



Bears With Phones

In Sweden, the month of May is when bears in the country wake up after their winter hibernation period and leave their dens. It is also the time to change the batteries in their "mobile phones". In the forests between Orsa and Sveg in the Dalarna region, some 50 bears come out of hibernation wearing a mobile terminal around their necks.

A number of bears in the Orsa area have been equipped with a mobile terminal over the past two years. These terminals on the bears can automatically send SMS messages to a research station, as well as receive them, after which positioning technology is used to keep track of the bears' movements. The research is part of a Scandinavian bear project that utilises mobile technology and Telia's GSM network to track and map where the bears wander.

"When a bear has received a number of position coordinates, an SMS message is sent from the bear's terminal to indicate where the bear is located. If we want to change the settings, we send an SMS back to the bear's terminal. It is the exact same technology that is used in ordinary mobile phones," says Sven Brunberg, field manager for the Scandinavian bear project.

Interaction has been introduced as a new study feature this year in order to research how people and bears interact in the woods. Researchers in the vicinity of a bear pretend to be berry pickers and use positioning techniques to study how the bears move and react when people are nearby. This is important for facilitating the interaction between modern man and wild animals, since the bear population is growing in Sweden.

"Telia is contributing to research on predatory animals, and at the same time, we are also collecting valuable information about our mobile coverage through this project. To say the least, the tracking of bears in the area puts extreme demands on our network, so I guess you could say that project gives us the 'bear facts' about our excellent mobile coverage in Sweden," says Indra ?ander, head of the Consumer Segment at Telia.



Sven Brunberg fixing the GPS-GSM collar

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