

SUN BEAR

What is a sun bear?

The sun bear is named after the U-shaped patch of yellowish-orange fur on its chest. It has a short, smooth black or rusty-coloured coat, small, round ears and a short, thick muzzle. It is the smallest bear in the world, measuring no more than 1.4 metres and weighing up to 65 kilos. Although small, sun bears can be dangerous, because they are quite aggressive.

Where do they live?

The sun bear is found in China, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Indo-China. It is one of two bear species in Vietnam. Sun bears normally live deep in the forest.

How do they live?

Sun bears are active mainly at night. They are expert climbers, and build sleeping nests high in the trees. Females usually give birth to two cubs.

What do they eat?

Sun bears are omnivores. They eat almost any food that they can find, including fruit, nuts, small animals, termites and whole bees' nests. They have a strong sense of smell. Their powerful claws can easily break open a termite mound, or rip open a tree containing a bees' nest.

Why are they in danger?

Sun bears are often kept as pets. Bear farmers also collect bile from their gall bladders and sell it. They are hunted and killed for their body parts, which are served up in restaurants or used in traditional medicine. The forests where they live are also being chopped down.

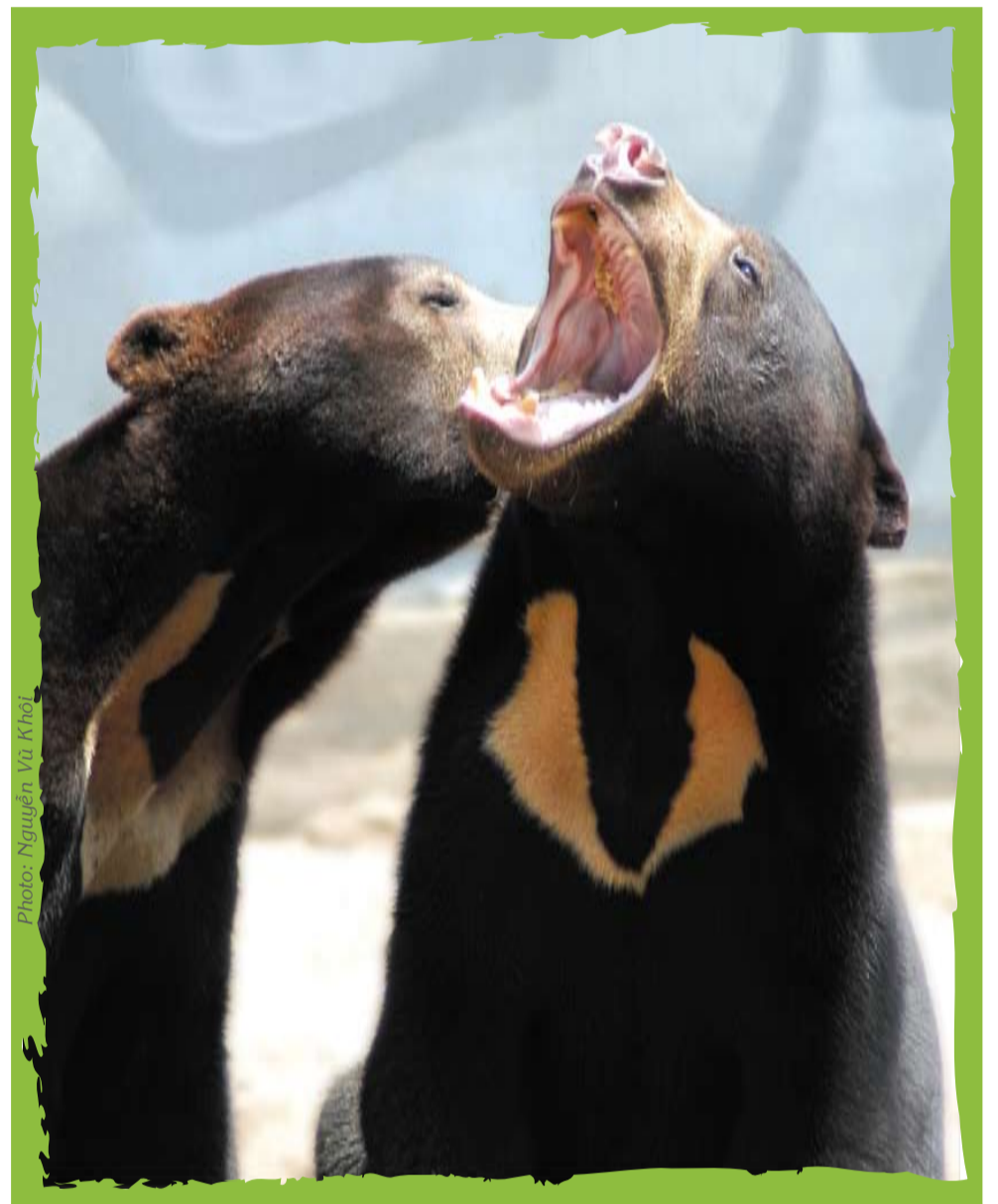


Photo: Nguyễn Vũ Khoa

Saving the sun bear

Wildlife At Risk is fighting to stop the illegal wildlife trade, rescue captive bears and protect wild bears. You can help us by NOT buying bears and NOT keeping them in cages.