



A SPECIAL COLLAR for brown bears, fitted with a transmitter, will be used in an ecological study in Hokkaido. KYODO PHOTO

Bears to sport transmitters in Hokkaido habitat study

SAPPORO (Kyodo) The Hokkaido Prefectural Government plans to study the ecology of brown bears by tagging them with transmitters.

The government plans to use the basic data to work out protective measures such as hunting restrictions.

According to the Hokkaido Institute of Environmental Sciences, which is affiliated with the prefectural government, the study program will cover a forest of about 20,000 hectares in Kaminokuni.

The institute plans to capture brown bears alive by early July by setting about 30

traps made of drums and baiting them with honey.

About 10 bears will be fitted with radio transmitters attached to neck collars while they are anaesthetized.

The transmitter batteries should last for four years, and the institute hopes to trace their movements and activities during that period.

"We will be able to collect basic data for setting the ceiling on bear hunting and working measures to preserve forests as their habitat," said Tsutomu Mano, a researcher at the institute.