

Possible bird flu outbreak occurs in China

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An outbreak of the bird flu may be taking place in southern China, where the deaths of several ducks have been tied to the potentially deadly virus.

Information on the Ministry of Agriculture's Web site said this month, farmers in the southern city of Guangzhou revealed several of their ducks had died of unknown causes, China's official news agency Xinhua reported Sunday.

By Sept. 13, eight days after those initial reports, the number of ducks who appeared to have died from the unknown ailment had reached 9,830.

Initial lab tests later revealed the H5N1 virus was present in test samples from several of the birds.

That report led to the culling of nearly 32,630 ducks and a swift response from the provincial department of agriculture, Xinhua reported.

While regional authorities attempt to limit the spread of the influenza-based outbreak, the National Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory is conducting its own set of tests on the carcass samples.

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