

NEWSLETTER
BEARS MATTER

Issue 19, Winter 2020/2021

'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 19 of Bears Matter! We are delighted to bring you news of our distribution of funds during the second half of 2020 and the amazing projects around the world we continue to support despite the pandemic. 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. Everything has been affected by COVID 19, and we really appreciate your support at this difficult time. Some of our beneficiaries have struggled throughout the pandemic, so our work is more important than ever to ensure that bears around the world enjoy a life free of fear and pain. We hope you enjoy reading about the projects we have been supporting.

Winter distribution of funds

Wildwood Trust – Adoption

It's always a pleasure to renew our adoptions, and two of the stalwarts of our Winton Bear Foundation "Orphanage" are Fluffy and Scruffy at the Wildwood Trust, Kent, UK. In this photo, they are feeling less "shy". For the record, Fluffy is the bigger bear, with reddish fur and a scar on his nose. Scruffy has a lighter, almost patchy colouration. Photographs tend to distort colours, so can make it difficult to identify the bears.

As Milcho & Goscho they travelled from Bulgaria to Kent in November 2014, where keepers gave them the nicknames "Fluffy" and "Scruffy". These names have stuck, and it seems appropriate as they have been transformed under the tender loving care of their keepers at Wildwood.

Photo credit www.wildwoodtrust.org



Orphan Bear Rescue – Russia

The Orphan Bear Rescue Centre was a new beneficiary last year, and we decided to donate again this year, having watched their amazing work over the last 12 months.

Many of us in the UK were first introduced to this organisation via a BBC documentary "Grizzly Bear Cubs and Me" - which followed wildlife expert and presenter Gordon Buchanan on his visit to the Pazhetnov family in Bubonitsy Village of Tver Region, 450km northwest of Moscow.

The Pazhetnov family rescue and rehabilitate orphaned bear cubs from around Russia, with the goal of mimicking the bears' natural upbringing in the wild as closely as possible.



Photo: The Senior Group of 2020

The Orphan Bear Rescue Centre itself aims to rehabilitate these animals to survive alone in the wild. They say: "The main characteristic of our work is that we work with animals that must learn to survive in the wild. The base condition of this skill is a sense of fear for humans. If the animal is not afraid of people, it will not survive in the wild and is doomed to death or life imprisonment in a cage. We do not raise bears in any way – we provide them conditions close to their natural habitat, and semi-free keeping, thanks to which they form all the behaviours necessary for life in the wild: food, defensive, nesting, fear response to humans."

Puzha

The Orphan Bear Rescue Centre can only rehabilitate orphaned bear cubs that were born in the current year and were not exposed to humans for lengthy periods of time. In exceptional cases, they can help orphaned bear cubs in their second year. Puzha is one of these cases. She weighed only 4 kg when she was delivered to OBRC in May, when their other cubs weighed over 10 kg. By the end of August she was already 15 kg, and now she weighs even more.

Puzha is healthy, she has no pathogens or problems with physical development - all tests are ok. She has a great constitution - so why is she so small? It could be that she was the smallest cub in a large litter, or she was the first cub of the young female. But anyway, Puzha is still a very small cub, and of course they worry how she will hibernate. Based on experience, to survive winter alone, a cub must be not less than 20 kg, and preferably over 25 kg. So they decided to hold Puzha for wintering in OBRC.

Puzha is not the first bear cub to have wintered in the OBRC so she had access to a ready prepared den, built by several "generations" of previous cubs. It was expected that Puzha would use this den, and from time to time she did visit and even entered it. Staff decided to assist Puzha to organize her winter shelter, and while she was away at the another enclosure corner, they brought "building material" - spruce branches, fern, dry leaves, and waited - watching the den from afar. But over a few days Puzha appeared there only occasionally. She had found another place for a den! Staff spotted it, moved the observation point and started to watch the new den site.

Puzha had found a fine place – under the fallen tree roots. She actively started to build the den by digging out sand over 2-3 days. Once the deep of the den met her approval, she started to scabble in forest litter, using everything she could find. Puzha rarely went far from the den – she was organizing it or was relaxing inside and did not go out for several hours.



Photo – OBRC – Puzha

Idaho Black Bear Rehab

The beautiful face of Lou headed up a recent funding appeal from IBBR and we certainly could not resist those eyes.



(Photo credits – IBBR)

IBBR badly need to upgrade their bear transport system. They can only transport 4 bears at a time, and can only go in one direction at a time! This isn't always an issue if the timing is right - but there have been a few instances where they were going to different states on the same day.

Their policy is to make rehab EASY for other states and transport plays a big part in that. They want to be able to pick up and return bears when it works best for everyone.

By upgrading to an enclosed trailer (or horse trailer), they will be able to move 8 to 10 bears, or, if needed, to take bears back to their home state for release at the same time by using the old system to go one way, and the trailer to go the other.

This will also be more comfortable for the bears; it's shaded, they won't have to move them around so much in the carriers, the bears will feel more secure being a bit more hidden on their trip home, and they will be better able to access each other for comfort (while still being separated when needed). It will be easier for the bears to be sedated, if needed, because of the design of the carrier for the trailer. As well, no one will have to hang halfway off the truck while attempting a good angle while sedating. Lastly, the roof of the trailer will provide an excellent spot for taking video of the bears running free once released.

This is the ideal project for our *legacy fund*, and we have been able to send a larger than usual donation to help with it.

You have heard of "Elf on the Shelf"?

At Idaho Black Bear Rehab IBBR they have "Bears on the Shelf".

This year's residents are all lined up for their photo shoot - Lou, Cash, Hazel (all from Nevada), Sage (from Wyoming), & Ninzi (also from Nevada).



A small selection of past Idaho Black Bear Rehab IBBR residents.

In the words of their guardian:

"I look at these bears in our care and it dawns on me that they have no idea how loved they are. Blissful and content in their own little world, living in the moment.

But I know.

I look at them with all of our eyes and our hearts. I'm thinking of you when I take a video or try to capture a perfect picture. I want you to know them as much as you can. I'm thinking of them as babies, and now, and how their release will go and how incredibly fulfilled they will be when they experience freedom again. These are your bears. The pressure is on to do right by them and by you. I'm honoured."



Libearty Bear Sanctuary – Romania

Two years ago, we heard of the sad loss of Max at Libearty Bear Sanctuary, in Romania, who was one of our first adopted bears. We decided to continue to support the sanctuary by adopting another bear, and chose Monica. This winter, we are renewing her adoption for a third year.

Monica had spent more than 15 years behind bars in a zoo in Ploiești. In 2009 she finally said good-bye to this suffering - the steel bars and concrete floor of the cage.



Monica, a special bear, very loved by AMP Libearty sanctuary visitors, has retired from public life, at 27 years old.

She now has a much bigger, vegetation filled home with a natural pool away from the daily hustle. She has the peace to live a relaxed bear life that too many haven't even dared to dream of. Her new home is so much more spacious and gives her the peace she really needs.

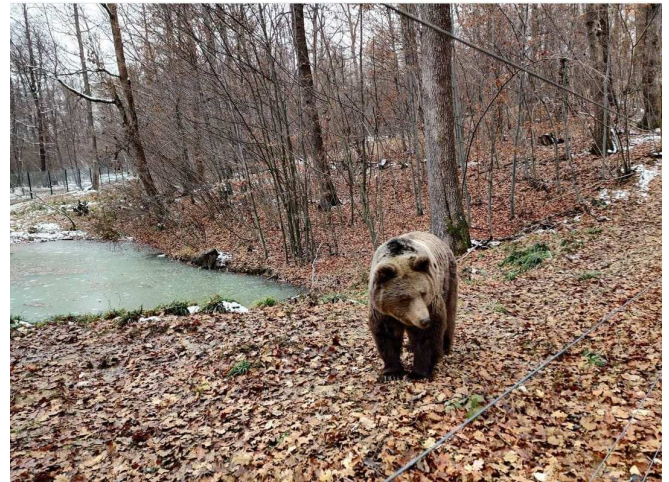


Photo Credits - Libearty

International Animal Welfare – Armenian Bear Sanctuary.

This year we responded to an urgent appeal from International Animal Welfare for funds for their Armenian Bear Sanctuary, both for providing the costly medical and rehabilitative care needed for the bears over the winter, but also to enable more bears to be helped.

Not only has the team of vets and keepers been battling the effects of the global pandemic, but for the past few months, there has also been a threatening war looming on their doorstep.

The effects of the conflict with Azerbaijan have forced them to suspend rescue operations in Armenia. However, they still need to build up a rescue reserve fund so that, as soon as they are given the go-ahead to resume, they are able to respond straight away to any rescue opportunities. International Animal Welfare have been rescuing & caring for bears in their Armenian sanctuary since 2017.

Every year wild bears are illegally caught or trapped by poachers in Armenia. Once captured, many of them end up in small, squalid cages in restaurants and other public entertainment venues as a tourist attraction. Some are kept in bus depots, others are hidden from view in dark cellars. Some of the bears

are mentally and physically damaged by the boredom and frustration of their miserable existence behind bars. Shockingly, in some rural restaurants in Armenia, bear meat is even available to those who know to request it.

The bears in Armenia are Syrian Brown Bears, one of the smaller sub-species of brown bear. They are found in the mountainous areas of the country where they forage for fruits, berries and insects in the meadows and forests and hibernate in caves and tree hollows. Their barren prisons are a far cry from their natural home in the forest.



Many bears are being kept captive in miserable conditions across Armenia, including in the capital

city of Yerevan. Some have been incarcerated for years in cramped cages with scarcely any food or water. Their environment meets none of their psychological or physical needs. They have very little space to move around in. They are given unsuitable and insufficient food and no environmental enrichment to distract and amuse them. The bears have been deprived of their dignity and their freedom. They lack everything they need to live life as nature intended.

Syrian brown bear Dasha, rescued in 2017, is one of the big "Happy Endings" for International Animal Welfare. Dasha had been kept in a cramped cage half-submerged in water by a riverside restaurant in Hrazdan Gorge in Yerevan. She was being used as a tourist attraction and spent her days pacing to and fro in boredom and frustration or climbing up the bars of the cage in a desperate attempt to escape from her iron prison.



Dasha was finally rescued in 2017. She responded well to the veterinary treatment and care she received and when winter set in, she went into

hibernation in her enclosure - to emerge the following spring with two tiny cubs at her heels!

Alan Knight OBE, IAR Chief Executive, said at the time: "I'm delighted that her cubs have been born into such a new, natural environment, rather than starting life behind bars. These two cubs will have everything they need to grow healthy and strong and we hope one day all three will have the chance to return to the wild where they belong."

Having undergone a thorough vet check to ensure the three bears were fit and well, they were sedated and carried into individual transport crates before being loaded onto a truck and driven high into the mountains above the rescue centre. On reaching the release site on protected land owned by FPWC and patrolled by its rangers, the crates were lined up side by side before the doors were raised simultaneously so that mother and cubs could leave together.

Alan said: "This is the happy ending we have all been hoping for. Dasha endured years of misery and deprivation locked up in a cage, now she has the freedom to live as nature intended. She has been fitted with a radio collar so that we can monitor her whereabouts and check that she and her cubs are thriving. Post-release monitoring means we can gather data on animals that have been reintroduced which is invaluable when planning future release operations."

Other News

Why not send a WBF gift for Mother's Day?

We have beautiful Mother's Day e-gift certificates available – giving your loved one a memorable gift, and helping the bears at the same time! ❤️❤️

• For a minimum donation of £5 we will e-mail you a certificate that you can print at home and pass to your gift recipient. ❤️❤️

The certificates can be ordered by emailing us at info@wintonbearfoundation.org.

They can be sent direct to the recipient, if required - just make sure to tell us their name and e-mail address, as well as your own. ❤️❤️



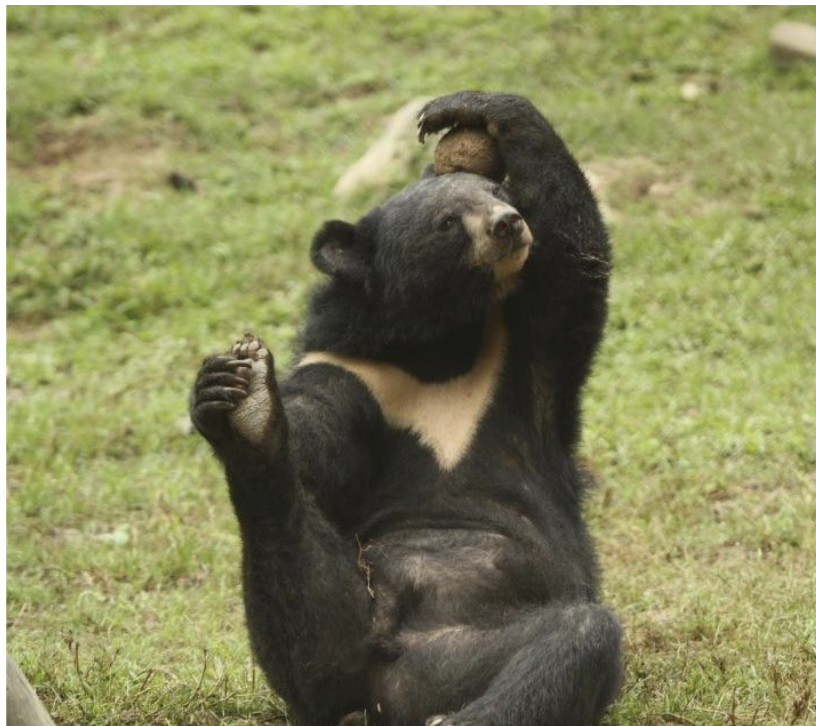
And last but not least, it has become a bit of a Christmas tradition at The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears to buy coconuts for each of the bears at Animals Asia's Vietnam sanctuary. Well, we did not forget this winter - here are a few pictures of gorgeous Goldie and Newtie enjoying their coconuts.



Coconuts for Bears in Vietnam



And we couldn't resist sharing one of our favourite photos from a previous Christmas Coconut distribution - Yin Yang throwing some yoga poses whilst balancing a coconut on his head – multi-talented!





The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears

How to contact us or for further information:

By Post - The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears (SCIO), 54 West Windygoul Gardens, Tranent, East Lothian, EH33 2LA, U.K. **By e-mail:** info@wintonbearfoundation.org **Website:** www.wintonbearfoundation.org
Telephone: +44-(0) 1875 614 899 or +44-(0)7904 733 137. **Please make any cheques payable to 'The Winton Foundation'**



The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears



HOW TO DONATE TO THE WINTON FOUNDATION FOR THE WELFARE OF BEARS

FROM THE UK - Please preserve the full value of your donation, by using one of these two methods:



Pay directly into our UK bank account:

Account Name: The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears

Account Number: 65526639 Sort Code: 08-92-99

Or login to your PayPal account www.paypal.com/signin/

and send to lesley@wintonbearfoundation.org

Be sure to select "Send Money to Friends and Family"

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www.wintonbearfoundation.org



The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears



HOW TO DONATE TO THE WINTON FOUNDATION FOR THE WELFARE OF BEARS

FROM OUTSIDE THE UK



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via the "Donate" button halfway down this page

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PayPal will deduct a charge for these donations

"Making it Bearable"

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