



DWHC newsletter – Summer 2025

Current topics

Hare Myxomatosis



From August of last year, reports of sick hares with swollen eyes that often appeared blind and collapsed increased. Investigation revealed this was a new variant of the existing myxomatosis virus, previously identified only in rabbits and the Iberian hare in Spain and Portugal. In the Netherlands, many hares died from this emerging disease last year, primarily in the provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel, but also in Limburg and Groningen. This year, we want to continue to closely monitor the virus's presence and track any further spread.

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Bird Flu



Last spring, the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus remained present, but there was no increased mortality among gulls and terns, which had previously been severely affected. In recent weeks, there have been several reports of dead birds, especially from the province of Zeeland, including 85 primarily young Herring Gulls. Twelve birds were sampled, and all tested positive for avian influenza. Positive test results were also received from other parts of Zeeland. In the province of North Holland, a live Common Buzzard tested positive. Furthermore, there are signs of increased mortality in the Haringvliet and IJmuiden, where testing is still ongoing. The test results are published monthly [on our website](#).

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New at DWHC

Monthly overview of bird flu test results



Maandelijks overzicht van vogelgriep testen 2025

Januari
Februari
Maart
April
Mei

We now offer a monthly overview of the test results of avian influenza per month on our website. This page includes a brief summary of avian influenza test results, less common bird species for avian influenza, mammals that tested positive, and any notable outbreaks of avian influenza in kept animals. On this page, we also publish a monthly table with all avian influenza test results per bird species for that month, as well as a distribution map.

[To the overview >>](#)

Upcoming research on rodenticides and hedgehogs



In collaboration with various wildlife sanctuaries in the Netherlands, we are conducting research on rodenticides in hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are non-target species, however they can still ingest rodenticides. This "hedgehog rodenticide study" will be part of a larger study on rodenticide cross-contamination. For this study, it is important to collect hedgehogs from both rural and urban areas to compare the levels. Ultimately, several dozen hedgehogs from across the country will be selected based on location and background, and their livers will be analyzed for rodenticides. Private individuals who find a dead hedgehog can also report them. Once the investigation is complete, we will share the results on our website.

Notable cases

Pop-off syndrome in hedgehog



A young hedgehog got entangled in a vegetable garden net, suffered hypothermia and dehydration, but was found alive. The hedgehog was taken to a wildlife sanctuary, where it was discovered that its echinoderm had folded over its pelvis: pop-off syndrome. This condition causes the pelvic muscle to spasm, preventing the hedgehog from curling up, leaving its pelvis exposed. Pop-off syndrome occurs in situations of extreme stress, such as a car accident or being entangled in a net, as this hedgehog experienced.

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Badger infected with *Streptococcus canis*



An old badger was found dead near a badger sett. Post-mortem investigation by the DWHC revealed that she had died from peritonitis caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus canis*. This bacterium is primarily found in dogs, and cats and primarily causes infections in animals with weakened health. *S. canis* can enter the body through wounds and spread to various organs. *S. canis* is a zoonosis, but infection with this bacterium in humans is very rare and has not yet been reported in the Netherlands.

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Hedgehog with ulcers on their legs caused by the bacterium *C. ulcerans*



A weakened hedgehog was found in Limburg with severe skin ulcers on its legs. Bacteriological testing revealed the presence of the bacterium *Corynebacterium ulcerans*, which produces an exotoxin that damages tissues. This bacterium belongs to the same family as diphtheria bacteria and causes ulcers, depending on the site of the infection. *C. ulcerans* is found in various wild and captive mammals, including hedgehogs, and can also infect humans, but is not transmitted from person to person.

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DWHC-focus species

Update focus species 2025: Common Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon



Six kestrels were sent to Wageningen Bioveterinary Research for testing on bird flu. Three birds tested positive for avian influenza, and three birds tested negative. A total of three Peregrine Falcons were reported to the DWHC in 2025. One of these was collected for examination at the DWHC. This peregrine falcon had bleeding in the neck, lungs, and liver. The bird likely died after flying into something. In addition, a Common Kestrel was examined at the DWHC with a hole in its right side and a hemorrhage in its left lung. The bird's trachea was infested with so-called gapeworms (*Syngamus trachea*). This causes some infected birds to have difficulty breathing, causing them to gasp for air with their beaks open, which can mimic 'yawning'.

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Results focus species 2023/2024: Beaver



Foto: Edwin Giesbers

In 2024 and 2023, a total of 16 beavers were collected for examination at the DWHC. The leading cause of death for the beavers examined, in both 2023 and 2024, was trauma, with a vehicle collision being the most likely cause. In addition, several cases were notable: asphyxiation, bacterial infection of the middle ear and brain, flukes in the appendix, cutaneous maggot disease, and the bacterium *C. ulcerans*.

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Signals from abroad

Germany: African Swine Fever found in new area



On June 14th, the German authorities confirmed an African swine fever infection. African swine fever (ASF) is a notifiable disease caused by the ASF virus, which can cause serious illness in pigs. Last weekend, an ASF-infected dead wild boar was found approximately 150 km from the Dutch border. It is important to report wild boars with abnormal behaviour and wild boars found dead to the local land management organisation, the local big game coordinators, or if they are not known, to the NVWA (National reporting point for animal diseases: 045 – 546 31 88).

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Southern Europe: Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease



Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) is a viral disease that primarily affects wild ruminants and cattle. The disease is spread by midges and is not a zoonosis, meaning it is not dangerous to humans. The virus has spread northward in Europe since 2022. It has not yet been seen in the Netherlands. In wild ruminants, EHD can cause serious illness and even death, with symptoms such as weakness, fever, swelling, bleeding, excessive salivation, and uncontrolled movements. The animal may also develop wounds in the mouth, tongue, and claws.

[Read more on EHD>>](#)

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