



The Bear Conservation Fund

of the
International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA)

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Conserving the world's bears through science and collaboration

Annual Report 2006—2007

The Bear Conservation Fund exists to support grant programs of the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA), funding :
Research
Exchange
&
Collaboration
in bear conservation around the world

IBA is a volunteer organization. Donations to the Bear Conservation Fund are not subject to overhead; all funds go directly to programs

The Bear Conservation Fund
International Association for Bear
Research and Management (IBA)

Contact at:
karen_noyce@bearbiology.org

Website under reconstruction at:
www.bearbiology/bcf.org

The uncertain future of polar bears is a potent reminder of the global scope of conservation issues. Conserving the vanishing Arctic environment requires the political will of multiple nations and a new level of urgency in international collaboration.

International pressure in cases like this can help nudge countries towards taking conservation action. However, building broad political will within a country is a grassroots phenomenon. It grows out of the passions of citizens at the local level and builds as those who understand local needs assume leadership roles to advocate for action.

Local experts that can represent their countries on international wildlife conservation forums, like the polar



Polar bear: *Andy Derocher*

bear biologists from Greenland, Russia, Norway, Canada, and the US that make up the World Conservation Union's Polar Bear Specialist Group, constitute a source of pride for their governments and fellow countrymen. They can speak to their political leaders on conservation necessary in their home countries with an authority not always afforded to outside experts.

Building local knowledge of and passion for bears, and fostering the development of regional and national expertise is what the work of the International Association for Bear Research and Management (IBA) and its Bear Conservation Fund (BCF) are all about. The IBA does not invest in building institutions, facilities, or administrative programs, but rather, in the work and professional growth of individuals that will contribute to the understanding of bears and their requirements and will grow to be leaders in science-based bear conservation in their countries, regions, or in the world. The profiles of past grant recipients and of recent projects supported through the Bear Conservation Fund that are included on pages 4 and 5 of this report, provide just two examples of the enormous pay-off that can come from this type of investment.

Karen Noyce, Chair





The Bear Conservation Fund

The Bear Conservation Fund (BCF) in 2006

At the end of 2006, the Bear Conservation Fund, for the first time, became the beneficiary of IBA's newly established endowment, the Homer Bear Conservation Fund. Established in August 2006, the Homer Fund performed well under the management of Sam Skaggs Investments, Juneau, Alaska. The directors of the fund released \$14,000 in earnings to be used for Research and Conservation (R&C) grants in 2007. The John Sheldon Bevins Memorial Foundation provided \$20,000 to the BCF. In addition, the Stahmann family provided a major gift of \$15,000 and other loyal donors, including Bear Trust International and others, provided their gracious support. In all, BCF income totaled \$55,350 for 2007 grants programs. Though less than in 2005 (when IBA received a \$50,000 leadership gift from the McGuire Family Foundation), this represented some new donors and included the new Homar Fund endowment which will henceforth provide annual yields similar in size to those IBA receives from the Bevins Memorial Foundation each year.

Proceeds from the Homer Fund are specifically earmarked by the donor for Research and Conservation Grants, as is 85% of Bevins gifts, with 15% going into Conference Travel Grants. Table 1 and the insets below and on page 3 provide detail on sources of BCF monies and allocations of funds. Donations for Experience and Exchange Grants and Information Outreach were low in 2006, because most funding was specified R&C grants. Goals for the coming year are to increase undesignated donations from private donors so as to increase provision for both R&C Grants and these other fledgling programs.

The R&C Grant Review Committee received 25 proposals for 2007 and awarded 11 grants. The map on page 3 shows locations of 2007 and previously supported projects. See page 6 for a listing of project titles and allocation by species and country.

**Special Thanks to the Following
Bear Conservation Fund
Benefactors:**
Homer Bear Conservation Fund
John Bevins Memorial Fund
Stahmann Family
Bear Trust International
Charles Smid
Riley Bechtel
Joan Rog

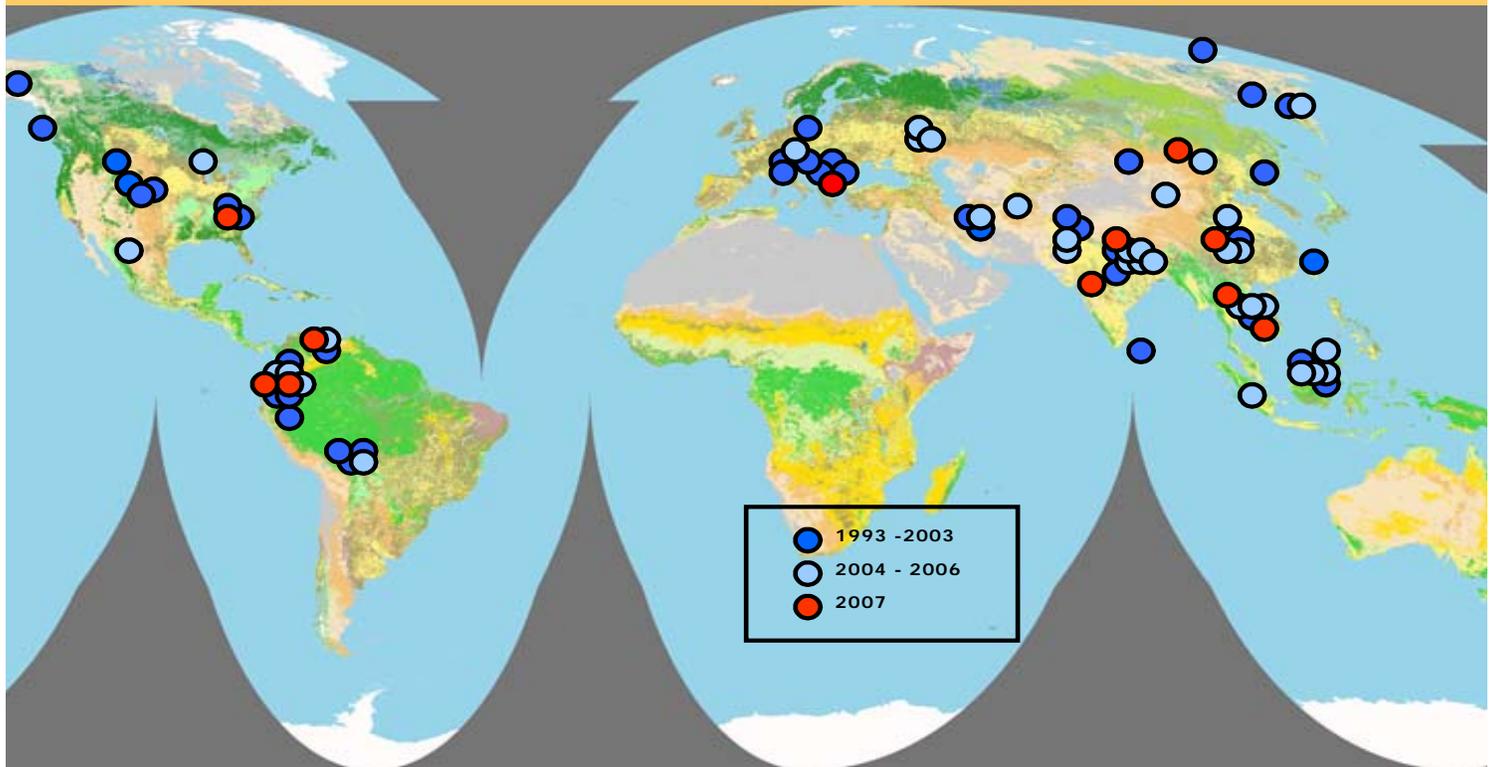
Total Donations		Program Allocation				
Received	Program year	Total \$	Research & Conservation Grants	Experience & Exchange Grants	Publications Outreach	Conference Travel Grants
1 March 2004 – 28 Feb 2005	2005	\$47,074	\$40,575*	\$3874	\$0	\$2625
1 March 2005 – 28 Feb 2006	2006	\$88,100	\$80,700**	\$6000	\$2500	\$2250***
1 March 2006 – 28 Feb 2007	2007	\$55,350	\$51,528	\$615	\$207	\$3000***

*Unused funds returned from 2004 increased total dollars available for R&C Grants to \$54,042 in 2005.
**IBA contributed an additional \$3350 from its general treasury to bring total grants funds to \$83,700 for 2006.
***IBA contributed matching funds for conference travel grants, bringing totals for grants to \$4500, and \$6000, respectively, in 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Programs Supported by the Bear Conservation Fund

- **Research and Conservation (R&C) Grants** receive 85-95% of BCF funds. Grants are awarded annually through a review process, for work in ecological research, conservation management, population assessment, and education/training. Priority is given to bear species and habitats of special conservation concern or projects with application to multiple species.
- **Experience and Exchange (E&E) Grants** provide support for working field exchanges between biologists and projects in different countries (up to \$1500 per traveler). Exchanges provide training and on-site consultation, must be of mutual benefit for host and traveler, and should foster ongoing partnerships.
- **Information Outreach** currently receives a very small portion of the BCF. These monies underwrite the distribution of IBA's technical journal, *Ursus*, and its newsletter, **International Bear News**, to deserving individuals and institutions in developing countries. It also helps cover costs normally born by authors for biologists in developing countries to publish their work in *Ursus*. These publications provide the most concentrated source of technical information about bears in the world and anchor the communication network among bear professionals worldwide.
- **Conference Travel Grants** underwrite travel for students and biologists from developing countries to attend IBA's international conferences. These represent a very small portion of the BCF, receiving money **only** from the Bevins Foundation and the IBA general treasury.

Locations of IBA Research & Conservation Grants Projects



BCF Sources of Income

- **The John Sheldon Bevins Memorial Foundation** is an independent fund established in 1992 by the family of John Bevins, who disappeared with colleagues over the Arctic in their research plane while conducting polar bear studies. IBA and the Nature Conservancy are designated cobeneficiaries of annual proceeds.
- **The Homer Bear Conservation Fund of the IBA** was established with a private donation for the express purpose of providing a steady income for conservation-oriented R&C projects focused on bears in areas other than North America, Europe, and Japan.
- **Bear Trust International** is a private non-profit organization dedicated to conserving all bear species through research, habitat protection, and education. www.beartrust.org
- **Other private donations**

BCF Allocation to Programs

- **85% of income from the Bevins Foundation** goes to Research and Conservation Grants
- **15% of income from the Bevins Foundation** goes to Conference Travel Grants
- **100% of income from the Homer Fund** goes to Research and Conservation Grants, limited to projects outside of North America, Europe, or Japan, on species or in areas of particular conservation concern
- **Other gifts that are not ear-marked** by donors for particular programs, species, or regions, are allocated as follows: 85% for Research & Conservation Grants, 10% for Experience & Exchange Grants, and 5% for Publications Outreach.

IBA



Oso	Urs
Bär	MeşBeňb
Björn	Orso
Orso	Björn
Björn	Samxe
Samxe	熊
熊	Shash
Shash	Béruang
Béruang	Karhu
Karhu	Бариц
Бариц	Bear



The Bear Conservation Fund

Research and Conservation Grants

2006 Project Profile: Rangewide Mapping of Asian Bears

In October, 2006, 49 bear experts from 20 Asian countries gathered in Nagano, Japan, for a historic workshop. Held in conjunction with IBA's 17th International Conference on Bear Research and Management, the purpose was to pool the knowledge of experts from across Asia to prepare up-to-date range maps for each of 4 Asian bear species: sun bears, Asiatic black (or moon) bears, sloth bears, and brown bears. The finished maps will indicate definite and probable occupied range, areas where bears have been extirpated, and places where their status is not known. They will serve as a basis for identifying priority areas for research and survey, and for measuring change in geographic distribution of bears through time.

The mapping project was made possible through a \$22,000 IBA R&C Grant to Dave Garshelis and Bruce McLellan, the co-chairs of the IUCN/SSC Bear Specialist Group (BSG). This represents the largest single grant awarded by the IBA to date; the ability to fully fund the project was a direct outcome of the \$50,000 McGuire Family Foundation gift to the IBA in late 2005. The project was considered an immediate priority by the BSG and its Asian Expert Teams, because of the lack of knowledge about the status of bear populations in many parts of Asia; prior to this effort, biologists from half of the countries that are home to these species rated the knowledge of bear distribution in their country as poor. Initially, Expert Team members provided whatever information they had, including site-specific documentation of observations, to Karen Minkowski of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the collaborating organization in this project. She prepared large draft maps, for workshop participants to discuss, revise, and further document. Final maps are nearing completion, and will soon be posted on both the WCS and BSG websites.



Mapping Asian bear range Dave Garshelis

Experience and Exchange Grants

2006 Project Profile: India and U.S.—Kartick Satyanarayan and Thomas Sharp

One of the E&E Grants IBA awarded for 2006 took Thomas Sharp, a wildlife biologist from Utah, USA, to southwest India, at the invitation of Kartick Satyanarayan, co-founder of Wildlife SOS (WSOS). WSOS is a nonprofit wildlife conservation organization that is in the process of purchasing parcels of land near Hampi, in the state of Karnataka, adjacent to several blocks of current forest reserves, in order to create a sanctuary for resident wild sloth bears. Thomas's primary purposes in visiting were to work with Kartick and WSOS to set up a population monitoring program for the future preserve area and to investigate with Kartick the occurrence and causes of human-bear conflicts in the area.



Sloth Bear, Nepal Dave Garshelis

These two goals were met during the time that Thomas and Kartick were on-site in Karnataka. Through this exchange, Thomas says he acquired a much better understanding of both the natural history of sloth bears in the scrub jungle and the conditions and limitations of working in that field environment. In addition, Kartick took Thomas to visit 2 rescue centers for dancing bears in Agra and Bangalore and the Daroji wild bear sanctuary near Hampi. They met with police and other officials in the region regarding poaching of wildlife and data on bear-human conflicts, making good contacts for future work in the region.

Kartick and other WSOS staff benefited from the opportunity for extended face-to-face discussions with Thomas regarding population monitoring, collection of scientific data in the field, and future strategies for WSOS in their efforts to raise funds for sanctuary lands and for their work.. Thomas and Kartick plan to continue their collaboration. They are currently making plans to attend IBA's 2007 conference on bear biology and management. Thomas will be analyzing data on human-bear conflicts collected from the Karnataka Forest Service, and he and Kartick hope to publish their observations of previously undescribed feeding behaviors of sloth bears.

Profile: Dr. Shyamala Ratnayeke

Dr. Shyamala Ratnayeke was always interested in natural history growing up in Sri Lanka. As a graduate student studying racoons at the University of Tennessee (USA), she became familiar, through her advisor, Dr. Mike Pelton, with American black bears and Dr. Pelton's many students of bears in the Smoky Mountains.



Dr. Shyamala Ratnayeke

Shyamala credits colleagues, mentors, and the availability of funds, including 2 IBA Research and Conservation Grants, with helping her gain the endorsement of the Sri Lanka Department of Wildlife Conservation to study the Sri Lankan sloth bears, a smaller, less hairy

subspecies of those on the Indian mainland. Conserving Sri Lankan bears has special challenges, due to enormous pressure on natural habitat from the rapidly growing rural human population. Sloth bears are persecuted for their reputation for inflicting serious injury to humans.

Despite political strife in the country, Shyamala and her Sri Lankan assistants set out in 2002 to address the critical lack of knowledge about the bears' ecology, status, and distribution. The study team radiocollared 10 adult bears at Wasgomuwa National Park and identified key habitat requirements. Through interviews with several hundred victims of sloth bear attacks, they identified factors that could decrease the risk of attack. They established a benchmark to evaluate changes in sloth bear distribution in the future.

According to Shyamala, one of her most significant accomplishments was to increase interest and public knowledge about bears through newspaper articles, workshops, and seminars. "My project team owes IBA and its members a debt of thanks for funds that were critical for continuing work in 2003 and 2004, and for the support and advice that came from its members who had extensive experience working on international bear projects."

Dr. Ratnayeke now serves as a Co-Chair of the Sloth Bear Expert Team of the World Conservation Union's Bear Specialist Group (BSG), maintaining contacts with colleagues in Sri Lanka and across Asia, and working to encourage more study and conservation of Asian bears.



Tracking bears in Taiwan

Profile: Dr. Mei-hsiu Hwang

To meet Dr. Mei-hsiu Hwang leaves no doubt of her passion for research and teaching. Just a few years out of graduate school, she is already building a legacy of bear conservation in her native Taiwan. Mei's love of nature and a desire to be a role model for students of wildlife conservation drew her to study the ecology of Asiatic black bears, locally endangered in Taiwan. As a PhD student at the University of Minnesota (USA), she led a research team trapping and tracking bears in the remote and rugged Yushan National Park. Mei also spent months in villages surrounding the park, documenting villagers' knowledge of bears and the history of their use of bears.

Mei's unassuming manner, unwavering focus, and ability to conduct field work in Yushan's challenging landscape won her the respect of the villagers and the title of "Bear Momma". Her work engendered national pride and drew attention to the conservation of native bears. To Mei, her most important accomplishment was to bring to the Taiwanese public an understanding of the threatened status of Taiwan's bears.

After completing her degree in the US, Dr. Hwang returned to Taiwan to teach in the Institute of Wildlife Conservation at National Pingtung University of Science and Technology. With her experience leading research teams in challenging field environments, she is the perfect mentor for the many students that now work with her on further bear studies in Taiwan, Malaysia, China, and Vietnam.

Of the Bear Conservation Fund, Mei says, "The IBA funds have provided special opportunities for projects from developing countries with inadequate research resources and information. The IBA itself also has generated an academic-friendly community for new investigators and those from developing regions to reach out to and communicate with others through relevant conferences and newsletters". This community of colleagues provides a "... platform from which conservation efforts can spread out and benefit little known bear species or populations which are highly at risk."



Dr. Mei-hsiu Hwang





Research and Conservation Grants awarded for 2007 (titles abbreviated)

• Bear conservation in Uttaranchal, India. Dr. H. S. Bargali	\$ 7,000	new
• Andean bear ecology and distribution in Sierra de Portuguesa, Venezuela. S. Garcia-Rangel (Ph.D. student)	4,700	also funded in 2006
• Impact of highways on bears in Greece A. Giannakopoulos (Ph.D. Student)	1,200	new
• Status Brown Bears in Northern Mongolia Dr. B. Lhagvasuren	7,000	new
• Success of reintroductions of Asiatic black bears in the wild, Thailand D. Ngoprasert (Ph.D. student)	4,500	new
• Bear conservation in Cambodia A. Olsson et al.	8,500	new
• Genetic misidentification error in population assessment, Georgia, USA J. Skvarla Sanderlin (Ph.D. student)	5,500	new
• Population trends for Asiatic black bears in western Nepal Dr. C. H. Stubblefield	1,200	new
• Genetics of the Andean bear in Ecuador M. P. Viteri (M.Sci. student)	3,400	also funded in 2006
• Conservation of spectacled bears and their habitat in Ecuador Dr. S.White et al.	1,500	new
• Mapping and discerning factors related to extirpation of Asiatic black bears, China Dr. X. Zhu et al.	7,000	also funded in 2006

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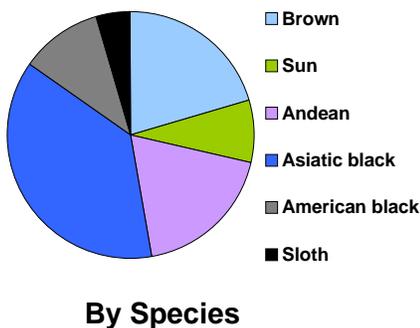
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Contact: Karen Noyce, Chair
karen_noyce@bearbiology.com

Phone: (218) 259-6686
(218) 492-4504
15542 County Rd 72
Warba, MN 55793
USA



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