

International Bear News



Tri-Annual Newsletter of the
International Association for
Bear Research and Management (IBA)
and the IUCN/SSC Bear Specialist Group

Summer 2018 Vol. 27 no. 2



Illustration of Asiatic black bear (by Mohammad Rasoul Haghani), used on a poster created by Hadi Fahimi to convey information about the Baluchistan bear (*Ursus thibetanus gedrosianus*) of Iran. Read more on asiatic black bears in articles starting on page 6, 11, 12, 21.

Table of Contents

INTERNATIONAL BEAR NEWS

- 3 International Bear News, ISSN #1064-1564

IBA PRESIDENT/IUCN BSG Co-CHAIRS

- 4 President's Column
- 6 A Tribute to Three Bear Biologists, Tennessee to Iran, and Thoughts on Mentoring

IBA MEMBER NEWS

- 11 In Memoriam: Hadi Fahimi, 1980–2018

CONSERVATION

- 12 Bear Parts Use in Vietnam: Do We Know as Much as We Think We Do?
- 13 Use of Small Explosives are a Threat to Sloth Bears in India
- 15 Status of the Japanese Black Bear in Shikoku Island, Japan, and the Conservation Project Launched by Japan Bear Network

MANAGER'S CORNER

- 17 Post-Release Conflicts with Humans by Captive-Rehabilitated New Mexico Black Bears
- 18 Florida Provides Over \$2.1 million to Local Governments to Reduce Human-Bear Conflicts

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP SUMMARY

- 19 1st BSG Sloth Bear Expert Team Meeting Sets Stage for Coordinated Research and Conservation
- 21 1st National Bear Conservation Workshop Held in Myanmar

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 23 26th International Conference on Bear Research & Management

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

- 23 24th Eastern Black Bear Workshop, April 22 – 25, 2019. Potosi, Missouri

STUDENT FORUM

- 24 Your Online Presence
- 24 Truman Listserv and Facebook Page

PUBLICATIONS

- 25 Recent Bear Literature

CORRECTION

- 29 Correction: Spring 2018 Issue

IBA OFFICERS & COUNCIL

- 30 Executive Council Members and Ex-Officio Members

BSG EXPERT TEAM CHAIRS

- 31 Bear Specialist Group Team Chairs

Table of Contents

International Bear News, ISSN #1064-1564

Tri-Annual newsletter of the International Association for Bear Research and Management

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International Bear News welcomes articles about biology, conservation, and management of the world's eight bear species. Submissions of about 750 words are preferred, and photos, drawings, and charts are appreciated. Submissions to regional correspondents by email are preferred; otherwise, mail or fax to the address above. IBA reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit submissions.



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Consult website for submission guidelines. Deadline for the Fall 2018 issue is 05 October 2018.



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The use of the IBA logo at the end of an article indicates articles submitted via the IBA regional correspondents and the IBN editorial staff.



The use of the BSG logo at the end of an article indicates articles submitted via the Bear Specialist Group.



The use of the IBA-BCF logo at the beginning of an article signifies work that was supported, at least in part, by the Bear Conservation Fund through an IBA grant.

IBA President

President's Column

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Onwards and Upwards

The abbreviation "OW process" has become a common phrase in IBA Council lingo. It refers to the so-called Oliver Wyman process, i.e., the review of IBA by the management consultant company Oliver Wyman (OW) that has resulted in a blueprint on how to restructure our current professional organization of bear biologists to a larger, professionally-staffed and broader-reaching organization with a greatly increased budget to increase IBA's impact with our primary goal, the science-based conservation of bear populations in the world. Council has voted favorably on a vote for IBA to develop and adapt the OW plan and to transform IBA into a professional organization. Based on this vote, Council has taken several steps to move forward with this transition. These steps can be divided into the 4 main tasks of: organizational building, fund raising, developing a core conservation strategy, as well as communication with members and member approval of organizational change. Below I outline the main content of each task and how Council is working with it.

Organizational building

Council has prepared a timeline for the implementation of several work streams from 2018 until 2020. This timeline functions as an outline of the transition process as well as the work steps necessary. As an all-volunteer organization, the current Council, Executive Officers in particular, are maxed out with the current workload so, hiring staff will be key for the implementation of this transition. We have met with the directors of Polar Bears International as well as with the Chief Operating Officer of National Audubon Society for general advice on how to approach such a transition process. These discussions, along with feedback from OW, formed the basis for staff position descriptions, such as an Executive Director (ED) and a Director of Transition/Capacity Building (DT/CB). The ED should report to a Board of Directors and the DT/CB should report to IBA Council.

In short, the ED should have the strategic and operational responsibility for IBA's conservation programs. Whereas overall course direction and operating philosophy will continue to be set by IBA Council, the main tasks of an ED will be to lead the fundraising efforts, develop and implement the IBA's strategic vision, and to implement a new model for soliciting, prioritizing, and funding proposals for research and conservation projects. Council has put together a Committee to lead the search for the ED. The team consists of IBA members, Council, and external professionals.

The first main task for a DT/CB will be to lead the search team for the ED. Once the ED is hired, the DT/CB will work closely with the ED in understanding IBA's structure and operations workflow, to maintain the services and opportunities for IBA members, work together on fund raising efforts, and to develop capacity building programs designed to build regional scientific and conservation expertise. OW was adamant that the DT/CB needs to be a person with intimate knowledge of IBA, and Council fully agrees with this assessment. Draft position descriptions for both positions are currently under review by Council.

Fundraising

No transition or hiring of staff is possible without a solid financial basis. Council is currently working on a sustainable financial plan, and has managed to obtain a significant amount as seed funding for a transition process. However, more funds are needed, and one of the main tasks of Council and any potentially hired staff must be to obtain additional funding. As members of IBA, if you have any suggestions or thoughts for sources of additional fund raising opportunities, we always welcome comments and encourage you to contact a Council member with your thoughts.

Conservation strategy

OW strongly pushed the need for a "pitch" that outlines IBA's conservation strategy and goals. A pitch is essential when approaching potential donors or for applying for grants and other funding opportunities. A draft conservation strategy is currently under review by Council.

Communication with Members and Member Approval of Organizational Change

Crucial for the proposed transition of IBA into a larger, professionally-staffed and broader-reaching organization is the support of our membership. The results of the 2015 membership survey clearly showed that members want IBA to command a higher profile on the world conservation stage and play a bigger, more impactful role in conservation of bears, in part by providing far more funding for on-the-ground bear science and conservation work. As a note of interest, our membership has grown substantially since 2011 when from 2011-2014 numbers were consistently between 300-350 and since 2014 membership numbers have been between 500-550.

However, a question presents itself: How does Council strike the balance between taking bold steps forward in making leadership decisions and keeping the membership informed and involved, while building and maintaining their full support? As elected Council, our authority to make decisions is vested in us through the Bylaws, and it is our understanding of the Bylaws that IBA Council can hire people for the above described positions. However, Council will seek legal support to ensure that the bylaws fully approve organizational and structural changes.

But, how should Council approach membership for their support and approval? Based on many internal Council discussions, as well as advice from OW and other organizations, I believe it is best to draft the working business and governance plans we need to articulate and accomplish these goals, and to propose an appropriate set of revised Bylaws to the membership. This is the process IBA has used in the past for structural changes, and it is what the Bylaws specify. However, prior to such a potential vote, Council will provide detailed information on the process via electronic outlets, such as eblasts and the IBA website.

I strongly believe that the membership will be in support to transition IBA to a larger, professionally-staffed and broader-reaching organization with a greatly increased budget, as long as we stay true to our objectives, stay financially responsible, and do not neglect or stray from the programs and attributes that our members currently value so much. We hope that with this transition, IBA will be able to provide more support to conserve and manage all 8 bear species in the world, not just to areas of high risk. I encourage you to visit the IBA membership meeting at the upcoming IBA conference in Slovenia, where we will provide more information about IBA's future.

LIFE WITH BEARS – THE NEXT IBA CONFERENCE IS AROUND THE CORNER!

Slovenia is hosting the coming IBA conference in the beautiful city of Ljubljana from September 16-21, 2018. It promises to be a great conference with 7 exciting sessions: Human-bear interactions and management; Bears and society; Bear ecology, behaviour and physiology; Bears and climate change; BSG session; Spatial requirements and demographic characteristics of bear populations; and Molecular genetics in bear conservation and management. In addition, 4 workshops are planned, including topics ranging from bear personalities, genetic monitoring, bear monitoring in Southeast Asia, as well as on bridging the gap between in situ and ex situ research. If you wish to attend one of the workshops, make sure to visit the conference website and select the workshop you would like to attend. Several excursions to UNESCO world heritage sites are planned, and I can promise spectacular scenery!

Slovenia shares a rich cultural heritage with southeastern as well as central Europe, and is a microcosm of Europe in itself. In "Europe's green heart" you can travel within 3 hours from the incredible scenery of rugged mountains in the North through luscious beech forest to the dry karst region and have a delicious fish dinner at the Adriatic sea in the South. Slovenia and Slovenians are famous for their hospitality and for their delicious and hearty foods; be sure to taste some kranjska klobása or krvavi cremeschnitte along the road. Also, Slovenia has spirit...so be sure to follow up both dishes with some slivovica! Please find more information at <https://lifewithbears.eu/>. Vidim se v Sloveniji!



IUCN BSG Co-Chairs

A Tribute to Three Bear Biologists, Tennessee to Iran, and Thoughts on Mentoring

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Much has been written about how people from 5 generations interact within the global workforce. Mentoring is a common theme, deemed crucial to success in many fields, especially science. A mentor can change one's life: open a new way of thinking; provide advice, encouragement, and opportunities; and set one on a career path. Likewise, the act of mentoring is self-satisfying; provides deeper learning; and widens one's perspectives and interpersonal relationships.

Here I provide some reflections on mentoring in the world of bear research and conservation. Mentoring is a personal relationship, and so this column is personal. The subject matter was prompted by some recent events, both celebratory and sad.

Mike Pelton: One of the Original Bear Mentors

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first seeds of the IBA: an informal gathering of 49 North American bear biologists in the Yukon Territory of Canada in 1968. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of continuous research on American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) at the University of Tennessee. That remarkable long-term research was started by my mentor, Dr. Mike Pelton. Mike's extraordinary career in bear research began with a request to study bears in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP), Tennessee, prompted by declining sightings there. Mike chose to make the best of that initial opportunity by mentoring a string of 53 graduate students, who studied bears in the GSMNP, other sites in southeastern U.S., and internationally. The GSMNP research remains the longest continuous study of any bear species in the world.

In May 2018, many of Mike's previous graduate students flew to Tennessee from as far away as California, Alaska, and even Malaysia to celebrate this 50th anniversary of bear research (which is still-ongoing, now led by Joe Clark). We shared many bear stories and photos from the past, and also enjoyed presentations on some current research. Most attendees were no longer involved in bear research, and indeed many had long ago switched to other wildlife-related professions or something entirely different. But all had one thing in common: an obvious deep respect for their mentor, and a lifelong apprecia-



Corey Pelton

Corey Pelton

Reunion of past graduate students who were part of the "50 years of bear research" at the University of Tennessee. Mentors of these past students, Mike Pelton (far left, standing) and Joe Clark (standing next to Mike)(Mike and Joe also in separate photo) have had an immeasurable impact on bear research and management, especially considering the multiplier effect of these former students mentoring others.

tion for the opportunity afforded to them as a graduate student under his tutelage. Coming back for a reunion was a way of reconnecting with old colleagues and meeting new ones, but mostly as a way of showing the respect and admiration for a person who provided a pivotal role in each of our lives.

I am a proud member of the first decadal group (1970s grads) of Mike's students. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have been a part of that. I was able to study bears only because another student had to drop out due to unfortunate circumstances, and Mike allowed me to take his place. Forty-two years later I still vividly reflect on the fortuitousness of that event in my life. I have come to the realization that so much of who you become is not merely your own doing, but singular events that direct you in one way or another. It was important for me to attend the reunion to come back to the place where I got my start. I also had the chance to relive some of that start, including a hike up the trail that I had hiked almost every day, trapping or tracking bears -- and almost out of a storybook, was treated to an extended observation of a mother and 2 yearlings feeding on spring foods along the trailside. Such sightings of bears in the GSMNP are common now, testament that the research informed successful management.

It's hard to thank someone enough for providing the opportunity that paves the way for the profession that you cherish daily. I hope the magnificent turnout at the 50th reunion did that.

But that reunion also gave me the chance to think about how many further people were mentored by those who were mentored by Mike. And of course that's the same for that whole first-generation of bear biologists, who are mainly now retired, but whose mentoring now extends to a third generation. The full impact of these early mentors on the world of bear biology and management is incalculable.

Mentoring through the BSG

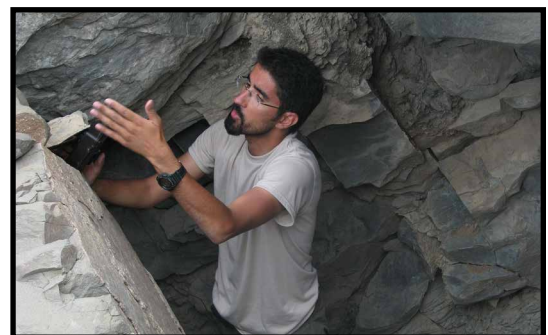
One of the chief aims of the Bear Specialist Group is to support younger biologists who are working to conserve bears across the globe. We do this by providing a network of people who freely share information and opinions, by creating an atmosphere for intellectual discovery, by writing formal letters of support, and by allowing members to use their BSG credentials as evidence of their designation as an acknowledged "bear specialist". We know that on some occasions, the BSG name has helped to sway conservation-related decisions. But more often, being a BSG member simply confers a confidence that peers and mentors in the organization consider your efforts to be worthy. This is good to know when working in the field of conservation, where it is often frustratingly difficult to document success (Garshelis and Steinmetz 2018).

Recent events prompt me to single out 2 individuals whose exemplary work was partially aided by BSG mentoring. I had the opportunity to meet both of them on separate occasions at IBA conferences, and in both cases was struck by their enthusiasm for conserving a population of bears that has been of great interest to me – the so-called Baluchistan bear.

The Baluchistan bear is a subspecies of Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus gedrosianus*) that inhabits the Baluchistan region of southeastern Iran and southwestern Pakistan. In the 1996 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals, this was the only extant subspecies of Ursidae singled out for a separate listing (Critically Endangered). It is likely the most isolated population, or collection of populations, of Asiatic black bear. It certainly is the most ecologically distinct subspecies of Asiatic black bear, living in a sparsely-vegetated arid region at the western extremity of its range. Since the first scientific documentation of the existence of this bear in 1877, little was known about it until the past decade, whereupon some of the best young wildlife researchers/pioneers in Iran made it their life's quest.

Taher Ghadirian

In 2009, Taher Ghadirian, then age 27 with an M.S. degree from Islamic Azad University in Tehran, began a project on Asiatic black bears in Hormozgan Province, Iran. This province is situated along the Persian Gulf, where the climate is exceedingly hot (sometimes >120°F or 49°C) and humid. Except for a photograph from the 1980s, there were no documented records of Asiatic black bears living in this harsh environment. Taher's team began a camera-trapping effort and found that the species was more widespread than even thought to have occurred historically. Two counties were identified as priority target areas for further research, having good bear populations but with high conflicts due to crop raiding and livestock depredation. Taher's team initiated an extensive review of the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the local people in order to most effectively work with them toward improved bear conservation in the face of these conflicts. After 4 years of gaining an understanding of bear distribution and people's interactions and attitudes toward bears, Taher's team completed a "Strategic plan for the conservation



Azar Sedaghati Khayat

Taher Ghadirian setting a camera trap in a cave used by Baluchistan Bears, Iran.

IUCN BSG Co-Chairs

Azar Sedaghati Khayat



Taher Ghadirian (back right) mentoring students in Iran on the ecology and national heritage of the uniquely-adapted Baluchistan bear (Asiatic black bear).

primary source of accurate, up-to-date information on the Iranian black bear population. He was an essential contributor to the *Ursus thibetanus* Red List account and range map. He worked through the BSG to contribute a series of fascinating articles on the biology and conservation of Baluchistan bears for this newsletter (Ghadirian et al. 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Khayat et al. 2015). Last year he wrote an article about a unique and innovative connection between local people's handicrafts and bear conservation. He submitted it to *International Bear News* and requested that the authors be identified simply as "the Asiatic black bear project of Hormozgan". When I told him that we required a list of author names, he chose as first author a local person whom he had recently met, and who had volunteered to assist with the project (Arianejad et al. 2017).

From frequent BSG-related correspondence with Taher I knew that one of his goals was to help select sites for new protected areas in Hormozgan Province dedicated to the conservation of Asiatic black bears, but which would not conflict with the livelihoods of local people. We had even seriously discussed radio-collaring some bears (he knew of some hotspots that they regularly used, where trapping might be successful); this could provide information about habitat requirements and amount of area needed to protect them, as well as draw more attention from the public and government officials (there's nothing like a few individual collared bears to do that). But all this work was abruptly terminated for reasons that cannot be discussed here.

It is my sincere hope that this letter of support from all his colleagues in the BSG, highlighting Taher's extraordinary dedication to conservation of this iconic subspecies and his demonstrated successes, enable him to go back to that task where he is so needed.

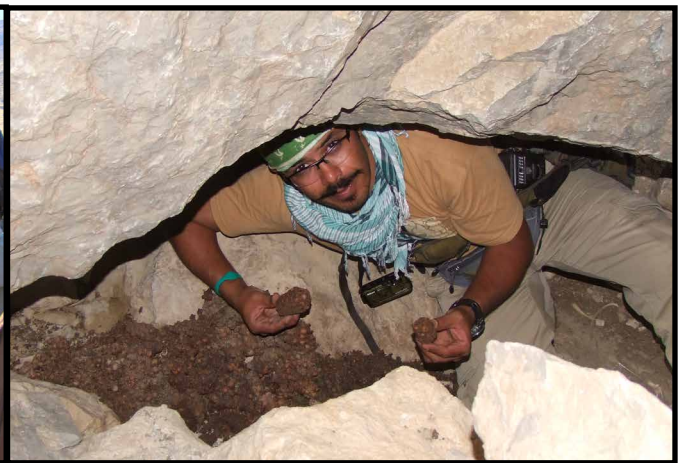
Hadi Fahimi

Hadi Fahimi began work on Baluchistan bears in 2008, initially for his MSc thesis. He has since worked in all 3 Iranian provinces where they occur: Kerman, Sistan & Baluchestan, and Hormozgan. He initiated a major effort to collect all known

Barbod Safaei



(left) Hadi Fahimi mentoring colleagues on camera trapping, Bamu National Park, Fars Province, Iran.



(right) Hadi Fahimi investigating Baluchistan bear scats in Darukan cave, Sistan & Baluchestan Province, Nikshahr, Iran.

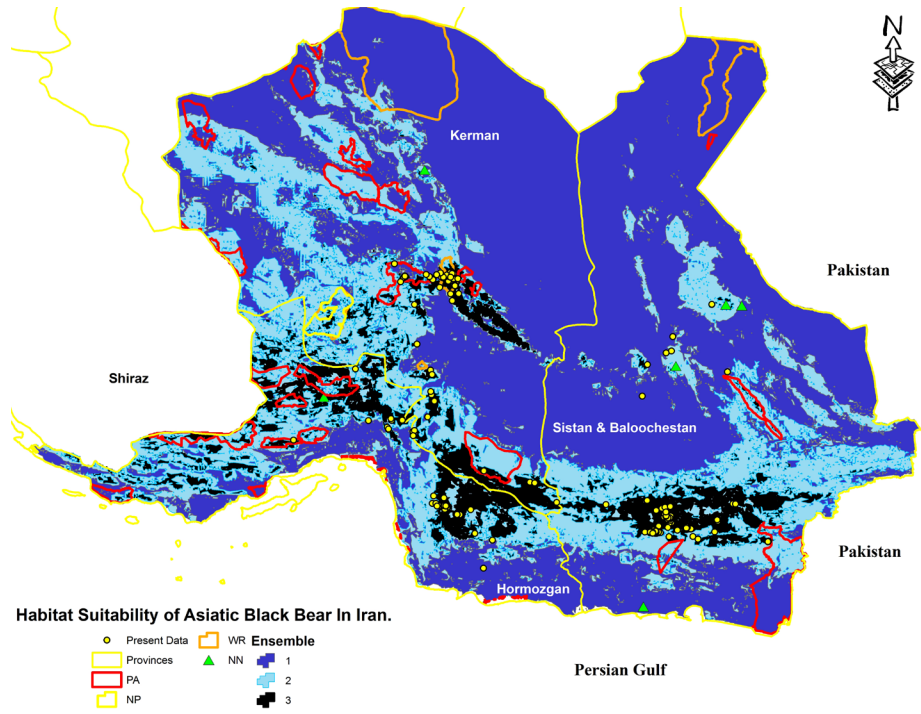
Barbod Safaei

bear presence points across this region, so as to accurately map and model the occurrence of the species and to discern the extent of connectivity/fragmentation of the various populations (as of 3 years ago, he had accumulated over 700 points). This was to be Hadi's PhD work. I had hoped to take him on as a PhD student, but we couldn't find sufficient funding to cover the expenses at a U.S. university, so last year he went on to become a PhD candidate at Islamic Azad University in Tehran.

But a tragic commuter plane crash took Hadi's life (please see obituary, page 11). When I heard the horrifying news, I remembered a wonderfully friendly, thoughtful, and energetic guy who I spent a half-day with in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2010. That same year I was a peer-reviewer of a paper that he published on the Baluchistan bears' peculiar use of caves (for refuge when feeding near humans and also relief from the summer heat; Fahimi et al. 2011). Hadi's eagerness to work with me to improve his paper was refreshing. We corresponded for a few years after that, and based on his growing achievements and his aspirations for innovative conservation actions, I appointed him as a BSG member in 2014. He listed this achievement as the #1 highlight on his CV in 2018, and he took full advantage of this membership to share his knowledge and gain knowledge from others.

Hadi's latest work, published posthumously (Fahimi et al. 2018) showed that seeds germinating from scats of Baluchistan bears may help to reforest this bear's own habitat — a novel idea that may foster more support of this bear from local people.

I understand that Hadi's wife Nahid hopes to carry on with some of the work that he was involved in, and to her I offer the BSG's continued mentorship.



Map of habitat suitability derived from presence points of Baluchistan bears across 3 provinces of southeastern Iran — a project that was in process by Hadi Fahimi.

Poster used to convey information about the Baluchistan bear (*Ursus thibetanus gedrosianus*) of Iran, created by Hadi Fahimi.

"I don't care what you do for a living—if you do it well I'm sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor." — Denzel Washington

Acknowledgements

I thank Azar Sedaghati Khayat and Arash Ghoddousi for helping to pull together the information on their colleagues, Taher and Hadi.

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In Memoriam: Hadi Fahimi, 1980–2018

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Hadi Fahimi was on board an Iranian passenger plane with 65 other people when it crashed into the Zagros Mountains en route from Tehran to Yasuj on Sunday, February 18, 2018. Nobody survived.

Hadi was a blossoming biologist focusing on the rare Baluchistan bear, a subspecies of Asiatic black bear. He worked on this species for his Masters degree in Habitat and Biodiversity Conservation from Islamic Azad University, completed in 2011. In 2017 he began pursuing a PhD from that university, again focusing on this rare bear.

Hadi worked on a host of different species, including ungulates, cheetahs, and brown bears, and was known as one of the best field herpetologists in Iran. He was also involved in many different conservation projects, especially targeting students and teachers. He was a perpetual teacher and nature guide. But most notably, Hadi was one of a small handful of people to devote his career to understanding the Baluchistan bear. He had already invested 10 years of his life in that quest, and was recognized as an accomplished field biologist. He was successful because he was observant and diligent at collecting data, and he developed a network of collaborators and contacts. His recent aim was to identify habitat fragments and corridors important to Baluchistan bears, which should be prioritized for conservation.

Hadi learned that conserving this species required much more than understanding its biology and ecology. Hence he spent much effort promoting community awareness and helping to alleviate human–bear conflicts. He cared deeply for local people, and wanted to ensure that they were compensated for losses and personal harm from bears, while also hoping that they could generate some revenue associated with bear conservation.

Hadi and his team learned from local people that in some parts of their range, Baluchistan bears regularly used caves. They scientifically documented this unusual behavior for the first time, and pointed to the need to conserve this valuable resource. Hadi led in the publication of that work, as well as a 2018 paper on seeds germinating from scats of bears, and how this discovery could also aid in their conservation.

In 2014 Hadi was appointed membership in the IUCN/SSC Bear Specialist Group, signifying his recognition as a leading bear expert and conservationist. The IUCN is the largest, most respected conservation organization in the world. Bear Specialist Group members are selected based on their professional achievements and demonstrated active work in bear conservation. For the past 4 years, Hadi was an active member, frequently providing new details of his work, and always desiring intellectual input from others. He was a passionate scientist, naturalist, and conservationist, and will be dearly missed.



Barbod Safaei



Mehdi Chalani

(top) Hadi was an accomplished field herpetologist (Latifi's viper, *Montivipera latifii*), but his first love was (bottom) Asiatic black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*).



Bear Parts Use in Vietnam: Do We Know as Much as We Think We Do?

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The bear conservation community recognizes the use of bear bile as a prevalent and persistent problem in Vietnam. New research has shown that use of farmed bear bile may be diminishing as bear farms are closed throughout Vietnam (Crudge et al. 2018), yet wild bear bile may still be popular. Research performed in the neighboring country of Laos showed that wild bear bile was significantly more sought-after than farmed, among both Lao PDR nationals and Chinese nationals (Davis et al. 2016). In Vietnam, Crudge et al. (2018) reported that owners of bear bile farms thought that consumers' preference for wild bile drove the decline in farmed bile business.

Drury's (2009) research in Vietnam, now nearly a decade old, showed that bear bile (and various derivatives thereof) was widely believed to be an effective medicine among the middle to upper-middle class individuals she surveyed in Hanoi. Vu (2010) also studied bear bile use in three major cities in Vietnam (Hanoi, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City) and found results similar to Drury (2009), as well as spatial variation between regions. However, since this work, little research has been performed into consumer rationales and motivations for bear bile use in Vietnam, despite the changing landscape of bile farming (Crudge et al. 2018). Additionally, to our knowledge no research has been performed into other uses of bear parts (such as bear leather for handbags and wallets).

In 2017, a research team comprised of members of San Diego Zoo Global, TRAFFIC Vietnam, and Animals Asia initiated a two-pronged approach aimed at improving understanding of bear parts use in Vietnam. The first prong of the study, led by TRAFFIC Vietnam, was conducted in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, where 432 and 912 people were surveyed, respectively. These surveys were designed to broadly understand consumer intentions, the mechanics of use, the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of consumers, and the demographic groups using bear parts. Additionally, a series of qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted, to provide context to the patterns seen in the questionnaire data. The second phase, led by Animals Asia, was a self-administered, mail-in survey of registered traditional medicine practitioners (TMPs) throughout Vietnam. A sample of 800 surveys was achieved. This survey was intended to: discern whether bear bile is still considered effective by TMPs; understand what common ailments bear products are prescribed for; and identify which demographic groups bear products are typically prescribed for.

Together, the results of these 2 surveys will provide a more comprehensive picture of medical use of bear parts in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Preliminary results so far reveal a more



Two Asiatic black bears (*Ursus thibetanus*) used for bile farming in Vietnam look out from a small cage. Although farming bears for bile is technically illegal in Vietnam, and many farms have been phased out, the practice persists through exploitation of legal loopholes.

Free the Bears

complex, spatially-variable pattern of use than previously reported. Generally, it is hoped that the information collected from both consumers and influencers may help to overcome the barriers in effecting behavioral changes in use of bear bile. Understanding such barriers to implementation is vital for creating targeted, effective conservation marketing campaigns (Bennett et al. 2017, Verissimo et al. 2018). This is particularly vital in conservation, where time and money are limited.

Although we are hopeful that our research will be a valuable addition to current knowledge about use of bear parts in Vietnam, there are still significant gaps. Whereas rural people comprise over half the Vietnamese population (Indexmundi.com 2018), this segment has not been sampled to the same extent as urban areas of Vietnam. The most recent study of this segment of the population was in 2011, and was focused primarily on the northern part of Vietnam (Vu 2012). As one of the largest consumer markets of illegal wildlife in the world, there is pressing need to more fully understand the motivations of all potential users in Vietnam.

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Use of Small Explosives are a Threat to Sloth Bears in India

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For 6 months in 2017, the field research team of Wildlife SOS had been tracking a radio-collared wild sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*) in the forests of Bannerghatta National Park on the outskirts of Bangalore in Karnataka. The female bear was not originally from the park but from an area roughly 30 km away. She had been translocated there because she was a problem bear, believed to be responsible for attacking and killing a local person. Before she was released into the park, Wildlife SOS had received permission to put a very high frequency, Global Positioning System (VHF/GPS store-on-board) collar on her.

Conservation

After about 6 months she seemed to be doing very well and settling into a specific area based on the data we were collecting through tracking her by VHF triangulation. And she rarely (though occasionally) entered the border areas outside the park where there were farms and small villages. We were happy to see that she was staying out of trouble and spending the vast majority of her time within the park. We were even able to get some camera-trap photos of her on December 6, 2017. She looked great—healthy and active! The WSOS researchers were all encouraged by how she was doing, and we were eager to see the finer detail GPS data being collected and stored in her collar.

On January 21, however, the signal location from this bear had not moved all day. She was eventually found dead. We conducted a full necropsy, but this was unnecessary, as the cause of death was immediately evident. She had bitten into an explosive device (a “country-made bomb”), hidden in a food bait. Her entire tongue, roof of the upper mandible, and skull were severely damaged. As if this was not enough, during the necropsy we discovered that she had been pregnant with two fetuses. The only bit of good news was that we were able to salvage and recover the collar from the dead bear, which enabled us to retrieve the GPS data of her movements.

These home-made explosive devices are known to be used throughout Southeast Asia by farmers to remove depredating wildlife, and poachers to obtain certain wildlife parts; but they are unselective, and kill any other unfortunate wild animal whose curiosity got the better of it. We were aware that these explosive devices were being used in southern India and had documented several sloth bear deaths over time, however the issue never really grabbed our attention — until now. The death of this valuable radio-collared bear indicated to us that this was potentially a real threat and prompted us to investigate further and dig into our records. Our investigations also revealed local witnesses who confirmed many other cases. Since August 2014, we documented 8 sloth bear fatalities in the southern Indian state of Karnataka alone. Six of the 8 bears were females confirming that this is indeed impacting the population.

The making, possession and use of these explosives are illegal in India, yet they seem to be commonly used in southern India, particularly Karnataka. They are generally made from mining supplies and used to kill Indian boars (*Sus scrofa cristatus*) for their meat. The people who use them tend to put them out during the night and pick them up in the morning before cattle or humans can be injured, which could get them into a great deal of trouble with local authorities as that would be a non-bailable offence and a heinous crime. Unfortunately, despite these incidents being reported to the authorities, the threat to wildlife is not taken as seriously and action is yet to be taken against these offenders, which likely emboldens them further. Sloth bears and wild boars are not the only species threatened by these explosives: we are aware of reports of elephants that lost a limb, trunk or jaw to these baited explosives.

Moving forward, Wildlife SOS will continue investigations into the use of these explosives for poaching wildlife in India, while pushing for law enforcement to control this serious threat to India’s wildlife.

Known sloth bear fatalities caused by baited explosives in Karnataka, India.

Incident	Date	District / Division	Location	Sex
1	Aug 26, 2014	Tumkur	Tumkur	Female
2	Mar 11, 2015	Ramnagara	Ramnagara	Female
3	Jun 13, 2016	Ramnagara	Sathanoor	Female
4	Jul 31, 2016	Ramnagara	Sathanoor Range	Male
5	May 1, 2017	Chikkamangalur	Kaddur	Female
6	May 19, 2017	Chikkamangalur	Kaddur	Male
7	Jan 5, 2018	Ramnagara	Ramnagara	Female
8	Jan 21, 2018	Bannerghatta National Park	Kodihalli Range	Female

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(above) A problem sloth bear translocated to Bannerghatta National Park, near Bangalore, Karnataka, India, was tracked with a VHF/GPS collar and camera-trapped in December 2016, 6 months after being moved. She was settling in the area and rarely ventured out of the park. (below) The sloth bear monitored by Wildlife SOS in Bannerghatta National Park was killed by an explosive bait after she wandered outside the park.



Status of the Japanese Black Bear in Shikoku Island, Japan, and the Conservation Project Launched by Japan Bear Network

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The Japanese black bear (*Ursus thibetanus japonicus*) inhabits Honshu (225,800 km²) and Shikoku (18,800 km²), 2 of the 4 main islands of Japan. Japanese black bears can be categorized into 3 clusters (Eastern, Western and Southern) based on the genetic phylogeny. The population of Shikoku Island belongs to the Southern cluster along with another isolated local population in Kii Peninsula on the opposite shore (Ohnishi et al. 2009). Japanese black bears historically distributed in Kyushu Island but the bears on this island are now considered extirpated as of some decades ago. Although, human-bear conflicts are a major bear management issue throughout Japan, as a result of range expansion (Japan Bear Network 2014), the Shikoku population is on the brink of extirpation.

Existing historical records show that bears were present throughout Shikoku Island, with 2 isolated populations existing in the western and eastern parts by 1940. The last record from the western population is from 1985 and current range is restricted to the eastern part of the island with an estimated range of approx. 500 km². It is thought that thriving conifer plantations on the island exerted huge impacts on the biodiversity of the mountainous area, which led to habitat loss for bears. Also, the number of nuisance bear kills dramatically increased because of bark stripping of planted trees by bears. Although the estimated population size was less than 50 bears in 1996 [Ministry of Environment (MoE) 2014], researchers in the past couple of decades have confirmed no more than 20 bears. If we leave the situation as is it will not be long before bears are extirpated from this island.

Researchers from the MoE, Forest Agency and Shikoku Institute of Natural History (SINH) since 2000 have pointed out that bears mainly use the broad-leaved forests which are found at 1,000 m asl. Also, reproduction has been confirmed at least once in 3 years since 1997 by age estimation of captured bears and camera traps. Diversity in genes related to adaptive immune system have decreased (Ishibashi et al. 2017), and Population Viability Analysis reported that the probability of extinction in 2037 is estimated to be 62.2% if the effect of inbreeding depression is strong.

Hunting of bears is prohibited as a conservation measure since 1987.

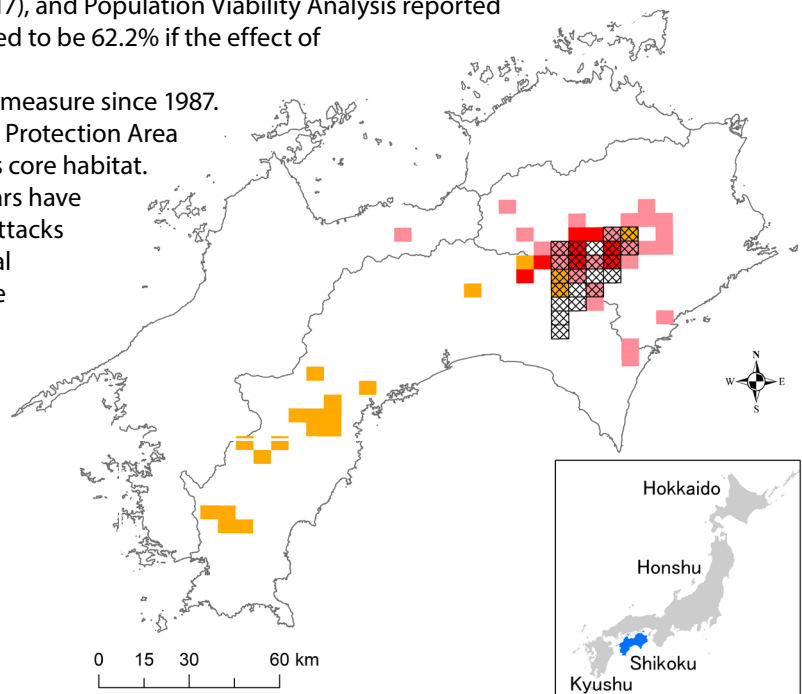
A total area of 118.17 km² is designated as a Wildlife Protection Area and snare traps are regulated in areas surrounding core habitat.

However, successful increases in the number of bears have not been observed until now. In Shikoku, no bear attacks on human have been recorded over the past several decades. Reports of sighting and field signs are rare and little conflict with human and bears exist.

Although damages on timber trees and beehive boxes sometimes occur, they have not been a big problem requiring mitigation measures.

Despite the fact that bears are at high risk of extirpation, the MoE who is in charge of biodiversity conservation, wildlife management and protection of endangered species, does not take initiatives for conservation. It is shameful if another extirpation of bears happens in Japan, following the fate of bears in Kyushu Island.

Japan Bear Network (JBN), a NGO which mainly consists of bear researchers and bear experts from all over the country, have a strong intention to prevent bears from being extirpated from Shikoku



Distribution of Japanese black bears in Shikoku (represent in 5 x 5 km cells) in 1978 (orange), 2003 (pink), 1978 and 2003 combined (red), and 2013 – 2017 (grid cell).

Conservation

Number of Japanese black bears harvested in Shikoku during 1920s - 1980s. Shaded cells represent the period when bounty campaign was implemented. Data are partially missing in 1940s.

Period	1920s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70s	80s
# harvested	34	47	5	7	30	60	6

at any cost. The scenario is to take urgent conservation actions as a national level project under the initiative of MoE in collaboration with a number of agencies and organizations. JBN have started a campaign in partnership with SINH and The Nature Conservation Society of Japan (NACS-J) that investigates the following 3 topics, and intends to increase awareness of people and the government through dissemination of the results and policy advocacy.

- 1) More exact information on current status of bears in Shikoku.
We will conduct field sign survey, hair trapping and camera trapping in the area where the current monitoring study has been conducted and bear presence is unknown. Collection of hair and scat samples which contain DNA and video of individuals would help gain precise information about population size, distribution range, reproduction and mortality.
- 2) Awareness of people living in Shikoku: How can we share the global value of biodiversity and bears with the local people?
People usually have little interest in conserving bears in Shikoku, both at local and national levels. In fact, many people living in close proximity to bear habitat tend to have adverse feeling for their conservation because they feel that increased number of bears will cause forestry damage and a higher risk of bear attacks, while extirpation of bears is also not their will. Therefore, we communicate with local people through several outreach activities and collaborative conservation activities in order to disseminate correct information about bears and build up shared value with local communities.
- 3) Proactive countermeasures.
After examining the result of (1) and (2) and if population recovery cannot be expected, then we would need to implement measures such as supplemental feeding, translocation (augmentation), captive propagation and genetic resource banking, and expansion of suitable habitat. Simultaneously, it is critically important to ask questions and consider the scientific feasibility, effects and challenges that might arise in local communities by the implementation of such actions.

Our short-term objectives are: 1) to promote the public awareness on conservation of bears in Shikoku not only at local but national and even global levels, and gain supports from the wider public; and 2) to propose national level conservation projects initiated by MoE with multiple stakeholders.

This JBN project is conducted with a grant from the Environment Restoration and Conservation Agency and NACS-J. We welcome any advice and support from around over the world.

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Typical landscape of bear habitat in Shikoku mountainous area.

Shikoku Regional Forest Office



Post-Release Conflicts with Humans by Captive-Rehabilitated New Mexico Black Bears

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Bears are captive-rehabilitated and released back to the wild for multiple reasons, including conservation of imperiled populations or species, animal welfare, and human social and political pressure. Although some captive-rehabilitated bears have had a positive influence on recovery of threatened or endangered bear populations (Clark et al. 2002), bears are most often captive-rehabilitated for individual animal welfare reasons or human social pressure (e.g., concerns over orphaned cubs surviving; Huber 2005, van Dijk 2005). However, bears can habituate to humans after repeated exposures and non-negative interactions with humans, both neutral and positive. Thus, an oft-expressed concern among bear managers is that captive-rehabilitated bears may be prone to conflicts with humans after being returned to the wild.

We investigated factors that may have influenced post-release conflicts with humans by captive-rehabilitated American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) in New Mexico, USA. During 2001–2016, a total of 256 injured or ill wild bears and orphaned bear cubs were captive-rehabilitated ($\bar{x} = 16$ bears/year). We sexed and assigned age class (cub [< 1 year]; subadult [$\geq 1 < 4$ years]; adult [≥ 4 years]) based on physical characteristics and cementum annuli analysis. All bears were given a uniquely numbered ear tag prior to being hard-released (i.e., without an acclimation period) in primary habitat on U.S. Forest Service lands ≥ 4 km from human settlements after rehabilitation. Cubs were released when 10–14 months of age, whereas subadults and adults were released when deemed recovered. We fit logistic regression models via maximum likelihood to investigate if duration in captivity, sex, or age class might predict post-release conflicts with humans.

Because of incomplete records or death during rehabilitation, our final sample size was 215 captive-rehabilitated bears that were released back to the wild. Median duration spent in captivity was 108 days for cubs, 74 days for subadults, and 14 days for adults. Fifty bears (23.25%) were recaptured or euthanized following release because of conflicts with humans: 29 cubs (18.71%), 12 subadults (26.09%), and 9 adults (64.29%). The average number of days until a bear was recaptured or euthanized because of conflicts was 472.17 (95% CI = 245.89–698.44). Among 6 considered regression models, the most parsimonious model included only age class, which was an important predictor ($\beta_{\text{Cub}} = 2.07$, 95% CI = 0.90–3.28; $\beta_{\text{Subadult}} = 1.70$, 95% CI = 0.40–0.3.01). The probability of conflicts with humans post-release was higher for adults ($P = 0.64$, 95% CI = 0.40–0.89) than cubs ($P = 0.19$, 95% CI = 0.13–0.25) or subadults ($P = 0.26$, 95% CI = 0.14–0.39).

Our results suggested that the probability of post-release conflicts with humans by captive-rehabilitated bears in New Mexico may increase commensurate with bear age at the time of intake to a rehabilitation facility. Releasing captive-rehabilitated cubs, who appeared to have the lowest probability of post-release conflicts in our study, might be preferable if mitigating conflicts with humans is a management objective. For example, captive-rehabilitated cubs could be used to help bolster imperiled bear populations or species via augmentation (Clark et al. 2002).

However, we cautiously interpret our findings for the following reasons. First, we did not know the experiential history with humans that subadults or adults had prior to captive-rehabilitation (i.e., previous conflicts). Second, our determination of conflict activity was based on the observation or recapture of ear-tagged bears, and the ear tag loss rate can be high for black bears ($\geq 42\%$; Diefenbach and Alt 1998). Third, without known-fate radio-monitoring data, we could not apply corrections for age class-specific survival or mortality rates post-release. Consequently, our estimate of post-release conflict probability for cubs, who tend to have lower survival rates than subadults and adults, may be negatively biased. Additionally, our estimates for subadults and adults might be at least partially reflective of behaviors learned by bears following interactions with humans that occurred prior to captive-rehabilitation.

Nonetheless, when deciding whether to captive-rehabilitate ill or injured adult black bears, we agree with prior studies that suggested managers employ caution. Both the experiential history with humans that an adult bear has and the management objectives for the greater bear population should be considered. We also suggest that future studies of the propensity for captive-rehabilitated bears to conflict with humans post-release use radio-collars to intensively monitor those bears. Such monitoring could help overcome the uncertainty present in data sets similar to ours, and also provide stronger inferential support for making rehabilitation and management recommendations.

Manager's Corner

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Manager's Corner

Florida Provides Over \$2.1 million to Local Governments to Reduce Human-Bear Conflicts

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Florida is home to over 20 million people and over 4,000 Florida black bears (*Ursus americanus floridanus*). Over 90% of the 6,000 bear-related calls the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) receives each year come from 18 of the 67 counties in Florida. The primary reason for those calls come from bears searching for food in neighborhoods, which is commonly found inside unsecured trashcans. Between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2018, the FWC will have distributed almost \$1.6 million to 16 counties with the highest levels of human-bear conflicts in the State. The funding shares the cost to purchase bear-resistant equipment with local governments, residents, and businesses to help them keep garbage and other attractants secure from bears. Until June 30, 2016, funding for those projects came entirely from the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida using proceeds of the sale of a specialty vehicle license plate called the Conserve Wildlife Tag (CWT). Starting July 1, 2016, the Florida Legislature appropriated additional funding through proceeds from permits sold for the 2015 bear hunt from the State Game Trust Fund, and in subsequent years provided funding from General Revenue.

Starting July 1, 2018, the FWC will provide an additional \$500,000 (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/wise/>) appropriated from the Florida Legislature to share the cost of bear-resistant equipment. At least 60% of the funding must go to local governments who have ordinances requiring trash be kept secure from bears. Currently, 4 counties (Seminole, Lake, Orange, and Santa Rosa), 1 city (Fort Walton Beach), and several homeowners' associations have ordinances in Florida.

Local governments, residents, and/or businesses match the grant with their own funding and in-kind services ranging from 10% to 60% of the overall project costs. As of 30 June 2018, grants have resulted in 10,400 bear-resistant trashcans, 9,750 sets of hardware that can be added to regular trashcans to make them bear-resistant, 170 bear-resistant dumpsters, 90 secured sheds, and 5 electric fence systems.

By June 30, 2019, the FWC will have provided a total of \$2.1 million in incentive funds to local governments, residents, and businesses to assist them in securing garbage and other attractants to reduce human-bear conflicts in Florida.



1st BSG Sloth Bear Expert Team Meeting Sets Stage for Coordinated Research and Conservation

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The first-ever formal meeting of the Bear Specialist Group's Sloth Bear Expert Team (SLBET) was held March 8 and 9, 2018, in Bannerghatta, India. The meeting was sponsored by Wildlife SOS (WSOS) and held at the Jungle Lodge, a 5-minute drive from the WSOS Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Center in the Bannerghatta Biological Park, bordering Bannerghatta National Park in the state of Karnataka. SLBET Co-chairs Nishith Dharaiya and Harendra Bargali worked closely with WSOS Co-founders Kartick Satyanarayan and Geeta Seshamani to plan the details of the meeting. The idea for the meeting was conceived during the IBA meetings in Quito, Ecuador, in November 2017, after a discussion with BSG Co-chair Dave Garshelis and attending members of the SLBET. The meeting was viewed as a precursor to a later workshop to develop a rangewide Conservation Action Plan for sloth bears (*Melursus ursinus*); this is now an IUCN/SSC mandate for all threatened species.



Group photo of participants of the SLBET meeting.

The main goals of the meeting were to:

1. Develop a coordinated network of sloth bear researchers within the different states of India as well as the neighboring sloth bear range countries.
2. Review recent information on the biology, ecology, and population status of sloth bears.
3. Promote science-based conservation: short and long term.
4. Set the stage for the formulation of the sloth bear Species Conservation Action Plan.

Workshop Reports

The meeting was attended by 26 participants (not including a large contingent from WSOS). The opening session began with a welcome address by Satyanarayan and Seshamani, who also gave a brief background to WSOS's sloth bear conservation work. This was followed with the keynote address *What Does it Take to Save a Species?* Presented by Barbara Durrant from the Institute of Conservation Research in San Diego, California. Nishith Dharaiya then explained the objectives of the meeting, and Harendra Bargali discussed the goals and activities of the SLBET. Nishith concluded the opening session with a summary of the recent (2016) sloth bear Red List Assessment.



Organizers (left to right: Nishith Dharaiya, Arun Sha, Harendra Bargali, Prachi Thatte) addressing the first meeting of the BSG Sloth Bear Expert Team, March 8–9, 2018, Bannerghatta, India.

Wildlife SOS

The rest of the first day included talks by sloth bear researchers from all over India about different aspects of sloth bear ecology, biology, and conservation:

- *Conservation of Sloth Bears in Vindhyan Highlands of Uttar Pradesh* by D. Sinha
- *Sloth Bears in Gujarat: Status, Issues and Scopes for Conservation* by N. Dharaiya
- *Sloth Bear Conservation Status in Maharashtra* by S. Sonone
- *Status and Conservation Challenges for Sloth Bears in Karnataka* by Sha and Shanmugavelu
- *Sloth Bear Connectivity in the Central India Landscape–Central India* by P. Thatte
- *Status of Sloth Bears in Chhattisgarh and Conservation Challenges* by Raj and Pragati
- *Conservation Challenges for Sloth Bears in Karnataka from Forest Department Perspective* by B.K. Singh
- *Sloth Bears in Human Dominated Landscapes of Orissa* by P. Maradraj
- *Protection and Conservation of Sloth Bear Habitat in North Karnataka* by Sha and Shanmugavelu
- *Sloth Bear Studies in Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra* by N. Singh
- *Habitat Threat and Conservation Strategies for Sloth Bears in Chambal Valley of Kota, Rajasthan* by K. Nama
- *Research on Sloth Bear Reproductive Behaviour Using Hormone Studies* by Y. Khadpekar.

The second day began with a brainstorming session and group discussion about the future of sloth bear conservation. This session concluded that the following activities should be initiated by the SLBET, in collaboration with local NGOs and the Forest Department:



Brainstorming session at the SLBET meeting.

Wildlife SOS

- Develop a sloth bear expert team web page with information on sloth bear research and researchers; funding opportunities; and an archive of sloth bear research papers, reports, and other scientific documents.
- Investigate region-specific population declines.
- Collect data on bear deaths, sign surveys, habitat degradation, and human–bear conflicts.
- Encourage and assist students to carry out research on sloth bears and associated habitats.
- Organize a National Bear Symposium in the near future.
- Prepare a manual of research methodology for the sloth bear.
- Prepare for the next meeting focused on creating a sloth bear conservation action plan.
- Attempt to organize an annual sloth bear conservation meeting.

Satyanarayan and WSOS announced the upcoming International Bear Care Conference in Delhi, India, in December 2018. The SLBET co-chairs requested that WSOS provide the opportunity for a session on sloth bear research during this conference.

The meeting was concluded with a vote of thanks extended by the co-chairs to WSOS for hosting this meeting, N. Sing and A. Malik for assisting in taking notes, and all the attendees for their active participation. The afternoon was spent at the Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Facility and the surrounding sloth bear habitat in the national park.



1st National Bear Conservation Workshop Held in Myanmar

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The first-ever “Stakeholders Consultation Meeting on Bear Conservation in Myanmar” was organized in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on March 13, 2018, to promote bear conservation in Myanmar. The meeting provided the opportunity to share data and experiences among local and international experts, governmental institutions and general stakeholders. The goal of the event was to assess threats to bears (sun bears, *Helarctos malayanus*; Asiatic black bears, *Ursus thibetanus*) and opportunities for their conservation in Myanmar. The initiative was organized by Istituto Oikos’ Sun Bear Conservation Project, which aims to foster the protection of sun bears and their habitats in Myanmar.

Representatives of the main environmental NGOs (non-government organizations), members of the IUCN Bear Specialist Group, zoo managers, academics and governmental authorities took part in the event. The presence of the Forest Department (FD) Director General and Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD) Director granted official status to the initiative. The Director General confirmed the commitment of the government in preventing habitat losses and tackling wildlife trade by establishing protected areas and collaborating with NGOs.

The speakers gave presentations on bear biology, ecology and population status in Myanmar and Southeast Asia, illegal bear trade and bear farms, habitat loss, captive bear centers, and education activities focused on bears. Projections of current and future bear population decline were presented by a representative of IUCN’s Bear Specialist Group. A central topic of the meeting was the possibility for Myanmar to establish a wildlife rescue center. This action could boost law enforcement by providing a standardized procedure for maintaining seized bears and combat trade of live animals. Free The Bears Foundation presented its strategy for tackling illegal bear trade in Southeast Asia. They also described the operating principles of bear rescue centers.

All the participants highlighted the importance of community engagement in conservation: bright examples of awareness raising activities were brought by Education for Nature Vietnam, which launched massive education campaigns against bear farming by involving social influencers as artists, actors, singers and web stars in Vietnam. The local Myanmar NGOs BANCA and Friends of Wildlife presented data on bear trafficking in Myanmar, with focus on the border areas where most of the illegal wildlife markets are located. Wildlife Conservation Society and Istituto Oikos gave updates on the current research on sun bears and presented their strategy for community engagement at the project sites.

The importance of by-catch data from camera trap surveys was underscored by Fauna and Flora International. The presence of bears in several regions of Myanmar has been confirmed recently by camera trapping. Smithsonian Institute provided insight on bear habitat loss in Myanmar by presenting satellite images and land cover maps that showed that deforestation is dramatically reducing wilderness areas, likely affecting



Participants in the Stakeholders Consultation Meeting on Bear Conservation in Myanmar, held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on March 13, 2018.

Myanmar Forest Department

Workshop Reports

populations of forest species.

The event concluded with a panel discussion of experts from the organizations presenting at the meeting and the NWCD Director. The legal framework for bear conservation was assessed in light of the new wildlife law to be issued in the coming months. Sharing data among organizations and other institutions was encouraged in order to maximize research efforts and avoid overlap and repetition. International experts were asked to share their “lessons learnt” and experiences in bear conservation in Southeast Asia. Primary actions for bear conservation in Myanmar were identified. More research is needed in order to understand bear population trends and priority areas for conservation. Education and awareness raising at local and national levels should be aimed at reducing harvest and demand of wildlife products. NGOs should work in collaboration with the Forest

Department and local authorities in order to foster law enforcement, and trainings and resources should be provided as well. Subsistence hunters should be offered alternative livelihoods through the implementation of community development projects. Finally, advocacy to politicians for effective environmental laws and support to conservation groups by the authorities was deemed essential to ensure environmental sustainability.

In conclusion, the issues discussed during the meeting were many and not easy to solve. Saving sun bears and Asiatic black bears will require sharing knowledge, data, and best practices among all the stakeholders involved. In this framework, the meeting has helped outline each actor’s tasks, and the future drafting of a specific management plan will undoubtedly boost wider stakeholder collaboration for bear conservation in Myanmar.

The proceedings of the meeting are available at: <http://www.istituto-oikos.org/projects/sunbear-en>

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Filippo Zibordi

Group discussion participants: (left to right): Brian Crudge (Free The Bears – FTB), Win Naing Taw (Forest Department’s Nature & Wildlife Conservation Division - NWCD), Grant Connette (Smithsonian Institute), Lorenzo Gaffi (Istituto Oikos), Maung Maung Kyi (Rakhine Coastal Region Conservation Association - RCA), Hla Naing (Wildlife Conservation Society - WCS), Ms. Dung Nguyen (Education for Nature Vietnam – ENV), Tun Oo (Friends of Wildlife – FOW).



Conference Announcements

26th International Conference on Bear Research & Management September 16-21 2018 in Ljubljana, Slovenia

The 26th International Conference on Bear Research & Management will be held between September 16-21, 2018 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The main theme "Life with Bears" is a human-bear coexistence in human dominated and politically fragmented landscapes. Specific conference topics are designed in a way to welcome recent research results, technical advances, and case studies on a wide spectrum of issues relevant to ensuring a long-term coexistence of bears and humans.



All details and deadlines can be found on the website <https://lifewithbears.eu>

Workshop Announcements

24th Eastern Black Bear Workshop April 22 – 25, 2019. Potosi, Missouri

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The Missouri Department of Conservation is excited to host the 24th Eastern Black Bear Workshop 22–25 April, 2019 at the YMCA of the Ozarks Trout Lodge in Potosi, MO: <http://www.ymcaoftheozarks.org>.

The purpose of the Eastern Black Bear Workshop (EBBW) is to bring together state/provincial biologists, federal biologists, and university researchers with responsibilities for managing black bear (*Ursus americanus*) populations in the eastern USA and Canada to discuss issues important to the management, conservation, and perpetuation of those black bear populations. EBBWs are inherently different from general conferences. Whereas conferences have the purpose of sharing information through the presentation of research and management papers, EBBWs are designed not only to share information, but more specifically to discuss and find solutions to problems of managing bear populations at the regional level.

Details coming soon! Visit www.easternblackbearworkshop.org in the coming months for more information on lodging, registration, agenda items, and poster submissions. Contact: Laura Conlee: laura.conlee@mdc.mo.gov or 573-815-7900 ext. 2903.



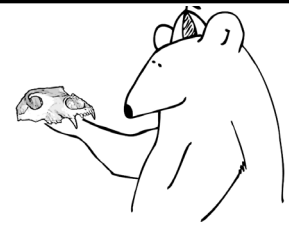
Trail camera footage of Bear 1428 and her yearlings exiting their den on a warm March day in southern Missouri.

Missouri Department of Conservation

Student Forum

Your Online Presence

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You meet someone (maybe at a conference) and have a good chat, you leave feeling good about the conversation, and the person you met likes what they heard and thinks they would like to follow up later. One or more of the following is going to happen:

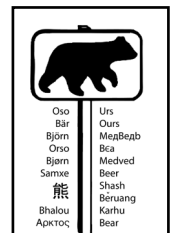
- 1) You've given them your business/networking card and they file it away as paper or digitally (some people take a quick picture and name the file with relevant details of where they met you).
- 2) Following up, they check out your links on your card, to your place of work, your online professional profile.
- 3) They Google you... do you know what they will see? Will they even find you or someone else with the same name as you? Will they find your personal Facebook page with things you would rather they not see? Will they find your professional profile(s), news articles about you/your project, your publications?

Prepare your online presence, so that people you meet, work with, or find you on social media find the best about you and what you do. Suggestions of where to start:

- 1) Google yourself
- 2) Keep your personal networking profiles (e.g. Facebook) private by changing security settings.
- 3) Keep your online professional profiles (e.g. Thomsen-Reuters Research-ID, ORCID), professional networking profiles (e.g. LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Academia.edu), professional social media (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, etc), website, blogs up to date

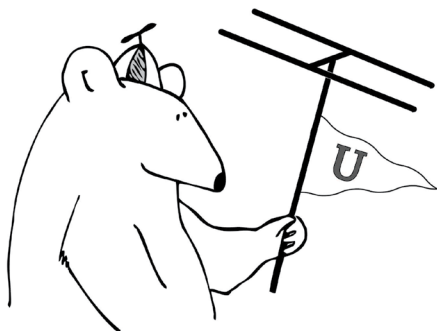
In the wildlife field the most common path is a series of volunteer positions, then multiple short-term positions, then longer-term, and finally (we hope) a permanent full-time position. If you are in the early years of this series your various professional profiles online should market you to potential employers. If you've applied for a position the employer will have some information about you via the cover letter and resume, but they may also do a quick Google search to find out a bit more about you. What they find could influence their decision to hire you, so you want to have your accomplishments and "best self" reflected in what they find. Your online presence is even more important if it is an employer who has reached out to their network looking for someone to fill a position in a short amount of time (they don't have time to post the job and wade through applications) and someone has recommended you as a potential hire. They may email you and ask you to send them a resume but they may also Google you (using your email address).

Creating and updating your professional profile(s) online (and Googling yourself) should be a permanent item on your career building checklist, something you do every 6 months or at least every year. The regular maintenance of your online profile will give you confidence that anyone looking you up online finds you and your accomplishments and will encourage further communication and possibly collaboration in the future.



Truman Listserv and Facebook Page

- Discussions pertaining to bear biology, management, or study design challenges
- Assistance with proposals and study design through IBA professionals
- Job searches, announcements, information regarding the IBA and student membership
- Planning for IBA student activities and meetings
- IBA membership is encouraged, but not required, for initial sign-up



Listserv Sign-up Instructions

- Visit: <https://www.bearbiology.org/membership/students/>
- Follow the links to request an invitation
- If you're a new member, please submit a paragraph about your project and include your contact information so we can all get to know you.

Facebook Sign-up Instructions

- Visit: <https://facebook.com/groups/IBA.Conference/>



Recent Bear Literature

Agnes Pelletier

Email: asg.pelletier@gmail.com

If you have an article recently published please email the citation for inclusion in the next issue of Recent Bear Literature. The deadlines for the next issues are:

- Fall Issue: 5 October: Marion Schneider: mfschneider@gmx.de
- Spring Issue: 5 February: Agnieszka Sergiel: agasergiel@gmail.com
- Summer Issue: 12 July: Agnes Pelletier: asg.pelletier@gmail.com

For easy access to articles, we are including the DOI citation, as well as the email contact of one coauthor if available. To open articles from their DOI, enter the DOI citation in the text box provided at the following website: <http://dx.doi.org>

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Corrections

Correction: Spring 2018 Issue

- Article: How Locals Characterize the Causes of Sloth Bear Attacks in Jawai, Rajasthan page 12 line 3 the word “Prada” should have read “Prasad”.

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About the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA)

The International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA) is a non-profit tax-exempt organization open to professional biologists, wildlife managers, and others dedicated to the conservation of all bear species. The organization has approximately 500 members from over 50 countries. It supports the scientific management of bears through research and distribution of information. The IBA sponsors international conferences on all aspects of bear biology, ecology, and management. The proceedings are published as peer-reviewed scientific papers in the journal *Ursus*.

IBA Mission Statement

Goal: The goal of the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA) is to promote the conservation and restoration of the world's bears through science-based research, management, and education.

Objectives: In support of this goal, IBA's objectives are to:

1. Promote and foster well-designed research of the highest professional standards.
2. Develop and promote sound stewardship of the world's bears through scientifically based population and habitat management.
3. Publish and distribute, through its conferences and publications, peer-reviewed scientific and technical information of high quality addressing broad issues of ecology, conservation, and management.
4. Encourage communication and collaboration across scientific disciplines and among bear researchers and managers through conferences, workshops, and newsletters.
5. Increase public awareness and understanding of bear ecology, conservation, and management by encouraging the translation of technical information into popular literature and other media, as well as through other educational forums.
6. Encourage the professional growth and development of our members.
7. Provide professional counsel and advice on issues of natural resource policy related to bear management and conservation.
8. Maintain the highest standards of professional ethics and scientific integrity.
9. Encourage full international participation in the IBA through the siting of conferences, active recruitment of international members and officers, and through financial support for international research, travel to meetings, memberships, and journal subscriptions.
10. Through its integrated relationship with the Bear Specialist Group of the World Conservation Union (IUCN)/Species Survival Commission, identify priorities in bear research and management and recruit project proposals to the IBA Grants Program that address these priorities.
11. Build an endowment and a future funding base to provide ongoing support for IBA core functions and for the IBA Grants Program.
12. Support innovative solutions to bear conservation dilemmas that involve local communities as well as national or regional governments and, to the extent possible, address their needs without compromising bear conservation, recognizing that conservation is most successful where human communities are stable and can see the benefits of conservation efforts.
13. Form partnerships with other institutions to achieve conservation goals, where partnerships could provide additional funding, knowledge of geographical areas, or expertise in scientific or non-scientific sectors.

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