

# China to launch panda census

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A giant panda cub plays at the enclosure at the Giant Panda Research and Conservation Centre in Chengdu, in southwest China's Sichuan province in March 2011. China is set to launch its once-a-decade panda census, state media reported, as it tries to determine how many of the endangered animals live in the wild amid efforts to boost numbers.

China is set to launch its once-a-decade panda census, state media reported Monday, as it tries to determine how many of the endangered animals live in the wild amid efforts to boost numbers.

Around 70 trackers are currently being trained at the Wanglang National Reserve in the southwestern province of Sichuan, believed to have the largest number of wild pandas in China, the official Xinhua news agency said.

They are expected to finish their training in the next several days and will then start a nationwide [census](#), the report quoted Yang Xuyu, an

official with the provincial forestry administration, as saying.

The trackers will collect droppings for [DNA analysis](#), which will allow zoologists to track individual pandas and estimate the number of the [endangered animals](#) living in the wild, the report said.

The census -- the fourth since it was first launched in the 1970s -- is also expected to ascertain pandas' living conditions, ages and any change in habitat.

According to the previous panda count a decade ago, there are 1,596 pandas left in the wild in [China](#), with 1,206 of them living in Sichuan.

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