

Locusts, Spiders, Snakes Plague Russian Regions

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Several Russian regions have been plagued recently by locusts, spiders and snakes, media reports and government officials said Monday.

Locusts have destroyed large swaths of crops in the republic of Bashkortostan and the Orenburg region, prompting the authorities to declare a state of emergency, Channel One reported. An aircraft was scrambled to attack the insects with poisonous chemicals. The republic of Chechnya and the Stavropol and Astrakhan regions have been battling locust onslaughts of their own.

Meanwhile, tarantulas are on the rise in the Oryol region. The regional branch of agricultural watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor announced the recent discovery of several of these wooly spiders, which can reach lengths of 35 millimeters. In a bid to assuage public fears, the agency reported that these spiders rarely bite humans and even if they do, their poison is not fatal.

In Siberia, after a recent flood, adders — small, venomous Eurasian snakes — infested the city of Surgut, Interfax reported on June 19. One snake bite has been recorded, according to the STV local news channel. In another incident, a man killed a snake after it attempted

to bite him at his dacha, Interfax reported at the time.

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