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Tens of Thousands of Reindeer Die of Extreme Weather in Russia's North

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More than 60,000 reindeer died of starvation over winter and spring in the far northern Yamal-Nenets autonomous district, the regional governor's office said.

The high mortality rate is likely to have been caused by extreme weather conditions in the Arctic region, such as heavy rain and snow, which made it more difficult for the deer to feed themselves, the statement said, Interfax reported Tuesday.

A operation is now underway to herd the reindeers to greener pastures, though many of the animals may be too weak to travel, the statement said.

The governor's office was also quoted as saying the regional government would allocate 10 million rubles ($287,000) to a fund set up to help herders in the Yamal region. The regional government has already given 31 million rubles to the fund, which helps farmers purchase necessary equipment, such as snowmobiles, as well as medicines and deer feed.

In total, almost 700,000 domesticated reindeer graze in the Yamal-Nenets district — about 35 percent of the world's domesticated reindeer population.

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