

## Spain to cull 17,000 ducks as bird flu hits

February 23 2017

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Catalonia public health official Joan Guix sought to ease public fears of a bird flu that led to a decision to cull 17,000 Spanish ducks, saying the virus "does not spread to humans"

More than 17,000 ducks will be culled in Spain after a highly contagious bird flu strain that has affected poultry throughout Europe was detected at a farm, authorities said Thursday.

The [virus](#) found in Catalonia is H5N8, said Meritxell Serret, in charge of agriculture in the northeastern region—the same one that has seen

hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese slaughtered in France's southwest.

Up until now, the virus had only been detected in Spain in three [wild animals](#).

The H5N8 strain can spread quickly in affected farms, often leading to the culling of thousands of birds.

Joan Guix, in charge of public health in Catalonia, sought to ease fears, saying it was a virus "that does not spread to humans."

Health authorities in Catalonia are now inspecting farms within a three-kilometre (1.9-mile) radius of the affected location to see if the virus had spread.

According to the World Organisation for Animal Health, 24 countries in Europe have detected the H5N8 virus this year, as have China, Egypt, Cameroon and India.

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Citation: Spain to cull 17,000 ducks as bird flu hits (2017, February 23) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-02-spain-cull-ducks-bird-flu.html>

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