

BEARS FIRST

Idaho Black Bear Rehab., Inc.

June 2008



Napili gives Sally a personal greeting when she arrives in spring 2005



Napili after her release in Spring 2006

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

Many people thought we quit or faded into oblivion since the last web site update. Not so - it's just that we had our hands full with bears and the demands of daily life. This is our first opportunity to do another Bears First issue and to bring you up to date on all that has happened. Since the start of IBBR in 1989, 2007 proved to be one of the most difficult years we have seen for bears. It was a very challenging year for IBBR and yet a year of blessings beyond anything we could imagine. It was also a year of many first time situations. For that reason this issue of Bears First will focus mostly on 2007 and 2008.

In this issue...

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN	PAGE 1
2007 - 2008 SUMMARY - OUR FIRST SPRING TRIPLETS	PAGE 2
OUR LARGEST BEARS YET - BURRS, BURRS & MORE BURRS - OUR FIRST BEAR TUMOR?	PAGE 3
CUBS OF THE YEAR-YEARLINGS, TWO YEAR OLD BEARS - JAWS, THE MIRACLE BEAR	PAGE 4
JAWS continued	PAGE 5
JAWS continued - NEVADA BEARS - INJURIES AND ILLNESS	PAGE 6
INJURIES AND ILLNESS - continued - NEW MONITORING SYSTEM	PAGE 7
NEW MONITORING SYSTEM - continued - EDUCATION PROGRAM	PAGE 8
WSPA FUNDED TRUCK PICKS UP & DELIVERS CUBS - 2007 MOST DIFFICULT YEAR FOR BEARS	PAGE 9
2007 MOST DIFFICULT YEAR FOR BEARS - continued - TWISTER THE TORNADO BEAR - NEW ROOF ON MAIN ENCLOSURE	PAGE 10
NEW RELEASE METHOD - BEARLY SPRING CLEAN-UP	PAGE 11
FINALLY-A WALK-IN COOLER - NON-PROFIT 501 (c) (3) - 2008 RELEASES	PAGE 12-13
SCOTLAND VISITOR LESLEY WINTON SHARES HER EXPERIENCES DURING THE BEAR RELEASES	PAGE 14-15

Idaho Black Bear Rehab, Inc. * 6097 Arney Lane * Boise, Idaho 83703 USA

Phone: (208) 853-3105 * Fax: (208) 439-6777 * E-Mail: INFO@bearrehab.org * Web: www.bearrehab.org

2007 - 2008 Summary

It was the first time IBBR:

- ◆ Received triplets in spring.
- ◆ Had cubs that wanted their formula cold instead of lukewarm or hot.
- ◆ Released two of the largest bears ever in the rehab program.
- ◆ Received a bear with an extreme case of burrs that's now free to breathe, sit, lie down.
- ◆ Had yearlings sneak in as cubs of the year.
- ◆ Mixed yearlings and two year old bears with cubs of the year.
- ◆ Had a two year old bear with a life threatening injury.
- ◆ Had a starved two year old brought to us.
- ◆ Received yearlings and not just cubs of the year.
- ◆ Received bears from Nevada for the rehab program.
- ◆ Turned around a starved two year old using formula.
- ◆ Had a cub with a broken front shoulder.
- ◆ Had a cub with a malady that massages of the belly cured.
- ◆ Was able to observe cubs in rehab with a monitoring system thanks to WSPA.
- ◆ Was able to observe new arrivals in the enclosures for 24 hours.
- ◆ Observed the behavior of a cub with a sibling that wasn't found.
- ◆ Was able to do some education programs since the middle of 2006.
- ◆ Had volunteers who will always go pick up and take back cubs as needed.
- ◆ Released cubs in November to build or find their own dens.
- ◆ Sent our WSPA truck throughout Idaho and other Western States to pick up cubs.
- ◆ Met bears at the Boise airport that were flown in from Utah.
- ◆ Had two part time employees.
- ◆ Saved 53 bears in one year.

OUR FIRST SPRING TRIPLETS

To start off 2007 we received three triplet cubs about 8-9 weeks old. There were two females (Koa and Patch) and one male (Hanalei). Although IBBR has taken in a set of orphaned triplets before, they were cubs that arrived early fall. This group was a handful from day one & had their own ideas of how bears should be raised, which many times was completely opposite of what was possible. They were quick to let us know they each had a mind of their own and were quite prepared to use it. At the same time, we have never experienced such a bonding as these three cubs had with each other. Most of the time twins or individual cubs bond with the foster mom, but not these three. If one did it, thought it, felt it, they all did. Even with twins, the bonding wasn't so defined in that way. They were the first cubs who wanted the formula not lukewarm, not hot, but cold. They were the first cubs observed to chase each other continuously for sometimes an hour. They would chase each other in one direction and then the last one would turn and run the other direction and the other two would turn and chase him. It was comical & exhausted us just watching them. Hanalei (the troublemaker) was a super athlete. He would walk on the chain link roof on all fours like we walk on the ground. Cubs have done that before, but only for a minute or so. Hanalei did it for several minutes and several times a day. Then he would hang from the roof & play with the other two while they were on the logs above the dens.



OUR LARGEST BEARS YET



Shilo



In June 2007 we released two of the largest bears we've ever had in the program - Shilo from Washington & Buddy from Idaho. Shilo & Buddy were best buddies and at the same time we've never seen bears argue so much. They were inseparable, but at times we had to wonder if they would survive the arguments. We finally decided it was both a personality trait and although we have not experienced such aggressive fights before, it was probably attempts at male dominance over each other - maybe practice for things to come after release. Both bears weighed in at 189 pounds on release. In June 2008 we sent Kanaloa back to CA weighing 214 pounds so he is now our largest bear to date.

BURRS, BURRS, AND MORE BURRS



Although we've had cubs with a few burrs now and then, in 2007 we received a cub with so many burrs stuck to his body & wrapped tightly in his fur that it had to hurt him to even breathe. He only weighed about 16 pounds. We tranquilized him and it took four people almost 45 minutes to cut off all the burrs. Although you can't see it in the picture, he

had burrs in his ears, under his armpits, between his hind legs, under his tail, on his soft belly, under his chin, between his toes, on the sides of his nose & jaw, & stuck solidly to the skin all over his back & sides. We filled a gallon bucket with the burrs we cut out of his coat. In the picture above, IBBR's Jon Knight prepares to move him to his new enclosure as he is waking up. It was the first time he could breathe, sit, move, or lie down without being in terrible pain from the burrs jabbing his tiny body.

OUR FIRST BEAR TUMOR ?

Late in the fall we received a cub with what appeared to be a tumor protruding about an inch out of the cub's side & about the width of a finger. After treating the wound our state wildlife vet, Dr. Mark Drew shaved the cub's rump and we found many bite wounds. It appeared he had been attacked or mauled by a dog. We treated the wound and started the cub on antibiotics. Two days later we had the results on the tumor - it was a huge mass of scar tissue and not a tumor. What a relief! The wound eventually healed over the scar tissue and the cub did fine.



CUBS OF THE YEAR, YEARLINGS, TWO YEAR OLD BEARS

Bears are born in Jan-Feb and called cubs during the first year of life. A bear that is starting its second year of life is called a yearling. This year we had three yearlings sneak in as cubs. Generally state wildlife agencies do not bring in yearlings even though IBBR is willing to help them. These lucky bears were saved because they were so small everyone thought they were cubs of the year. We discovered they were actually yearlings while moving them to the main enclosure and got a look at their teeth.



Can you tell which two of the four are the yearlings? Hint: size won't tell you. It's the first time we mixed yearlings with cubs of the year. It turned out concerns about mixing bears of such different ages were unfounded. Everyone eventually merged and the playing and wrestling began. Amazingly, we also received two bears that were two years old that we added to the mix later. One was a female starved and near death. The other was a male who had his upper jaw shot off. His story is below.

JAWS - THE MIRACLE BEAR



Bears are pretty hardy and do well at healing themselves. However, this year brought a very sad and unique situation in the form of a two year old bear with one side of his upper jaw shot off. It's the first time we've had the opportunity to help a seriously injured older bear. Worse than losing his upper jaw and all his teeth on that side of his upper jaw, his nasal cavity was wide open from just behind his nose to just under the eye. Definitely not a wound he could fix himself. He was in good shape on arrival so it appeared the wound was fairly recent. A very nice officer trapped him in a location he shouldn't have been in,

and saw the wound and called us. Of course we were thrilled to get the opportunity to help him. The first thing we did was have Dr. Tim Murphy clean the wound. Then we put him on antibiotics for about two weeks. During that time we all fell in love with him - he was just a big lump of bear, so gentle, so calm, so nice considering what some human did to him. Because it had to be so painful to eat, we gave him soft foods like formula, yogurt, cottage cheese, canned fruit, and grapes. As the rawness of the wound healed, he began to eat dog food, apples, and other fruit. The name "Jaws" just seemed to be appropriate for him from the beginning. He definitely wasn't the frightening predator like the shark from the movie "Jaws". His name described the injured area as well as being one of the most powerful parts of every bear's body. After about a month, we moved him to the main enclosure with the other bears. He developed a friendship with a Nevada cub of the year and they wrestled and played constantly. Unfortunately, all the rough wrestling didn't help the wound. We had to put him on antibiotics again for about 10 days just to be on the safe side. In December we separated him again to prepare him for surgery. Neither Jaws or his Nevada buddy were happy about that.

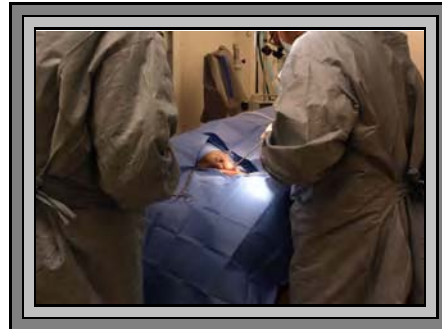


Before surgery - injury healed but nasal cavity still wide open

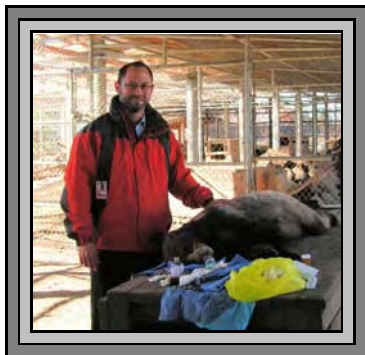
JAWS THE MIRACLE BEAR - continued

Until 2007 we had never mixed cubs of the year with yearlings. You always hear that older bears will kill cubs. Apparently no so with this group. At almost any time of day you would find Jaws sitting on one side of the divided enclosure and his Nevada buddy on the other. They would try to play and wrestle through the chain link. When that turned out to be too difficult they each climbed the chain link to the roof in hopes of finding a way through to the other side. It was pitiful and our hearts went out to them as they wanted to be together so badly. Kanaloa, a male bear from California also wrestled a lot with the two of them and he couldn't seem to comprehend why Jaws was separated from them. He paced and looked for a way in to the area where we held Jaws.

In January we prepared Jaws for surgery. Although not fully in hibernation, he was in the den most of the day. We wanted him as lethargic as possible to help him heal after surgery. Unless we could find a way to cover the open nasal cavity, his fate would be sealed. Releasing him would be out of the question. The open nasal cavity would cause infections and allow all sorts of dirt and materials to enter and probably cause pneumonia as well. No one knew for sure if it would be possible to close the nasal cavity. Dr. Jeff Brouman who performed surgery on another bear with a shattered leg agreed to see what he could do to help Jaws. We tranquilized the bear and took him to WestVet Clinic. Two hours later we had a bear with a completely covered nasal cavity. Dr. Brouman was able to loosen skin from the side of his face and pull it forward to cover the open cavity. What an amazing job by the WestVet team! Below is a picture of Jaws preparing for surgery and one during surgery.



He remained separated until the stitches came out and another week after that we opened the gate between the enclosures. It was less than a minute when his Nevada buddy and Kanaloa joined him. The wrestling and playing began again immediately. The final test was how his jaw and the repairs would hold up with all the mouthing they do while wrestling. Jaws remained calm and good-natured despite all the pain he endured. What a trooper! He definitely puts some of us humans to shame. He never once showed aggression towards us, always took his medication willingly, and never bothered the injury or the stitches. Below is a picture of Dr. Brouman after taking out the stitches, his first moments joined by his Nevada buddy (closest to the camera) - Kanaloa next to the Nevada bear - Jaws facing both of them, and Jaws fully recovered. On page 6 you can see his jaw the day of release and later on pictures of his release.



JAWS - continued



NEVADA BEARS

In the past we've taken orphaned cubs from all the surrounding Western states. However, 2007 was the first time Nevada sent bears to IBBR. They ended up sending six bears. One we thought was a yearling turned out to be at least two years old. She was on the verge of starving to death. We hadn't yet moved Jaws to the main enclosure so we put her in the enclosure next to him. Both enclosures were very isolated and protected from weather and activity. We started her on formula even though she wasn't a cub of the year. Our formula has turned around every case of starvation in cubs so it's our first course of action. The question was, would this bear take the formula. Jaws was the first older bear we tried giving formula to other than cubs of the year. He drank it willingly so we hoped she would too. We gave her other food as well, but to our delight she went for the formula right away. She took about a gallon a day and within 4-5 days was eating the other solid food as well.



She had a no nonsense attitude and was very quick to tell us where to go should we overstep her boundary. She kept us in our place and we understood not to mess with her. Her tolerance for help only went so far. We fed, cleaned, and peeked, but moved when she warned us to move. It didn't take much warning either! When we tranquilized her to move her into the main enclosure she had gained about 50 pounds. The other bears in the main enclosure took even less time than we did to learn to leave her alone. Although she never wrestled with or joined the other bears, she wasn't aggressive with them unless they entered her den. Have you ever seen a bear fly? When one of the bears dared enter her den, they most definitely came flying out. We have limited pictures of her as she was definitely not a camera buff. We did capture the one above with our monitor system snapshot capabilities. See photos of her release on the 2008 release page.

INJURIES AND ILLNESS



Although we've had cubs in the past with broken legs, gunshot wounds, or hip problems, this year for the first time we had a cub with a broken front shoulder. Dr. Tim Murphy operated on him & put a pin in the shoulder. He looked a bit funny until the fur grew back. He did fine and was released with the other bears in June 2008.

We also had a cub for the first time with a temporary mysterious problem. Two cubs arrived close to midnight one evening. We got the first cub out of the metal carrier and he ran to the back of the enclosure. We then turned our attention to the second cub. He wouldn't come out of the carrier so it became a waiting game. While

INJURIES AND ILLNESS - continued

we were dealing with him, the first cub made his way to the water tub swallowed about two gallons of water and air before we could stop him. He was obviously very thirsty and very frightened so he was sucking up both air and water as fast as he could. Although he had moved normally when coming out of the carrier & running to the back of the enclosure, he was now wobbling. We put him back in a vari-kennel & brought him inside to watch him. His abdominal cavity was swollen twice it's normal size & he looked like he was nine months pregnant. He was having difficulty breathing and was obviously very uncomfortable with such a big belly. It was also possible he still had some after affects from a tranquilizer if the officer had to use that to catch him. Since we didn't have that information at the time he arrived, we asked Dr. Murphy to come and look at him. His heart sounded fine and he said liver problems might cause fluids in the abdominal cavity too, but it was probably the air & water he gulped that was the culprit. We decided to take him to the clinic in the morning, take x-rays and do blood work to be sure.



In the meantime, he was pretty miserable and uncomfortable. Sally introduced herself to the cub, told him she was going to get very personal with him, opened the door and dove in. For the first minute or so he was hesitant, but the minute her hands began gently rubbing his belly, he relaxed and gave her free rein to do whatever she wanted. She has emptied lots of bladders over the years without breaking them, but he was so swollen she couldn't even feel the bladder. She gently massaged his belly every half hour for about 5 minutes and then he was finally able to sleep a little. Sally went back to her desk to work, but continued the process all night. By ten the next morning his belly was half the size - he was burping and expelling gas. Sally started him on soft foods, a little at a time and a little water. The belly massage continued for two days and by the third day he was eating normally and his belly stayed it's normal size. Then he told her in very clear language that he no longer needed her help. His heart was fine and he was definitely recovered so Sally put him back with the other bears. He was doing bear things and frankly could care less about Sally when he saw her despite their most intimate few days together. It's always amazing that a wild animal can temper his instincts to trust for as long as help is needed and then just as quickly withdraw that trust when help is no longer needed. That's what makes it so satisfying to Sally - it's a gift, but always a rare gift and doesn't last long so you have to treasure it while you have it and never take it for granted.

NEW MONITORING SYSTEM



Thanks to WSPA our dream of having a monitoring system in the enclosures is a reality! In the fall of 2007 we installed the system with seven cameras. Once we installed the monitor system it was as if a whole new world opened up for us. Finally we could watch the bears and their normal behavior without being an interruption or becoming the focus of their attention. We felt like a "Peeping Tom", but we quickly got over that. We have been able to monitor each bear individually and the group as a whole. We discovered that Kanaloa (the California cub from Sequoia Kings National Park) is really a polar bear in disguise. It doesn't matter what time of day or night or how cold it is, he is in the swim tub. At times I swear we even see icicles hanging off his fur when he gets out. We were able to watch Jaws & his Nevada buddy develop their friendship. We watched a group of three bears plot and plan to destroy one of the hollow logs and then proceed to carry out their plan right before our eyes. We watched Hanalei try (thankfully without success) to get to the cameras. We watched hours of playing, wrestling, bears piling on bears, swatting, ambushing, and chasing. Then we got to watch as they cuddled up together in groups and slowly drifted off to sleep, exhausted from all the "hard work".

NEW MONITORING SYSTEM - continued

We were able to monitor the injured bears to see they were eating and moving okay. The most delightful viewing was when we put new hay in the dens and on the ground in some of the smaller enclosures. There is nothing as comical and quick to put smiles on your face as bears with fresh hay. It can't even be described in words. For the very first time we were able to observe new cubs on a 24 hour basis after their arrival. It's also the first time we observed cubs who had known siblings that weren't found. We realized how much quicker they adopted a buddy among the other cubs than single cubs do. Stands to reason as they are used to having a sibling, but it wasn't something we had been able to observe before. The system also allows us to snap photos at any time - see picture to right.



Kanaloa in swim tub - again!

We are working diligently to bring either live streaming video to the web site, or video with a 24 hour delay. By the time you read this newsletter, the video may be available on our web site within a month or so. We released all the 2007 bears so for now we will start with recorded video taken over the past few months. When 2008 bears arrive and are in the enclosure, then you will be able to view video of them as they move through the rehab process. The video will also be valuable to other bear projects and bear rehabilitators around the world, wildlife biologists and state wildlife agencies. If you enjoy the video, your donations to keep it on the web site will be very much appreciated.

We are forever grateful to Vault Inc. for their advice, support, installation, and maintenance on our new system. We contacted several companies and they stood out from the beginning. Jim Jorgensen helped us find the perfect system for our budget. Nathan serviced the cameras and answered some of our silly questions. Without Vault Inc. we would still be struggling to find the right monitoring system.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

In the first few months of 2008 we did several education programs and hosted some school classes at IBBR. Volunteer Christina Brearley had a baby & until this year was unable to continue with the school programs except on a very limited basis. During 2008 we will continue to build the education program and plan to have it fully reinstated by the end of the year. Part of our education program will also be to use our monitoring system along with conference calls to do education programs in other states. If we can get live streaming video of the bear enclosures, we can share what they are seeing, talk about the rehab process, about each bear's personality, and answer their questions. It is expensive so our computer tech is working on it to see if we can accomplish this goal. For the immediate future we will use video of the 2007 bears.



In the future we hope to build a small education building on the property. It will allow us to do presentations to small groups while the cubs are in a small enclosure inside the building. Trying to hold squirming cubs who want down while doing a presentation in a classroom just doesn't work. Cubs held in a vari-kennel are barely visible. This will allow us to do the presentation and have the cubs on site too. We will have a monitor showing live video of the main enclosure, pictures of the rehab process and releases, informational flyers, posters, and video of bear releases.



As a way of saying thank you for collecting canned fruit for Jaws, we invited the kids and teachers from Vision Charter School to IBBR for a special education seminar on bears.

WSPA FUNDED TRUCK PICKS UP AND DELIVERS CUBS THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN STATES

In 2007 we were blessed for the first time with two volunteers who consistently took the WSPA truck and traveled all over Idaho & the Western states to pick up and return cubs. Terri & Larry Limberg traveled to Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California & all over Idaho. They met California park rangers halfway to bring Kanaloa to IBBR. One of the struggles in helping orphaned cubs is to make it as easy as possible for state wildlife agencies to put the cubs in rehab. If it's going to be a costly process for them or take their officers away from already heavy work loads, they may decide not to put the cub in rehab. In the past, finding someone available to go pick up a cub in another state or even in various parts of Idaho on a moment's notice was sometimes impossible. Volunteers were always willing, but frequently not able to do it on short notice. Thanks to Terri & Larry, they have dropped everything and made bringing the cubs to IBBR their priority. Larry even jokes with us that he is having "bear withdrawals" if the time between trips is too long. We may do the rehab, but if not for them, some of the cubs wouldn't have made it here for rehab. They even picked up a ton of hay for us several times. It's also the first time our WSPA funded truck met a bear at the Boise airport. Utah flew in cubs twice in 2007 and Terri & Larry



were there to pick them up. They are definitely a bear's best friend.



were there to pick them up. They are definitely a bear's best friend.

2007 MOST DIFFICULT YEAR FOR BEARS

2007 was one of the most difficult years for bears that we have seen since our first cub arrived in 1989. Fires, droughts, poor food supply, and extreme weather on top of hunting season put



tremendous pressure on bears in all the Western States. Some years we struggle to save cubs and get them brought in, but this year the calls were coming in daily to see if we could take a cub or two or three. Once the cub is reported to the wildlife agency the real work begins. Locating the cub, setting the traps, getting officers or volunteers to check the traps, and finally arranging transport once the cubs are caught. It can be a nail biting process that is both frustrating, filled with anxiety & goes on for days. One cub in Idaho was coming into a campground for a couple of days. When the campers left, they notified IBBR. We called Fish & Game and the officer in the area took the bear trap out to the campground. It was cold and wet and the trap had to be checked daily to avoid the cub freezing to death inside the trap. The officer in the area was



First spotting of the tiny campground cub.

scheduled to be away for several days testifying at a court trial. IBBR found volunteers to travel daily to the remote mountain location to check the trap. We placed food in the culvert trap and on the ground in front of it. One day we were told the food on the ground was gone and yet there was no bear scat in sight. The next day the food was still there, but this time there was bear scat. Was the bear getting the food? Was another animal getting it instead? No one spotted the cub for four days after we set the trap

2007 MOST DIFFICULT YEAR FOR BEARS - continued

and the food in the trap was not disturbed. We decided the cub was either too frightened to enter the big culvert trap that Fish and Game set out or possibly too small to trip it. On day five a volunteer checking the trap spotted the cub in one of the campground trees. Jennifer Struthers, a region 3 wildlife tech who could also tranquilize bears volunteered to take our smaller bear trap to the location. She drove three hours to the remote site, set the trap and stayed there waiting. Two hours later we had a bear! Thanks to over 10 people (wish we could name them all here) volunteering to help with just one bear, this cub was saved only a few days before a winter storm hit the area. He would not have survived long after that.

TWISTER - THE TORNADO BEAR

In June of 2006 a tornado (rare in Idaho) went through Bear, Idaho. Along with the destruction it also left a tiny orphaned cub. The cub wandered around for several days before the few residents who saw her realized mom was not around. She collapsed outside one of their houses during a horrible rainstorm. Realizing she was close to death, resident Deb Davis scooped her up and drove her to the nearest clinic. Dr. Bruce Gardner was able to get fluids in her to offset the dehydration and she survived the night. By morning she was better, but had a long way to go. When she arrived at IBBR Sally wondered if she could really survive. She was so weak she couldn't stand and would fall over when she tried. She fought hard to survive & after a week, it looked like she was going to pull it off. Eventually she joined the other bears and throughout her time with



A week after release

IBBR she remained a determined bear.

Unfortunately, 2007 when we released her turned out to be one of the worst years for bears struggling to survive. That same survival determination that saved her life the year before, ended up costing Twister her life. In the summer of 2007 a startled camper shot her as she peered into his tent a few weeks after release. Sally said she didn't think Twister would hurt anyone, but she would push the limits to get food because of her strong survival instincts. The camper had no way of knowing her plight to survive in the past or what her intentions were at that moment. It was a very sad day for many people who followed her story and supported her efforts to survive.

NEW ROOF ON MAIN ENCLOSURE



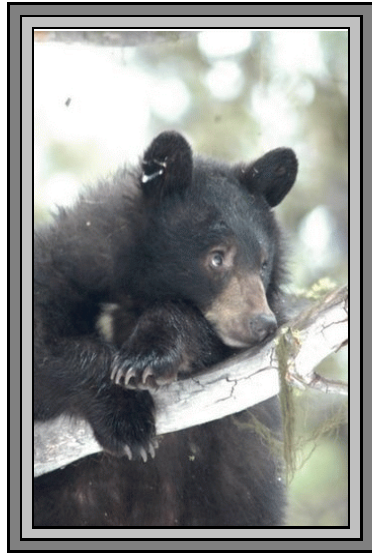
After the 40 bears we had in 2004 and into spring of 2005, we were delighted that WSPA funded a new wood roof for the main enclosure. The spring rains in 2005 just about drowned the bears and us. If the truth be told, the bears had a blast. However, being slapped in the face



with a pile of mud and water as the bears tore past in play wasn't exactly fun for us. Slipping and sliding and trying to work was a real nightmare. Now when the spring rains begin, we can actually feed and clean without snorkeling around the enclosure. A big thanks to WSPA for providing the funds and to Bud Peak & the Dept of Fish and Game for their support of this project. A tremendous thanks to the Poachers Club for taking on this project and donating their time, knowledge and hard work in building the roof.

NEW RELEASE METHOD

Instead of starting bears in hibernation here, for the first time we released bears late in November to let them build or find their own dens. Not an easy thing to do when you try something for the first time. The worry factor is large and it's a pensive time for us at IBBR until we know more. Results in the spring of 2008 showed all the bears survived. However, one of them was shot during spring hunting season. We also sent several bears to Wild Animal Rescue of Idaho (WARI) in Northern Idaho to winter through. The rest of the Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and California bears held through winter and released in June 2008.



We have been blessed beyond imagination to have saved a total of 53 bears in 2007. What more can we ask than to know these bears are safe and sound thanks to IBBR supporters and funding provided by WSPA and their supporters. It may have been an extremely difficult year for bears, but so many people stepped up to the plate to help - the public, state wildlife agencies, officers in the field, veterinarians, and the many people and organizations who donated special food for Jaws and the Nevada female. IBBR owes a huge debt of gratitude to all of you. A special thanks to Jon Knight who helped Sally hold it all together by carrying such a heavy work load after Sally's mother passed away. Also thanks to Jed Thomas who stepped in to help us through the winter and into spring 2008. When Jed left, Alison Robinson joined IBBR to continue helping Jon & Sally with the bears' daily care.

BEARLY SPRING CLEAN-UP

Each year we have a "Bearly Spring Clean-up" project to clean up after winter, repair the enclosures from the last round of bears, and prepare them for the next group. In 2008 as part of the Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project, Trevor Lewis and Troop 77 came to help IBBR. 17 Scouts plus a few parents spent two days cutting, raking, hauling, and weeding to make the IBBR grounds shine! Thank you Trevor, the Scouts from Troop 77, and the parents. What a great job you did!



FINALLY - A WALK-IN COOLER



In 2008 after years of searching, we finally located a used walk-in cooler to store fruit. The refrigerators we use are wearing out and struggling to hold all the fruit during the hot weather. Boise Refrigeration delivered and set up the walk-in cooler so all we had to do was connect the electricity to the various components. Arlene and Peter Davidson asked electrician Jon Duncan to help us with the project. He donated his time and knowledge to accomplish the task. Arlene and her grandchildren came out with him to help. What looked like a project doomed to fail is now a working walk-in cooler holding fruit. We couldn't have done it without the help of these wonderful people.

NON-PROFIT 501(c) (3)

In 2003 we applied for our 501(c) (3) status. During the advance ruling period which lasted through 2007, we were classified as a public charity rather than a private foundation. In April, 2008 the advance ruling period ended and the IRS notified us that we will continue to be classified as a public charity and maintain our 501(c) (3) non-profit status.

We look forward to the future, the challenges, the blessings, the learning experiences that come with each new bear. As always, IBBR will be there for orphaned cubs. Hopefully, we will also have more opportunities to help older bears in the future. Thank you all for your donations and financial support to make that possible.

2008 Releases

On the following page we included pictures taken during the releases of the 2007 bears in June 2008. How wonderful to see so many cubs, now yearlings prepared to take charge of their lives. To see the two three year old bears free again after such a struggle to survive will keep us working hard to save bears for years to come. Life doesn't get any better than that for those of us at IBBR. During the 2008 releases, guest visitor Lesley Winton from Scotland joined us for three days. Following the release pictures on page 13, Lesley shares her experiences for this issue of Bears First. Thank you Lesley for giving Bears First readers your insight as to what it's like releasing these bears.

Please take a minute and send a tax deductible donation to:

Idaho Black Bear Rehab, Inc.
6097 Arney Lane
Garden City, Idaho 83714 U.S.A.

The Bears Thank you!





Our beautiful "Heart" bear



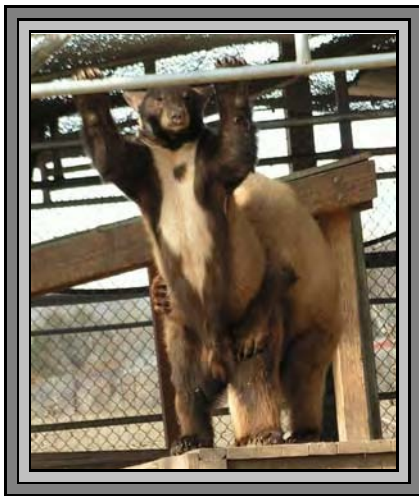
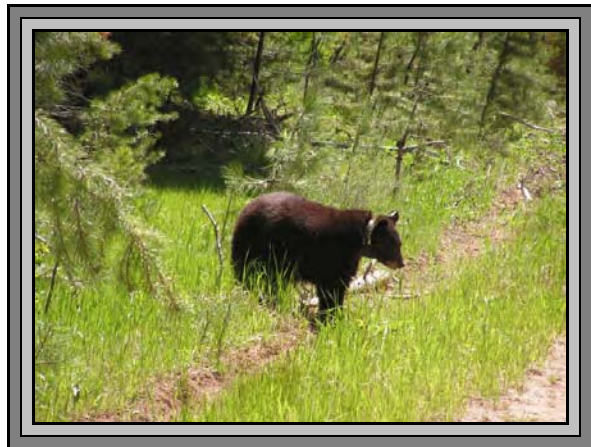
Look at the lightning marking on Burrs



Sassy - NV starved female free again



Jaws looks to see if his buddy is in the other carrier before leaving to check out the area



Kanaloa from CA shows off his beautiful markings



Off he goes - back home at last. The gun is just filled with rubber bullets to discourage him from hanging around the release site should he linger



Utah bear gets weighed & checked and then all four bears leave IBBR to return to Utah.



SCOTLAND VISITOR LESLEY WINTON SHARES HER EXPERIENCES DURING BEAR RELEASES

Bear lover Lesley Winton worked for WSPA for ten years. In recent years, Lesley has helped support IBBR by raising funds and awareness in Scotland for orphaned cubs. Lesley had an opportunity to join IBBR on some of the spring 2008 releases. These are her words.

Well that's it. They've all gone. 21 of the most beautiful black bears of all shapes and sizes are back home in the wild where they belong. After 3 days of weighing, tagging, collaring, measuring, stretchering and lifting bears into crates; after 600 miles of rugged, dirt road terrain, twisting and turning high up and around the sides of hills and mountains with sheer drops to the side, the bears are home and I have been honoured and privileged to be part of this.



Lesley Winton helping IBBR with the first day of releases

*I first visited IBBR in July 2006 when Sally had only 3 bears, but this was something else! Having had 53 bears in total **during** 2007, and with the out of state bears returned to their own territory, 21 Idaho bears remained. When Sally told me it would be okay for me to help with the 2008 spring release, my flight was booked quicker than bears climb trees.*

On arrival at Sally's, her home looks like any other urban property, but hidden behind was a huge enclosure housing 21 inquisitive and mischievous bears frolicking around in the swim tub, over and under the log play structures and in and out of the wooden dens. There were big, lumbering, heavy set 200 lb gentle giant bears and sweet little 50 lb bears with feisty spirits and the attitude of a bear three times their size. It was important at this time that human/bear contact was kept to a minimum since it was so close to release time. However, it was hard not to be completely emotionally overwhelmed by these beautiful animals that are a captivating mixture of playful and cheeky yet timid and shy. For every unique individual bear this was the final stage of their journey with Sally. Her heart and soul has gone into the care and well-being of every bear and to make the transition from their traumatic separation from their bear mom to their return to the wild as stress free an experience as possible.

The first stage was to prepare for the releases. These would take place over three days from Sunday to Tuesday - 8 bears the first, 7 the second, and 6 on the last day. With all hands on deck, it began with the sedation of the bears. Tranquillizing was a stressful process for all involved and would be done as quickly and efficiently as the bears would allow. As nothing traumatic had ever happened to them in their safe and secure enclosure up until that point, it would have been nice to try to explain to them it was for their own good as they darted around the enclosure trying to avoid the jab stick that would deliver the drugs to knock them out for the nest stage.



IBBR's Alison Robinson & Jon Knight - getting ready to load two of the 6 Nevada bears in the culvert trap for transport back to Nevada

Trying to capture every moment on a camera or camcorder and at the same time being charged with the responsibility of data collection, I was amazed at my sudden ability to multitask - not wishing to miss a single moment! Once sedated each bear would be stretchered out of the enclosure to be rolled on to the weighing machine - total dead weights - legs and paws flopping

SCOTLAND VISITOR - continued

everywhere, eyes dazed, lips twitching, snoring lightly. Carefully and gently the bears were weighed, tagged, collared and measured (chest measurement on the exhale - they'll make a bear rehabber of me yet!). Then came the fun part of lifting them into their transportation crates on the back of the truck. As the bears weighed anything from 50 lbs to 200 lbs, this particular task swung from being relatively straight forward to providing a major challenge! With legs, backs, necks and heads supported (the bears - not ours!) each bruin was carefully and comfortably placed in its crate along with a chum of similar size.

The preparation for release was much the same each day. The whole process was over within about an hour. The shot given to the bears would wear off about 45 minutes after it was given so as soon as they were all safely on the truck we were off. Over the next three days we would travel hundreds of miles into the remotest forest areas for the releases. If we stopped at gas stations, the bears would become a major talking point. On the first journey, the bears became quite vocal en route. I think there may well have been a couple of disagreements between crate buddies, but they seemed to sort it out pretty quickly. On day two and three, I was amazed at how peaceful they seemed, only to start getting frisky and impatient to get out on arrival at the release site. On the journey to the second site, we had to drive dangerously close to the edge of a steep drop into a lake. I remember thinking 'Please God - if we're going to go over - please make it on the way back so at least the bears are okay!' That's how totally, inextricably intertwined I felt with the responsibility of getting our precious cargo home.

On arrival at the release sites, the crates were unstrapped and the doors opened. On occasion, some of the bears gingerly came out of their crate to sniff their surroundings before leaping off the truck, but most of the time the minute the padlocks were undone - off they shot! There were few greater moments than the one on one of the releases, when the padlocks were taken off the crate that held this little bear - smaller than most of



the others. As soon as the padlocks were off all you saw was this paw whacking the door open followed by this head and body with such a determined expression. He might as well have come out that crate singing "I'm coming out so you better get this party started!". A very special moment, summing up an incredible experience.

I have learnt so much about bears, their behaviour, the threats they face each day through legal and illegal hunting, fires, droughts, poor food supply or habitat, and the complexities between the emotional hands on side of rehab and the matter of fact side of biology, population control and release. I think the job of the rehabber has to be one of the hardest. How can you not become attached to these little helpless creatures that come to you? How on earth do you work 24/7 giving heart and soul to these animals to ultimately return them to the wild that is their rightful home and is fraught with potential danger. How do you return this orphan back to a place where he may ultimately be shot during hunting season? The love that shows for the natural needs of the bear is immense and takes an incredible person to see that it is done.

These bears will always have threats to face in the wild. However, as they have allowed us the privilege of sharing their lives for even a short while, perhaps the least we can do when taking them home is load the dice in their favor as much as possible.

BEAR NECESSITIES - WISH LIST

The Idaho Black Bear Rehab Program needs your help. Without this program, orphaned bear cubs would not have a place to go. Zoos and wildlife parks no longer want or need cubs as they have their own breeding programs. We raise orphaned cubs for release back into the wild. They remain with us until December when we take them to dens in the mountains. When they come out of hibernation the following spring, the cubs are on their own. We also release some in spring after hunting season ends.

It costs about \$900 - \$1000 to feed and care for each cub during the eight to fifteen months they are with us. If everyone could donate even the price of one soft drink, it means we can help one more cub.

ALWAYS NEEDED: \$\$ for formula - Fresh fruit when in season

VOLUNTEER HELP - DONATED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:

IBBR needs people to oversee the following three areas:

1) Volunteer Coordinator 2) Fund-raising Manager 3) Grant Writer

Printer to donate printing handbooks, newsletters, and other documents

Electrician to donate time and knowledge to rewire old wiring

Volunteers to pick up fruit and nuts in fall

GENERAL SUPPLIES:

Bath towels * Hand towels * Lumber * Copy paper * Large & medium Vari-Kennels * Stamps

Large tree logs or stumps for climbing * Xerox Phaser 8560 Solid Ink Sticks - yellow, cyan, magenta, black

HP Laserjet 2420dn printer cartridges * Hydraulic lift truck crank for IBBR truck (see www.pickupspecialties.com 4' model LT436) and High Lift Table Cart (see www.HarborFreight.com - item 41145-1VGA) * Golf cart to haul items from roadside drop to enclosure at back end of property

SPECIALITY ITEMS:

Available by Special Order from UPCO (800) 254-8726 - - you can arrange payment with UPCO - ship to address at bottom - no substitutions please)

Milk Matrix #99882 (15 Lbs) - Esbilac #9498 (5 Lbs powdered) - Vionate #615 (2 Lbs)

Available at Treasure Valley stores or online ordering from Mazuri.com or 800-227-8941

Mazuri Bear Diet - 40 lbs - stock #5ZH6 \$47.70 or Omnivore Biscuits - 40 lbs - stock 5635 \$37.30

See web site www.mazuri.com for locations in the Boise area

FORMULA ITEMS:

6 oz jars of Gerbers #3 fruit baby cereal (peach & Blueberry Buckle) * Plain or flavored Yogurt * Honey * Natural applesauce *

Boxes of oatmeal * Boxes of Gerbers baby rice one grain cereal

FOOD ITEMS :

40 LB sacks of Fred Meyer Premium **Chunk Style** dry dog food * Bread * Acorns & Hazelnuts * Fish (salmon or trout) Raw carrots * Cans of fruit * Cottage cheese * Avocados

FRESH FRUIT (Please ask if fruit was sprayed with insecticide) :

Apples, peaches, pears, grapes, plums, cherries, apricots, watermelons, cantaloupes, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, strawberries



Ruggles - 1989 - He started it all!

Please find enclosed my donation for \$ _____ to help save an orphaned cub.

Name: _____ Address: _____
(Please Print) (Please Print)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Thank you for your support and help. We will send a tax deductible receipt to you.
IBBR is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) Organization