The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kamchatka Authorities Urge Caution as Bears Awaken From Hibernation

By Jennifer Monaghan

June 04, 2015



Bear footprints are seen on the way to Khalaktyrsky beach on the Pacific Ocean, Kamchatka.

“If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise,” goes the popular English-language nursery rhyme “Teddy Bears' Picnic,” and for residents of Russia's far eastern Kamchatka region the song has never been more appropriate.

Residents have been advised to sing loudly while walking in forested areas to give fair warning of their approach to local brown bears, which are currently emerging from hibernation, the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry said in a statement Thursday.

Brown bears never enjoy being spooked, but as they have been starved of high-protein nourishment for the several months, this would be a particularly bad time for a surprise encounter, the statement said.

In addition to singing and making other loud noises, residents should travel in groups and

keep children close at all times, the ministry noted. Only specifically trained dogs should be taken on walks through the woods, as untrained dogs threaten to attract bears.

Check out the gallery: Russia Starts Here: Welcome to Kamchatka

The ministry also advised sticking to open spaces, and particularly avoiding strolls in forested areas at nighttime or twilight — the bears' preferred dinnertime.

Under no circumstances should residents try to approach a bear if they see one — especially a bear cub, as doing so threatens to provoke protective mothers. In the event of a chance encounter, the ministry advises residents to walk — "never run" — away without turning their backs.

Brown bears can weigh up to 380 kilograms. While they enjoy feeding on roots, berries and honey, they also have a taste for other mammals, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Russia is home to about half of the global population of brown bears, with upward of 100,000 of the animals living on its territory, according to statistics cited by the WWF.

Contact the author at j.monaghan@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/06/04/kamchatka-authorities-urge-caution-as-bears-awaken-from-hibernation-a47134