

Sweden allows first wolf hunt in 45 years

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Sweden will this winter allow its first wolf hunt in 45 years following a decision by the Scandinavian country's parliament to limit their number, authorities said on Wednesday.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency is to announce by mid-December its quota for the [wolf](#) cull, expected to be between 20 and 40 animals, Susanna Loefgren of the agency told AFP.

"That (number is) what (experts) have offered us, we're working on it and a decision will be taken mid-December," Loefgren said.

The regions where the hunt will be allowed are the province of Dalarna, Gaevleborg county and Oerebro county in the country's centre as well as

the provinces of Vaestergoetland in the southwest and Vaermland in the west.

The Swedish parliament decided in October to limit the wolf population to 210 animals, spread out in 20 packs, for the next five years by issuing hunting permits in regions where wolves have reproduced in the past three years.

"The main reason for the decision is to raise the (public's) acceptance of wolves" in Sweden by limiting their number, Loeffgren said.

The animal's presence is controversial in the Nordic country as domestic and [wild animals](#) are increasingly attacked by wolves, which have been sighted recently near residential areas, including near the capital Stockholm.

The [environmental protection agency](#) estimated Sweden's wolf population to be between 182 and 217 animals last winter.

It said the hunt would start in January and end before mating season begins in mid-February.

Wolves almost became extinct in Sweden in the 1970s but their number has increased steadily since efforts were made to reintroduce the animal to the country.

Like some other European countries, Sweden allows the hunt of protected species, such as the brown bear and the lynx, in order to cull stocks.

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