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First Reintroduction Attempt of Brown Bears in Greece

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On the 10th of April 2011, the emergency team of the NGO ARCTUROS was notified of the presence of a lone brown bear cub, approximately 3 months old, trapped in a wood mill, in the prefecture of Kastoria in northwestern Greece. For the following two days the biologists of ARCTUROS, tried to track down the missing mother in order to reunite the family, but in vain. A couple of days latter a similar call reached ARCTUROS from the prefecture of Trikala in central Greece. Despite attempts to reunite also the second cub with its mother, both animals finally ended up in the rehabilitation facility of ARCTUROS.

Eurasia

Since then ARCTUROS has been preparing the two orphan cubs (*named "Little John" and "Nikitas"*) for what is to be now the first reintroduction attempt of brown bear cubs in Greece. The efforts of the ARCTUROS team are scientifically supervised by Dr. John Beecham, while the veterinary monitoring of the two cubs is carried out by the Veterinary School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

In order to avoid habituation towards humans that would compromise release, strict protocols have been followed. In the first two months upon arrival, the cubs were housed in a small caged area and had contact only with two members of the ARCTUROS staff, who bottle-fed them. In the beginning "Little John" and "Nikitas" were shy and competitive, but this changed really soon, and now they act as brothers.

After the first two months, the cubs were transferred to the Reintroduction facility of ARCTUROS, a one hectare forest of beech and oak, where they are being monitored by remote controlled cameras. The animals have no contact with humans anymore (the two caretakers try to minimize contact to the necessary feeding sessions), and they have become more independent and even wary of humans. The cubs will remain in the facility of ARCTUROS until late November, when they will be released to hibernate in the wild – post release monitoring will include the satellite tracking for a year and the genetic tracking of the cubs...[to be continued...] 🐻



Americas

Nevada to Hold First Ever Black Bear Hunt

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Nevada's first ever black bear hunting season began on August 20th of this year and will extend through December 31st or when the quota is reached. According to historical records the hunting of bears in this state took place to a small degree in the late 1800s, mostly by miners and cattlemen, but 2011 marks the first year a managed hunt will occur.

Following several years of a mark-recapture project, population models were used to determine a sustainable hunter kill rate. The quota was set very conservatively at twenty bears, only six of which can be females. Forty-five tags were sold in a draw containing roughly 1200 applicants, almost all of which were Nevada residents. Tag holders were required to attend a bear hunting indoctrination prior to receiving their tag. The use of dogs is allowed but baiting is illegal and there is a mandatory check-in requirement.

As expected the anti-bear hunting sentiment, Nobearhuntnv.org (NBHNV) was strong and organized, mainly consisting of a relatively small proportion of vocal residents from Incline Village, Lake Tahoe. Their oral arguments were mostly emotionally based and centered on the fear of bear hunters shooting other outdoor recreationists or hunting within the limits of Incline Village. Their legal arguments focused on the process by which the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners established the hunt, and they filed suit in Carson City District Court in June 2011. After considering written arguments