

# Hungry bears given plenty of acorns

A group in Wakayama Prefecture placed 850 kilograms of food in the mountains around Shimizu recently to feed hungry bears—so the bears wouldn't invade residential areas.

The bears' natural food, nuts, is in short supply this year because of a long hot summer. The nut yield is said to be only 10% that of a normal year, and bears have been descending from the mountains and rooting around for food in villages like Shimizu, Miyama and Ryujin.

Fearing the bears might harm people or pets, the Kii Region Wild Animal Protection Friendship Society put out the food in hopes of keeping the bears in the mountains.

Villages in the area gave the society 700 kg of sweet potatoes and 150 kg of acorns. They were left at three places in the mountains.

The society said that while some people have complained that feeding the bears could have the negative effect of encouraging them to remain in the area, the program was implemented in the belief that it is important for people to learn to live in harmony with wild animals.



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**Food is collected by an animal protection group in Wakayama to feed starving bears.**