

# Bird flu found in second German state

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Berlin (dpa) - A summer outbreak of bird flu in Germany was confirmed Tuesday to have spread to a second state, with three swans killed by the deadly form of avian influenza in a small town close to Leipzig.

At the end of last week, half a dozen swans killed by the virus were found in a turgid urban pond in Nuremberg in Bavaria state.

Some 190 people around the world have died of bird flu since 2003, mainly through coming into close contact with infected poultry, according to the World Health Organization.

Scientists fear the virus could mutate into a form easily transmissible between humans, which could touch off a global pandemic that would kill millions of people.

The health ministry in Saxony state in Germany's east said three dead swans were found in the Frohburg district, south of Leipzig, and a quick test established they were infected with the dangerous H5N1 virus.

Saxony state had to exterminate a flock of farm birds last year after they caught H5N1.

More tissue tests are being done at Germany's federal animal- disease laboratory on the Baltic Sea island of Riems.

In Nuremberg, a municipal spokeswoman said none of the other dead birds in the city apart from the six swans had H5N1.

Scientists on Riems are trying to establish if the virus is connected to outbreaks of avian influenza at a Czech poultry farm and in Hungary. The disease has not been detected in Germany between August 2006 and its appearance late last week in Nuremberg.