

Hungry Bears Approach Villages in Flood-Hit Far East

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A couple with their dog looking at their flooded house in Khabarovsk after massive flooding in the Far East. **Boris Razin**

KHABAROVSK — Aggressive bears, starving because their natural food sources were destroyed by floods, are becoming a growing threat for Far Eastern villages, local police said Wednesday.

Bears are having difficulties finding their traditional food — berries and salmon — because of floods, said Yevgeny Shukshin, the police chief of the Polina Osipenko district in the Khabarovsk region.

"The chance of meeting predators has increased," he said in a statement. "Hunger drives the animals closer to humans and forces them to search for food at garbage dumps. More and more often we are being informed of bears approaching villages."

In one of such incidents, police had to deal with an aggressive bear, which dangerously approached a group of children picking mushrooms. Officers initially tried to scare the animal off, but had to shoot it when it ran towards them.

Due to the floods, emergency situations have been declared in the Amur, Khabarovsk and Primorye regions, the Jewish autonomous region, as well as the republic of Sakha.

Deputy presidential envoy to the Far East Vladimir Pysin said on Tuesday that the overall damage is currently estimated at 30 billion rubles (\$1 billion).

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