

EARTHWATCH INSTITUTE FIELD REPORT

Project Title: China's Black Bears

Principal Investigators: William McShea, Dave Garshelis, and Zhu Xiaojian

Position/Affiliations: Smithsonian Institution's National Zoo (wm); Minnesota
Department of Natural Resources (dg); Peking University (zx)

Research Sites: Tangjiahe and Wanglang Nature Reserves, Sichuan Province, China

Local Management Status of the Research Site(s) (e.g. National Park, RAMSAR Site, World Heritage Site, IBA etc.):

National Nature Reserve

Scientific names of primary species being studied: *Ursus tibetanus*

Key Research Objectives:

- Habitat use and home range of Asiatic black bears
- Villager attitudes and activities concerning Asiatic black bears
- Food habitats of Asiatic black bears
- Bear survey techniques appropriate for region

Date this report was completed: December 26, 2005

Data Collection and Results

a) Give a concise account of the data you have collected during the past field season. We completed 120 transects for bear signs within known bear habitat. We collected 105 scats from bears in the area. We have two bears with radio collars on and both are providing home range data. We interviewed 15 beekeepers, took measurements at 25 hives, and interviewed 20 villagers regarding bear/human conflicts.

b) What progress have you made towards achieving your original objectives?

We will finish Tangjiahe data collection in 2006 and have completed all work at Wanglang.

c) Please provide a summary of your results.

Transects can be used to reliably detect the presence of Asiatic black bears and differences in habitat use can be incorporated into the survey protocol to allow the technique to be used across a broad region.

Significance/Benefits of Research

a) What is/are the significance/benefits of your research at the following levels?

- Local (in the area of the research site)

We conducted training and brought about involvement of reserve staff in bear ecology. We increased awareness of local villagers to issues regarding bears.

- National

We provided assistance to CITES Office on survey of bear distribution and conducting training course that trains reserve staff from throughout the region on how to deal with human/bear conflicts.

- International

We created an international team to study bear ecology and brought together researchers from diverse backgrounds that would not normally interact on a conservation project.

b) How do your findings contribute to issues of sustainability?

Bears cause significant damage to agricultural crops for local villages. Bear gall bladders are in high demand for traditional medicine. We are working to find ways to minimize damage to crops and to increase awareness of the damage brought about by poaching. We are increasing abilities of reserve staff to successfully deal with conflicts.

Dissemination of Results

a) Have you provided details of results from your research to or within:

- Scientific papers (indicate status; e.g., peer reviewed or in progress/press): none
- Management plans and reports (in progress or completed): none
- Presentations

- 1) The Other Bear of China, Bill McShea, November 18, National Zoo, 80 persons
 - 2) Progress on Province-wide Bear Survey, Liu Fang, November 16, Bear Rescue Center, Chengdu, 30 persons
 - 3) Bear Conservation in China, Dave Garshelis, November 6, Peking University, 100 persons
- Popular articles or films (in progress or completed): none
Books, chapters, illustrations: none