

《点赞！聪明的熊猫 为吹空调假装怀孕》

The birth of tiny panda cubs - seen live on television for the first time - was expected to captivate viewers in China.

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But fans of the endangered animals will be disappointed, because there will be no pitter patter of tiny paws any time soon.

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Experts say that the 'pregnant' panda who was to be the star of the show is not expecting after all, and may have been faking a pregnancy to cash in on cushy living quarters and extra treats at the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Research Centre in China.

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Giant panda, Ai Hin, showed signs of being pregnant last month, according to reports by state news agency Xinhua.

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But experts at the centre in the south western province of Sichuan, think she experienced a phantom pregnancy.

The animals' natural habitat in the mountains has become more built-up and the bears have a low reproductive rate, making their survival perilous.

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Female giant pandas reach maturity at between four and eight years old and only ovulate once a year in the spring.

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A short period of two to three days is the only time they can conceive and while a panda often gives birth to twins, only one usually survives.

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Over a lifetime of around 35 years, female pandas typically only successfully raise five to eight cubs, so their slow breeding rate prevents the population from recovering quickly.

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There are just 1,600 pandas living in the wild in China, as well as some 300 kept in captivity.

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