

INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL RESCUE CELEBRATES WORLD BEAR DAY WITH RELEASE OF 'TYRED' RESCUE BEAR PHOTO

Wednesday 20 March, 2024

International Animal Rescue (IAR), in partnership with their colleagues in Armenia at the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), IAR is pleased to mark **World Bear Day on March 23rd** with a heartwarming snapshot into the lives of rescued bears in Armenia.

In this heartwarming photo, captured at the sanctuary in Urtsadzor, a brown bear, affectionately named the 'Tyred' bear, was spotted emerging from hibernation only to resume napping using a tyre as a pillow. This charming image gives a snapshot of the resilience and adaptability of bears rescued from distressing circumstances.

The Urtsadzor sanctuary, operated by IAR and FPWC, currently provides a haven for 29 rescued bears, each with its own story of survival and recovery. Many of these bears were previously kept in cramped cages at restaurants and other public venues, where they were exploited as tourist attractions. The conditions in which they were kept were often shocking, prompting the urgent intervention of IAR and FPWC to rescue and rehabilitate these beautiful, majestic animals.

Tragically, despite ongoing efforts, as many as 50 bears may still be awaiting rescue from similar conditions. However, through the dedication and commitment of IAR and FPWC, significant progress has been made in providing these bears with the care and freedom they deserve.

Once in the sanctuary, the bears gradually return to the wilder behaviours of their natural habitat. This includes hibernating during the winter months when food is scarce. Always full of surprises, one rescued female bear emerged from hibernation with two tiny cubs at her heels. Through careful monitoring and support, these cubs have since been successfully reintroduced into the wild, contributing to the conservation efforts of Armenian bear populations.

Gavin Bruce, CEO of International Animal Rescue, commented, *"World Bear Day serves as a reminder of the challenges that remain and are still faced by bears worldwide, and sadly, particularly those exploited for entertainment purposes. The 'Tyred' bear's photo highlights the bear's capacity for joy, even after suffering and years of captivity. At IAR, we are committed to rescuing and rehabilitating bears, providing them with a safe haven. Allowing bears to live out their remaining years in comfort and free from exploitation, pain or suffering."*

For more information on International Animal Rescue's efforts to protect bears and other wildlife and their ongoing conservation work, please visit <https://www.internationalanimalrescue.org>

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International Animal Rescue UK

T. 07870808166

E. media@internationalanimalrescue.org

W. <https://www.internationalanimalrescue...>

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