

Achtung, bunny's back in town

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Wild boars in the wild in Germany. Hares, foxes and wild boar are increasingly migrating into Germany's cities, causing havoc and even sometimes endangering humans, a major wildlife organisation said on Monday.

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Increased industrialisation and "predatory cultivation" of rural land are luring animals into big cities, where it is easier to find food and shelter, Magnus Herrmann from the NABU conservation group told AFP.

"Wild boar were the first to make an appearance in cities like Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt, they are incredibly adaptable and can pose a real problem if they become too tame," he said.

Last year, a 72-year-old hunter bled to death on the outskirts of Berlin after a wild boar bit him in the leg, puncturing a major artery. Herrmann said that up to 8,000 boars live in the German capital.

There have not been any known incidents of foxes attacking people, but Herrmann warned: "It is important not to stroke or feed them because they are very unpredictable and could attack you at any time."

In an echo of the city's old cold war split, the Tagesspiegel daily wrote Monday that hares in the eastern side of the once divided city are now competing with rabbits for food in the western side.

This is not the first time Germany has hit international headlines with a rabbit-related issue.

In 2007, a German pensioner shot to fame for breeding a 10 kilo (22-pound) rabbit the size of a dog, after which he was offered a contract by North Korea to supply giant rabbits to boost meat production in the Communist country.

Last year, a spate of brutal, unsolved "rabbit murders" left 40 bunnies near the city of Dortmund dead.

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