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Hibernation of bears amazes scientists

If black bears retreat to hibernate in a cave, put their bodies as a rest. The heart beats only about 14 times a minute rather than the usual 55, the breaths become longer, and the body temperature drops by five to six degrees Celsius.

Surprised researchers have now found that the metabolism of the Bears runs on much lower than previously thought back burner.

The hibernators curtailed their metabolism to drastic 75 percent, the group reported to Åivind TÄ,ien from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks to the start of the worlds largest interdisciplinary research conference on Thursday in Washington. Normally, the metabolic rate decrease, even with a reduction in body temperature of ten degrees only by half.

The researchers first obtained extensive data from the winter sleep of bears, and present them in the U.S. journal "Science". But they took up "problem bears" back, the rangers in nearby villages were captured. The black bears were taken in caves with motion detectors and cameras in a natural environment. They were given for measuring the body temperature and heart rate are planted. Your metabolism high, the team calculated from the oxygen consumption in the cave.

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sink for other hibernators, the metabolic rate and body temperature equally dramatically. Not so with the Black Bears. Their body temperature was back to the surprise of researchers by not more than five to six degrees, while their metabolism languished only a quarter of the summer value.

In this reduced pace it creates Bruin, five to seven months without food and water to survive without loss of bone and muscle mass and no problems with the kidney or the digestive system.

Intrigued, the scientists observed another phenomenon. And the body temperature of a bear the 30 degree mark approached, he was struck by a chill that lasted until the animal had re-heated to 36 degrees. This cycle continued at intervals of three to seven days throughout the whole winter away.

The researchers hope that the hibernation of bears tricks once can use for the search for therapies for bone loss and kidney disease or for treatment of accident victims. Even a long flight into space would be better cope with people if they were temporarily transferred to a sort of hibernation, the team speculates.

(DPA)

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