



# BEARS MATTER

Issue 20, September 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 20 of Bears Matter! We are delighted to bring you news of our distribution of funds during the first half of 2021 and the amazing projects around the world we continue to support. 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 continues to be 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.

## Summer distribution of funds

### Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre

This is the lovely Romolina, who we adopted last year, at the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre.

She was rescued from Kampung Romol, Sapulut, in the interior division of Sabah and was handed over to the Sabah Wildlife Department then sent to BSBCC on the 7th of July, 2018. On arrival, she was tiny. She weighed only 5.95kg. She was subsequently found to be malnourished. Her bodyweight was inappropriate and she showed signs of stunted growth (small body with some of her teeth being permanent teeth) as a result from improper diet (rice, cereals, sausages and fruits) and being confined in a small cage which restricted her growth.

Since then, Romolina has enjoyed her new-found freedom in the forest at BSBCC. She has shown great enthusiasm in being able to explore the forest canopy! She loves to be alone, independent and active in learning the forest skills. Romolina is a superb climber and looks absolutely amazing! She loves to stay high up on a branch. She has adapted well to the life as a near-wild sun bear.

We renewed our adoption of Romolina this year, and also sent a little extra in funds for treats.

We know that her time will come to take the next step in her journey to freedom and have a second chance at living in the wild in the future. When that time comes we will happily wish her well - until then, we will continue to support her through the annual adoption program at BSBCC.

**£104 donated.**



(Photo- Yvonne Chong)

## Forgotten Animals

A new beneficiary in 2019, this year we have again donated to Forgotten Animals in support of the UTYOS Bear Cub Rehabilitation Project

The center is located in the Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve in the Russian Far East and was established in 1991 to protect the unique biodiversity and threatened wildlife species in the region. UTYOS is the life work of the Kruglov family - launched by tiger expert Vladimir, and continued by his son and daughter Eduard and Lyudmila.

Here, they are rescuing orphaned wild animals and preparing them to be wild again. They have welcomed, cared for and released into the Taiga, himalayan black bears, brown bears, amur tigers and other wild animals.

Tigers and bears are captured by poachers mainly for sale in China - the tigers for their bones and bears for their bile.



*(Photo -Utyos Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre)*

**£200 donated.**

---

## The Southwest Wildlife Conservation Centre

The Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center, which our founder and director Lesley Winton visited while in Arizona a few years ago, is currently caring for five black bears, and we have sent funds again this summer to keep them in watermelons - which they love - for several months.

Southwest Wildlife rescues and rehabilitates wildlife that has been injured, displaced, and orphaned. Once rehabilitated, they are returned to the wild. Wildlife education includes advice on living with wildlife and the importance of native wildlife to healthy ecosystems. Educational and humane scientific

The Asian black bear is the symbol of the Russian Far East, but hunting the species is still legal in the country. Every year at least 50 bear cubs are orphaned during the hunting season. These tiny babies have no family, they are orphans, because their mothers were killed by hunters and poachers - Eduard Kruglov with his family and a small dedicated team has been saving these orphans since 1991. The rehabilitation process is complex, lengthy and very expensive: over the 12 month period human contact is reduced to the minimum to allow the cubs remain wild.

Growing baby bears need regular veterinary checkups to ensure their health is perfect and they are developing correctly. During these checkups the centre staff and vets handle cubs in the safest way - just as their mothers would in the wild. For the rest of the time the little ones are monitored through the 24/7 CCTV.

Cubs are kept on a special balanced diet consisting of fruits, veggies, meat, fish, cereals, seeds and nuts.

After 2 months of quarantine cubs are placed to a very large forested enclosure for 10 months where they learn how to be real bears before their release back into the wild. At the end of the rehabilitation process and after a thorough veterinary control grown bears are ready to go back to their wild home where they belong. And where they will be able to survive thanks to the selfless and dedicated efforts of Kruglov family and their staff.

UTYOS doesn't receive any support from the government and relies only on donations. Forgotten Animals has been working with them since 2013 helping save animals who suffered at the hands of humans.

---

research opportunities are offered in the field of conservation medicine. Sanctuary is provided to animals that cannot be released back to the wild. SWCC was, and still is, the only accredited wildlife sanctuary in Arizona with the facilities to care for large mammals, such as bears. **Donated £100**



## International Animal Rescue and Wildlife SOS – Chitra

We are proud to support the International Animal Rescue and Wildlife SOS through one-off donations and our annual bear adoption of Chitra, which we renewed again this Summer.

Chitra was the 500th bear that was rescued in India, just before Christmas 2008. Her poor muzzle had been pierced several times, leaving it painfully swollen and inflamed with a huge tear down one side. Her canine teeth had been knocked out leaving gaping, infected cavities in her gums. She was rescued from her Kalandar owner from a village in Chitradurga Karnataka and was severely malnourished and neglected. Forced into becoming a dancing bear, she was subjected to years of abuse and injustice. Made to starve for months at a stretch, she had lost all hope.

When, twelve and a half years ago, a nervous Kalandar walked into the Wildlife SOS Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Centre with an old, emaciated bear, being tugged at the end of a 2-foot long rope, her new life was about to begin. Her droopy eyes scanned her surroundings – the new faces, the unfamiliar calls of the wild, the pleasant gust of wind that soothed her. Chitra's story was similar to that of 628 dancing bears that were rescued by Wildlife SOS, having undergone immense physical and psychological trauma.

For Chitra, the initial days were very challenging! The bear care staff would observe Chitra aggressively swaying her head for hours on end in distress. She would sit in the corner observing the other bears but reacted very aggressively when approached. The staff and the veterinary team knew that utmost care had to be rendered as she was still haunted by her past life.

Chitra weighed a scrawny 62 kilos when she was first brought into the Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Sanctuary and crouched in fear, expecting to be beaten. The ring through her delicate nose had to be surgically removed, along with the ropes wound tightly around her neck.

Nervous and starving, Chitra was given tasty fruits sprinkled with vitamins to improve her health, and lots of TLC. Slowly her appetite and health improved and she became more trusting and gregarious. However, Chitra was a very naturally shy bear; she hated receiving veterinary treatment and developed a phobia of enclosed spaces, due to being stolen from her mother as a cub and kept locked in a small box for several weeks before being sold as a performing bear. She was extremely fearful of unfamiliar people, clearly

anticipating that they were going to hurt her. It would take time and patience to resolve her behavioural and psychological problems. The keepers said she didn't sleep much for a long time but they hoped she was gradually learning to forget the nightmares of the past.



To ensure a smooth transition to her new life, Chitra had to be introduced to other bears in order to interact. Once Chitra's wounds had healed, she was kept in a socialisation pen for a few weeks with other bears. Everyone was astonished when she went to the climbing platform where another bear, Abhimanyu, was lying down and fell asleep next to him. In the evening she even helped Pooja dig a little pit! It was so heart-warming to watch Chitra finally be able to enjoy herself after over a decade of neglect.

One afternoon two younger bears began play fighting and, although Chitra joined in gamely, the bears were too tough for her and she was clawed on her neck and her ears were nipped. Luckily, she completely recovered and could return to the socialisation pen. The brush with the young bears didn't seem to have knocked her new-found confidence and she became more settled and content – perhaps accepting at last that the bad days of being abused by humans were over and she no longer had anything to fear. The keepers kind, the food plentiful and she had acres of woodland to explore. Her coat became glossy and her eyes began to brighten.



Chitra struck up a wonderful friendship with Shiva with whom she had been sharing her enclosure. Lots of new enrichments such as hammocks and swings kept the pair busy playing together. They soon formed a strong bond and could always be found cuddling up for an afternoon nap – they even shared their treats with each other!

Today, Chitra spends most of her days resting in freshly dug mud pits, or hammocks to bask under the warm winter sun. As she is over twenty years old, Chitra has been placed under geriatric care and receives specialized veterinary attention along with a carefully curated diet that enables her to fight off diseases and maintain her strength. Chitra undergoes regular dental procedures which helps the veterinary team keep close scrutiny on her dental hygiene to avoid long-term damage to enamels and gums.



Chitra's movement and agility have been reduced due to her age and her arthritic limbs, hence she prefers to rest on low-levelled platform enrichments. Other than this, food-based enrichments, honey-covered logs and enrichment balls are the best way to keep Chitra motivated without over-exerting herself. She has always enjoyed her own company, seldom interacting with other bears! However, in a delightful turn of events, keepers have noticed Chitra's growing friendship with Amrita, another geriatric bear who shares her enclosure. The duo can be seen digging mud pits and catching short naps in the shaded corners of their field!

From a timid, weak bear, Chitra presently weighs a healthy 75 kgs and continues to receive intensive treatment for her age-related ailments. Her twelve-year long journey recounts her perseverance, grit and strength in all these years, making her the special bear that she is. *(photos courtesy of International Animal Rescue)*

**£51 Donated**

## The Andean Bear Foundation

The Andean bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) is the only South American bear species, and is endemic to the narrow strip of cloud forests, dry forests, and high grasslands that stretch along the Andes. Also known as spectacled bears due to their distinctive eye markings, Andean bears are important keystone species throughout their range. However, habitat loss and fragmentation are increasingly threatening these bears, bringing them into closer contact and conflict with people. Bears are also killed in retaliation for damaged crops and livestock, and are currently listed as 'Vulnerable to Extinction' by the IUCN. Unfortunately, little is known about the ecology and distribution of this elusive species, which has impeded the development of appropriate management plans.

The Andean bear is shy by nature and is not aggressive - avoiding humans as much as possible. However, forays into the fields and predation of livestock provoke conflict between the bears and local people.

One of the major causes of conflict between bears and humans in Ecuador is the tendency of bears to eat corn. In many of the regions where bears live, there are communities in extreme poverty - they cannot afford to lose their only source of income and food. Electric fences have been suggested as a possible solution to this particular form of bear-human conflict, but this would not solve the problem, it would simply move it elsewhere or to farmers who cannot afford those electric fences. When a bear raids a cornfield in the ABF study area, the farmer can be paid some compensation. This has lessened the bad attitude towards the bears and they are no longer being hunted. However, the study area is only a small part of Ecuador and they cannot compensate all farmers throughout the bear's range. ABF's research is geared toward a greater understanding of how bears use their habitat, developing a land use plan, and suggesting to farmers a way to minimize the risk of having bears eating in their cornfield.



We recently came across this small project for Andean bears, inspired by an elderly bear who's only food source is human-grown corn. We decided to support this project as part of our latest Distribution of Funds. Here is the story:

In April, ABF put a satellite collar on an elderly female – she was named "DeeAnn", in honour of DeeAnn Wilfon, President of the Association of Zoo veterinary technicians (AZVT), who collaborated in the investigation. She is the longest-lived wild Andean bear that they have had the opportunity to study - she must be the mother, grandmother and great-grandmother of many bears in and around the Mantales / Leito Valley. DeeAnn's teeth are so worn, that it is a true miracle that she is still alive. The monitoring they've been doing on her has shown that she feeds in the cornfields of the region, which has created a human-bear conflict for some years now.

ABF are hoping to raise money to buy the crops which have not yet been harvested in the Mantales / Leito Valley, so that DeeAnn can carry on feeding from her only food source, and have a conflict-free old age. They have a target to raise \$4,000 dollars to buy cornfields in the valley, not only for DeeAnn, but for other bears, who live in that region. They also plan to grow their own feed for the bears, to keep them away from the villages' crops.

Armando Castellanos is the president of the Andean Bear Foundation in Ecuador. The Foundation helps rescue, rehabilitate, and relocate bears that have come into contact with local communities. Castellanos is also conducting field research in Ecuador's Cayambe Coca National Park in order to improve scientific knowledge about bear ecology and inform appropriate conservation strategies. This organisation also educates tourists and locals on co-existing with these iconic species.

**£200 Donated**



*(photos courtesy of Andean Bear Foundation)*

## MongoliAid International

We have again sent funds to MongoliAid International to help with the provision of supplemental feed drops to the Gobi Bear.

MongoliAid is a small charity, founded in 2009. They are based in Australia, and work closely with the researchers and others active on the ground in the Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area. They work with the MAMA NGO organization to feed the bears twice a year - in spring and autumn - and these feeding stations provide researchers with great information on the health of the bear population.



*(Photos - Bayasgalan Amgalan)*

Only around 40 Gobi bears are thought to exist, all of them roaming singly or in small family groups around a desolate stonescape known as the Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area. The only bear species to adapt to desert life, they eat a near-vegetarian diet and prefer the protein-rich tuberous root of wild rhubarb above all else. There are no Gobi bears in captivity.



The people of southwestern Mongolia have long known of the mysterious animal they called mazaalai, but credible reports were mixed with tall tales of a shaggy, humanlike creature roaming the wildest reaches of the desert. Not until 1943 did a Russian scientist-explorer confirm for the outside world that Gobi bears actually exist. Although they belong to the species *Ursus arctos*, commonly known as the brown bear or grizzly (in N.America), their coats are often more bronze than brown and show blazes of white on

the orequarters and neck. They also tend to be smaller than most North American grizzlies, whose living conditions are plush by comparison.

Life is tough for these bears and they look a little scruffy. But they're an important part of the ecosystem – not having them around would be a great loss to the world. If we can save them, we are also saving big chunks of habitat that will then help protect other animals.

In 2014, there were just 29 Gobi Bears in existence. In 2020, there were around 40 - thanks to government action taken in 2013 to safeguard their habitats, and twice-yearly food dumps. Now, one or two cubs are born every year, slowly boosting the tiny population.

Despite the astonishingly small numbers and the harshness of their habitat, researchers remain upbeat about the bears' chances of survival. They are aiming to achieve a population of 100.

Hair traps at feeder sites collect samples, allowing DNA analysis. The work so far has revealed that there is no evidence of inbreeding-based disorders which would put the population in peril.



Despite encouraging signs, Gobi Bears still face challenges from climate change and other man-made threats. A misguided effort to expand livestock herding in southern Mongolia during the middle of the 20th century, when the country was a satellite state of the Soviet Union, brought more people to the Gobi, and with them more guns. Hunting the bears was later banned but overgrazing of the desert's marginal vegetation took a heavy toll, and by 1980 Gobi Bears had lost much of their former range and population. Overgrazing continues to be a major threat. But a positive legacy of the Soviet era was the establishment in 1976 of the Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area. Today the nature reserve is their sole refuge.

**£236 Donated**



## 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.



This is the free and easy way to raise funds for the foundation, simply by shopping online.

Join for free and raise funds when you shop at over 4,400 stores. Your purchase will automatically generate free funds!

How Give as you Live works:

- Sign up free and choose from The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears as your charity.
- Search for a store you want to shop with on Give as you Live - there are over 4,000!
- Click on the store logo - you will be directed to the store website, and your visit tracked by Give As You Live.
- Make your purchase as normal.
- The retailer then pays Give as you Live commission for your purchase, which is converted into a donation to us!

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

So far supporters have helped us raise over £180, at no extra cost to them.

<https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/wintonbearfoundation>

## Coffee for Bears

We understand that Covid 19 has affected many people's finances. However, if you have been lucky enough to continue earning during the pandemic perhaps you could donate the cost of your daily takeaway coffee to help the bears? Every donation goes to the projects we support and helps fund many amazing projects around the world.



**Thank you also to everyone who continues to donate to us and contribute regularly by direct debit.**



## 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](mailto:info@wintonbearfoundation.org) **Website:** [www.wintonbearfoundation.org](http://www.wintonbearfoundation.org)

We also have an active Facebook Page

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



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

FROM OUTSIDE THE UK



Use PayPal (either with a PayPal account or a credit card)  
via the "Donate" button halfway down this page  
[www.wintonbearfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/donate-contact/](http://www.wintonbearfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/donate-contact/)

PayPal will deduct a charge for these donations

*"Making it Bearable"*

[www.wintonbearfoundation.org](http://www.wintonbearfoundation.org)



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

FROM OUTSIDE THE UK



Use PayPal (either with a PayPal account or a credit card)  
via the "Donate" button halfway down this page  
[www.wintonbearfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/donate-contact/](http://www.wintonbearfoundation.org/how-you-can-help/donate-contact/)

PayPal will deduct a charge for these donations

*"Making it Bearable"*

[www.wintonbearfoundation.org](http://www.wintonbearfoundation.org)

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