

Russia Draws Up Measures to Control Bear Population After Spate of Deadly Attacks

By [Reuters](#)

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The Eurasian brown bear. **Charles J. Sharp / CC BY-SA 4**

The Russian government said on Wednesday it was drawing up urgent measures to control the population of brown bears that has spiraled out of control in some regions, with at least 22 people killed in attacks.

In the latest attack, reported by state media, a 23-year-old man out gathering berries was killed by a bear this week in Kamchatka, in Russia's far east.

Last week, a Russian woman in Siberia was fatally mauled by a bear in her garden, amid a nationwide spate of killings that experts blame on climate change and human incompetence.

"It is clear that as the population grows, so too does the number of problems. Systemic measures are needed to ensure that humans and animals can coexist safely and to maintain

the necessary balance," said Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Patrushev.

"In this regard, the Russian government is currently preparing a series of priority measures," he said.

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The government said it would look at lifting hunting quotas on brown bears, would establish regional population limits, give local authorities extra powers to control their numbers, and identify regions that need more financing to tackle the problem.

The population of brown bears has more than doubled in the last three decades to 308,000, in part due to shorter and milder winters. At least 22 people have been killed by bears across Russia, the world's largest country, since this spring, the RIA state news agency said.

Experts cited in Russian media have said bears have been forced to look further afield for food this year because an early and dry spring meant there was a lack of berries for them to feed on in September.

People are also guilty of leaving food waste out in the open where it attracts bears and of ignoring safety rules, experts say.

Investigators in Krasnoyarsk in Siberia — home to nearly 27,000 bears, according to environment ministry data — said last week that they had opened a criminal case into the local environment ministry, accusing it of negligence that led to the deaths of seven people in September alone.

The federal environment ministry has sought to play down the spate of attacks, saying that around 20 to 30 cases of bear attacks have been recorded annually in recent years, but that social media and smartphones are making such attacks seem more widespread.

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