

Wang, Ying The current status of Formosan black bear in Taiwan.  
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**Abstract:** Due to recently increasing game exploitation and habitat fragmentation, the existence of Formosan black bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus formosanus*) was thought to be endangered. To assess the current status of this species, aboriginal hunters, forestry workers and game store owners were interviewed, and 6 field surveys were also conducted. The results showed that this species was distributed mostly in mountains where the elevation is higher than 1,500 m; whereas in winter it could be seen in low elevation from 500 to 1,000 m. From 1985-88, 32-60 bears were sighted by the forestry workers in 22 locations. Most bears were found in Lala Mountain Reserve, Yushan National Park and Snow Mountain Area. In addition, from our surveys, some bears were found in Tawu Mountain Reserve.

At present, this species can fetch a price between \$727 US and \$7,274 US ( $x = \$2,713$  US,  $N=13$ ) in the local market. This price is approximately 1/2 the annual income of an aboriginal hunter. Besides, over half the aboriginal hunters ( $N=97$ ) were willing to catch the animal regardless of its fierceness. This species is widely favored by game store owners; about 91 bears were sold in game stores between 1985-1988.

A decreasing bear population was reported by most of the game store owners, aboriginal hunters and forestry workers, as a result of unlimited hunting. To cope with the current crisis, the Council of Agriculture legally declared in January 1989 that the Formosan black bear is a threatened and protected species and a reserve to protect the Formosan black bear is now