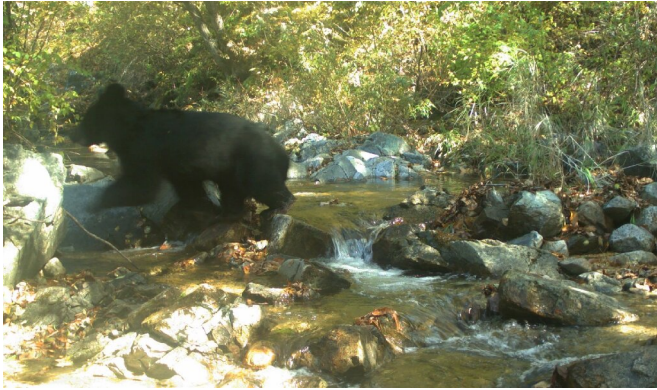


Rare Asian black bear spotted in Korean DMZ

10 May 2019



While some soldiers have reported seeing bears in the DMZ, it was the first time one had been photographed

A rare Asiatic black bear has been photographed in the Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas, Seoul's environmental ministry said.

The area around the four-kilometre (2.5-mile) wide strip running across the peninsula bristles with minefields and fortifications.

But while it is the world's last Cold War frontier, the zone itself is known as one of the few areas where nature is untouched by development, and a haven for wildlife.

The bear was photographed by an unmanned research camera in October, Seoul's environment ministry said.

Although there have been some testimonies by soldiers who said they saw Asian black bears inside DMZ, it is the first time that an image of the animal had been captured in the area, it added.

It was a juvenile estimated to be eight or nine months old and weighing about 25-30 kilograms (55-66 pounds), the National Institute of Ecology

said, and was presumed to be living in the DMZ with its parents.

The [species](#)—Latin name *Ursus thibetanus*—is classed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of endangered species.

More than 5,000 plant and [animal species](#) have been identified in the DMZ, including the long-tailed goral wild goat and northern fur seal, according to the South Korean government.

"The latest discovery of the Asiatic black bear once again proves the exceptional ecological value of the DMZ," said environment ministry official Yoo Seung-gwang.

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