

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BROWN BEAR IN BULGARIA

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Abstract: Fossils of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos* L.) and the cave bear (*U. spelaeus* Blum.) from Bulgaria indicate that during the Diluvium the brown bear was rarer than the cave bear. About the end of the Diluvium and the beginning of the Aluvium, the cave bear became extinct and the brown bear spread through Bulgaria.

According to Ruskov (1959), there were 450 brown bears in the mountains of Bulgaria in 1959. The low number of bears was because hunting laws dating from 1897 considered it a harmful animal; this law was repealed in 1941. Another reason for the low number is increasing economic development in the mountains. The number of brown bears is now satisfactory (about 520 individuals); hunting is forbidden and the species will not become extinct.

Craniological and dentographic data from 7 crania (3 males and 4 females) of brown bears from the mountains of Rila and Pirin indicate that the condylobasal lengths are within the limits of 18 individuals of *Ursus arctos arctos* from the European part of the USSR (Ognev 1931). Precise subspecific determination of Bulgarian brown bears will be possible when more crania are available.
