



A BROWN BEAR and her cub are the main subjects in a documentary shot by animal researcher Mamoru Odajima of Memanbetsu, Hokkaido. KYODO PHOTO

MESSAGE IS PRESERVATION

Film focuses on brown bear

SAPPORO (Kyodo) A wild animal researcher from Memanbe, Hokkaido, hopes a documentary film he has produced on brown bears will help educate the public about the threatened species.

Mamoru Odajima, 53, shot and edited the film himself.

For the past 15 years Odajima has spent more than 100 days a year in the Mount Daisetsu range observing and studying the bears.

He edited about 500 hours of 16 mm films into a 50-minute documentary four years ago.

Since then he has been showing the film and providing a commentary to conservation and citizen groups throughout the country.

The film features a mother brown bear and her two cubs, and shows how they forage, how the mother bear raises the cubs and how the cubs play.

Odajima got within 20 meters of his subjects while filming them.

He said he was able to approach so close because he had cultivated the trust of the

animals over a long period.

The brown bear population is estimated at 2,000 to 3,000 in Hokkaido.

However, it is said to be decreasing rapidly, and some people are concerned about the survival of the species.

Odajima said that despite the bears having a reputation for ferocity, they are not dangerous if people do not invade their territory.

He said his film shows people can coexist with the bears, and calls for stronger protective measures.