

FREEDOM FROM LIFELONG PAIN !...Rescued Bears at Pune receive help from Wildlife S.O.S

Three rescued 'dancing bears' Babu, Reshma and Gudu are finally happy... freed finally from pain they suffered all their life since they were tiny cubs.

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Babu Bear is 12 years old. He is happy today but after twelve long years of pain that he suffered at the hands of the Kalandar Gypsies. Babu was stolen as a baby bear when he was merely weeks old and his mother was killed.

His Kalandar master made a hole in his muzzle with a red hot iron poker and inserted a thick, heavy brass ring the size of a large bracelet through it. Babu's muzzle was soft and delicate. The weight of the brass ring hurt him and caused him pain. It was this pain that made him jump up and down when his master flicked the rope that was tied to this ring. His actions appeared like he was dancing, but in fact he was far from being happy, he was frightened and very much in pain. He had suffered enough…;it was time to be free.

Information about the 3 bears had reached Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder of Wildlife S.O.S and a team from Wildlife S.O.S was already on their way.

Today, a special team of vets arrived from the Agra Bear Rescue Facility to the Centre at Pune where he was temporarily housed. Dr. Ilayaraja and Baiju Raj were part of the team and were shocked to see how the bear had lived with this pain for so long.

After careful and patient observation of the bear's behaviour, the Wildlife S.O.S team anesthetized Babu with a dart. He was soon fast asleep and would not feel anything. Cutting the thick heavy ring was quite a task as it had to be done before Babu regained consciousness but it had to be done very carefully without injuring the Bear. With determination, patience and the experience of the Wildlife S.O.S team, the ring was soon off! Babu was finally free. The ring had also caused an infection on the inside of his muzzle that was swollen and filled with puss. He was treated with antibiotics and painkillers.

According to Dr. Ilayaraja, Wildlife S.O.S's Veterinary Officer "It feels so good to be able to relieve this animal of pain that he has suffered for years silently".

Babu Bear is soon to be shifted with his two other companions to the Agra Bear Rescue Facility, a landmark collaborative project between Wildlife S.O.S and the State Forest Department which has recently been expanded to 160 acres. The Agra Bear Rescue Facility is primarily funded by International Animal Rescue.

According to Geeta Seshamani, Co-founder, Wildlife S.O.S "The ring to us signifies slavery which the Bear has patiently suffered all its life. This freedom from the ring is true freedom from pain and suffering" "All of us had tears of joy as the ring finally came off. To see the animal being able to breathe normally is such a relief" said Baiju Raj, Wildlife biologist at Wildlife S.O.S after the successful removal of the ring. The entire procedure was carried out in the Pune Center where the animals were temporarily housed by the State Forest department. The founder and

director of the Centre, Dr. Neelim Kumar Khaire also known as "Anna" expressed his happiness in the action taken by Wildlife S.O.S to relieve the suffering of these animals in such a quick manner.

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Wildlife S.O.S is an Indian Non-Governmental organisation working in the field of Wildlife rescue and Rehabilitation since 1995. Our main project is the rescue and rehabilitation of 'dancing bears', which are Indian Sloth Bears exploited by a gypsy tribe, called Kalandars for street entertainment purposes. In collaboration with the State Forest Departments, Wildlife S.O.S runs the World's largest Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre for Sloth Bears in Agra alongwith 3 other centres in Bhopal, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Working in tandem with the government law enforcement agencies, including state forest departments, Wildlife S.O.S has rescued around 400 Sloth bears from leading miserable lives with Kalandars and with the recent extension to the Agra Bear Rescue Facility, we hope to eradicate the profession of 'bear dancing' by rescuing the remaining around 500 bears off the Indian streets and rehabilitating the bear dancers as well, so that they and their generations to come don't revert to 'dancing or poaching bears' ever again. Join hands with us in giving both man and animal a life of Dignity and Freedom!!! The Bear Rescue & Kalendar Rehabilitation Programs of Wildlife S.O.S are primarily funded by International Animal Rescue. Other international partners are Free the Bears Fund Inc - Australia, Humane Society International - Australia and One Voice Association, France.

For more, visit our website, www.wildlifesos.org

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