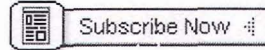
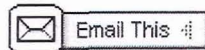


12-13-2004



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Center needs help to keep roof over black bears' heads

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The Idaho Statesman | Edition Date: 12-13-2004

Ask the average Idahoan to imagine where black bears live, and chances are their thoughts will turn to the state's natural landscapes: beautiful forests, rugged mountains and sparkling rivers.

But don't count out the densely populated Treasure Valley — 33 black bears live at a rehabilitation center in Garden City, which is devoted to returning cubs back to the wild.

Workers and volunteers at Idaho Black Bear Rehab Inc. say they have a record number of bears this year and are asking for the public's help to make space for them.

"Everything blossomed out of control this year," said Sally Maughan, the center's president.

The rehabilitation center usually takes in about eight to 10 bear cubs a year, Maughan said, but "each year is a little different."

Because of the large influx, the center has reached the maximum number of bears it can handle. In addition to Idaho bears, the center also takes in bears from states including Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Wyoming. Idaho Fish and Game estimates there are about 20,000 black bears in Idaho.

Maughan hopes to add on to the facility's main enclosure, but is having trouble raising the money. A permanent cover, allowing the center to add more dens, is needed, she said.

The center, which is licensed by Idaho Fish and Game, typically releases black bears either in winter or in spring, just after the spring hunt. Since they began operations, the center has released 89 bears back into their natural habitat.

Only two of those have become problem bears, Maughan said.

The most likely explanation for this year's influx of bears to the rehab center is a combination of changes in the bears' food sources, and an overall human attitude shift

Enlarge



Photo courtesy

Because of the record number of bears at Idaho Black Bear Rehab, the facility built three additional dens, but they already are full. A roof is needed over the main enclosure to add more dens and keep the bears dry.

How to help

Sally Maughan of Idaho Black Bear Rehab Inc. said the center's needs include:

Financial support. Money would go toward purchasing materials and paying workers needed to construct additional roofing.

Labor. Anyone with construction experience to help build additional coverage.

• Donated materials.

Wood, cement and colored tin roofing.

To help the center, send e-mail to info@bearrehab.org, or call Sally Maughan after working hours at 853-3105.

Related Links

[Idaho Bear Rehab Inc.](#)

about predators, Maughan said.

People go out of their way now to help orphaned or injured bears when they have positive attitudes toward them, she said.

Maughan isn't complaining about this year's bear bonanza, though. "I can't imagine my life without them," she said.

Belinda Isley, a volunteer at the center, said Maughan's work to give black bear cubs a second chance has drawn widespread regard.

"Sally is known as a bear rehabber," Isley said. "She's had great success rehabilitating them."