

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyfl/Our ref LG/00332/22

Dr Sharon Thompson
Head of Policy and Advocacy
RSPB Cymru

Information redacted

08 Sep. 2022

Dear Dr Sharon,

Thank you for your letter of 16th June, regarding the urgent need for a Welsh Government-led response plan to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in wild birds. Wales' population of seabirds are of international importance, and I share your concerns regarding the recent increase of HPAI observed in the wild bird populations, in particular the seabird populations highlighted in your recent letter.

I am aware that in June there were an additional three locations where wild birds have tested positive for H5N1 HPAI in Wales. I recognise the importance of continued monitoring of the situation and need to prepare for the potential threat of HPAI spreading within Wales' wild bird population. I fully support the work of officials who are collaborating with colleagues, both within Wales, and across the UK including government administrations, SNCBs, scientists and stakeholders to understand the scope of the situation, the scientific evidence and develop guidance.

Officials are developing an evidence-based action plan for Wales and value the input from experts across the field including stakeholders such as yourselves, British Trust for Ornithology and The Wildlife Trusts with whom discussions have begun. This action plan considers measures that can be taken in the short term such as the need for researchers to follow biosecurity measures to minimise the potential spread of HPAI between colonies.

In the longer term, I am committed to delivering a Welsh Seabird Conservation Strategy which aims to identify a number of high-level actions to support the conservation of seabirds in Wales. Officials are working closely with stakeholders to develop actions which will be underpinned by evidence assessing the vulnerability of seabird species to pressures and threats.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I recognise and thank RSPB nature reserve managers for the key role they are playing in remaining vigilant to the risks of HPAI and sharing details on the health of seabirds at their sites.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'L' and 'G'.

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