

Polar bears vs scientists: Russians get emergency supplies

14 September 2016

It's been polar bears versus Russian scientists on a remote island in the Arctic.

A group of seven bears had besieged five researchers at a Russian weather station over the past few days. Luckily for the scientists, a passing ship delivered flares and dogs to help ward off the beasts.

Vadim Plotnikov, chief of the station on Troynoy Island in the Kara Sea, said that the Russian vessel also deployed a helicopter Wednesday to chase away the bears, according to the Tass news agency.

The bears had grown increasingly aggressive in recent days, killing one of the station's two dogs and smashing windows of the station's depot. The desperate explorers had run out of flares and remained trapped inside.

Plotnikov said that one female polar bear was particularly persistent, overnighing under the station's windows since the weekend.

Russian Natural Resources Minister Sergei Donskoi ordered officials to take quick steps to help the crew, and a research ship that happened to be in the area delivered the badly needed supplies. At the same time, Donskoi emphasized the need to spare the bears.

Polar bears, whose habitat has been threatened by climate change, are considered protected species, so researchers have to rely on flares to drive them away.

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