

Europe gripped by worst ever bird flu outbreak: EU

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More than 50 million birds have been slaughtered in the past year in Europe due to bird flu outbreaks.

Europe has been gripped by its "most devastating" ever outbreak of bird flu in the past year, European health authorities said on Tuesday as experts study the feasibility of vaccinations.

Between October 2021 and September 2022, around 2,500 outbreaks of bird flu were detected on farms in 37 European countries, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the EU said.

In that time "some 50 million birds were slaughtered" on affected farms, the EFSA reported.

The toll did not include preventive culls of chickens, ducks and turkeys that were carried out alongside the outbreaks, the health agency told AFP.

The EFSA said that "for the first time" there had been no marked separation between two epidemic waves, as the [virus](#) was not brought under control in the summer.

This autumn, the epidemic was more virulent than last year at the same time, with the number of infected farms 35 percent higher.

Between September 2 and December 10, 2022, around 400 outbreaks were recorded on farms in 18 European countries. The virus has also been detected more than 600 times in [wild birds](#), notably ducks and swans, which the report said may have contributed to the spread of the virus between farms.

Health authorities are studying the possibility of using vaccinations to arrest the spread of the virus.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said the risk of infection in humans was low, and "low to medium" for people working in contact with birds and poultry.

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