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Leningrad Regional Court Says Local Hunters Can No Longer Shoot Stray Dogs

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Hunters will no longer be able to shoot wild dogs for sport.

Hunters living in north-western Russia will no longer be able to shoot wild dogs for sport after the Leningrad Regional Court ruled the animals should not be considered fair game.

The court determined that recent amendments to regional legislation — which allowed hunters to shoot stray dogs on designated hunting patches — were at odds with federal laws on hunting, the local prosecutor's office said Thursday in an online statement.

Earlier this week, the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly recommended that the State Duma should criminalize the "deliberate killing of animals using dangerous methods," though the amendments would exclude the killing of stray animals for sanitary reasons.

St. Petersburg is home to 700,000 stray dogs, according to statistics from the city's legislative assembly, which added in an online statement that "thousands" of stray dogs had reportedly been poisoned in the city between 2010 and 2014.

Reports of dead dogs turning up on the streets of Russian cities also emerged in January after a suspected campaign by so-called "dog hunters" to poison stray ferals.

Last month, lawmaker Oleg Mikheyev from the A Just Russia party submitted a draft bill to the State Duma, which, if adopted, would prohibit the shooting of stray dogs and cats throughout Russia.

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