



Our risk assessments (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/hpai-developments110507.pdf>; <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/pdf/hpai-europe300606.pdf>) have also considered a possibility that the virus may have been introduced in wild bird populations in a number of discrete pockets and maintained at a very low level, but remain unnoticed. On that basis we have concluded that sporadic outbreaks of H5N1 (or any other type of H5 or H7 HPAI) may continue to occur within a wider region worldwide including Europe (and the UK) leading to sporadic outbreaks in the summer of 2007 when birds congregate for moulting. Moulting waterfowl are unlikely to move longer distances.

While dead swans may be an 'indicator species' because they are easier to detect, this detection again highlights the importance of surveillance for dead birds and how essential it is to continue to maintain high biosecurity standards with regard to domestic poultry.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of this report and the previous risk assessments we consider that recent epidemiological developments, both in Europe and worldwide do not significantly alter our previous overall conclusion that there is an increased but still low likelihood that the virus may be introduced from the currently affected areas to the UK.

Should H5N1 virus, or any other type of H5 or H7 HPAI, be detected in wild birds in the affected area, it is unlikely that it may be introduced to the UK by direct movements at this time of the year. However, this risk will be reviewed should the virus be detected in wild birds in areas within the major migratory flyway that may involve direct movements to the UK in the near future.

Based on the disease report and situation assessment, the likelihood of the introduction of the virus from Germany to the UK via legal importation of live poultry is considered negligible at this stage. However, this likelihood may be reviewed should any consignments be identified by the German authorities to have originated from the currently affected area. At this stage, the likelihood of the introduction of the virus via legal trade in poultry meat from the area currently under restriction cannot be determined. In any case, EU rules require an affected Member State to inform other EU MS of any relevant consignment that may have originated from the area that is currently placed under restrictions. Nevertheless, it is important to continue to maintain and implement appropriate biosecurity measures. On the basis of this outbreak and previous experiences, further developments may be likely and we continue to monitor and review the situation.

## **References**

- European Commission. (2007a). Suspicion of Avian Influenza in swans in Germany. Urgent Fax 707 22/06/2007. Directorate D – Animal Health and Welfare, Brussels, D1 (07) D/411463.
- European Commission. (2007b). 1) Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 confirmed in wild birds in Germany; 2) Legislation in relation poultry outbreaks and wild bird cases of H5N1 HPAI, biosecurity and surveillance in the EU. Urgent Fax 708 25/06/2007. Directorate D – Animal Health and Welfare, Brussels, D1 (07) D/411466.