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Bear that survived tornado shot dead by camper

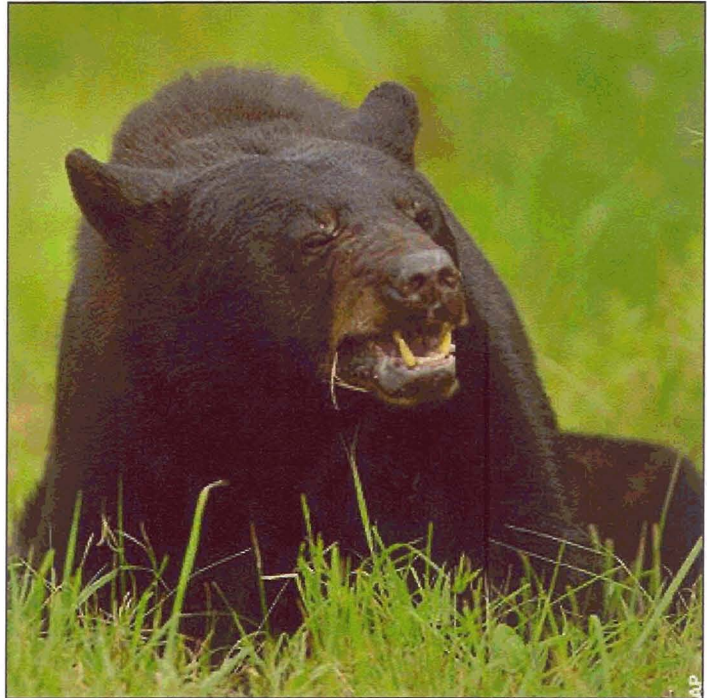
By Sally Peck and agencies

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A young black bear, orphaned and rehabilitated after a freak Idaho tornado, has been shot and killed by a camper after she nosed her way into his tent.

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The yearling female, dubbed "Twister" by animal rescuers at the Idaho Black Bear Rehabilitation Center in Boise, was teetering on the edge of starvation following the June, 2006, tornado, when she was found alone and weighing only seven pounds (three kilograms).



The rehabilitation centre cares for orphaned bears that might otherwise be sent to zoos or circuses

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After her June 23 release, a game manager spotted the bear several times around campgrounds, foraging for food.

To improve her chances of survival, he recaptured Twister in late August and relocated her to a more remote area. But she returned to populated areas and was sighted several times at campsights.

On Sept 20, Twister's boldness in her search for food went too far, and she nosed her way into the camper's tent.

A man who later contacted the Department of Fish and Game told agents the bear entered his tent at about 2am. Frightened by a rare attack three months earlier in northern Utah, in which a black bear killed an 11-year-old boy, the man decided not to take any chances and shot Twister.

Sally Maughan, who runs the bear rehabilitation centre, admitted that she had grown attached to the young cub.

"She tried so long and so hard to survive, so you'd like to have thought that there was a longer life for her," Ms Maughan told the Associated Press. "But there's nothing we could do differently. She made her decision, and it cost her life. I wish it hadn't happened — but now I've got 45 other bears to worry about."

State wildlife officials said record heat, devastating wildfires, drought and the failure of this summer's wild berry crop have driven more and more wildlife, including bears, moose and elk into closer proximity to humans.

The four other bears released with Twister are also dead, killed in separate instances by hunters since August, making 2007 the first year that an entire crop of bears raised at the rehabilitation centre has died in the first year of freedom.

Of the 150 bears rescued by the centre in 18 years, only two prior to Twister have become "nuisance bears" and had to be destroyed, Ms Maughan said.

Supported by the London-based [World Society for the Protection of Animals](#), the centre takes in orphaned bears that might otherwise be sent to zoos or circuses and, after training them, releases them into the wild.
