

Read the text and mark the statements

True (1),  
False (2).  
Not Stated (3).

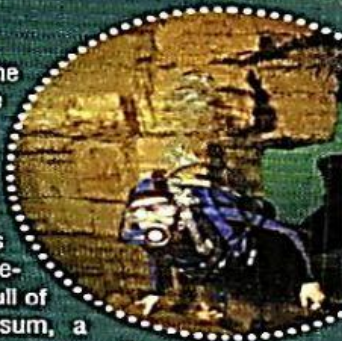
1. The divers who explored the Orda Cave felt like they were on another planet.
2. The divers take tourists on tours to the cave
3. Visibility in the cave is excellent.
4. The Geyser Valley has the largest geysers in the world.
5. The Velikan Geyser stopped erupting after the mudslide.
6. It's rare to see a brown bear in the reserve.

## FRAGILE WILDERNESS

Russia is the largest country in the world with a total land area of over 17,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It's no surprise that it is full of incredible natural wonders. Some of these places, however, are so wonderful and so fragile, that maybe we shouldn't go there ...

### The Orda Cave, the Western Urals

Just as Neil Armstrong once reported back from the moon, a team of daring and experienced cave divers recently got the chance to go where no one had ever been before when they explored the longest underwater gypsum crystal cave in the world. At temperatures barely above freezing and carrying heavy and expensive equipment, the divers took photographs in order to show people the 3-mile-long underwater wonderland. The unique cave is full of stunning rock structures. Because of the gypsum, a mineral that can form clear crystals, the water was so clear that the divers could see over 45 metres ahead of them! The environment in the cave is so delicate though that even air bubbles from the divers could damage it. Because of this, the team used an underwater funnel to take their air bubbles safely out of the cave. They hope that now people can see the stunning photographs of the cave, they will understand how important it is for precious places like this to be protected.



### Kronotsky Nature Reserve, Kamchatka Peninsula

This remote nature reserve along Russia's Pacific coast covers over 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Frequently described as the 'Land of Fire and Ice', it is home to the Geyser Valley with the second largest number of steaming geysers in the world. In 2007, the valley was badly damaged by a massive mudslide. This didn't affect one of the most amazing sights in the valley, though, the Velikan Geyser, which erupts every 6 hours, shooting tons of water 30 metres into the air. Within the valley also lies the 10 km-wide Uzon Caldera, a collapsed volcanic cone where magma heats ground water to near boiling point and there are hundreds of bubbling mud pools, geysers and hot springs. As if all this isn't enough, fly over the crater of the Maly Semyachek volcano and you'll see a stunning turquoise acid lake. It isn't uncommon to spot the footprints of brown bears on a trip here, either, of which there are over 700 in the reserve, along with eagles, leaping salmon and other rare wildlife. The wonders at this UNESCO world heritage site are endless, but the only way to visit it is by helicopter and a day trip costs at least \$700. Well ... perhaps not quite the only way; an online virtual tour of the Geyser Valley has recently been launched!

