**8年级（上）英语第70课时（第18周）**

**《写作小讲堂之保护“国宝”》学程拓展**

**Panda population growing**

Giant pandas are like the superstars of the animal world. They make headlines (上头条) much easier than others. If a panda is born, or a panda gets sick, or a panda enjoys an ice cream cake on a hot day, the whole world knows it.

Why? Yes, they are cute. But the bigger reason is because there are not many left. In the 1980s, because many of their living places were lost, their number dropped (减少) to just over 1,200.

But here’s some good news. On Sep. 11th, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) took the giant panda off the world’s “endangered (濒危的) animal list”. Now the panda is in the group of “vulnerable” (易危的).

According to the IUCN, the latest research shows there are about 2,000 pandas in the wild in China.

“This is a deserved status (应有的地位),” says Mr. Sanjayan, senior scientist at the Conservation International. “The Chinese government has put in 30 years of hard work in pandas — [they are] not going to let the panda go extinct (灭绝的).”

How has China done it? Let’s take a look.

**Eating well**

Pandas sometimes eat small animals and fish, but bamboo (竹子) takes up 99 percent of their diet. And these guys are big eaters! A panda needs 12-38kg of bamboo a day.

In 1958, China set up the first panda reserve (保护区). Now there are 67 of them. People have planted lots of bamboo there so pandas can have enough fresh food.

**Remember to be gentle**

Baby pandas are only 15cm long - that is as small as a pencil! They are also born blind (盲的) and only open their eyes six to eight weeks after birth. So researchers need to take really good care of them in labs (实验室).

When pandas grow big enough, researchers return them to the wild. But researchers try not to disrupt (打扰) other pandas’ lives. When they get close to wild pandas, they dress up like a panda.

**Saying hello to the world**

China has also welcomed international organizations (组织) wishing to study pandas. They bring expertise (专业知识) and attention.

The most famous visit was in 1979 by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). Its logo is the panda, so it makes the panda popular worldwide.

China also sends pandas to other countries as special “ambassadors (大使)”. The money that foreign zoos pay also helps with our work to save pandas.

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