

BEARS MATTER

Issue 15, Winter 2017/2018

'Adopt an animal, become its voice, learn everything you can about it and work with people that want to better its existence, too.' Anon

Welcome to Issue 15 of Bears Matter! Hard to believe we're into our 15th newsletter and our eighth year. We are now helping more than 33 different bear projects in 17 different countries around the world - quite an achievement for a small charity built from the ground up. Of course, we couldn't do any of it without you and we are so grateful for your ongoing support of and commitment to the Winton Bear Foundation. Since the last newsletter we've been working really hard to continue to be as effective as possible and help as many bears and bear projects around the world as we can including existing beneficiaries and new ones. We are also welcoming more bears to our WBF 'Orphanage' where we adopt animals from other organisations to assist them financially but also to raise awareness of each species of bear and the threats they face. So with that in mind and without further ado, we would like to tell you more about what we have been doing, with your help, over the last 6 months or so. Enjoy!

Japanese Bear Parks

The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears has made a donation to Wild Welfare to provide enrichment for the bears currently resident in bear parks in Japan, including Hanako, an elderly resident at KumaKuma Bear Park in the Akita region. A report on these parks has been written for this newsletter by Georgina Groves of Wild Welfare.



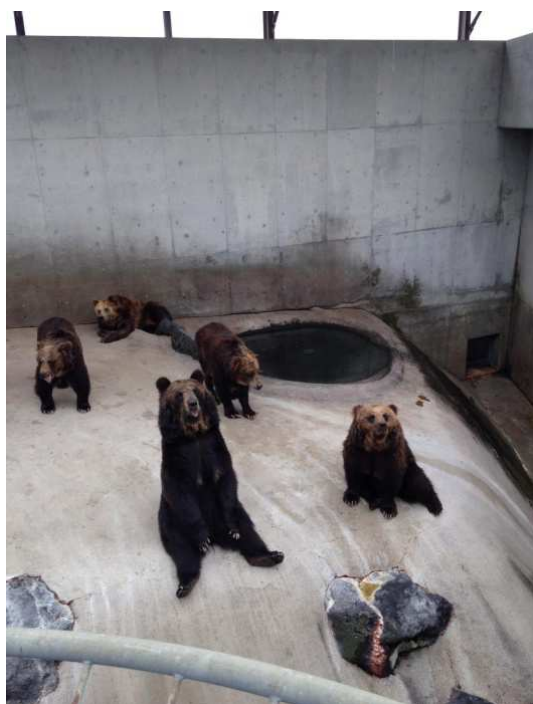
Study meeting at KumaKuma Bear Park

Report by Georgina Groves

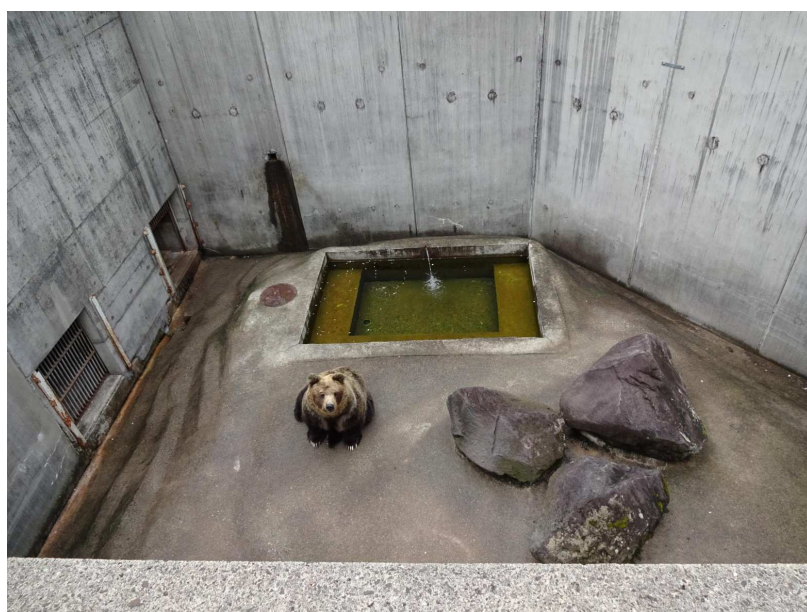
The first Japanese bear park was opened in 1958 in Noboribetsu, Hokkaido. These parks began as centres to care for orphaned (as a result of legal hunting and encroachment) wild Asiatic black and brown bears from around Japan. Today there are around eight bear parks across the country that are mostly tourism-oriented facilities, where visitors can view hundreds of bears in traditional bear pits and are encouraged to buy food pellets to throw at the bears. It is estimated that in total, there are around 400 black and brown bears held in these parks. Concerns about these parks first came to international attention through a report by World Animal Protection and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The findings indicated extremely serious welfare issues including overcrowding, abnormal behaviours, unhygienic enclosures, no behavioural enrichment, and in some cases circus style performances. In 2015,

Wild Welfare carried out an investigation into five of the parks, and found that the same concerning issues still existed in the majority of the bear parks. It is important to recognize that it is not possible to remove these bears from the parks as there is nowhere for them to be moved too, neither can any effective regulations be applied to improve animal welfare as protection measures for captive wild animals, and the enforcement of them, are still very limited in Japan.

In 2016, Wild Welfare, joined by Dr Heather Bacon from the University of Edinburgh, Veterinary Welfare Education and Outreach Centre, and Dr Monica Bando from Washington State University, facilitated a “Study Meeting on the Care and Management of Captive Bears”, at KumaKuma Bear Park. We were also joined by a representative from Noboribetsu Bear Park and the Japanese Bear Network. This facility is found in the Akita prefecture and holds approximately 40 Asiatic black bears and 16 brown bears. The black bears are kept in two main concrete pit enclosures, with a further smaller enclosure for yearlings, and one final small enclosure which held one thirty-year old brown bear female called Hanako. The main enclosures are large, but lack any appropriate environmental infrastructure and are overcrowded. The brown bear facility was only opened in 2014. It attempts to create a natural environment and has soft substrate throughout, with pools and hides available. Unfortunately, the bears have to be rotated, so only are out in this enclosure for approximately 4 hours every two days, and otherwise held indoors. Dr Bacon and Dr Bando gave talks on animal welfare and care, behavioural and veterinary needs of bears and nutrition and feeding enrichment in captivity. There were also practical sessions, where staff were trained in observational welfare and health assessments.



Group of bears at a Japanese Bear Park



Hanako, aged 30, at KumaKuma Bear Park

All photographs by courtesy of Georgina Groves

Since this training, Wild Welfare has been monitoring changes with the help of a local animal welfare group. There have been some improvements in the management of the bears, with some enrichment has been provided. The Winton Bear Foundation enrichment grant for the park, will help provide a more diverse enrichment programme, focusing in particular on improving geriatric care for Hanako the elderly brown bear and providing the black bears with regular behavioural enrichment. Wild Welfare visits Japan twice yearly, working alongside their partners and enforcement agencies to identify long term solutions for the bears in all the parks, and working with the Japan Association of Zoos and Aquariums to provide training and advice to hundreds of other captive facilities in Japan. They have requested regular updates from the park in regard to the generous donation from the Foundation, and we hope to be able to share these with you!

***'Bears Matter'* Newsletter**

If you have not already signed up for our newsletter and our regular updates please let us have your email address and we will add you to our mailing list.

How to contact us or for further information:

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Telephone: +44-(0) 1875 614 899 or +44-(0)7904 733 137. **Please make any cheques payable to 'The Winton Foundation'**

NYAN HTOO UPDATE



You might recall reading about Nyan htoo, the Myanmar cub with the swollen tongue, well the good news is that vet Heather Bacon from Edinburgh and veterinary nurse Caroline Nelson from Animals Asia have been part of a team carrying out a further successful operation on his tongue. The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears paid for both Heather and Caroline to fly out to Myanmar in 2016 to carry out a first stage of surgery and paid again for their travel in Autumn 2017, when Heather, Caroline and team removed an amazing 3kg of tissue from Nyan htoo's tongue. He can now play happily and safely with his brother in their sanctuary at a monastery in Myanmar.

Further details can be found in this short report from BBC Scotland <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-41723455> which includes a photograph of the two young bears playing.

Photograph to the left, taken after 1st surgery in 2016 - by courtesy of Heather Bacon

ECO-HALYCH BEAR REHABILITATION PROJECT

The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears has been supporting the Eco-Halych Bear Rehab Project in the Ukraine since December 2016. They are building a sanctuary where mistreated bears can find a safe new home.

A sum of \$250 (£200) was provided in winter 2016, which has enabled Eco-Halych to purchase materials to create places for the bears to play and relax, including tree houses and platforms. A further sum of £497 was given in the winter of 2017 to help purchase a camera for live streaming of the bears.

There is still a problem in the Ukraine, with over 200 bears known to be kept in appalling conditions, such as rusty cages and barren concrete pits, without proper food or care. A lucky few bears are enjoying life again at Eco-Halych.



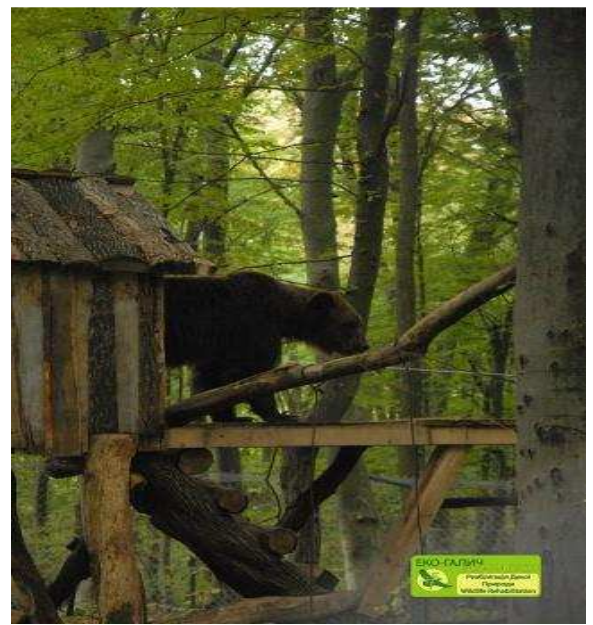
*Unloading materials to build enrichment facilities –
Photo courtesy of Eco-Halych*

To find them on Facebook, for more wonderful photos and videos of the bears click on the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/EcoHalychWildlifeRehab/>



*Myr, one of the bears at Eco-Halych
Photo courtesy of Eco-Halych*



*Myr, investigating the treehouse at Eco-Halych
Photo courtesy of Eco-Halych*



TOPPING UP 'THE HONEY POT'



Because the Bear Foundation is progressing so well, so quickly, we've decided to have a dedicated fundraising section in the newsletter. This will cover events that have happened, are coming up and ways in which you can help. Funds raised are put into a pot of funds affectionately known as 'The Honey Pot.' These funds are then distributed at regular intervals to projects around the world, working to help bears and protect them from abuse and cruelty. In November we issued two grants of £400 each to bear-related projects in Idaho, USA.

The first went to Idaho Black Bear Rescue, a regular beneficiary. The grant is to aid the on-going care of rescued cubs, and the release of their current residents America and Liberty in the spring.

As a wildlife rehabilitator since 1978, founder Sally Maughan started The Idaho Black Bear Rehab program in 1989 with the arrival of the first orphaned black bear cub. She began developing rehab techniques for orphaned cubs at a time when it was believed impossible to successfully release any bear raised by a human. Prior to that, the only rehab available to orphaned cubs was the occasional bear biologist. Wildlife agencies believed that an orphaned cub raised by a human would either starve to death or become a problem bear if released.

IBBR cover all the rehab expenses for each bear, and require that each bear return to its home state for release.



Photo courtesy of Idaho Black Bear Rehab IBBR

The second went to Valerie Stephan-LeBoeuf, to help with a collaborative environmental education and outreach effort between The Animals' Trust and Idaho Black Bear Rehab, Inc.

“Walking with Wildlife” will bring environmental education into public schools throughout the state of Idaho with the goal to engage, inspire, and empower students as they become leaders in their community to reduce human/wildlife conflict, and to protect natural environmental systems.

Human/wildlife conflict is a growing concern in communities throughout the state of Idaho.

Conflict incidents can end in the death or injury of wildlife, and result in property damage and economic loss for humans. Conflict with some species of wildlife can also present significant human safety risks.

The project will carry a strong focus on the resolution of human/bear conflict.

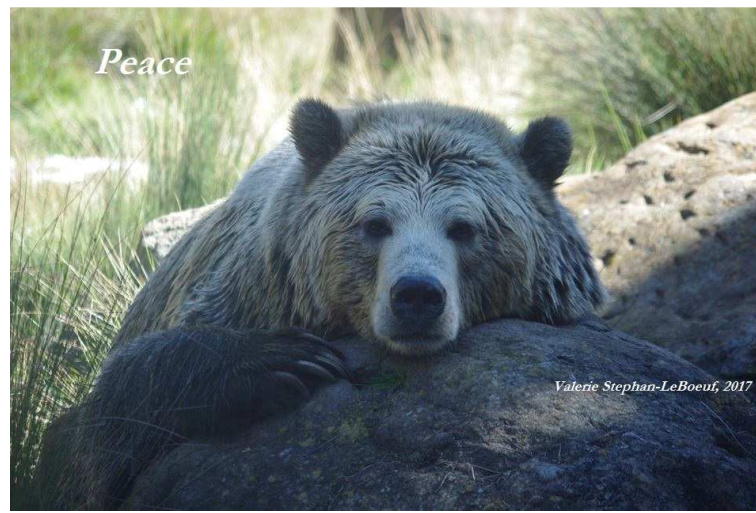


Photo courtesy of Valerie Stephan-LeBoeuf

PADDINGTON RAFFLE

A raffle was held in December 2017 as part of the fundraising to Top Up The Honey Pot. The raffle raised a brilliant £170, with Harrison Graham being the lucky winner of the first prize - a fabulous vintage Paddington Bear – and Caroline Papastamatiou winning the second prize – a Wildwood Trust gift pack. Congratulations to both the lucky winners. Paddington Bear fun facts added to the occasion - who knew that the first Paddington Bear toy was made for Jeremy Clarkson!



SPECIAL DONATION

We recently received a very special donation to our Honey Pot funds. A group of Year 5 friends from Holy Trinity C of E Primary School, Wimbledon, decided to raise money for Pandas just before Christmas. They raised £100 by holding competitions and selling cakes and panda-themed crafts once a week on the school playground. The children did this without any direction from teachers or parents, and lots of pupils supported their efforts. They decided to give the money to the Winton Bear Foundation.

In this photo you can see the large panda prize that was awarded to the child who got the closest guess to the number of biscuits in the panda's tub. The children are wearing the panda theme beanies that were sold. There was also a smaller panda prize for the child who guessed the panda's name correctly.

The children raised a total of £97 and parents rounded it up to £100.

It is so heart-warming when we hear stories like this, and we cannot thank the children, staff and parents enough



BEARS MATTER MONTH 2018



Bears Matter Month 'Life through their eyes'

Feb 14th - Mar 11th 2018

In just 7½ years, we have donated nearly £18,000 to 33 organisations across 16 countries, an average of £2,376 per year to bears.

We have a very small core of supporters who make monthly donations to our Honey Pot Fund - accounting for just £744 per year. This makes planning our donations to needy bears very difficult, as we cannot guarantee what will be available at any time.

This Bears Matter Month, if we can increase our annual income to £1,000, we will hold a special draw where one regular supporter will win two beautiful stained glass bears. We only need another £22 to be pledged per month!

Huge thanks must go to Julia Attwood for all her hard work during Bears Matter Month.

March 2018 Raffle Results

The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears raffled two great prizes to help raise funds in Bears Matter Month. The draw for prize winners was made on 10th March, 2018, and the winner announced on 11th - Mothers' Day - the last day of Bears Matter Month.

The first prize, of a fabulous Polar Bear Teddy, made by 'Huggable Toys' was won by ***Deirdre McGhie***. Many congratulations Deirdre.



As a second prize we put together a Wildwood Trust gift pack from items donated by a supporter who has adopted one of the rescue bears there. This consists of a family entry ticket to the park, worth £34, for up to 2 adults and 3 children (valid to 1st December 2018), a bear factsheet, a car sticker and a set of exclusive bear photos/post cards. This was won by ***Maggie Catterall***. Many congratulations Maggie.

Animals Asia coconuts – we purchased a coconut each again for all the Vietnam bears for their Christmas present

Bear lovers will recall with great sadness the threatened eviction of 104 of Animals Asia's beloved rescued bears from their Vietnam sanctuary at the end of 2012. Following the wonderful news that the eviction was overturned, we at the Winton Bear Foundation decided to buy a coconut for each and every bear in the sanctuary, as a special treat so that they could celebrate staying in their new home. We started a tradition in January 2013, and have been sending funds for this annual treat ever since.



Mine, all mine – one of the bears enjoying their coconut. Photo courtesy of Animals Asia

GIVE AS YOU LIVE



**Raise funds for
The Winton Foundation
for the Welfare of Bears
with Give as You Live**

Shop online, or on
the High Street with store-cards.

Compare insurance, utilities,
holidays and offers.

Raise more funds by inviting
friends to join.

Click here to join

At the beginning of BMM in 2017 we set the Foundation up as a Give As You Live charity. This is a fantastic way to raise money for us as you shop. Check out their website and see how you can help us raise more money for the bears. <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/wintonbearfoundation>

One Winton Bear Foundation supporter switched her charity to us last year, and has raised nearly £80 for us, just by shopping as normal!

If you already use Give As You Live - why not consider switching to us for a month? Every little helps 😊

Our Little Orphanage!

The Winton Bear Foundation's little orphanage is growing rapidly! We have decided to 'adopt' a different species of bear from organisations that are currently beneficiaries. This way, this allows us to support their work and also raise awareness of each species of bear and the threats they face. To date we have six adoptees, Fluffy and Scruffy at Wildwood Trust, Bodo (Animals Asia), Max (Liberty Sanctuary) Chitra (International Animal Rescue and Wildlife SOS at the Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Centre in India) and Kudat (Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre). We will renew each of our adoptions on an annual basis, helping to raise awareness of the dreadful conditions many bears are rescued from and the organisations trying to help them.



Our lovely little orphanage – from left to right: Max, Fluffy and Scruffy, Bodo, Kudat and Chitra

We hope you have enjoyed this update and we'd like to thank you very much for your ongoing support for our work.

Together, we will make the world a better place for bears.