

Hunting Law in Sweden Changes Brown Bears’ Parenting Behavior

Posted May 14, 2018

Category : Science/Environment

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

1. **lengthen** / 'lɛŋk θən / (v) – to make something longer
Example: The hours of daylight **lengthen** every summer compared to winter.
2. **adapt** / ə 'dæpt / (v) – to adjust in order to fit a situation
Example: It takes a while before I **adapt** to a new environment.
3. **selective** / sɪ 'leɪk tɪv / (adj) – related to choosing and keeping some while rejecting others
Example: The farm uses **selective** breeding and chooses only the best animals to breed new ones.
4. **rear** / riə / (v) – to take care of and raise a young child or animal
Example: For many species of birds, both parents **rear** their children together.
5. **compensate** / 'kɒm pən ,seɪ / (v) – to have something positive to make up for something negative
Example: Bats’ excellent sense of hearing **compensate** for their bad night vision.

Article

Read the text below.

Female brown bears in Sweden are now staying with their cubs longer than they did before, according to a research.

A team of researchers from Norway and Canada analyzed 22 years’ worth of data on Scandinavian brown bears. The data revealed that the time mother bears spent with their cubs **lengthened** to 30 months, which is 12 months more than the length of time they spent 20 years ago.

The researchers suspect that the bears may have **adapted** their child-rearing behavior to hunting laws in Sweden. In the country, it is legal to hunt bears without needing any license, but hunters are forbidden from shooting bears that are with their cubs.

One of the researchers said that the law possibly had a **selective** effect on the bears—those that spent less time with their cubs were more likely to be killed by hunters, leaving bears that **reared** their cubs longer to breed and reproduce.

The change in the bears’ child-rearing behavior caused a drop in their birth rate. This is because bears that stay longer with their cubs do not breed as quickly as bears who spend less time with their young. However, according to the research, a higher survival rate among both mothers and their cubs **compensated** for this decrease.

Currently, the bear population in Sweden is steady, so authorities think that hunting brown bears in the country can be sustained. However, the bears were once classified as an endangered species. In 2015, brown bears were in the Swedish Species Information Centre’s red watchlist—a list that names species that are threatened by extinction. The center said that the main reason for the threat was hunting.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Do you think that researchers should also analyze other bear species? Explain.

- What else do you think can be done to sustain the high survival rate of bears?
- Discussion B**
- Do you think anti-hunting laws should be limited to endangered species or should it cover all animals? Discuss.
 - In your opinion, which animal laws should be prioritized in your country (e.g. animal protection, anti-animal testing, etc.)? Discuss.
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- [illegible]

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