

Kazakhstan mulls endangered antelope cull after population boom

June 30 2022



In 2015, a nasal bacteria wiped out more than half of the world's Saiga antelope population, but after a recent population boom Kazakh authorities are considering a cull.

Kazakhstan is considering culls of its endangered saiga antelope, the

ecology ministry told AFP Thursday, after citing scientific advice about the threat posed to agriculture since the population rebounded.

Conservation efforts that included a crackdown on poaching have seen the [saiga](#)'s numbers in Kazakhstan soar from under 200,000 following a die-off in 2015 to 1.3 million ahead of this year's spring calving season, officials said.

"We have a scientific recommendation to regulate the [population](#) of saigas," a spokeswoman said.

"We are studying it, but no final decision has been taken," she added, without offering any deadline for the decision, set to affect some 80,000 animals.

The former Soviet country's vast steppe is home to a majority of the world's Saiga, known for its distinctive bulbous nose and the horns whose status in Chinese medicine fuelled the poaching.

Russia's Kalmykia region and Mongolia host smaller numbers of the animal.

A ban on hunting introduced in the late 1990s is set to run out in 2023 and Kazakhstan's ecology minister Serikkali Brekeshev suggested Wednesday that the ministry had "made a decision" about regularly culling up to 10 percent of the Ural saiga population in western Kazakhstan—the largest of three saiga population groups in the Central Asian nation.

"Today...saigas cross over not only into pasture land, but also farm land. It's a definite problem," Brekeshev was quoted as saying by local media.

But the ministry spokeswoman told AFP that any decision would need to

be approved by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and that the "position of society" would be taken into account.

Kazakhstan's leaders intensified their crackdown on illegal hunting in 2019, after two state rangers were killed by poachers, causing popular anger.

Kazakhstan's 2015 saiga antelope die-off saw more than half the [global population](#) at the time wiped out by what scientists later determined was a nasal bacterium that spread in unusually warm and humid conditions.

© 2022 AFP

Citation: Kazakhstan mulls endangered antelope cull after population boom (2022, June 30)
retrieved 18 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2022-06-kazakhstan-mulls-endangered-antelope-cull.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.