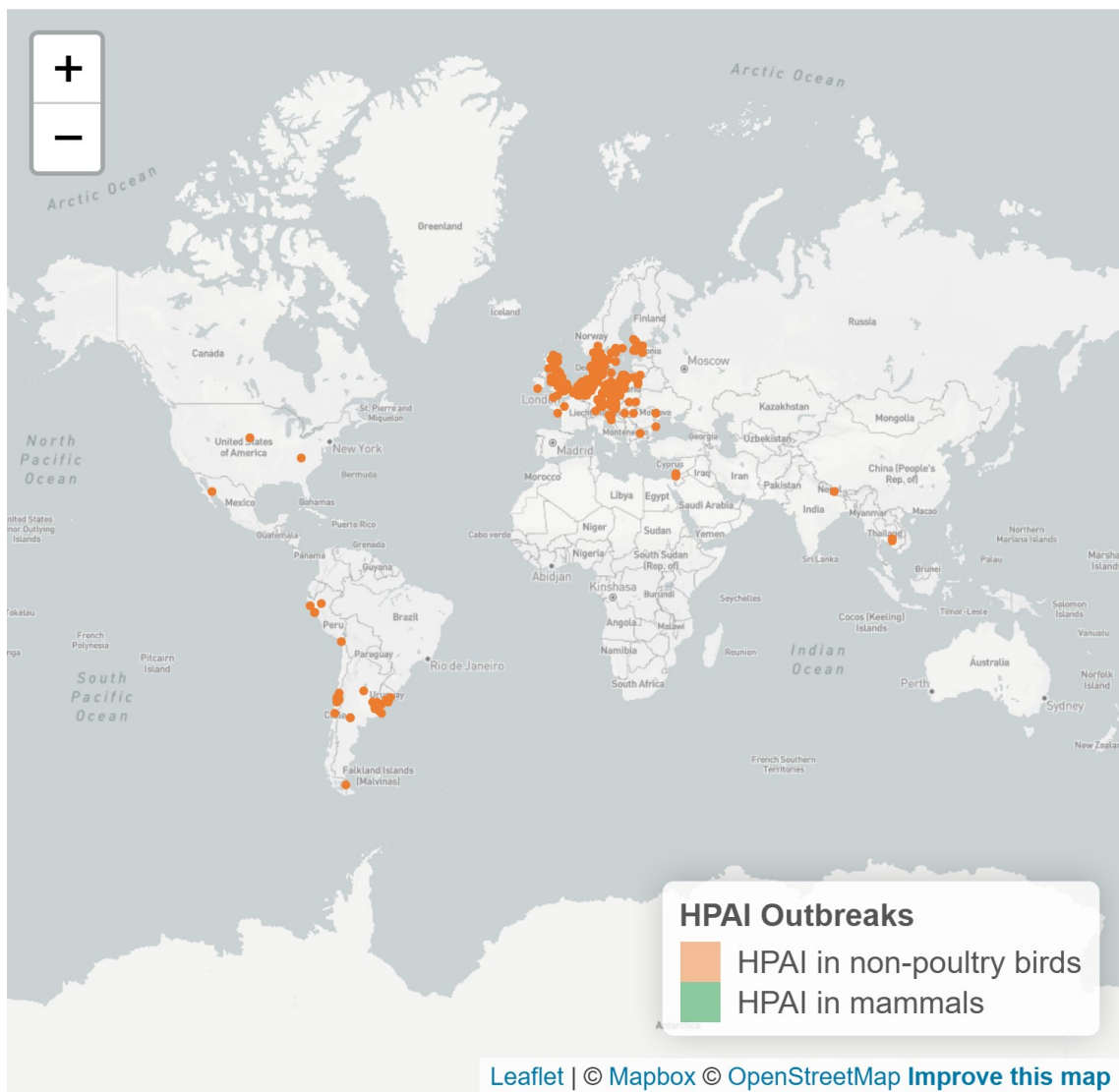


Figure 5. Distribution of HPAI new outbreaks in non-poultry and mammals reported through WAHIS.

⁶ This list corresponds to countries and territories that have notified cases in wild birds, mammals or domestic birds other than poultry. This explains why their numbers are different from those presented on page 4 in the 'HPAI key figures for the current seasonal wave and the two previous waves' table, which does not cover domestic birds other than poultry.

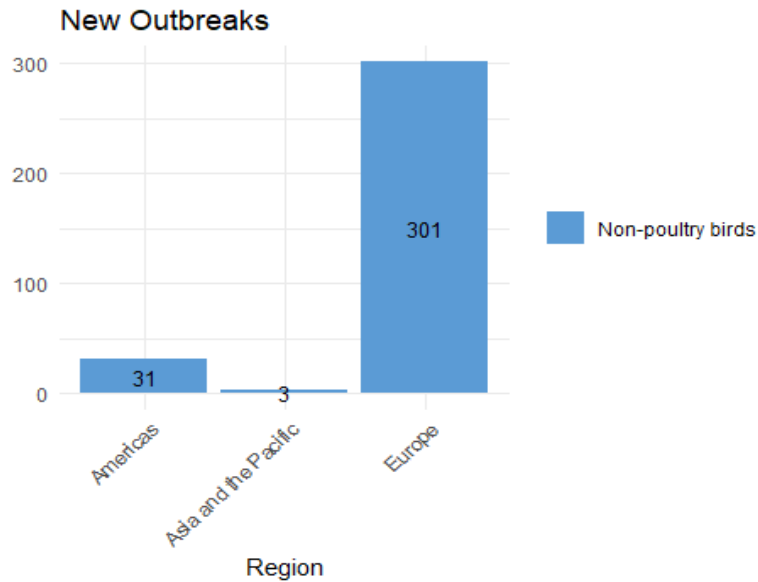


Figure 6. Number of new outbreaks in non-poultry reported through WAHIS by geographical region.

Self-declarations of freedom published during March 2026

In accordance with the provisions of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, Members may wish to self-declare the freedom of their country, zone or compartment from HPAI. A Member wishing to publish its self-declaration for disease-freedom, should provide the relevant documented evidence of compliance with the provisions of the Code.

No Member requested the publication of a self-declaration of freedom in March 2026.

Recent news

- [Guidelines for Surveillance of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza for Smallholder Poultry Systems in Resource-Limited Settings](#)
- [Statement on the impact of HPAI on wildlife worldwide - WOAAH - World Organisation for Animal Health](#)
- [GF-TAD Webinar \(December 2025\): Update on the global situation of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza \(HPAI\)](#)
- [92GS Tech-02: Animal Health Situation Worldwide](#)
- [The State of the World's Animal Health 2025](#)
- [Statement on the impact of HPAI on wildlife worldwide](#)
- [High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza \(HPAI\) in Cattle](#)
- [Interview: Avian influenza prevention: could vaccination support egg security?](#)
- [Case definition for HPAI in cattle](#)
- [Updated joint FAO/WHO/WOAH public health assessment of recent influenza A\(H5\) virus events in animals and people](#)
- [Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza \(2024–2033\)](#)
- [Webinar of global strategy: Advancing Global Efforts for the Prevention and Control of High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza](#)
- [Pathogenicity Avian Influenza - WOAAH - World Organisation for Animal Health](#)
- [Conclusions of the Meeting on Vaccination and Surveillance for HPAI in Poultry: Current Situation and Perspectives](#)
- [WOAH HQ, Paris - France, October 22-23, 2024](#)
- [GF-TADs Meeting: Detection of HPAI in Ruminants and Humans in the USA \(cont.\)](#)

WOAH resources

- [Avian influenza portal](#)
- [Self-declared Disease Status](#)
- [WAHIS](#)
- [Resolution adopted in WOAAH General Session 2023: Strategic challenges in the global control of HPAI](#)
- [Considerations for emergency vaccination of wild birds against high pathogenicity avian influenza in specific situations](#)
- [Practical guide for authorised field responders to HPAI outbreaks in marine mammals](#)
- [Webinar: Launch of Guidelines 'Mitigating Disease Transmission Risk at the Wildlife – Livestock Interface to Facilitate Safe Trade'](#)

Awareness tools

[Understanding avian influenza](#)

[Avian influenza: understanding new dynamics to better combat the disease](#)

[Avian influenza: why strong public policies are vital](#)

[Video: Avian influenza threatens wild birds across the globe](#)

For any press inquiry on HPAI, e-mail us at media@woah.org.

OFFLU resources

[OFFLU summary report from the WHO vaccine composition meeting, February 2026](#)

[Global overview of the spread and impact of H5 clade 2.3.4.4b high pathogenicity avian influenza virus in wildlife, 2020-2024](#)

[Beyond poultry: Rethinking monitoring and control of HPAI H5Nx anticipating spillover risks for mammals](#)

[OFFLU annual report 2025](#)

[OFFLU Guidelines for High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza Virus Risk Mitigation in Cattle](#)

[OFFLU AIM Technical Report \(September 2025\)](#)

[OFFLU Statement on the Development of a Global Consensus H5 Influenza Genotyping Framework](#)

[Webinar: OFFLU Avian Influenza Matching \(AIM\) for Poultry Vaccines](#) [OFFLU diagnostic guidance: HPAI dairy cattle](#)

Other relevant resources

[Cumulative number of confirmed human cases for avian influenza A\(H5N1\) reported to WHO](#)

[Human infection with avian influenza A\(H5\) viruses](#)

[WHO, Influenza at the human-animal interface, Summary and risk assessment from 23 January to 31 March 2026](#)

[HPAI Detections in Livestock](#)