

houses, increasing their run-ins with people, says Mattson. If the number of bears killed as a result of these conflicts increases, this would further shrink the population.

Even if the current population estimates are accurate, removing 24 animals through hunting could have detrimental effects, says Andrea Santarsiere, an attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity who is based in Victor, Idaho. In 2017, 56 bears died in the IGBST monitoring area as a result of natural causes or conflicts with people. “If the same

amount dies this year, we could be looking at up to 80 bears removed from the population,” Santarsiere says.

Killing females might pose even higher risks to the survival of these grizzlies, she says. The Wyoming proposal would allow the killing of up to two females in the IGBST monitoring area, but it doesn’t cap how many females hunters can take outside this region. Females can carry up to four cubs at a time, Santarsiere says, “so killing one female could equal removing five bears from the population”.

Van Manen says the hunting proposal won’t pose a risk to the bear population. Only two hunters at a time would be allowed in the monitoring area, and the hunts would stop as soon as two females had been killed, he says.

Wyoming officials seem intent on allowing the hunt, says Louisa Willcox, a wildlife activist based in Livingston, Montana, who has been in contact with Wyoming’s wildlife department. “It’s extremely unlikely that the scientists’ comments will make them pause.” ■

FUNDING

Wellcome Trust vows to pull grants from harassers

UK charity launches policy to force institutions to report bullying or sexual misconduct.

BY HOLLY ELSE

One of the world’s largest research-funding charities is cracking down on harassment and bullying. Scientists who have been sanctioned by their institutions could lose out on funding from the Wellcome Trust, under rules announced on 3 May.

It is the first major UK research funder to institute such a policy; the US National Science Foundation introduced similar rules earlier this year.

Wellcome’s policy will come into force for new and existing grant applications on 1 June. It will apply to anyone already associated with a grant, including those whose projects are already under way. It gives Wellcome, a biomedical-research charity in London, the right to withhold funding from a researcher or to bar them from applying for future grants.

The policy also means that sanctions can be levied against institutions that fail to disclose details of such misconduct, do not investigate allegations in a timely and fair manner, or take inappropriate action. In extreme circumstances, sanctions could include suspending funding from an entire organization.

“Bullying and harassment are just plain wrong,” says Alyson Fox, director of grants at the charity. These behaviours are harmful, and therefore affect the research that Wellcome funds, she adds. The policy “will give organizations notice that we are taking this extremely seriously”.

The Wellcome Trust funded more than 900 grants, worth a total of more than £1 billion (US\$1.4 billion), in 2017.

Under the new guidelines, Wellcome will require organizations that receive its grants to have clear policies that outline standards of acceptable behaviour by staff and procedures for responding to allegations of harassment and bullying.

The policy defines bullying as a misuse of power that can make people feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. It says harassment is unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone else’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Six types of sanction can be applied to grant holders and Wellcome advisory committee members whose employers have investigated

and upheld an allegation of bullying or harassment. They include removing researchers from grants, and banning them from supervising Wellcome-funded PhD students or submitting future grant applications.

Institutions that do not abide by the policy risk being temporarily barred from applying for Wellcome grants. In extreme cases, they will have existing funded suspended.

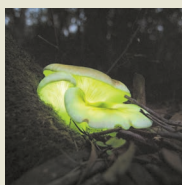
Emma Chapman, an astrophysicist at Imperial College London and a member of the 1752 group, which lobbies against sexual misconduct in higher education, calls the harassment policy an “excellent step forward”. However, she worries that it could lead universities to settle complaints informally to hide problems. The requirement to report only upheld allegations is understandable, Chapman adds, but it risks missing researchers who resign before an investigation is completed.

Philip Maini, a biological mathematician at the University of Oxford, UK, also questions how effective the policy will be. “If an institution has someone bringing in huge amounts of overhead and publishing in *Nature* and *Science*,” Maini says, “are they really going to take action against them if they are a bully? I think not.” ■



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