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NATURE

No more dogs for some

Fri, 23 Nov 2007

Sweden's parliament on Thursday adopted a new law aimed at tackling the problem of aggressive dogs by allowing police to seize dangerous canines and even ban some people from owning or handling them.

"The parliament agreed to the government's proposal for a new law on care for dogs and cats. The aim is to reduce the problems that are linked to lacking care for dogs," it said in a statement.

As other countries have banned certain dog races associated with attacks on humans, such as Norway and Britain, the Swedish government considers that certain dogs' aggressive behaviour is the fault of their owners and is not due to their race.

"Unfortunately there are dog owners who are not able to take care of or train their dogs. Some, even though they are very few, go so far as to use their dogs as weapons," Agriculture Minister Eskil Erlandsson said in a statement on Thursday.

"That's why the government now wants to introduce the possibility of dog bans for people who have seriously failed in their care of a dog," he said, adding that such people would even be banned from taking care of other people's dogs.

Anyone who breaks the new law, which is set to go into effect in January, will be subject to fines or up to one year in prison, Erlandsson said.

Deaths from dogs are rare in Sweden, though newspapers occasionally report attacks on people. According to the Swedish Kennel Club, only one death has been attributed to a dog attack since the 1960s.

Sweden, which has a population of some nine million, tallies 725 000 dogs.

AFP

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