The Giant Panda - an Endangered Species that Needs Protection by Randy Collins

Article published on January 13th 2012 | Art

The giant panda that is found in Central-Western and South-Western China is considered to be in an endangered species. This docile looking creature has some distinctive features like black patches around both eyes and over the ears. This genial looking creature is not known to be violent; however there have been instances where it has attacked humans more out of irritation than any other reason.

A fully grown male panda can reach a height of up to 1.8 m and weighs up to 160 Kg. It is primarily herbivorous and 99% of its diet consists of bamboo. However, pandas in captivity have been fed honey, leaves, oranges, bananas and eggs. It is also believed to eat rodents and birds occasionally. With dwindling numbers, hardly 2000 in the wild and a couple of hundreds in captivity, the Panda becoming vulnerable is a cause for concern.

The Panda has a body resembling that of a bear's. It has a thick wooly coat that keeps it warm in the cool forests that it has made its home. The Panda's paw has a thumb which is actually a modified sesamoid bone or a bone embedded within a tendon. This helps the animal to hold the bamboo while eating. The tail of the panda is pretty long at up to 15 cm and the second longest in the bear family with the sloth bear topping the list. The life span of the giant panda is about 20 years and it can live up to 30 years in captivity. A female giant panda named Ming Ming lived up to a ripe old age (for a panda) of 34 years.

The animal spends its entire life on land. Its life is spent in the bamboo forests which it roams in search of tender shoots of bamboo, which is a delicacy. They are generally solitary creatures and like to be left alone. An adult has a territory of its own where he lives with his mate, and the female does not permit other females to encroach. Pandas communicate by making peculiar vocal sounds and also by marking barks of trees with their claws and spraying urine to leave behind the scent.

The giant panda seeks shelter in tree hollows and rock crevices and does not establish or have a permanent den. This is the main reason why giant pandas do not hibernate during winter and instead, seek warmer climates and migrate. It relies on spatial memory rather than visual memory to find its way around familiar territory. Pandas do not have a social responsibility and the male just mates the female and leaves her to fend for herself and her cub. Though the giant panda is an herbivore it has the digestive system of a carnivore which is why it occasionally eats meat. It is believed to be uniquely adapted to its surroundings and is believed to have lived in the bamboo forests for millions of years.

The giant panda needs to eat at least 10 to 14 kg of bamboo shoots in a day to sustain itself and spends most of the day collecting tender shoots and eating them with great patience. Due to the enormous quantities of food that are ingested, the panda needs to defecate at least 40 times in the course of a day. It believes in conserving its energy and never ventures too far away from its familiar territory.

Giant Pandas are being carefully reared in captivity and need to be provided all the protection to ensure and they do not become a vulnerable species from the endangered species they already are. Denuding of their habitat for human needs has to be stopped and their natural habitat kept intact to ensure their peaceful existence on this planet.

Article Source:

http://www.articleside.com/art-articles/the-giant-panda-an-endangered-species-that-needs-protection.htm - Article Side

Randy Collins - About Author:
Randy Collins is a freelance author. He expresses his concern about the endangering and extinction of rare species of wild animals and believes awareness needs to be created to arrest the decline. He keeps himself updated by watching related programs that are aired by popular services like a Verizon FiOS TV.

Article Keywords:
Verizon FiOS TV, FiOS TV, Panda

You can find more free articles on Article Side. Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!