

WILDLIFE DISEASES

Situation Report 01/24

Period covered: Jan – Jun 2024

This report provides an update of wildlife disease situation, according to the information submitted through the World Animal Health Information System of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WAHIS).

A general introduction of the scope and objective of this report as well as global level of wildlife disease surveillance activities can be found on [Wildlife Health - WOA - World Organisation for Animal Health](#).

Key messages and Recommendations

- During the reporting period, **55 countries and territories** reported **3,800 outbreaks** and **11,566 cases** in wildlife. Cases of **eight diseases** were reported in **151 different wildlife species**, **10%** of which are classified as being at risk of extinction by the IUCN red-list.
- The reporting of exceptional events affecting wildlife during the period mainly concerned **African Swine Fever** and **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza** in several regions. This is a common situation also observed in previous situation reports that shows the widespread existence of surveillance activities in WOA Member countries and the extensive distribution of these two diseases worldwide.
- Few deaths and cases in **15 threatened species**, representing **0.6%** of the total number of cases notified during the period have been reported, highlighting the importance of diseases for the **conservation of biodiversity**. The spread and persistence of ASF and HPAI in wildlife poses a threat not only to biodiversity (especially when the diseases are reported in fragmented bird and mammal populations), but also to livestock, food security, and human health at the global level.

Recent updates (January –June 2024)

In total 3,800 new outbreaks with 11,566 cases of [exceptional disease events](#) (based on the criteria listed in Article 1.1.3.1 of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code - Figure 1) were reported in terrestrial wildlife during the reporting period, through the WAHIS system. Other cases in wildlife have been reported during the period through email using the provision of [article 1.1.5](#) of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code (although Members are only required to notify listed diseases and emerging diseases, they are encouraged to provide WOAH with other important animal health information), specifically in relation to Infection of birds other than poultry, including wild birds (HPAI) (see [dedicated dashboard](#)). Finally, other cases in wildlife species, reported as affected in areas where diseases are stable are not covered by this report.

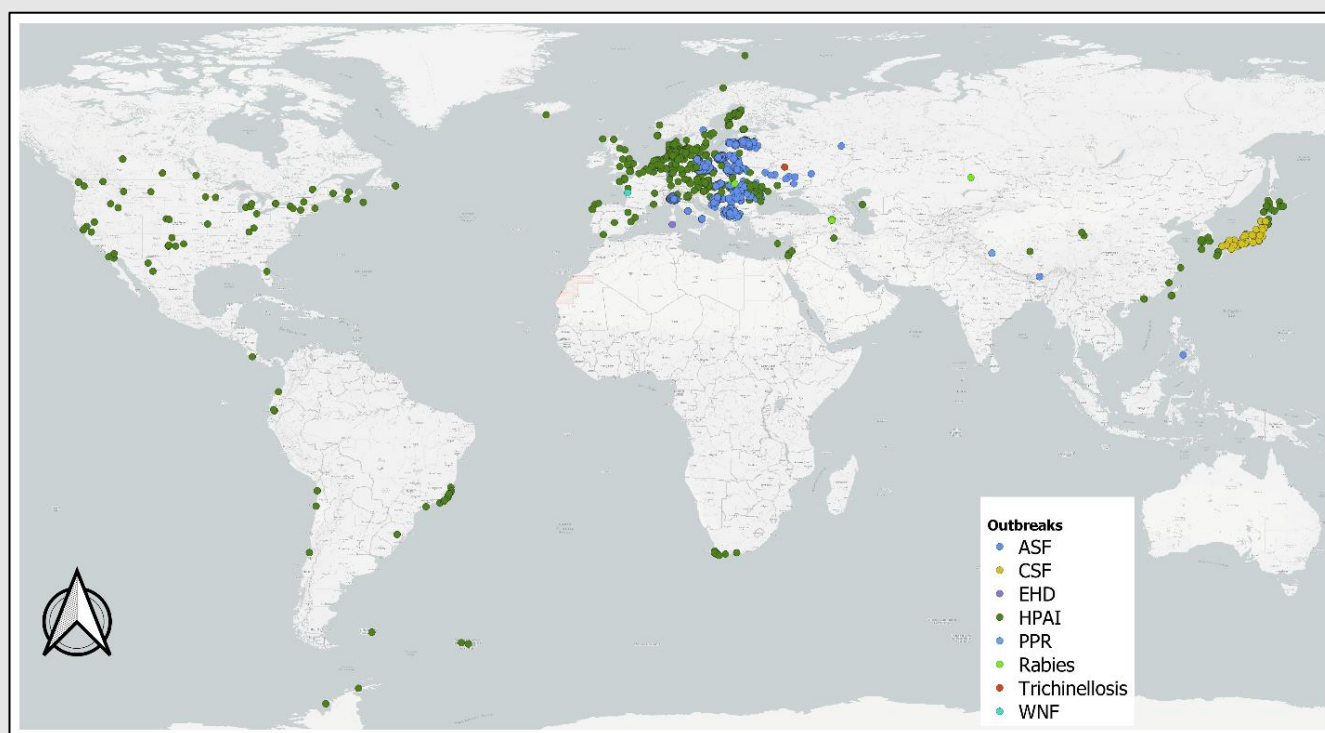


Figure 1. New outbreaks of exceptional disease events reported during the period in terrestrial wildlife. ASF= infection with African swine fever virus, CSF= infection with classical swine fever virus, EHD= Infection with Epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus, HPAI = Infection of birds other than poultry, including wild birds, with influenza A viruses of high pathogenicity, PPR= Peste des petits ruminants, WNF=West Nile fever.

Outbreaks were reported in countries in Africa, Antarctica, the Americas, Asia, and Europe (Figure 2), specifically, infection with African swine fever virus (ASF), infection with classical swine fever virus (CSF), infection of birds other than poultry, including wild birds, with influenza A viruses of high pathogenicity (HPAI), Infection with Epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHD), infection with rabies virus (rabies), Peste des petits ruminants (PPR), and West Nile Fever (WNF). The majority of outbreaks (87%) were reported in the Europe Region, possibly related to more extensive wildlife surveillance and/or reporting. All the outbreaks reported in the Americas, were linked to the spread of HPAI in the Region, while in Asia the outbreaks reported were linked to HPAI and CSF (Figure 2). The diseases with the highest global number of outbreaks reported were, as in previous reports, ASF (N= 2,863) and HPAI (N=659). Cases were reported in 151 different wild species belonging to 21 orders (Table 1, Table 2).

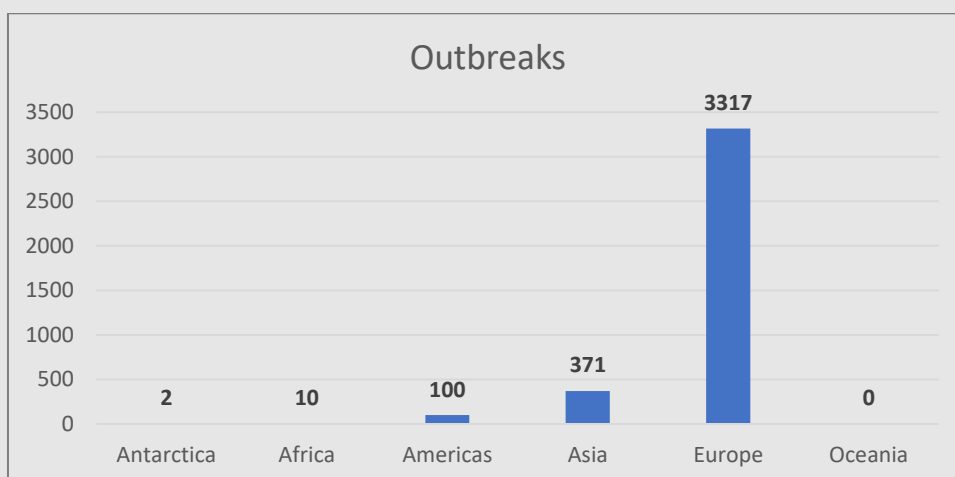


Figure 2: Number of outbreaks reported during the period and split by world region

Table 1 – Number of outbreaks reported by disease and information on zoonotic character of the disease¹.

Disease	Outbreaks reported	Zoonotic disease
ASF	2,863	No
CSF	257	No
EHD	1	No
HPAI	659	Occasional
PPR	2	No
Rabies	14	Common
Trichinellosis	1	Common
WNF	3	Common

¹This assessment is based on the definition of zoonosis documented in the Tripartite Guide to Addressing Zoonotic Diseases in Countries: "infectious diseases that can be spread between animals and humans; can be spread by food, water, fomites, or vectors."

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 diseases that affected species with threatened status. The full list of species reported is available on demand.

Disease	Cases	Order	Species (common name)	Reporting countries/territories	Endangered status*
ASF	24	<i>Artiodactyla</i>	<i>Visayan warty pig</i>	Philippines	CE
HPAI	1	<i>Anseriformes</i>	<i>Common Pochard</i>	Japan	VU
HPAI	1	<i>Suliformes</i>	<i>Snowy Owl</i>	Canada	VU
HPAI	1	<i>Falconiformes</i>	<i>Saker Falcon</i>	Hungary	EN
HPAI	1	<i>Gruiformes</i>	<i>Hooded crane</i>	Japan	VU
HPAI	1	<i>Charadriiformes</i>	<i>Eurasian Oystercatcher</i>	Belgium	NT
HPAI	1	<i>Charadriiformes</i>	<i>Audouin's Gull</i>	Spain	VU
HPAI	1	<i>Anseriformes</i>	<i>White-winged Scoter</i>	Canada	VU
HPAI	1	<i>Carnivora</i>	<i>Walrus</i>	Norway	VU
HPAI	5	<i>Trogoniformes</i>	<i>Guanay Cormorant</i>	Chile	NT
HPAI	5	<i>Phaethontiformes</i>	<i>Black-faced spoonbill</i>	Chinese Taipei	EN
HPAI	2	<i>Procellariiformes</i>	<i>Horned Grebe</i>	Canada	VU
HPAI	12	<i>Strigiformes</i>	<i>Jackass Penguin</i>	South Africa	EN
HPAI	2	<i>Accipitriformes</i>	<i>Mountain Hawk-eagle</i>	Japan	NT
PPR	10	<i>Artiodactyla</i>	<i>Argali</i>	China	NT

Global and regional impact

Reporting and impact on biodiversity

Out of the 151 species for which cases were reported, 15 of them (10%) have a threatened status according to the IUCN classification. In term of quantitative impact, they represent however only 0.6% of cases reported given that endangered species population are numerically less represented and with limited geographic range. One species is classified as “Critically endangered” (CE), three as “Endangered” (EN), seven as “Vulnerable” (VU), and four as “Near threatened” (NT), (figure 3, table 2). Out of the seven reported diseases, HPAI is the one infecting most of the threatened species (13/15), while ASF and PPR impacted one each only. The detection of HPAI in species with vulnerable conservation status is a common and constant finding in our analysis, highlighting the potential impact of this disease on biodiversity conservation. Further scientific studies (wildlife population assessment) would be needed to measure the impact of the disease. It is worthy to highlight that in our case three endangered species, seven vulnerable and three near threatened species are impacted by HPAI. The recently published WOAHA guidelines “Considerations for emergency vaccination of wild birds against high pathogenicity avian influenza in specific situations” addresses this risk by providing guidance on considerations for emergency vaccination of wild birds against high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in immediate response to an outbreak or increased risk of introduction of HPAI.

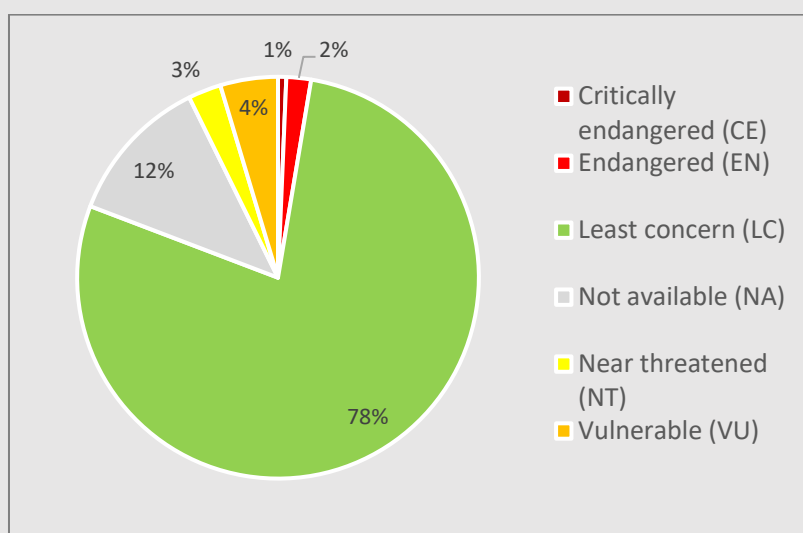


Figure 3: Percentage of reported species falling under the different IUCN categories

In particular, HPAI was detected in three species with endangered IUCN status: one **wild Saker Falcon** in Hungary, and 12 **wild Jackass Penguin** in South Africa, and five **Black-faced spoonbill** in Chinese Taipei. To provide an idea of the potential impact of HPAI occurrence in these species it is relevant to highlight that:

- [Saker Falcon](#) has an estimated population of 12,200-29,800 mature individuals, with a decreasing population. This species occurs in a wide range across the Palearctic region from eastern Europe to western China.

- [Black-faced spoonbill](#) has an estimated population of 2,250 mature individuals. Breeding population is present in Korea (Democratic People's Republic of); Korea (Republic of) and Russia, while non-breeding population is reported in Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- [Jackass Penguin](#) has a decreasing population with an estimated population of 41,700 mature individuals. It is endemic to southern Africa, where it breeds at 28 localities in Namibia and South Africa. Just seven colonies now support 97% of the South African population.

HPAI keeps also being reported in wild mammals, and the [WOAH statement on HPAI in wild mammals](#) highlighted the need for better surveillance, reporting, control and genetic sequence sharing to better anticipate the consequences of the ongoing outbreaks on wild mammals populations.

Finally, ASF was reported in a species critically endangered: the Visayan warty pig in the Philippines (24 cases reported). The [Visayan warty pig](#) has a decreasing population, and it is endemic to the Philippines, and in particular of the West Visayan Islands (or Negros-Panay Faunal Region) of the central Philippines, where previously it occurred on Panay, Guimaras, Negros, Cebu, Masbate and (probably) Ticao Islands. This species is replaced by *S. philippensis* on Bohol and all other larger Philippine Islands, except on Mindoro where it is replaced by *S. oliveri*. This species has been extirpated from most of its range, and fragmented populations survive today only on Negros, Panay, and possibly Masbate. In addition, ASF could potentially threaten other endemic wild pig species in Asia, leading to the extinction of [local populations](#) and creating tensions for top predators that rely on wild pigs as a major food source.

Reporting and impact on Public health

HPAI has a recognised zoonotic potential. In the current situation, it is worrying to observe that the number of cases in mammals has increased and that the virus has adapted to infect mammals more efficiently (in this report HPAI was reported in 12 mammal species, belonging to Carnivora and Rodentia orders [American Mink, Arctic Fox, Bobcat, Domestic cat, Gray Seal, House mouse, Mephitidae (unidentified), Puma, Raccoon (Northern raccoon), Red Fox, Striped Skunk, Walrus]). This might indicate ongoing adaptation to new mammalian host and potential future risks for human health, although currently, the human infections are still sporadic. The increased number of HPAI cases reported in mammals is a trend 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 mammals.

Few outbreaks of three common zoonoses: rabies, trichinellosis, and WNF were reported in Armenia, Hungary, Kazakhstan and South Africa. In Kazakhstan, rabies was reported for the first time in a new zone of the country, while in South Africa it was reported in an unusual aquatic host (Cape fur seal).

A recurrence of trichinellosis was reported in Ukraine in a wild boar. Trichinellosis was last reported in the country in 2011. Finally, outbreaks of WNF were reported in France and Germany in different bird species.

Reporting and impact on domestic animal's health and welfare

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

The report of PPR in Argali (10 cases) in Asia is also significant, not only because the species has an endangered IUCN status (Near Threatened), but also because the occurrence of the disease in wildlife may pose a risk to the international efforts currently underway to eradicate the disease at global level.

More information and resources

- [Statement on avian influenza and mammals](#)
- [Avian Influenza and Wildlife: Risk Management for People Working with Wild Birds](#)
- [Continued expansion of HPAI H5 in wildlife in South America and incursion into the Antarctic region \(OFFLU statement\)](#)
- [Considerations for emergency vaccination of wild birds against high pathogenicity avian influenza in specific situations](#)
- [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
Complete list of species for which cases were reported in December 2023 is available on demand at epi@woah.org.