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Environmentalists Condemn Russian Bill to Extend Hunting Season

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Russian environmentalists have condemned a new bill to extend the country's spring hunting season, the Kommersant newspaper reported.

Public discussion on a new bill formally closed on Tuesday evening.

Under Russia's current law, regional authorities can designate 10 days between March and June as open hunting season. The bill hopes to extend that time by allowing some regions — including Moscow — to split their hunting area into separate zones. Each zone would then be given its own 10-day open season.

The bill's authors also hope that an extra six days will be added to let hunters shoot ducks "with the use of live decoys."

Hunters have pushed for the new bill, claim that Russia's unpredictable weather often stops many trappers from using the 10-day period.

Environmentalists have condemned the plans as “unacceptable,” claiming that they will pose a threat to Russia's wildlife.

"Spring hunting causes serious harm to the biodiversity of a country,” said Mikhail Kreyndlin from Greenpeace Russia. “Thousands of rare water birds are killed every year because hunters confuse them with common migratory birds,” he told the Kommersant newspaper. “Shooting won't just be for ten days, but for three and a half months."

Russian environmentalists have come under increasing pressure in recent months, including a group of volunteer firefighters working with Greenpeace who were attacked by an unknown gang.

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