

A European bear's point of view, finally on film

April 15 2014



A brown bear plays in a sanctuary near the village of Mramor, Serbia on March 1, 2014

They love their larvae, snore like troopers when they sleep on their sides and, for reasons unknown, get a kick out of pushing over the trunks of dead trees.

Those are just a few of the insights into the daily life of Europe's

dwindling band of [brown bears](#) obtained as a result of an innovative film project being shown as part of a hit exhibition at the Natural History museum in Toulouse, in southwestern France.

The museum teamed up with authorities in Slovenia and the wildlife filmmaker Michel Tonelli to capture an intimate record of the daily activities of a female bear living in the Slovenian highlands thanks to a camera attached to a GPS-enabled collar she was fitted with.

The experiment, which has never been done before with European brown [bears](#), did not produce any startling new revelations about their lives, but it did offer a glimpse into the world seen from the point of view of an animal that conservationists struggle to observe acting naturally.

"This enabled us to get inside the bear's black box, their own universe," said Henri Cap, a zoologist at the museum.

"For example, when the bear goes past a cabin where she has obviously had a bad experience in the past, she turns on her heels and gets out of there immediately.

"It is disturbing to watch, the fear of humans, but it also shows a capacity for rational thought. That might surprise some but everyone who works with bears knows they are extremely intelligent animals."

The bear, named Tolosa after the Roman name for Toulouse, was filmed shaking a rowan tree to release the berries and displaying an extraordinarily delicate touch as she gathers tiny larvae to eat.

Tolosa, who was estimated to be about five years old, also displays a penchant for knocking over [dead trees](#): for fun or to provide insects with an ideal environment to produce more of the yummy larvae? Scientists

just don't know.

The images are available on the Internet at:

[www.museum.toulouse.fr/-/dans- ... e?redirect=/explorer](http://www.museum.toulouse.fr/-/dans-...e?redirect=/explorer).

They form part of a major exhibition on bears which organisers are hoping to take to Paris and Barcelona once the Toulouse run is finished in June.

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