

Hundreds protest against release of bears in France

April 30 2018



Shepherds including from Spain protested against the release of bears in the Pyrenees, southwestern France

Hundreds of demonstrators including shepherds and farmers marched on Monday in south-west France in protest against the reintroduction of two bears into the countryside.

The French environment minister announced at the end of March that he wanted two female bears to be released into the Pyrenees-Atlantiques area to ensure the sustainability of the species.

But [farmers'](#) union FDSEA said the move was "completely out of step with reality".

Around 1,200 protesters, including some from nearby Spain, wielded banners reading "You will not have the skin of the shepherds!".

More than 600 animals, mainly sheep, were killed in 2017 by bears, said Claude Soulas, the director of local agricultural cooperative the Centre for Livestock Farming.

He said protection measures recommended by the government, including fences and dogs, were ineffective.

Environment Minister Nicolas Hulot had said he wanted the bears to be released this autumn because there are only two left in the area.

The number of bears in the Pyrenees is estimated at 39, mainly in the centre.



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