

Switzerland's only bear killed amid threat fears

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A bear waits to be fed in Keenesburg, Colorado on October 20, 2011. Switzerland's only recorded wild bear has been culled after fears that it could pose a threat to humans

Switzerland's only recorded wild bear has been culled after fears that it could pose a threat to humans, the authorities announced on Wednesday.

The male bear, known as "M13", was shot dead by wildlife rangers on

Tuesday, said Adrian Aeschlimann, spokesman for the Federal Office for the Environment.

"The cull was carried out according to the management plan for [bears](#) in Switzerland," he told AFP.

M13 lived in the mountainous Graubunden region of eastern Switzerland, on the border with Italy, spending spring seasons in the Val Poschiavo.

The animal, which was around two years old, had repeatedly headed into inhabited areas to look for food and had even taken to following people.

In November 2012, the bear had already been considered problematic and placed on a behaviour-watch list, a step away from a cull order.

Before deciding they must kill the bear, Swiss rangers had attempted to increase its wariness of humans by firing rubber pellets and firecrackers.

M13 was the only survivor of a trio of cubs.

Its brothers, M12 and M14, died last year when they were hit by cars in Italy.

The three bears were part of a programme in Italy's Trentino Alto Adige region to reintroduce an animal long wiped out by hunters.

The population on the Italian side of the border is now around 30.

The Swiss took the decision to shoot M13 after consulting Italian [wildlife protection](#) authorities.

Environmental campaigners WWF hit out at the decision to shoot M13.

They said it was natural for a bear that woke up from [hibernation](#) to head into the valley to look for food, and that it would have returned to the mountains as the weather improved.

In addition, with increasing maturity, M13 would have been likely to return to Italy to look for a mate, they said.

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