

Originally published in German at [noe.orf.at](https://www.noeforum.at) , April 3, 2023

Hunters are now allowed to shoot wolves

The new wolf ordinance, which was passed unanimously in the state government almost three weeks ago, will come into force on Monday. Hunters are now authorized by decree to scare or shoot wolves under certain conditions.

From Monday, hunters are automatically authorized by regulation to act if certain criteria are met. Warning shots are allowed, for example, if a wolf approaches people in settlements at less than 100 meters or repeatedly visits food sources in a settlement. This also applies when a wolf climbs over protective fences and injures or kills livestock kept inside.

In turn, a wolf is intended to be shot if an animal follows a human despite attempts to evict it, reacts aggressively to humans, or approaches humans with dogs and attacks the dogs. This also applies if one or more wolves climb over fences and kill livestock within four weeks. The new regulation is initially limited to two years.

Long wait for notification

There has already been a clear step-by-step plan for wolves that show problematic, undesirable behavior. However: A decision from the authorities was required for deterrent measures such as scare gunshots and ultimately also shooting down. In practice, however, it took too long for this to be available, according to the presentation of the new regulation in mid-March.

After each warning or shooting, the person authorized to hunt in the respective area must be informed immediately. Furthermore, a telephone or written report must be sent to the responsible district administrative authority within 24 hours. This then takes over the examination or sampling. The hunters were specially trained for this.

However, due to the new regulations, "clean" wolves can also be shot in the future, which were previously inconspicuous, as was the case recently in Carinthia. Because whether a wolf has already killed livestock or approached a settlement for the first time can only be checked afterwards using genetic reports.

WWF: breach of EU law

However, because the authority will no longer issue any notices in the future, the public no longer has the option of taking legal action against decisions such as shooting down. According to WWF wolf expert Christian Pichler, this violates the Aarhus Convention and thus EU law. The responsible deputy state governor Stephan Pernkopf (ÖVP) said in mid-March: "We have consulted experts and they assess it as legally compliant."

With the new regulation, the state not only facilitates the shooting of wolves, but also the promotion of protective measures. In the event of cracks, the farmers affected continue to receive financial compensation. In addition, subsidies for herd protection measures such as electric fences will be increased. The WWF expert welcomes the investments and measures in herd protection measures.

<https://noe.orf.at/stories/3201281/>