



IDAHO BLACK BEAR REHAB, INC.

Sally Maughan - Founder

6097 Arney Lane * Garden City, Idaho 83714

Phone: (208) 853-3105 * Fax: (208) 439-6777

E-Mail: INFO@bearrehab.org - Web site: www.bearrehab.org



For the Bears

In 2009 IBBR asked Valerie LeBoeuf to conduct an unbiased review of IBBR's bear rehab program. Valerie is on the board of IBBR and has a widely varied background working with wildlife. Her credentials are impeccable. Valerie's concern for the welfare of animals and her honesty on that issue would provide IBBR a clear overview of the program, good or bad. Valerie's background is as follows:

- 1986 - 1988 Seasonal zookeeper - Boise City Zoo.
- 1987 - 1996 Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator, specializing in cougars.
- 1990 - 1996 Designed, implemented, and managed the Beaver Sterilization / Rehabilitation Study Program - Boise City.
- 1991 - 1999 Owner - The Animals Trust - provided educational programs about wildlife to the public; offered humane solutions to wildlife depredation issues to the public and government agencies.

Past Board Member - Idaho Humane Society

Founding Member & Past Board Member - Animals in Distress Association (AIDA)

Board Member - Idaho Black Bear Rehab, Inc (IBBR)

Currently Valerie is finishing B.S. Psychology and Minor in Paralegal Studies at Boise State University.

Below is Valerie LeBoeuf's Analysis of the Rehabilitation Programs of Idaho Black Bear Rehab, Inc.

Sally A. Maughan
Idaho Black Bear Rehab
Founder - President

An Analysis of the Rehabilitation Facilities and Programs of Idaho Black Bear Rehab, Inc.

HISTORY

Founded by Sally Maughan, IBBR began its efforts for the successful rescue and rehabilitation of Black Bears in 1989. Since that date, over one hundred ninety three (193) bears have directly benefited from the program's care standards and on-site facility housing. Countless other bears and their future offspring, not requiring IBBR's direct facility care, have also been positively impacted by the educational and outreach efforts of IBBR, the research generated and published from IBBR's activities, and the support of humane organizations in bear issues worldwide.

This analysis attempts to address standard areas of concern such as access to food, water, shelter, species companionship, observation, veterinary care, spatial needs, behavior enrichment and release success using documented data and scientific reports.

RESEARCH

SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS OF WILDLIFE REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES

John Beecham, a retired Idaho Department of Fish and Game biologist has been involved with the black bear rehabilitation program of IBBR for nearly twenty (20) years. Since his retirement, his expertise gained from the research generated by IBBR bears has been sought by scientists, worldwide. During a 2005 presentation at the 16th Annual International Conference on Bear Research and Management, Beecham noted the scientific value of rehabilitation programs. He states, "A successful rehabilitation program has the potential to provide benefits not only to individual bears from a welfare perspective, but may contribute to conservation efforts for rare species. Reintroduction programs can be used to augment bear populations that have adequate habitat but exist in low numbers because of other controllable factors, increase genetic diversity in small, isolated populations, or to reintroduce bears into suitable, but unoccupied habitat."¹ In addition he considers not only the scientific value of rehabilitation efforts, but also the "image management" benefit to government agencies charged with the regulation of wildlife populations. In Beecham's publication, *Orphan Bear Cubs Rehabilitation and Release Guidelines*, he states that "Rehabilitation programs also have provided positive educational and public relations value to governmental entities charged with managing wild bear populations. Rehabilitation programs also provide wildlife managers with an opportunity to use released animals, as surrogates for threatened bear species, to evaluate long-term strategies for managing small bear populations, with no risk to threatened or endangered bear populations."²

The rehabilitation program of IBBR has also been noted by scientists from the Chengdu Research Base for Giant Panda Breeding in China who cite the IBBR program as a potential model in efforts to return Giant Pandas bred in captivity to the wild. “The experiences of rehabilitation and reintroduction with other bear species is valuable in planning for the eventual reintroduction of giant pandas, Kati Loeffler, a German veterinarian at Chengdu, said in an e-mail...The situations in Idaho and in remote areas of Canada are almost ideals that we can use as guidelines.”³

REHABILITATION FACILITIES

Based on personal observation and a survey of rehabilitation facilities around the world, John Beecham notes in his guide to the rehabilitation and release of black bears that rehabilitation facilities are located in a variety of worldwide settings including within municipalities, countryside and natural-wild-type settings and that the location of those settings often determine the types of enclosures used and the materials of construction. In addition, since bears are received by rehabilitation facilities throughout the year, Beecham states that a facility that has “several enclosures of various sizes available offers considerably more flexibility in the number of bears that can be housed at any given time.”⁴

According to Beecham, rehabilitation facilities offer wildlife agencies the opportunity for the reintroduction of bears that otherwise might have been candidates for euthanasia, permanent captivity or left to fend for themselves with the risk of habituation and/or nuisance behavior.⁵ Based on his research, experienced rehabilitation facilities have shown that rehabbed bears are “excellent candidates for release back to the wild”.⁶ In fact, “survival rates for orphaned cubs do not differ substantially from those of wild cubs, and few animals (less than 2%) become involved in nuisance situations within one year of their release”.⁶ The opportunity to socialize with other cubs during rehabilitation is listed by Beecham as possibly the “most important factor in reducing the level of habituation” while in a rehabilitation program.⁷

RULES & GUIDELINES FOR FACILITIES & STANDARDS OF CARE

An endeavor was made to survey various published rules and guidelines for the rehabilitation of wildlife as a part of this analysis. Most federal and state statutes are of a general nature, except when specifically addressing captive animals involved in food production or experimental research. Some states have addressed rehabilitation activities in their written code, and in the case of the state of Wisconsin, refer to standards of care and facilities as published by the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA). In addition, the state of Wisconsin has published their own guide, *Wildlife Rehabilitation in Wisconsin, An Introduction and Study Guide*, which addresses not only Wisconsin state code, but also the NWRA guidelines. The applicable sections of Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 169 – Captive Wildlife that relate to wildlife rehabilitation are also highlighted and include the following:⁸

169.39 Humane care and housing.

(1) *COMPLIANCE WITH RULES.* No license may be issued under this chapter unless the department determines that the applicant will comply with all of the rules promulgated under subs. (2) and (3).

(2) *RULES; GENERAL.* The department shall promulgate and enforce rules for the housing, care, treatment, enrichment, feeding, and sanitation of wild animals subject to regulation under this chapter to ensure all of the following:

- (a) *That the wild animals receive humane treatment and enrichment.*
- (b) *That the wild animals are held under sanitary conditions.*
- (c) *That the wild animals receive adequate housing, care, and food.*
- (d) *That the public is protected from injury by the wild animals.*

Federal Laws were found as well, that would be applicable to the welfare of wildlife in a rehabilitation program. The section of the federal code that applies specifically to the space requirements of animals, such as bears in a rehabilitation program, states that “Enclosures shall be constructed and maintained so as to provide sufficient space to allow each animal to make normal postural and social adjustments with adequate freedom of movement. Inadequate space may be indicated by evidence of malnutrition, poor condition, debility, stress, or abnormal behavior patterns.”⁹

Nadja Lubiw-Hazard, DVM addresses standards of care, or lack thereof, in her publication, *American Blackbear: a comparison of husbandry and housing practices*.¹⁰ The necessity of her review was a result of the 1999 passage of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in the Province of Ontario, Canada. Prior to this Act, Ontario, Canada had no legislative provision for the keeping of wildlife in captivity. According to Dr. Lubiw-Hazard, the Act allows for the development of regulations which will govern the keeping of wildlife, including standards of care and facilities. Her goal of the review is to highlight the behavioral, spatial and physical requirements of bears kept in captivity, and offer models of practices for improvement of current facilities. As noted by Dr. Lubiw-Hazard, “The 1994 Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) Standards for Animal Care and Housing state that, Animal enclosures in which animals are on public display should: a) Be of a size which enables the animals to: 1) exercise natural behavior to facilitate public education and interpretation; 2) achieve a distance from the public and other specimens at which the animals are not psychologically or physically stressed; 3) achieve a full range of body movements and physical movements normally performed. b) Contain furniture and/or procedures to physically and psychologically enrich the environment and stimulate normal physical movement and behavior c) Contain natural or man-made shelters enabling the animals to protect themselves from natural conditions (eg. sun, rain and snow)”.¹¹

Dr. Lubiw-Hazard also addresses stereotypic behaviors which are defined as behaviors that do not normally occur in the wild, have no function, and are repetitive. She concludes that these types of behaviors indicate “unsatisfactory husbandry/environment” and imply some form of mental suffering.¹² Enclosure enrichment is a critical component of suitable facility enclosures. Dr. Lubiw-Hazard lists:¹³

Varied substrates – natural ground, dry leaves, hay, straw, wooden shavings or wood chips, sand, gravel, bark litter, shredded newspaper.
Varied vegetation – grass/herb mixture, trees, shrubs and bushes.
Furnishings – logs, rocks, barrels, large boxes, climbing opportunities, elevated resting places.
Stimulation of prolonged foraging and feeding behavior – edible branches, ice blocks containing food, root vegetables hidden in the ground, nuts, raisins and small fruits hidden in piles of sticks and branches.
Encouraging exploratory and play behavior – large plastic cans, tubs, pipes and traffic cones, branches and twigs, wooden logs, ropes.
Stimulation of olfactory and rubbing behavior – different flavors on the ground and on elevated structures to elicit sniffing behavior, hides for rolling and rubbing, resin or spruce-needle oil on tree trunks and the ground elicits rubbing, scent trails leading to concealed food items.
A pool sufficiently deep for bathing.

The Zoological Association of America offers its own general regulations which are noted as minimum standards for animal care and housing for captive wildlife:¹⁴

- (1) No person shall maintain captive wildlife in any unsafe or unsanitary condition, or in a manner which results in threats to the public safety, or the maltreatment or neglect of such wildlife.*
- (2) Caging Requirements:*
- (a) Cages or enclosures housing captive wildlife shall be sufficiently strong to prevent escape and to protect the caged animal from injury, and shall be equipped with structural safety barriers to prevent any physical contact with the caged animal by the public. Structural barriers may be constructed from materials such as fencing, moats, landscaping, or close-mesh wire, provided that materials used are safe and effective in preventing public contact.*
- (b) All cages or enclosures less than 1,000 square feet shall be covered at the top to prevent escape...*
- (5) Sanitation and Nutritional Requirements:*
- (a) Sanitation, water disposal, and waste disposal shall be in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.*
- (b) Water: Clean drinking water shall be provided daily. Any water containers used shall be clean. All pools, tanks, water areas and water containers provided for swimming, wading or drinking shall be clean. Enclosures shall provide drainage for surface water and runoff.*

(c) Food: Food shall be of a type and quantity that meets the nutritional requirements for the particular species, and shall be provided in an unspoiled and uncontaminated condition. Clean containers shall be used for feeding.

(d) Waste: Fecal and food waste shall be removed from inside, under, and around cages and stored or disposed of in a manner which prevents noxious odors or pests. Cages and enclosures shall be ventilated to prevent noxious odors.

SPECIFIED RULES & GUIDELINES

The Accreditation Standards of the Zoological Association of America (ZAA) also detail the following enclosure size guidelines for the permanent captivity of black bears: First bear – 20 x 20 ft x 8 ft high and for each additional bear, increase cage size by 25% of original floor space.¹⁵ This correlates to approximately 400 sq.ft. for the first bear and 100 sq.ft. per each additional bear. Keep in mind that these guidelines are for bears in permanent and long-term captivity.

The most applicable rules for the rehabilitation of wildlife in Idaho are found in the current Idaho Code. “The Idaho and Game Commission is authorized under Sections 36-103, 36-104(b), 36-501, and 36-504, Idaho Code, to adopt rules concerning the importation, possession, release, sale, or salvage of wildlife in the state of Idaho... These rules shall be cited in full as IDAPA 13.01.10.000, et seq., Rules of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission, IDAPA 13.01.10, Rules Governing the Importation, Possession, Release, Sale, or Salvage of Wildlife.” The Department of Fish and Game has operated under this statutory authority for the regulation of permits concerning wildlife rehabilitation. Under IDAPA, the Department has adopted rules which specifically address enclosure requirements for the keeping of wildlife in captivity.¹⁶ They are as follows:

10. Cages or Enclosures. (7-1-93) a. It shall be required of each owner of big game animals to pen such animals in suitable pens and restrain them for inspection at any reasonable time when requested to do so by the Director or his representative. b. Big game animals, including bear and mountain lion shall be confined in enclosures that meet the following minimum requirements: (7-1-99) i. Has a floor made of cement or concrete at least three (3) inches thick into which metal fence stakes are permanently placed or a floor that consists of chain link or other material that will preclude the animal digging through the floor to escape; (7-1-93) ii. Has a chain link fence of at least eight (8) feet in height; (3-23-94) iii. Has a chain link cage top, or has any other Department approved configuration such as a pit that will preclude escape. (3-23-94) iv. Cages, fencing and guard rails shall be kept in good repair at all times and gates or doors shall be securely fastened and locked. (3-23-94)

c. All such cages and/or enclosures for big game animals shall be of sufficient size to give the animal confined ample space for exercise and to avoid being overcrowded. (3-23-94) i. The length of the cage or enclosure shall be a minimum of four (4) times the body length (tip of nose to base of tail) of the animal being kept. (3-23-94) ii. The width shall be at least three-fourths (3/4) of the minimum cage length. (3-23-94) iii. For the second animal housed in cage, floor space shall be increased twenty-five percent (25%) and for each additional animal housed in the cage, floor space shall be increased fifteen percent (15%). Cages with tops shall be of reasonable height to accommodate the animals contained therein. No nails or other sharp protrusions which might injure or impair the animal shall be allowed within the cages. (3-23-94) d. A suitable shelter or shield shall be provided for big game animals for protection from inclement weather and from the sun. (3-23-94) e. Cages or enclosures for big game animals shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition consistent with good animal husbandry. (3-23-94)

The National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA), of which IBBR is a member in good standing, recommends minimum enclosure sizes based on age groupings of black bears:¹⁷

Age	Infant	Nursing / Pre-Weaned	Juvenile / Adult	Injured Adult
Size	20 gallon	3x6x3 (18 sq.ft.)	20x36x16 (720 sq.ft.)	8x12x8 (96 sq.ft.)

These guidelines should be considered, however, in the full context of the NWRA publication. “Because wildlife patients undergoing rehabilitation are individuals, each with different injuries and unique behaviors, recommended cage sizes and techniques may not apply to every case. The wildlife rehabilitator is encouraged to alter techniques for housing, pre-release conditioning and other aspects of the rehabilitation process, so long as basic natural history, comfort, and hygiene needs are met. Cage dimensions can be modified to accommodate special needs of the facility, animal or new advancements in the field.”¹⁸ The NWRA goes further, stating that outdoor enclosures should provide “physical and psychological conditioning” opportunities and “allow animals to improve their strength, develop stamina and coordination, restore muscle tone, and acclimate to ambient weather conditions.”¹⁹

FACTS

IBBR CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL BEAR RESEARCH

According to a press release on the website of World Society of Protection of Animals (WSPA), “a three year joint study by WSPA and Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation (IBBR) gives solid proof that orphaned bear cubs raised in captivity can

develop into wild animals capable of surviving on their own”.²⁰ The release states that biologist, John Beecham designed the study and concluded that the opportunity to socialize with other bears during rehabilitation, quality habitat of release area and no human contact 7-10 days after release are critical elements of a successful reintroduction. IBBR is cited as providing all of the three criteria as part of the rehabilitation program. WSPA hopes that this study will serve as model to be used for “at risk” bear populations.²⁰

IBBR FACILITIES AND STANDARDS SET INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLE

In the publication, *Orphan Bear Cubs Rehabilitation and Release Guidelines*²¹, six (6) photographs of the facilities and bears of IBBR are shown throughout the publication and used as visual examples of rehabilitation enclosures, features of habitat enrichment, and of bears rehabilitated by IBBR being released back into the wild. Dietary requirements and feeding techniques are cited as well, using as an information source, *The Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Handbook*²², prepared by Sally Maughan of IBBR and based on her experiences of over twenty-five (25) years as a wildlife rehabilitator (nearly twenty (20) years of focus with the rehabilitation of black bears). Beecham’s publication²³ also stresses the importance of bears having the opportunity to socialize with other members of their species during rehabilitation; “most captive bears demonstrate some level of habituation to their caretaker...**No clear correlation appears to exist between release success rates for bears showing minimal habituation and those demonstrating significant levels of habituation to one or two caretakers, at least in situations where the cubs were allowed to socialize with other cubs in the enclosure.**”²³

REHABILITATION SUCCESS

During the period of 1989 to December 31, 2008, IBBR received one hundred ninety one (191) bears into the rehabilitation program. Age on arrival varied from three (3) weeks to two (2) years. Standard release periods were November 18 - December 27 and January 1 - July 27. Release weights varied between 50 lbs-214 lbs. Seven (7) bears died prior to release (less than 4%), thirty five (35) bears are known to have died after release due to human related factors (less than 19%) and one hundred forty five (145) released bears (nearly 76%) are believed to be alive based on data received as of June 2008.²⁴

FACILITY ENCLOSURES OF IBBR

Facilities of IBBR²⁵ include five (5) outdoor enclosures that can accommodate a variety of bear ages, medical conditions and smooth transitions into the populations of current resident bears in rehabilitation. Enclosures vary in length, width, height, enhancements, etc., so that they are tailored to accommodate the constantly varying needs of bears that enter the rehabilitation program.

Analysis of IBBR – June 2009
Prepared by Valerie M. LeBoeuf

A detailed examination of the enclosure sizes of IBBR is warranted in this discussion.

14 x 27 x 6 Temporary Interim Enclosure – can be divided
378 sq.ft.

8 x 24 x 6 Temporary Interim Enclosure – can be divided
192 sq.ft.

35 x 45 x 8 Winter Enclosure – can be divided
1575 sq.ft.

4 x 5 x 3.5 Deck Daytime Young Cub Enclosure
20 sq.ft.

40 x 100 x 10 Main Enclosure
4000 sq.ft.

The total sq.ft. in these enclosures equates to nearly 6200 sq.ft. of available floor space to bears in the rehabilitation program at any one time (excludes cubs that are kept indoors until they begin to spend time during the day in the deck enclosure). If these facilities were to be used for the **permanent captivity** of bears, the Accreditation Standards of the Zoological Association¹⁵ would **allow for fifty nine (59) bears** per the total sq.ft. available. If the enclosures are considered individually (excluding the space offered in the Deck Enclosure and the smaller Temporary Interim Enclosure), these same standards would **allow for fifty one (51) bears** at the facility. Based on these comparisons and the fact that bears in the rehabilitation program will spend on average, seven (7) months or less at the facility, the accommodations at IBBR could be deemed quite spacious.

Most important is the examination of enclosure size with the current IDAPA rules of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.¹⁶ IBBR meets the Department's requirement of eight (8) ft. height and a chain link cage top. If a weaned bear is considered at a length of five (5) ft (a generous size), then per the Department's current IDAPA regulations, **IBBR could house eighty two (82) bears** in its Main Enclosure (4000 s.f.) and **an additional twenty eight (28) bears** in its Winter Enclosure (1575 s.f.). IBBR has no intention of providing housing for one hundred ten (110) weaned bears at its current facility, however, IBBR is, and has been, in continuous compliance with the Department's IDAPA rules regarding enclosure requirements for captive wildlife.

Another factor for consideration is the natural variation of the influx/efflux of wildlife numbers entering the programs of rehabilitation facilities. Actual numbers of bears requiring rehabilitation care at any one facility can contrast yearly based on natural causes such as food supply which can be affected by drought or wildfire; human interference such as hunting or habitat encroachment; and the availability of other rehabilitation facilities in specific areas of impact.

Analysis of IBBR – June 2009
Prepared by Valerie M. LeBoeuf

The following data displays the numbers of bears onsite at IBBR – which has fluctuated throughout each year as well as year to year.²⁶

1989

1st Quarter – 0 bear
 2nd Quarter – 1 bear
 3rd Quarter – 1 bear
 4th Quarter – 1 bear

1991

1st Quarter – 0 bear
 2nd Quarter – 1 bear
 3rd Quarter – 1 bear
 4th Quarter – 1 bear

1992

1st Quarter – 0 bear
 2nd Quarter – 4 bears
 3rd Quarter – 4 bears
 4th Quarter – 3 bears

1993

1st Quarter – 1 bear
 2nd Quarter – 4 bears
 3rd Quarter – 4 bears
 4th Quarter – 4 bears

1994

1st Quarter – 0 bear
 2nd Quarter – 5 bear
 3rd Quarter – 8 bears
 4th Quarter – 12 bears

1995

1st Quarter – 3 bears
 2nd Quarter – 3 bears
 3rd Quarter – 0 bear
 4th Quarter – 0 bear

1996

1st Quarter – 2 bears
 2nd Quarter – 3 bears
 3rd Quarter – 3 bears
 4th Quarter – 3 bears

1997

1st Quarter – 3 bears
 2nd Quarter – 0 bear
 3rd Quarter – 0 bear
 4th Quarter – 0 bear

1998

1st Quarter – 0 bear
 2nd Quarter – 2 bears
 3rd Quarter – 2 bears
 4th Quarter – 10 bears

1999

1st Quarter – 10 bears
 2nd Quarter – 14 bears
 3rd Quarter – 14 bears
 4th Quarter – 14 bears

2000

1st Quarter – 0 bear
 2nd Quarter – 3 bears
 3rd Quarter – 9 bears
 4th Quarter – 22 bears

2001

1st Quarter – 12 bears
 2nd Quarter – 15 bears
 3rd Quarter – 6 bears
 4th Quarter – 6 bears

2002

1st Quarter – 6 bears
 2nd Quarter – 3 bears
 3rd Quarter – 4 bears
 4th Quarter – 6 bears

2003

1st Quarter – 6 bears
 2nd Quarter – 6 bears
 3rd Quarter – 0 bears
 4th Quarter – 1 bear

2004	2005
1 st Quarter – 2 bears	1 st Quarter – 41 bears
2 nd Quarter – 3 bears	2 nd Quarter – 41 bears
3 rd Quarter – 17 bears	3 rd Quarter – 1 bear
4 th Quarter – 37 bears	4 th Quarter – 1 bear
2006	2007
1 st Quarter – 2 bears	1 st Quarter – 9 bears
2 nd Quarter – 4 bears	2 nd Quarter – 13 bears
3 rd Quarter – 5 bears	3 rd Quarter – 24 bears
4 th Quarter – 9 bears	4 th Quarter – 53 bears
2008	
1 st Quarter – 32 bears	3 rd Quarter – 3 bears
2 nd Quarter – 32 bears	4 th Quarter – 6 bears

With the exception of the 4th Quarter of 2007, IBBR did not exceed the minimum size standards of permanent housing for captive black bears as set forth in the ZAA Accreditation Standards¹⁵; and capacity was only exceeded during this time period if the sizes of the two (2) smaller enclosures are not considered, and no consideration is given to the cubs that may not have required any outdoor enclosure space. This could be analyzed as well, however, it has already been demonstrated that the size of IBBR’s enclosures are more than adequate for the number of bears that have received rehabilitation services over the past nineteen and one half (19.5) years.

STANDARDS OF CARE AT IBBR

Over fourteen (14) pages in the *Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Handbook*²² are devoted to the nutritional needs of the black bears that are cared for by IBBR. Information ranging from specialized milk formulas, techniques for successful bottle feeding, weaning and the variety of food necessary for health and successful release fitness are covered. A protocol for the “daily routine” of food preparation, feeding, water supplies, observation is documented as well. The quality of the care provided – facility structures, food, enclosure enrichment, veterinary care, etc. – is evident by the fact that as of end 2008, only seven (7) bears have died during their time at IBBR. Statistically, that’s less than 4% of all bears cared for by IBBR and includes bears that have arrived after being hit by cars, suffering severe malnutrition, shot with bullets, covered with burrs, attacked by other animals, and suffering from broken bones. The fact that over 96% of the bears that arrive at IBBR are subsequently released is a testament to the quality and success of the care provided during rehabilitation.

IMPACT

INDIVIDUAL BEARS

The numbers themselves tell the story of impact on individual bears. To date, there is no other Idaho facility equipped and committed to the requirements of caring for

these potential numbers and the varying degrees of infirmity presented by individual bears. The only option for many of these individual bears would be euthanasia or letting “nature take its course”.

WORLDWIDE IMPACT

Numerous animal welfare organizations and world renowned bear “experts” have used the examples of IBBR’s facilities, standards of care and release success as a part of their own publications.

IMPACT ON SURROUNDING REGION

Over 67% of the bears entering the rehabilitation program of IBBR have been Idaho bears. However, IBBR has been providing rehabilitation services for bears from seven (7) other states as well. These various state fish & wildlife agencies have brought bears to IBBR since 1992 because of the lack of suitable facilities and rehabilitators in their own states and because of the international reputation for success that IBBR has built over the last nineteen and one half (19.5) years. Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Oregon, California – all have looked to IBBR for assistance with the rehabilitation and release (back in their own state) of approximately sixty two (62) bears.²⁷

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources assessed the release of fourteen (14) yearling black bears in 2005 that had been cared for by IBBR since the previous year, 2004. The study noted the mean weight of the bears at release (females 94 lbs, males 183 lbs) and remarked that “both males and females were larger than yearling bears found in the wild”.²⁸ It was also noted that “despite having spent several months in close proximity to people there was surprising little evidence to human habituation”.²⁹ The release of the rehabilitated bears was considered by researchers to be a success, and “It seems this may be a viable technique for augmenting existing populations. It may also be a way to establish new populations in unoccupied habitat.”³⁰

The “in house costs” of the rehabilitation of out-of-state black bears have been the responsibility of IBBR. At no time, during rehabilitation, have any out-of-state bears been documented as having or transmitting a disease to Idaho bears that could have a detrimental effect on Idaho bear populations.

CONCLUSION

The rehabilitation activities of Idaho Black Bear and Rehabilitation, Inc. have made worldwide impacts on the care, rehabilitation and release of various bear species. The methods and research generated by the activities of IBBR have been used by scientists worldwide as potential models for the restoration of threatened and endangered bears. Individual bears in both Idaho and other states have had the opportunity to rejoin

existing bear populations and contribute their own gene pools to provide the diversity which is essential to natural biological systems.

Individual members of the public have had the opportunity to become aware of a program that supports the notion that “one bear” does make a difference, and that “one person” can make a positive impact on wildlife populations. The chance to report an orphaned or injured bear; the knowledge that their individual concern will result in that bear receiving humane and appropriate care; and that because of their initial action, a bear will be returned to the wild – this is the beginning of fostering an inherent position that all citizens have a stake in the environment and its wildlife populations.

State agencies responsible for the protection of wildlife species benefit by having IBBR take on the responsibility of time, facility and the financial ramifications, of providing rehabilitation services for black bears. The general public is generally not aware that various wildlife agencies are not mandated by law to provide that type of care for wild animals.

Nothing in this analysis indicates an inadequacy of the facilities or methods of IBBR for the successful rehabilitation of black bears in Idaho. An examination of various federal, state, zoological standards of care and reports/presentations of wildlife biologists, point to the conclusion that the facility design, size and techniques of IBBR have resulted in significant levels of rehabilitation success. Neither behavioral maladaptations, nor health issues have been recorded to have developed because of overcrowding, lack of behavioral stimulation or inappropriate habituation.

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28. Heward, Joshua D. 2005. *Final Report: 2005 Yearling Black Bear Release in the Book Cliffs*. Prepared for Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Pg. 2.
29. Ibid. Pg 3
30. Ibid. Pg. 7