

Fluffy nuisance: Paris sends Invalides rabbits into exile

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The rabbits enjoyed munching the grass outside the Invalides complex in Paris.

Tourists and Parisians have long been accustomed to the sight of wild rabbits frolicking around the lawns of the historic Invalides memorial complex, one of the French capital's great landmarks.

But efforts are underway to relocate the fluffy animals, accused of damaging the gardens and drains around the giant edifice that houses Napoleon's tomb, authorities said.

Police said that several dozen bunnies had been captured since late January and relocated to the private estate of Breau in the Seine-et-Marne region outside Paris, a move that has prompted an outcry from [animal rights activists](#).

"Two operations have taken place since 25 January," the police prefecture told AFP on Tuesday.

"Twenty-four healthy rabbits were captured on each occasion and released after vaccination" in Seine-et-Marne, the prefecture said.

Six more operations are scheduled to take place in the coming weeks.

Around 300 wild rabbits live around Les Invalides, according to police estimates.

"The overpopulation on the site is leading to deteriorating living conditions and [health risks](#)," the prefecture said.

Authorities estimate the cost of restoring the site, which has been damaged by the proliferation of underground galleries and the deterioration of gardens, pipes and flora, at 366,000 euros (\$391,000).

Animal rights groups denounced the operation.

The Paris Animaux Zoopolis group said the rabbits were being subjected to "intense stress" or could be killed "under the guise of relocation".

"A number of rabbits will die during capture and potentially during

transport," said the group, accusing authorities of being "opaque" about their methods.

The animal rights group also noted that Breau was home to the headquarters of the Seine-et-Marne hunting federation.

The police prefecture insisted that the animals would not be hunted.

In 2021, authorities classified the rabbits living in Paris as a nuisance but the order was reversed following an outcry from animal groups who have been pushing for a peaceful cohabitation with the animals.

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