

"A fed bear, is a dead bear?" Maybe not!

By: Scott M. Anna

Wildlife Rehabilitator's have made this old adage antiquated. It was first believed by many that if black bears were captured for one reason or another, then fed by humans they, would "never" be able to be re-integrated back into the wild. Evidence has shown that with such rehabilitators as Appalachian Bear Rescue <http://www.appbears.org/>, Ellijay Wildlife Rehabilitation Sanctuary, <http://www.wildlife-rehabilitation.org/>, and Rehabilitator Charlie Strothkamp of Springfield, Missouri, these magnificent creatures are able to live full lives. Whether it is adopted by a Zoo, as in the case of "Maggie" the Black Bear cub that had been rescued from a home in North Georgia (article from North Georgia News located on my website-www.cabincrittersart.com), or returned to live in heavily Black Bear populated areas, such as the North Georgia Mountains.

The success rate of being returned to the wild is 50% survival, as is the survival rate of Black Bears who have never had human interference.

Recently I have had the privilege of speaking with and interviewing Charlie Strothkamp. She has been a Licensed Rehabilitator for several years after retiring from the Springfield Police Department. Charlie was the "first female officer on the Springfield Police Department", and had to retire due to an illness. Then the "Call of the Wild" came knocking on her door and in her heart. Charlie has been responsible for rescuing, and rehabilitating several animals such as cougars, and the American Black Bear.

Most of the animals that she has rehabilitated have been adopted by Zoo's and Wildlife Parks, such as; Living Desert Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Charlie told me several heart warming, and heart wrenching stories about animals she rescued and some that were able to be rehabilitated.

The saddest, but one with a great ending was that of "Maggie." After being adopted, "Maggie" is now thoroughly enjoying her new life in the Zoo. At nine months she has increased in weight to about 80 pounds, which is about average for a Black Bear cub her age. At the time she was rescued (six months of age), she weighed



about 36 pounds, which was underweight for her age at that time. She had also been very mistreated, with injuries to her face and body. Her sibling and mother had to be euthanized due to their condition. It was first thought that "Maggie" herself would have to be euthanized. But due to the efforts of Charlie Strothkamp, this was not the case.

As in the case of the Appalachian Bear Rescue in North Carolina, and the Ellijay Wildlife Rehabilitation Sanctuary, the rescued bears live in habitats very similar to those that they were found in. These bears have very little contact with

humans, and are usually returned to the wild.

For more information about Wildlife Rescue, and Rehabilitation, please feel free to contact the links provided above. There are numerous guidelines and requirements if interested in becoming a rehabilitator, so check with your state Wildlife Conservation Departments.

As in the case of "Maggie" I will continue to be in contact with the Living Desert Zoo and Charlie Strothkamp regarding her progress.

"Hang in there baby!"