

Japan creates emergency plan to stop bear attacks

17th November 2025



Japan's government has created emergency measures to address record numbers of bear attacks. The Ministry of Environment reported that 13 people have been killed, and more than 100 have been injured by bears since April. The death toll is the highest since

records began in 2006. Wildlife management experts have devised a plan to reduce the increasing numbers of fatalities, injuries, and encounters with bears. Part of this plan is to reduce bear populations in areas where the animals have been sighted. Another feature is the establishment of region-specific capture targets. Authorities will also set up a buffer zone in many areas to try to separate bear habitats from human residential areas.

There are two species of bear in Japan and their numbers have surged in the past decade. Estimates suggest the Asian black bear population has roughly tripled since 2012 — rising from about 15,000 to around 44,000. The larger and more dangerous Ussuri brown bears, native to the northern island of Hokkaido, have doubled in number. There are several reasons for the growth in bear populations. One is the shortage of beech nuts, which scientists attribute to climate change. Another reason is a declining number of licensed hunters, who were largely responsible for bear culls. Finally, a depopulation of rural areas means bears are venturing into towns and villages.

Sources: [japantimes.co.jp](https://www.japantimes.co.jp) / [aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com) / [kyodonews.com](https://www.kyodonews.com)

Writing

We should never kill wild animals even if they kill people. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Japan / government / bears / bear attacks / environment / plan / wildlife / rural areas / species / the past decade / dangerous / nuts / climate change / hunters / villages

True / False

- 1) Japan's government said bears have killed 13 people this year. T / F
- 2) The number of fatalities is the highest for over 100 years. T / F
- 3) Wildlife experts have revised a plan to keep a check on bear injuries. T / F
- 4) Authorities will create an area to keep bears away from housing areas. T / F
- 5) The number of black bears in Japan has risen three-fold since 2012. T / F
- 6) There are about 44,000 brown bears living on the island of Hokkaido. T / F
- 7) The number of bear hunters in Japan is going down. T / F
- 8) Bears are entering villages because of people leaving them. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. measures | a. increased three-fold |
| 2. toll | b. came up with |
| 3. devised | c. escalated |
| 4. fatalities | d. scarcity |
| 5. buffer | e. actions |
| 6. surged | f. indigenous |
| 7. tripled | g. deaths |
| 8. native | h. straying |
| 9. shortage | i. tally |
| 10. venturing | j. cushion |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of bears?
- c) What bear species do you think is best?
- d) Is the rising number of bears good or bad?
- e) How is climate change affecting animal numbers?
- f) What do you think of culling bears?
- g) How should you do if a bear attacks?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a bear hunter?

Phrase Match

1. Japan's government has created emergency
 2. address record
 3. death
 4. reduce the increasing numbers of
 5. separate bear habitats from human
 6. their numbers have surged in the
 7. the Asian black bear population has roughly
 8. native to the northern
 9. responsible for bear
 10. bears are venturing
- a. past decade
 - b. fatalities
 - c. numbers
 - d. island of Hokkaido
 - e. culls
 - f. residential areas
 - g. measures
 - h. tripled since 2012
 - i. into towns
 - j. toll

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you know about bears?
- b) What should you do if you encounter a bear?
- c) What dangerous animals are there in your country?
- d) How can Japan reduce the numbers of fatalities from bear attacks?
- e) What would you do if you sighted a bear?
- f) Why are bears seen as cute in books and movies?
- g) How important are bears?
- h) What advice do you have for people living in areas with bears.

Spelling

1. emergency smaeesur
2. death lotl
3. the increasing numbers of tilatsfiea
4. region-specific apurtce targets
5. set up a bfferu zone
6. human niaitsedler areas
7. two ipsesec of bear
8. their numbers have sredgu
9. the eahgtsro of beech nuts
10. which scientists etritaubt to climate change
11. a declining number of eelcndis hunters
12. bears are netnivurg into towns

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. b	4. g	5. j
6. c	7. a	8. f	9. d	10. h

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What has Japan's government created to address record bear attacks?
2.	How many people have bears injured since April?
3.	When did Japan start keeping records of bear attacks?
4.	Who came up with a plan to reduce increasing numbers of deaths?
5.	What will authorities set up to separate bears and humans?
6.	Roughly how many black bears are there in Japan?
7.	By how much has the brown bear population increased in recent years?
8.	What food are brown bears having problems finding?
9.	What is happening to the number of licensed hunters in Japan?
10.	What are bears doing as a result of depopulation in rural areas?

Speaking – Dangerous

Rank these with your partner. Put the most dangerous at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Bears
- Mosquitos
- Tarantulas
- Sharks
- Scorpions
- Pythons
- Murder hornets
- Wolves

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.