

Hunters kill 20 wolves in first Swedish hunt in 45 years

January 2 2010



Hunter Sune Johansson (Down center) weighs a female wolf after it was shot during a wolf hunt near Kristinehamn.

Hunters shot dead 20 wolves in Sweden on Saturday on the first day of the country's first authorised wolf hunt in 45 years, according to a toll issued by Swiss media.

The Swedish environment authority had issued permits for 27 of the animals to be killed between January 2 and February 15 in five central and southwestern regions: 10 percent of the Sweden's entire wolf population.

Parliament decided in October to limit the wolf population to a maximum of 210 and 20 packs for the next five years.

The wolf population has grown steadily from near zero in the 1970s and poses a problem for farmers, who lose livestock in attacks. They are also increasingly seen in urban areas including suburbs of Stockholm.

Sheep farmer Kenneth Holmstrom told the Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter that he had lost 32 sheep in 2005 in just two wolf attacks.

"The wolf has the right to exist in the forests and in the fields but it must be better controlled," he said.

"It does not have a natural enemy and it multiplies quickly."

Swedish conservation groups have objected the hunt violates European Union legislation on species and habitats.

There were about 150 [wolves](#) in Sweden in 2005. The number rose to between 182 and 217 last winter and more cubs produced since then, according to the Swedish [Environmental Protection Agency](#).

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