

German hunters angered by proposed ban on shooting cats

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A cat walks on a fence as sun sets in Sieversdorf, eastern Germany, on June 6, 2014

German hunters are up in arms over a proposed law that would prohibit them from shooting cats, a practice they say helps save birds and rodents.

The [hunters'](#) federation of the rural state of North Rhine-Westphalia defends the practice on environmental grounds, saying on its website that a [wild cat](#) can "kill up to 1,000 birds" a year.

But a new law, due to be presented to the regional parliament before the end of the year aims to move tabbies out of their crosshairs.

Environment ministry spokesman Wilhelm Deitermann said under current legislation dating from the 1930s, hunters can target [cats](#) which venture more than 200 metres (650 feet) from a house or prowl fields and the edges of forests.

But the ministry, headed by ecologist Johannes Remmel, argues that the damage caused by cats "does not justify such regulation".

The legal change spells good news for local felines. During the last hunting season shooters in the state killed "about 8,000 cats," Deitermann told AFP.

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