

Lacking Berries, Bears Threaten Irkutsk Residents

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Bears, like this one in Katmai National Park in Alaska, have been spotted in residential areas in Irkutsk region in the last month. **Bobisbob**

Hungry bears looking to fatten up for winter have appeared in and near two cities in the Siberian region of Irkutsk for the first time in recent years, posing a threat to local residents, who have shot at least one of the bears.

The growth of berries and pine nuts has been low this year in the taiga near the cities of Bratsk and Ust-Ilimsk in northern Irkutsk region, leading bears to look for other sources of food for the last month, local officials told Interfax.

One official also speculated that the bears have appeared in residential areas due to changed migration patterns after massive forest fires in neighboring Krasnoyarsk region this summer.

A spokesman for the Bratsk administration told the news agency that the appearance of bears

was a first in recent years.

Last week, hunters in Bratsk, a city of about 250,000 people, shot a bear in the city's central district after it panicked and became dangerous, a city administration spokesman told Interfax.

At least six bears have appeared at dacha and gardening communities near Ust-Ilimsk, a city of just under 100,000 people, a city administration spokesman told Interfax. Two of them have been caught while four remain free, the spokesman said.

Officials noted that the bears had evidently not caused any injuries to people.

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