

# No one lives where a nuclear plant exploded — except animals

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.22.15

Word Count **362**



Bison drink on the Belarus side of the Chernobyl exclusion zone in 2006. The nuclear power plant in Ukraine exploded in 1986, and more than 100,000 people left the region — but according to a new study, the population of animals has dramatically increased. Photo: Tatyana Deryabina/Courtesy of University of Portsmouth via Washington Post

A nuclear power plant exploded in 1986. It was in Chernobyl, Ukraine. The power plant made electricity.

The disaster sent radiation all over the area. Radiation is dangerous. It can make people very sick. Thousands of people had to leave their homes. No one can live there anymore.

Wild animals have moved in. There are as many animals as in wildlife parks in the country of Belarus, a new study says. Belarus is next to Ukraine in Europe. The number of wolves is seven times greater than in wildlife parks.

## **When People Left, Animal Population Took Off**

Tom Hinton is a scientist. He led the study. He was surprised to find so many animals.

There were few animals in 1987. After humans left, many more came. By 1996, the number of animals doubled. There are now brown bears in the forest. Wild boar live in empty buildings. Trees grow in the streets.

People kept the animals away, said Jim Smith. He is a scientist at the University of Portsmouth in England. He also helped with the study. Once people left, animals came back.

The area is still dangerous, Hinton said. Some animals might be getting sick. Also the ground near the power plant is still poisoned.

## **Wolves Help Tell The Story**

The wolves are very important. The wolves are healthy. This means that every plant and animal must also be healthy.

There is another team of scientists. They are counting animals in Ukraine.

Nick Beresford is one of the scientists. He liked the study. He said people thought the animals were doing well. Still, there was no real proof. This is the first study that proves it with science, he said.

## **A City Overgrown By Trees**

Thousands of people once lived in Pripjat. It is a city in Ukraine.

Pripjat used to look like a city with some trees, Smith said. Now it looks like a forest with some buildings.

In the city, Hinton sees houses and the cars and the baseball bats. People left them behind when they went away. It makes Hinton sad.

He also sees wild boar running around. It is not common to see them in other places.

## Quiz

- 1 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-3]. Which event happened LAST in the introduction?
  - (A) an explosion
  - (B) radiation spread
  - (C) animals moved in
  - (D) people moved out
  
- 2 Read the section "Wolves Help Tell The Story." Why is the study important?
  - (A) because the animals are doing fine
  - (B) because it counts the animals in Ukraine
  - (C) because there are so many wolves in Ukraine
  - (D) because it is the first to show that the wolves are healthy
  
- 3 Read the section "When People Left, Animal Population Took Off." What does "population" in the title of that section mean?
  - (A) a city
  - (B) a habitat
  - (C) different kinds of animals
  - (D) the number of something

- 4 Read the sentences from the introduction [paragraphs 1-3].

*The disaster sent radiation all over the area. Radiation is dangerous. It can make people very sick.*

What is another word for "disaster" as used in the sentence above?

- (A) news
- (B) creation
- (C) discovery
- (D) emergency