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Cheryl Frederick, a UW graduate student studying sun bears at the Woodland Park Zoo, spreads treats for the bears to find as part of an enrichment activity. Hiding the food or placing it in their environment allows the bears to forage as they would in the wild.

Aug. 3, 2006

UW, zoo to continue cooperative work

By Joel Schwarz
News and Information

Woodland Park Zoo and the UW have renewed their agreement for scientific and educational cooperation to promote research, education and conservation.

The agreement is designed to expand and promote greater cooperation between the two institutions, according to Lisa Dabek, the zoo's director of conservation, and Randall Kyes, head of the UW's Division of International Programs at the Washington National Primate Research Center and a research associate professor of psychology.

"Both institutions offer unique collaborative opportunities with regard to expertise, service and facilities," said Kyes, who conducts collaborative research and training in conservation biology in Indonesia, Nepal, China, Thailand and Bangladesh. "The impressive range of collaborative activities that have taken place between the UW and the zoo thus far is only a glimpse of the potential that lies ahead."

Dabek said, "The agreement is designed, among other things, to promote the zoo's interest in conservation biology and conservation biology programs at the University and abroad. For example, the zoo has been supporting the International Field Training Program in Conservation Biology headed by Kyes since 1999."

In addition, it will help promote the flow of information between the two institutions and the exchanges of zoo employees and UW faculty and students for teaching, research and training purposes.

The two institutions have had a formal cooperative agreement since 2001, although UW students have been doing behavioral and observational studies on grizzly bears, western lowland gorillas, orangutans, Asian elephants, laughing thrushes and other animals since at least 1975.

One current zoo employee, Cheryl Frederick, is also a graduate student working on her doctoral degree with Kyes in the animal behavior program in the UW's


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This bear enjoys a tube of water and grapes.

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psychology department. Frederick's research has focused on the reproductive biology of sun bears and the applications for conservation of this endangered species (see photos).

Undergraduate students have also made use of the zoo, especially those in Psychology 419, which focuses on behavior studies of animals. It has the serious purpose of expanding basic knowledge of animal behavior, and teaching students about conservation of endangered species and research methods, according to Barbara Kirkevold, a former lecturer in the UW psychology department. The class is operated as a cooperative program between the UW and the zoo and also the aquarium.

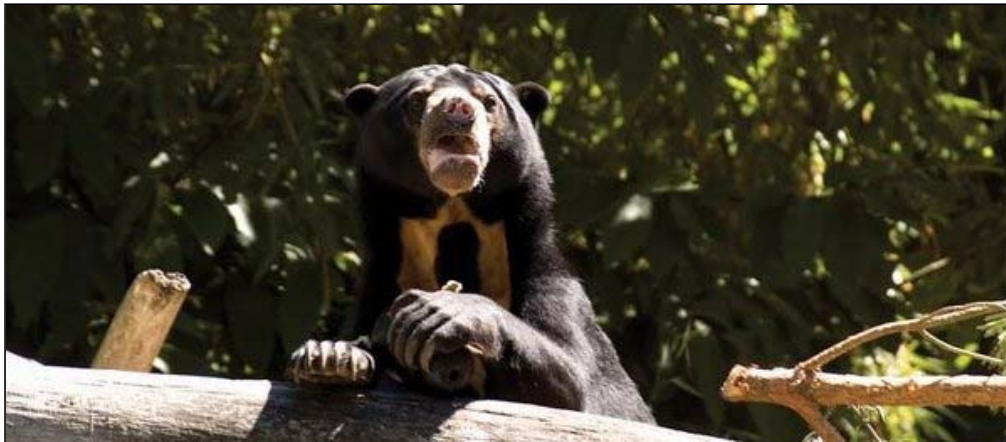
"It takes years to accumulate data in the wild on a species and it is not always possible to observe animals in their natural habitat," said Kirkevold. "Studying in the zoo is a welcome alternative."



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This bear licks honey spread on a tree trunk.

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This bear "smiles" for the camera after finding a treat.

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