

Health and Welfare of bears farmed for bile

Seminar at the European Parliament
Nov.16, 2010

Johan Lindsjö,
DVM, M.Sc. in Wildlife Health

Outline

- Health and welfare
- Pain and distress
- Physical injuries
- Compromised behaviour
- Conclusion



www.bearsoftheworld.net

Health and welfare

Freedom from disease or abnormality, and the state of well being brought about by meeting the physical, environmental, nutritional, behavioural and social needs of the animal (*Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs UK 2004*)

Findings from bile farms and Animals Asia
Foundation China Bear Rescue Centre (CBRC)



www.animalsasia.org

Pain and distress

- Bile extraction, especially “free-dripping fistula”
- Vocalisations of distress, bite, kick and struggle



www.animalsasia.org

- Crush cages



Adapted from www.moonbears.co.uk

Injuries related to environment and husbandry

- Under-feeding and inadequate nutrition
→ Emaciation, poor hair coat, tartar and gum disease, stunted growth
- Water deprivation
→ Dehydration

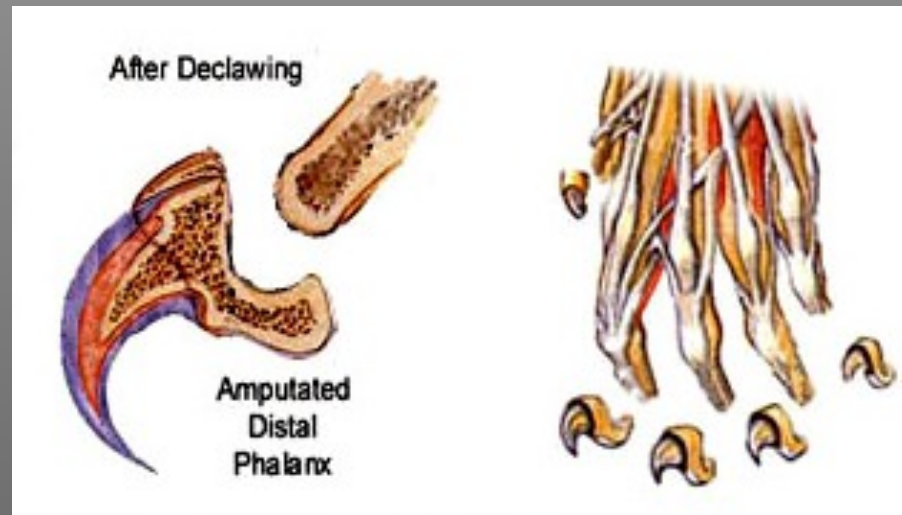


- Amputation of canine teeth



©/AAF

- Amputation of the last bones of the toes, i.e. declawing



Adapted from Hudson and Hamilton. 1993. Atlas of Feline Anatomy for Veterinarians, W.B. Saunders Company

Physical injuries

Medical evaluation at the CBRC, including clinical examination, blood and urine analyses, abdominal ultrasound examination and additional diagnostic imaging if required





- Self-injury → Hair loss, skin damage



and extensive tissue damage



Photo: AAF

- Bar biting and chewing →
Worn and broken teeth



From: Loeffler et al. 2009. Animal Welfare

- Capture injuries → Missing limbs



Photo: AAF

and snare wounds

- Inactivity and abnormal posture
→
bone and joint diseases
(arthritis, intervertebral disc disease, spondylosis)
and hindlimb paralysis





- Impaired health, detrimental environment and lack of care



Traumatic eye injuries (corneal ulcers), infectious eye diseases and cataracts



Photo: AAF

Summary of injuries and disease in bears received by Animals Asia Foundation

(Loeffler et al. 2009¹, Animals Asia's China Bear Rescue Centre, pers. comm²)

- Underweight or emaciated: 90 % ¹
- Dental disease: 65 % ²
- Missing limbs, mutilated digits, crushed paws or other signs of significant traumatic injury: 60 % ²
- Eye disorders: 15 %, blind on arrival: 4 % ²

Injuries related to bile extraction

- Bile extraction techniques
- Catheters

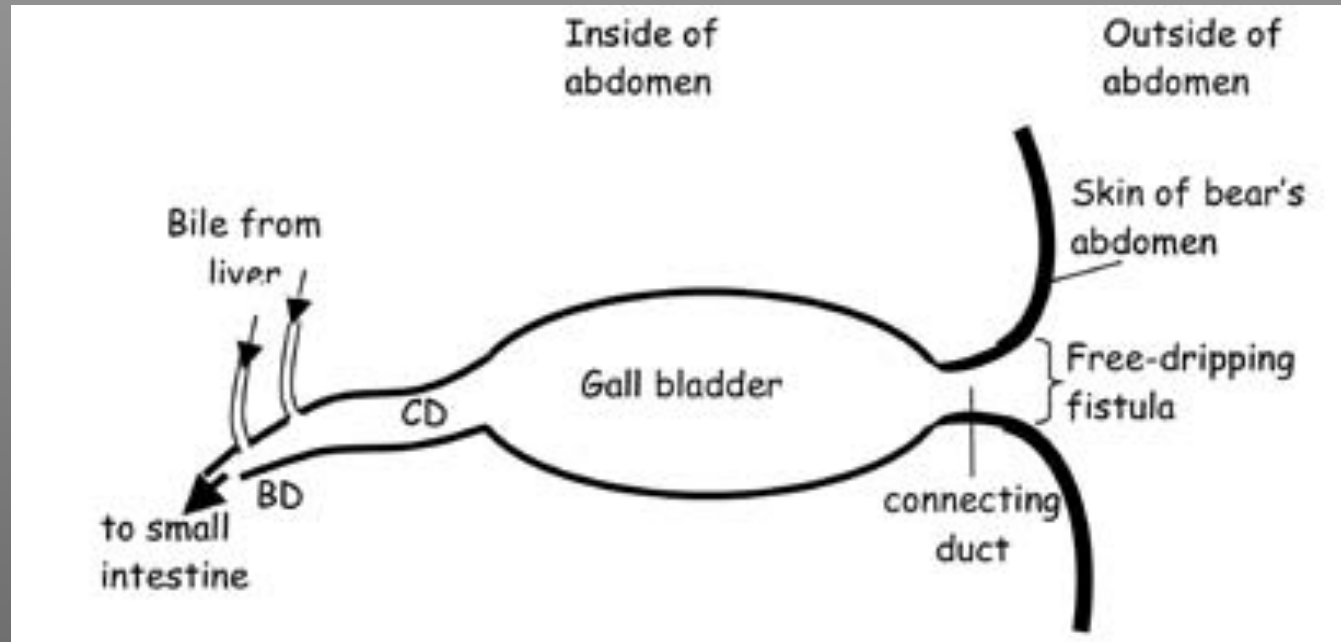


Photo: AAF



Photo: AAF

- Free-dripping fistula



Courtesy of AAF



Photo: AAF

- Leaking bile → Inflamed, ulcerated skin

- Gall bladder pathology
- Gall bladder inflammation/infection (cholecystitis)

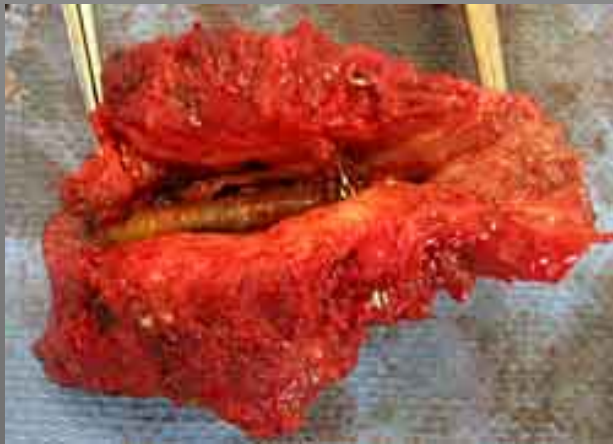


Photo: AAF



Photo: AAF

- Gall bladder polyps



From: Loeffler et al. 2009. Animal Welfare

- Gall stones

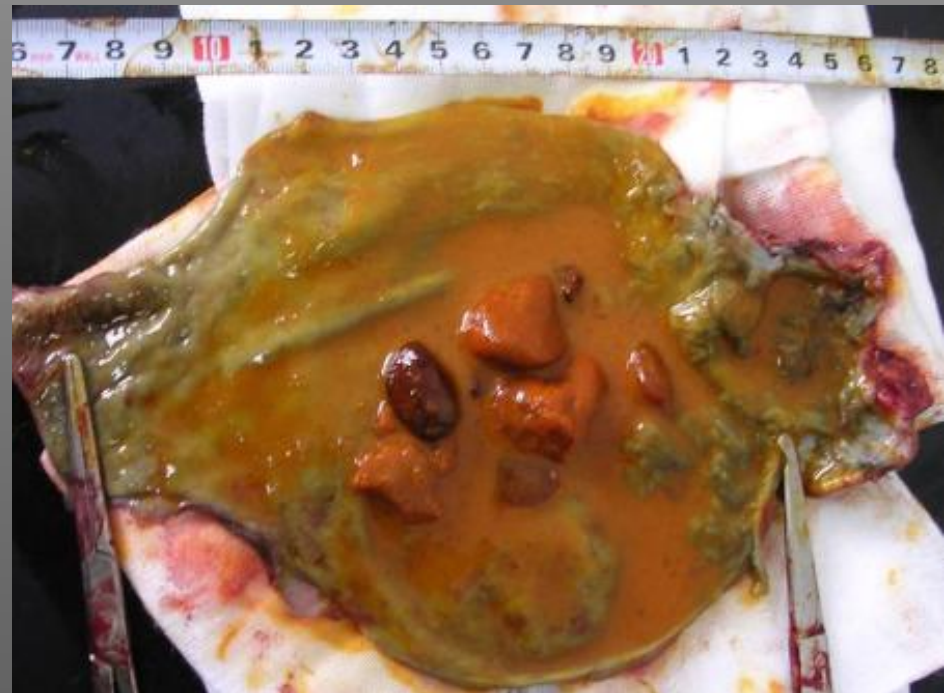


Photo: AAF

- Liver and bile duct tumours



Photo: AAF

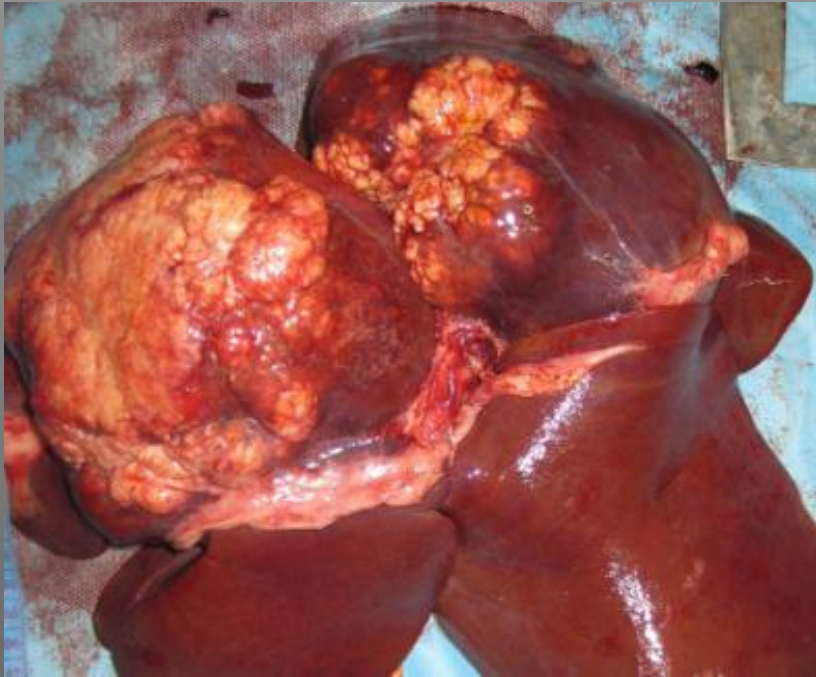


Photo: AAF

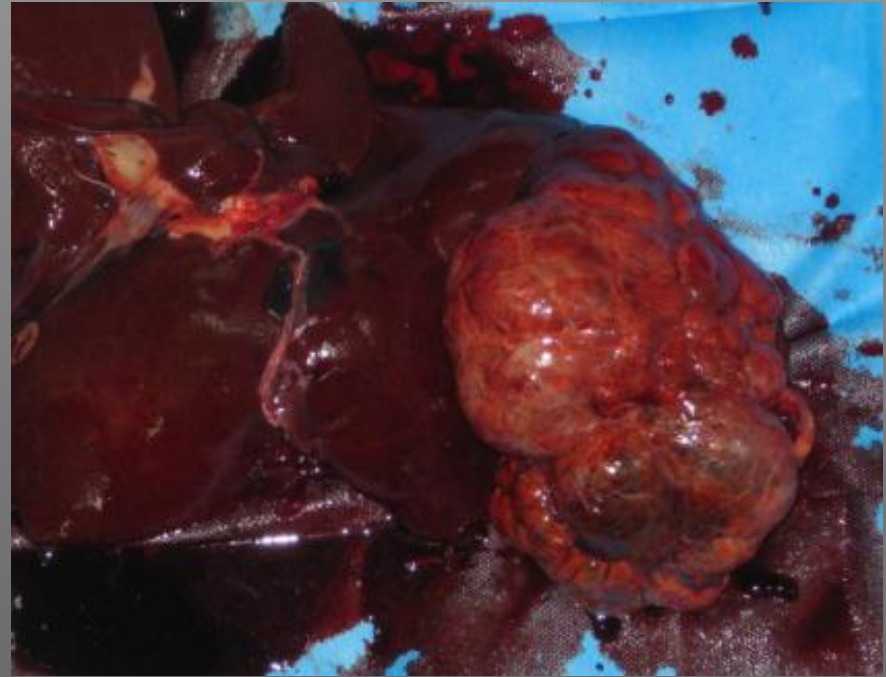


Photo: AAF

Abnormalities in 218 fistulated bears at CBRC

(Loeffler et al. 2009)

- Gall bladder inflammation/infection: 217 (99.5 %)
- Gall bladder polyps: 154 (71 %)
- Hernia: 66 (30 %)
- Gall stones: 55 (25 %)
- Abscesses in abdomen: 58 (27 %)
- Foreign objects in the gall bladder: 38 (17 %)
- Liver and bile duct tumor: 30 (14 %)
- Inflammation in abdomen: 13 (6 %)

Compromised behaviour

- Stereotypical behaviour = disturbed behaviour
- Animals in captivity, *not* in wild animals

Definition (*Jensen 1996*):

- Deviant
- Without apparent function
- Takes up most of an animal's time
- Repetitive



www.thylazine.org



www.captiveanimals.org



www.horseandhound.co.uk

- Stereotypical behaviour

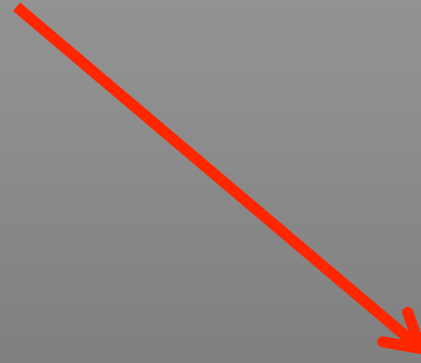


Sign of stress

- Stereotypical behaviour



Sign of stress



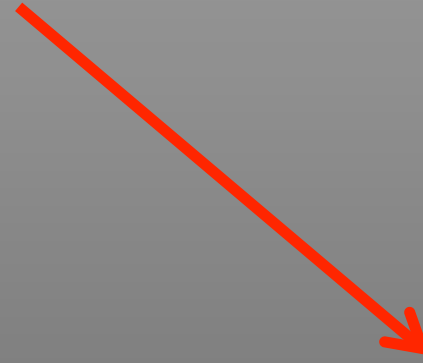
or Cope with long-term stress

- Stereotypical behaviour



Sign of stress

or



Cope with long-term stress

Regardless: Sign of inadequate environment

- Bar biting,
head rolling,
cage banging,
weaving of head and body,
pacing, rocking, circling and stepping from
side-to-side



(95 %)
(Loeffler et al.
2009)

- Bar biting, head rolling, cage banging, weaving of head and body, pacing, rocking, circling and stepping from side-to-side



(95 %)
(Loeffler et al.
2009)

- Aggressiveness, agitation
→ Self-injury



Photo: AAF



Photo: AAF

- Wild: Weaned at 1.5 years
Farms: \leq 3 months



Photo: AAF

- Too early weaned → Behaviour associated with premature removal from their mother

Conclusion

“Freedom from disease or abnormality, and the state of well being brought about by meeting the physical, environmental, nutritional, behavioural and social needs of the animal”

- Farming and bile harvesting adversely and seriously affect health and welfare in bears



Photo: AAF

Conclusion

“Freedom from disease or abnormality, and the state of well being brought about by meeting the physical, environmental, nutritional, behavioural and social needs of the animal”

- Farming and bile harvesting adversely and seriously affect health and welfare in bears



Photo: AAF

- Bear bile farming is an inhumane practice and it can never be conducted in a humane way