

Catching-Up – New Rules and How They Affect You.

On Monday 9th January 2023 the National Avian Influenza Protection Zones (AIPZ's) that cover England, Scotland and Wales, were all amended to include new mandatory requirements for those who catch-up gamebirds (pheasants, partridges or ducks). Below is an overview of these new legal obligations and some frequently asked questions about the practice of catching-up.

Once caught up, previously wild birds are classed as poultry and will be subject to the same rules and regulations as other kept birds. Therefore, all relevant requirements under the relevant AIPZ must be complied with when dealing with caught-up birds. In England and Wales this includes mandatory housing measures in addition to the quarantine requirements.

New Rules

As of 9/1/23 any birds caught up must be quarantined for a minimum of 21 days before being moved off the premises. They must remain in the holding pen/building for 21 days after the last caught-up bird was introduced to it before being moved. In this context, being moved means moving the birds to a new premises, shoot, game farm or other holding than that where they were caught-up.

In all cases accurate up to date records of all catching-up activity must be kept and must be available on demand to APHA/DEFRA

In Wales there is an additional requirement for all keepers of captive birds to complete a Self-Assessment checklist, which can be found [here](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

- When can I catch-up?

In England and Wales catching-up is legal until the end of the shooting season (1st February). In Scotland it is legal until 28th February. **Catching-up is illegal after these dates.**

- Why must caught-up birds be held for 21 days?

In order to reduce the likelihood of Avian Influenza being spread by caught-up gamebirds being moved from where they were caught up to another location. This is in line with many other disease control and prevention policies. 21 days is deemed long enough for any presence of infection, even if only in one or two birds, to spread to other birds in the flock and become noticeable.

- What happens if I wish to move birds from my premises before the 21-day period is up?

You would need to apply for a license from the relevant authority in your home country. However, it is unlikely that these would be granted unless there was essential reason to permit such movement.

- Can I still catch up if I am in a 3km Protection Zone (PZ), a 10km Surveillance Zone (SZ), or a 3km Captive Bird Monitoring Zone (CPBZ)?

Yes, but you cannot move caught-up birds off your premises until the zone has been lifted and you are no longer restricted. Remember that if any part of your premises is in one of the disease control zones then the whole premises is deemed to be in the zone. You can check if you are affected by any of the disease control zones by looking at the APHA interactive map [here](#). If you click on the search icon in the top left corner you can enter your postcode and see your exact location on the map.

- If my premises is in the free area (not affected by any disease control zones) and I catch-up birds and observe the new quarantine requirements, can I then move the birds to a new location inside a disease control zone (PZ, SZ or CBMZ)?

Such a movement will need a licence from APHA. Grant of the licence will be at the discretion of APHA and will depend on a range of factors, mostly centred around biosecurity and record keeping on the site of origin and the site of destination.

- If Avian Influenza (AI) was found in wild birds on our shoot or nearby, can I still catch-up?

There is no law preventing this, but common sense suggests that it will be very risky. DEFRA, Scottish Government and Welsh Government are all strongly advising keepers not to catch-up if they are in an area known to have, or have had, AI.

- What happens if I caught-up birds are infected with AI?

As soon as the birds are caught up and under your 'control' they are captive and if they contract AI your premises will become an Infected Premises (IP) and be treated like any other IP. All birds on site will be culled and restrictions will be placed on the premises.

- Do I need to complete the Poultry Register for caught up birds?

It is a legal requirement to complete the register if you keep 50 or more captive birds for any period of time and this includes gamebirds. You can find out more and register [here](#)

You should also sign up for poultry alerts which will give you early details of any suspected or confirmed cases.

- What other precautions should I be taking?

The AIPZ's which affect the whole of the UK requires keepers of birds to observe specified standards of biosecurity. (Enhanced standards apply for keepers of more than 500 birds.) Once birds have been caught-up they become captive birds, and the keeper of those birds is subject to the mandatory obligations placed on them by the AIPZ. You can find details of the AIPZ [here](#) for England, [here](#) for Wales and [here](#) for Scotland.

The Government risk assessment has identified that the risk of an individual shoot being infected with AI because of catching up gamebirds when correct best practice and biosecurity is practiced, as low. However, the overall risk of at least one site across Great Britain becoming infected as very high. It is therefore essential that anyone who undertakes this activity follows all legal and best practice requirements. Failure to do so may result in further restrictions being placed on the whole shooting sector in future.