

Monthly Report May 2025 SENTINEL Wild Birds

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CONTENTS

Summary report..... 3

1. Overview..... 3

2. Results..... 3

 2.1 Data collection 3

 2.2 Genomics summary 8

3. Conclusion..... 9

Acknowledgment 10



SUMMARY REPORT

1.OVERVIEW

SENTINEL Wild Birds aims to enhance the understanding of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus dynamics in wild bird populations by conducting active surveillance at key locations in and near Europe. These locations are divided into the following surveillance nodes: Node 1 Gulf of Finland (Finland, Estonia), Node 2 Southern Baltic Sea (Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland), Node 4 Eastern Black Sea (Georgia), Node 6 Lake Constance (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), Node 7 Veneto Region (Italy), Node 8 Camargue (France), and Node 9 Gulf of Cadiz (Spain). This monthly summary provides an update on sampled wild birds as part of an early warning system to support wildlife management and disease prevention efforts. The data in this report are based on previously unpublished samples collected from February to May 2025.

2.RESULTS

2.1 DATA COLLECTION

Since the last monthly report (published on 29th of April 2025; (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15302263>), and as of 15th May 2025, test results have been submitted for 421 samples taken from 327 individual wild birds representing 8 taxa across four nodes in Europe (Figure 1; Table 1 & 2). Of the 421 collected samples, 246 (58 %) were faecal samples, 52 (12 %) cloacal swabs, 51 (12 %) tracheal/oropharyngeal swabs, 33 (8 %) nest swabs, 19 (5 %) blood samples, 12 (3 %) feather samples, and 8 (2 %) combined swabs (choana + cloacal). Of all samples, only one, a Mallard from Georgia, was found positive for avian influenza virus (Figure 1; Table 1 & 2).

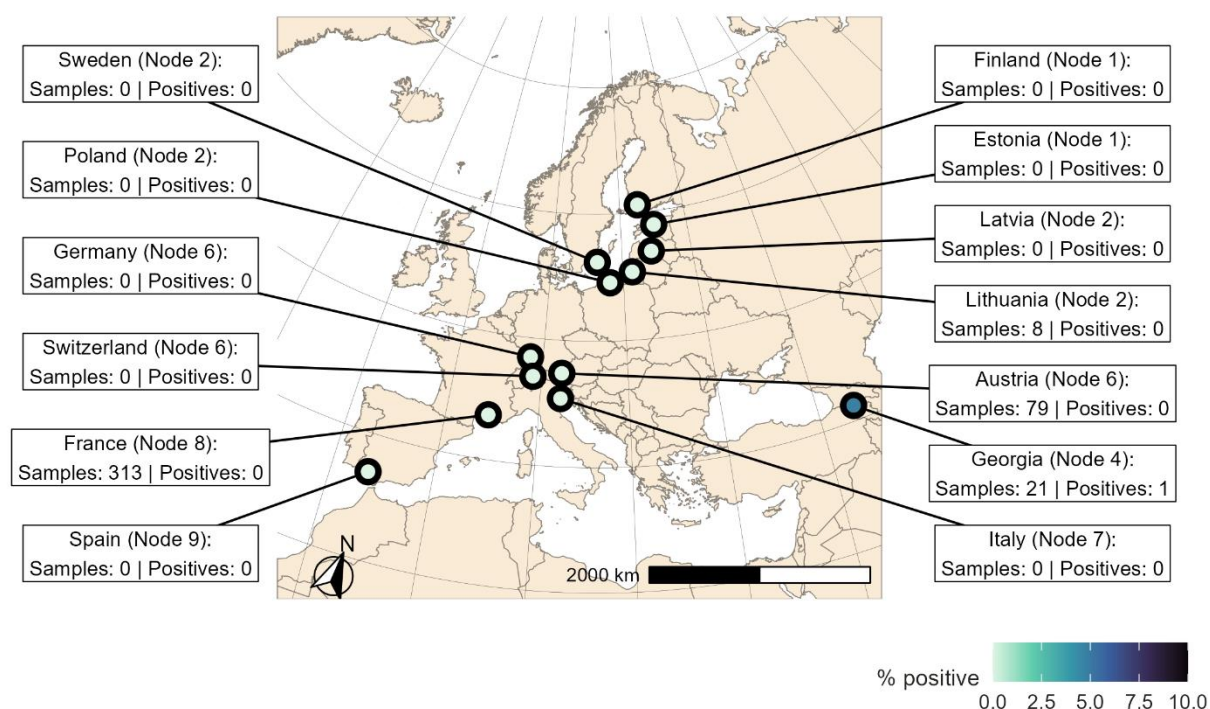


FIGURE 1 Sample sites for the 327 birds sampled in four countries, yielding 1 sample positive for avian influenza virus. The figure includes previously unpublished samples from February to May 2025.

TABLE 1 Total number of individuals sampled in the wild (including recaptures of some birds), as well as number of individuals tested positive for avian influenza virus in the respective country. The table includes previously unpublished samples from February to May 2025.

Group/species	Node 2 Lithuania		Node 4 Georgia		Node 6 Austria		Node 8 France		Total	
	Ind.	Pos.	Ind.	Pos.	Ind.	Pos.	Ind.	Pos.	Ind.	Pos.
<i>Waterfowl</i>										
Mallard			8	1					8	1
Domestic Mallard			2	0					2	0
Garganey			1	0					1	0
<i>Cormorants</i>										
Great Cormorant					29	0			29	0
<i>Larids</i>										
Black-headed Gull					2	0			2	0
Common Gull	2	0							2	0
European Herring Gull	6	0							6	0
Yellow-legged Gull							277	0	277	0
Total	8	0	11	1	31	0	277	0	327	1

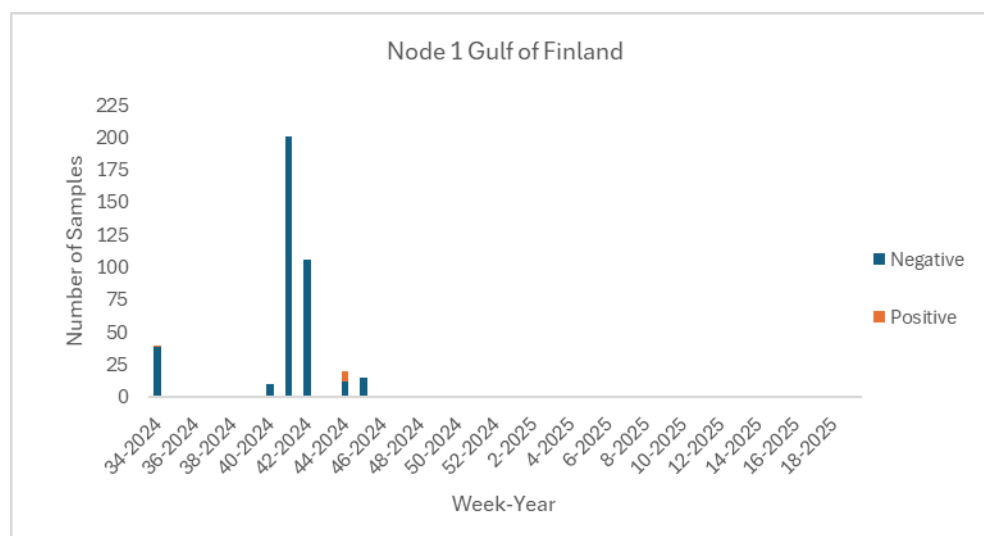
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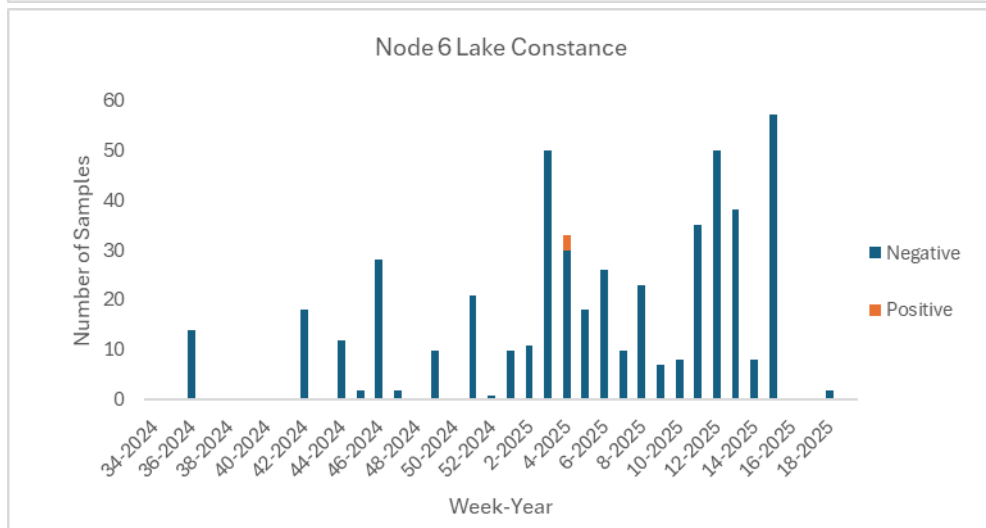
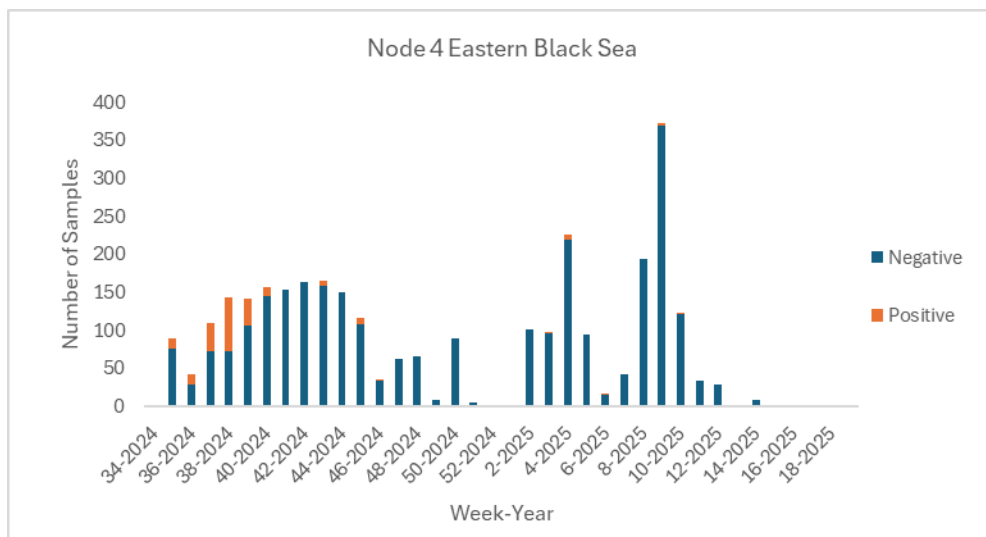
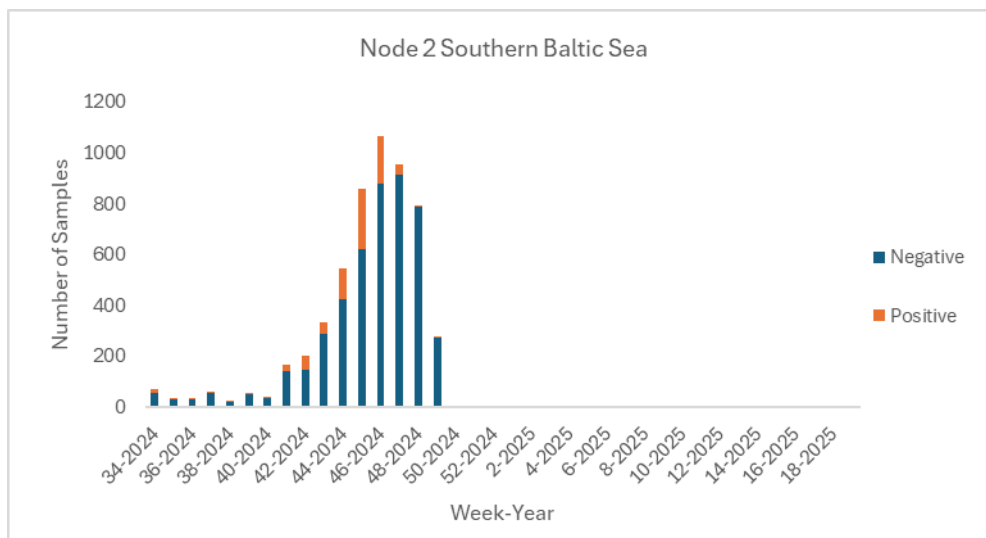


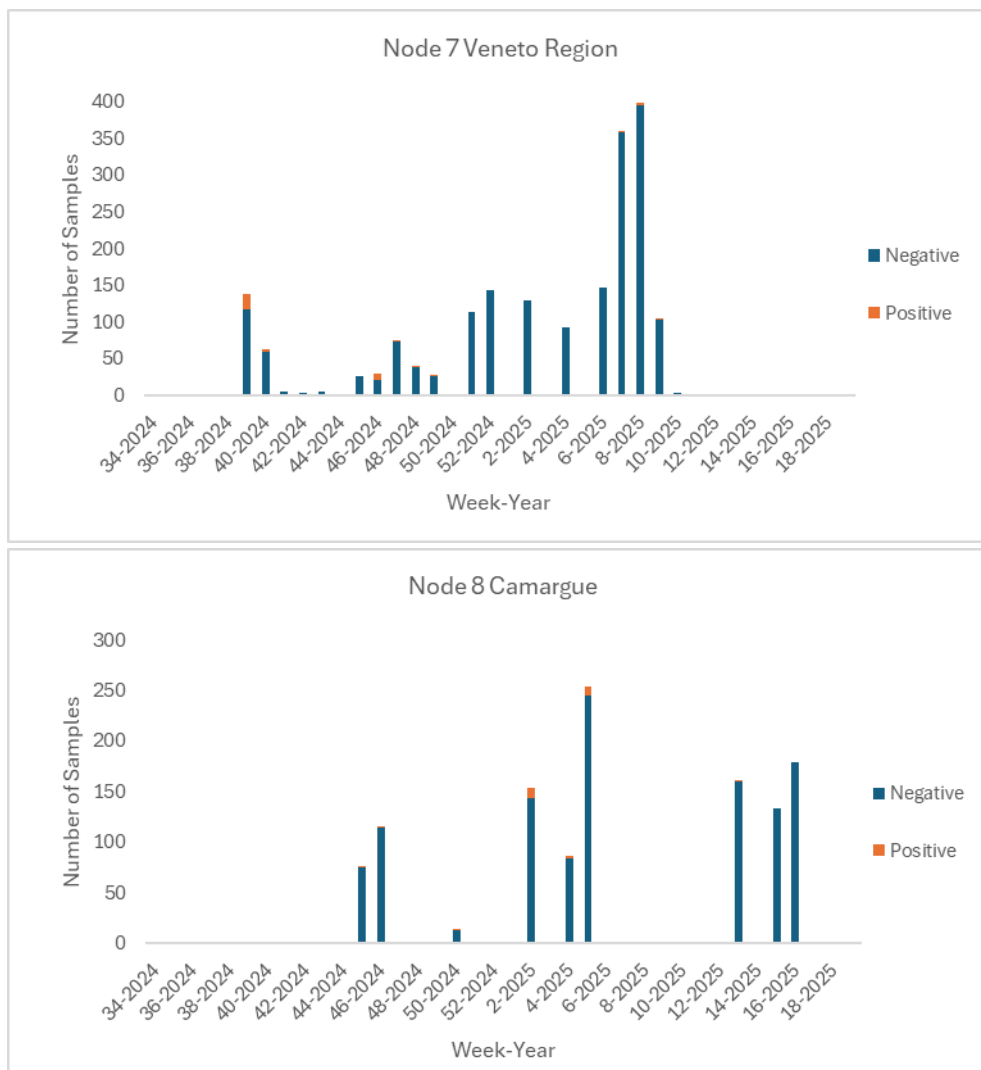
TABLE 2 Total number of collected samples as well as number of samples positive for avian influenza virus, in the respective country. The table includes previously unpublished samples from February to May 2025.

Group/species	Node 2 Lithuania			Node 4 Georgia			Node 6 Austria			Node 8 France			Total		
	Samp.	Pos.	HPAI	Samp.	Pos.	HPAI	Samp.	Pos.	HPAI	Samp.	Pos.	HPAI	Samp.	Pos.	HPAI
<i>Waterfowl</i>															
Mallard				15	1	0							15	1	0
Domestic Mallard				4	0	0							4	0	0
Garganey				2	0	0							2	0	0
<i>Cormorants</i>															
Great Cormorant							77	0	0				77	0	0
<i>Larids</i>															
Black-headed Gull							2	0	0				2	0	0
Common Gull	2	0	0										2	0	0
European Herring Gull	6	0	0										6	0	0
Yellow-legged Gull										313	0	0	313	0	0
Total	8	0	0	21	1	0	79	0	0	313	0	0	421	1	0

A weekly compilation of all 13481 samples (positive and negative; including previously published), collected at each node from August 2024 to May 2025, can be seen in Figure 2.







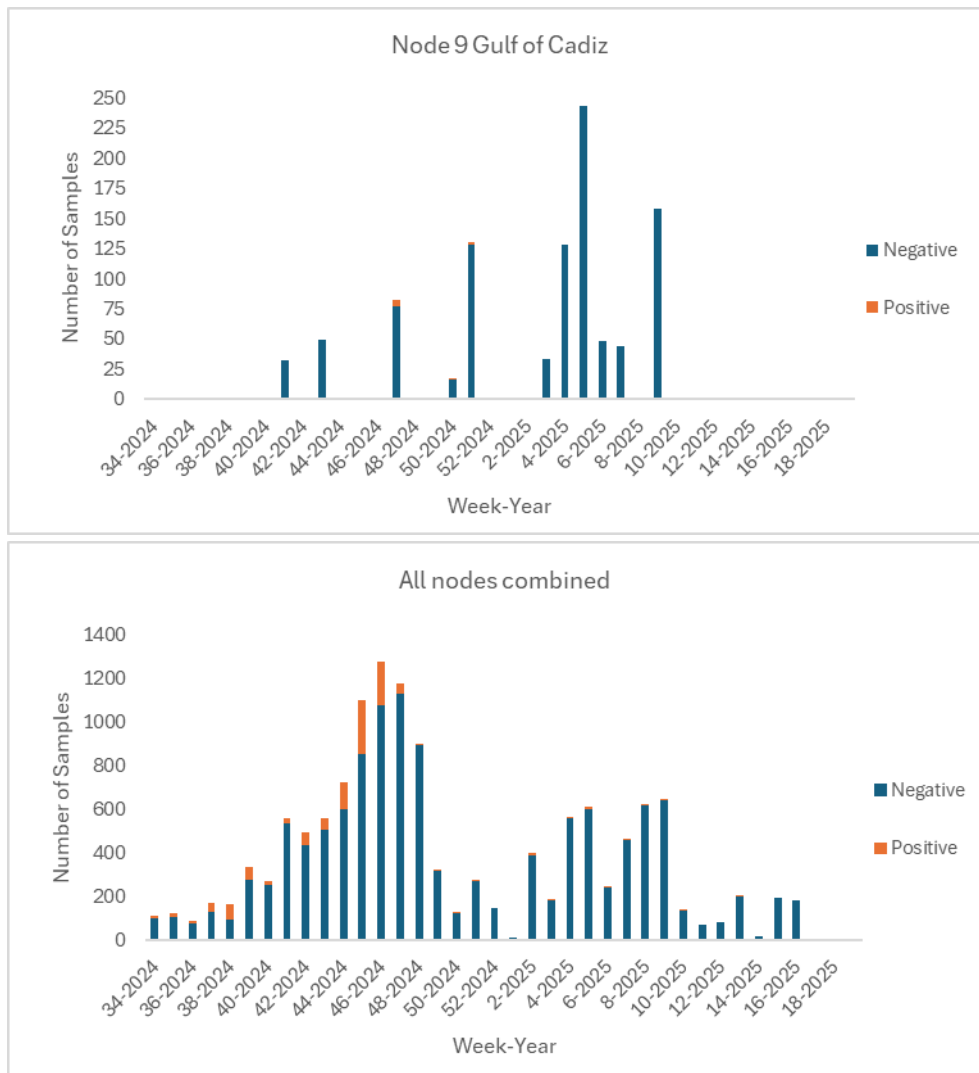


FIGURE 2 Weekly summary of samples collected at each node, as well as all nodes combined, from week 34, 2024 to week 19, 2025. In total, 13481 samples (negative samples in blue; avian influenza virus-positive samples in orange) have been collected at seven nodes between August 2024 and May 2025, yielding 1041 samples positive for avian influenza virus, including 24 samples positive for HPAI virus. The figures also include samples published in previous reports.

2.2 GENOMICS SUMMARY

Since the last report was published on 29th of April (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15302264>), and as of 15th May 2025, no new sequences have been generated. The latest and previous Nextstrain builds are available on the SENTINEL Wild Birds Group (<https://nextstrain.org/groups/SentinelWildBirds>).



3. CONCLUSION

As the migration period is now over and the breeding season has begun, trapping of wild birds has markedly declined, with only 327 individuals sampled across four nodes. Only Camargue (Node 8) continue to catch and test birds (Yellow-legged Gulls) in any significant numbers.

The only AIV positive sample analysed in this report was a Mallard caught in Georgia (Node 4) in February. The sample has neither been confirmed as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), nor low pathogenicity avian influenza (LPAI).

Although the number of analysed samples is low for the period, there are no indications of avian influenza outbreak in the surveyed areas.

In the coming months, we expect low numbers of sampled birds across most nodes, and also low numbers of samples positive for avian influenza.



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Node 2: Swedish National Veterinary Institute (SVA) (Sweden); Linnaeus University (Sweden); Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment (BIOR) (Latvia); National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute (Lithuania); State Food and Veterinary Service (Lithuania); National Veterinary Research Institute (Poland)

Node 4: Centre of Wildlife Disease Ecology (CWDE), Ilia State University; State Laboratory of Agriculture of Georgia

Node 6: Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES) (Austria); Verein für die Betreuung des Naturschutzgebietes Rheindelta (Naturschutzverein Rheindelta) (Austria); Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute (FLI) (Germany); Max-Planck-Institut für Verhaltensbiologie (MPI) (Germany); National Reference Centre for Poultry and Rabbit Diseases (NRGK) (Switzerland); Swiss Institute for Virology and Immunology (IVI) (Switzerland)

Node 7: Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie; Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA)

Node 8: École Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse (ENVT); INRAE (Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture, l'Alimentation et l'Environnement); La Tour du Valat; Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels d'Occitanie (CEN Occitanie); Laboratoire Départemental du Gard; Office Français de la Biodiversité (OFB); Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté Alimentaire; Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (MNHN); Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire de l'alimentation, de l'environnement et du travail (ANSES)

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