



HUSBANDRY STANDARDS FOR CAPTIVE BEARS IN HO CHI MINH CITY

INTRODUCTION

This information booklet has been put together with several aims.

Firstly, it aims to educate both FPD officials and bear keepers in the international standards expected for keeping bears in captive conditions, looking at various aspects of husbandry.

The different standard levels in each category, should also demonstrate the most important points to be considered and what conditions would be viewed as unacceptable for the adequate welfare and health of a captive bear.

The standards can be considered as follows:

- Standard 1*- international standards, ideal.
- Standard 2*- reasonable standard
- Standard 3*- below reasonable standard
- Standard 4*- Low, unacceptable.

Secondly, it aims to provide a guideline for future FPD enforcement, ensuring the improvement of conditions for captive bears, until such a time that they might be relocated to a rescue centre. If not for alliance with fining, an incentive system could be put in place, to award keepers who improve conditions for their bears and thus to encourage others to do the same.

The five husbandry categories being considered are:

1. ***Environmental Enrichment*** (page 2)
2. ***Enclosure size*** (page 5)
3. ***Enclosure cleanliness and hygiene*** (page 6)
4. ***Medical/health issues*** (page 7)
5. ***Nutrition*** (page 9)



1: ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

The importance of enrichment to a bear's captive environment should not be underestimated. Research has shown bears to be extremely intelligent animals which grow stressed and bored very quickly in unstimulating captive conditions. This can lead to stereotypical behaviour, which sometimes leads to self-inflicted physical injury. Stress leads to a reduction in the efficiency of an animal's immune system and thus is a threat to the good health of the animal. It can cause animals to stop eating and drinking and can also lead to greater aggression in animals.

The following are some examples of ways which have been successfully used to enrich a bear's environment.

VERY IMPORTANT: Shelf/wire mesh basket approx 1.5m off ground- bears prefer to make nests off ground at night. Provide nest-making material e.g. hay, straw, leaf litter (in the wild, all species of bear known to construct nests/dens)

Raised areas for bears to climb made from dead trunks/planks e.g aerial walkways, climbing frames and platforms

Hanging large tyres by rope from roof (ensure metal rim removed from inside of tyre)

Pool- eg. a removable plastic pool filled with water. Bears are known to enjoy wading and bathing in pools in captivity and in the wild.

Living trees/awning to provide shade if outdoors

Skylight in roof to provide natural sunlight and warmth if indoors(must still be some area in shade)



Piles of logs or rocks, for a keeper to hide food in, and for the bears to climb upon. (can be removed at times)

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NB:Hiding food around the enclosure increases mental and physical stimulation for the bear, as it moves around searching for the food. Very good and simple method of enrichment.

Other methods of hiding food -

Scattering randomly around enclosure - on floor and platforms and inside hanging tyre

Freezing fruit within large ice cubes

Hiding food within plastic containers with holes in sides, or inside bamboo sticks, hollowed out wooden logs, balls etc. These objects need to be removed and cleaned daily.

Whole food- entire plants, hard vegetables eg potato, turnip, pumpkin.

Live feed eg fish in pools can encourage natural foraging activity. Fresh dead fish can be used in a small pool if cleaned daily.

A variety of foods keeps the bear interested in feeding as it can't predict what will be in its next meal.

Ideally, ground material (at least in one small area, if not whole enclosure), which allow bears to dig

Natural food plants growing in enclosure or external eg. Fig trees for sun bears.

An example of a possible weekly enrichment schedule which could be used in a small indoor enclosure is provided with this document.



ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT STANDARDS:

- 1:** 4 or more items of enrichment from this list(or similar effect) used daily
- 2:** 3 items from this list (or similar) used daily
- 3:** 2 items from this list (or similar) used daily
- 4:** 1 or no items of enrichment provided.



EXAMPLE OF A WEEK LONG PLAN FOR ENRICHMENT:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
A M	Hide some of feed in suspended tyre and smear jam inside a loose tyre to be added to enclosure. Scatter rest of feed all around enclosure.	Add 1/2 logs to enclosure. Add whole squash/turnip with feed- suspend whole vegetable from cage bars with thick rope. Smear honey on one and rub garlic and basil on the other. Scatter rest of feed all around enclosure	Add fruit flavoured giant ice cubes. Suspend fire-hose hammock in enclosure. Smear jam on outside of hanging tyre. Scatter rest of feed all around enclosure.	Place logs/planks in enclosure to provide climbing opportunity for bears. Scatter feed around enclosure and on climbing logs.	Add large plastic basin filled with bark chippings/ leaves. Add whole squash/turnip s to feed. Scatter rest of feed around enclosure and hide some in suspended tyre.	Add loose tyre to enclosure. Add fruit flavoured giant ice cubes. Smear jam on outside of hanging tyre. Scatter rest of feed all around enclosure.	Add large plastic basin filled with water. Scatter rest of feed around enclosure & hide some in suspended ty
P M	Place in 2 bamboo lengths with holes drilled- fill bamboo with nuts and raisins and jam holes with fruit pieces. Scatter rest of feed all around	Suspend bamboo mobile in enclosure with thick rope and fill ends with fruit yoghurt	Add 4 hollow rubber or plastic balls to enclosure. Fill one with fruit, one with nuts and raisins, one with jam and one with yoghurt. Scatter rest of feed around enclosure	Place in 2 bamboo lengths with holes drilled- fill bamboo with nuts and raisins and jam holes with fruit pieces. Scatter rest of feed all around	Add 2 small logs to enclosure with holes drilled in them. Fill logs with nuts and raisins and block holes with fruit. Scatter rest of feed all around enclosure.	Add bamboo mobile to enclosure and fill tubes with nuts and raisins and stuff ends with fruit. Scatter rest of feed around enclosure.	Place logs/planks in enclosure to provide climbing opportunity fo bears. Smea garlic and bas onto logs. Scatter feed around enclosure and on climbing logs.



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2: ENCLOSURE SIZE

For the welfare of the animal, International standards state that the **minimum** acceptable size of an indoor Asiatic Black Bear or Malayan Sun Bear enclosure is 3m x 3m x 3m . Ideally, these bears would only be indoors temporarily (eg. 3 month quarantine health check period), moving into outdoor enclosures at a later date, or having an enclosure with both indoor and outdoor areas.

For outdoor enclosures, the recommended international standard is 10m x 6m per bear, demonstrating the large amount of space required for adequate activity of these animals in long term captive conditions.

ENCLOSURE STANDARDS:

- 1:** Enclosure at least 3m x 3m x3m
- 2:** Enclosure at least 2.5m x 2.5m x 2m
- 3:** Enclosure at least 2m x 2m x 1.5m
- 4:** Enclosure less than 2m x 2m x 2m

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3: ENCLOSURE CLEANLINESS/HYGEINE

In order for adequate hygiene and welfare standards to be met, bear's enclosure should be thoroughly cleaned twice daily. This involves complete removal of all faecal, urinal and old food material (e.g.with power hose washing) and washing down of the enclosure with water and an appropriate disinfectant. A sloping concrete floor, allowing drainage to the outside of the enclosure is best. At the second clean, any enrichment material which is dirty/contaminated with feed should be removed and cleaned and disinfected, ready to be used again.

This cleaning schedule is very important to prevent build up of unhealthy organisms e.g, fungus and bacteria within the bear's



environment. It is also important for welfare, as a bear forced to sit in its own urine and faeces may receive physical urine scald and infection as a result of this situation, as well as being uncomfortable and unpleasant.

Cleaning Standards:

1: Enclosures thoroughly cleaned twice daily. All faeces, urine (unless having been very recently produced at time of inspection) and old food and enrichment material removed from enclosure.

2: Enclosures thoroughly cleaned once daily. All faeces, urine (unless having been very recently produced at time of inspection) and old food and enrichment material removed from enclosure.

3: Enclosures cleaned once daily but not all faeces, urine, old food or enrichment material removed completely from enclosure.

4: Enclosures cleaned less than once daily.

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4: MEDICAL/ HEALTH ISSUES

Captive bears should be observed closely twice daily to check whether any abnormal behaviour or health problems are present.

Any captive bear that shows signs of ill health, should be seen by a qualified veterinarian as soon as possible, to ensure accurate diagnosis of a problem, and rapid and correct treatment. This is important both for the welfare of the animal, so that it does not suffer symptoms of illness unduly, and also for the good, long-term health of the animal and sometimes with contagious conditions, is vital for the health of the people around the animal also.

Here are *some* examples (**not all** existing conditions) of health problems which should immediately receive veterinary attention:



- Reddening, swelling or discharge from around the nose, ears or eyes
- Anorexia, weight loss
- Swelling around jaw, pain evident when bear trying to eat
- Groaning/noises of discomfort.
- Abnormal e.g. loose faeces
- Abnormal discolouration of urine e.g. red (maybe blood)
- Animal is scratching abnormally
- Skin lesions e.g. wounds, abrasions, spots, ulcers
- Hair loss, or loss of condition of hair i.e. Dull not shiny
- Lameness, or any observable injury to paws or limbs.
- Abnormal discharge from rear end.
- Sudden abnormal aggression/other change in behaviour
- Abnormal growth/lumps evident anywhere on body

If severe injury or illness suspected e.g. if bear very debilitated a veterinarian should **always** be called **immediately**.

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Medical Standards:

1: From the sighting of first sign of bad health (e.g. as listed above), veterinarian called within 48hrs and treatment is initiated.

2: From the sighting of the first mild sign of bad health (e.g. as listed) veterinarian called within 5-10 days and treatment is initiated. If problem severe, veterinarian is always called within 48hrs.

3: Veterinarian called after 10 days for mild problem or if owner self-diagnosis and treatment is started and is successful. Also, standard 3 if a bear were to have a severe problem and a veterinarian would not normally be called within 48hrs.

4: Veterinarian called after 48hrs even in cases of severe sickness. For more mild problems - if a veterinarian is never called and the problem never treated.



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5: NUTRITION - FOOD AND WATER

Water must be accessible by a captive bear at ALL TIMES.

The diet of a captive bear must contain all the necessary nutrients and calorific value as would the same animal's diet in the wild.

Nutrition Standards:

1: Amount and quality of diet adequate, with bears observed to be of a good weight. Feeding occurs at least twice daily. Water always accessible and checked several times a day and refilled as needed.

2: Amount and quality of diet adequate, with bears observed to be of a good weight. Feeding occurs once daily. Water always accessible, but checked and refilled only once daily.

3: Amount and quality of diet observed as not of recommended ideal but bears observed to still be in good condition. This with water always accessible but only checked once daily.

4: *Either* amount and quality of food inadequate with bears not in ideal condition/underweight *or* if water is not always accessible to the bear throughout the day.

FPD HUSBANDRY STANDARD CHECKLIST

Name of owner:

Address of owner (if different from location of bears):

Name of keeper:

Location of bears:



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TOTALS:

Number of Standard 1 –

Number of Standard 2 –

Number of Standard 3 –

Number of Standard 4 –

Average Standard:

Signature of FPD official:

Signature of owner/keeper: