



Wild Animals are NOT Pets

Adopt a Pet, Not a Problem

Problem:

It is becoming increasingly popular to own bears as pets. Bears of many species, including brown or grizzly, American black, Asiatic black, spectacled, and sun bears, are kept as pets or displayed in substandard unaccredited zoos and pseudo-sanctuaries, traveling shows, and roadside exhibits. Many of these shows are designed to promote interaction with the audience, and children are frequently exposed to these dangerous animals. Bears are wild animals and should not be kept as pets.

Facts:

- Since 1990, we have documented multiple incidents of injury and escape that have resulted from bears kept as pets. For example, a 2-year-old boy in Ohio required reconstructive surgery after being bitten and clawed by his grandfather's pet black bear; in another incident a 600-pound pet black bear kept in a 15 x 15 foot cage in Missouri bit and nearly severed the hand of a 6 year old boy when he tried to pet it; and in Oklahoma an 8-year-old girl suffered a broken arm and other injuries when she tried to pet the neighbor's 6 foot tall, 300-pound pet black bear.
- The average pet owner cannot provide appropriate housing, secure containment, adequate nutrition, or proper medical care and cannot meet the complex social, emotional, and behavioral requirements of bears.
- Bears kept as pets suffer from painful declawing and dental extractions for the sole purpose of making them less dangerous pets.
- Some captive bears are known for exhibiting acute stereotypic behavior. Bears often pace their enclosures, obsessively chew and bite themselves and objects, become hyper-aggressive, and may exhibit other abnormal behavior.
- Bears often turn aggressive as they grow older and their natural instincts emerge. People forget that cute cubs quickly turn into 200- to 1200-pound, unpredictable wild animals.
- Few people have the facilities or expertise to care for these dangerous wild animals, and most bears live out their lives alone, chained in backyards or kept in inadequate, cramped enclosures.
- There are no federal regulations in the U.S. banning or controlling pet bear ownership or exotic animal ownership in general. Twelve states ban private possession of exotic animals, seven states have a partial ban, and fifteen require a license or permit.



Solution

- Never buy a bear for a pet.
- Do not patronize substandard unaccredited facilities that exhibit bears.
- Report suspected dangerous housing or abuse of bears to local humane societies or animal control officers.
- Support appropriate legislation to regulate the ownership of wild animals as pets.

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