

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ANDEAN BEAR CONSERVATION



The Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), also known as the Andean Bear, is the only bear species from South America. It gained notoriety in 1958, after English author Michael Bond created a fictional character for children's literature: Paddington Bear.

As stated in the first story to introduce Paddington, the bear with an old hat and a duffle coat comes from 'Darkest Peru'. His origins were

suggested by Mr. Bond's publisher, who found out that an environment such as the cloud forests of Machu Picchu represents one of the main natural habitats for the Andean Bear. Despite the character's fame, the species now holds a vulnerable conservation status due to poaching and loss of habitat. This is the main reason for Inkaterra Asociación (ITA) to work on its Andean Bear Rescue Center, located at the hotel grounds of Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel.

Located at the heart of the Andean Bear's natural habitat, this conservation program is intended for research, conservation and education. Its main objectives are rescuing, rehabilitating and working on a reproduction and reinsertion program, if conditions allow it. The Andean Bear is considered an umbrella species, as its conservation indirectly protects many other species that are part of their ecosystems. These bears are territorial beasts that mark a big area as their own. After eating, seeds get stuck in their fur, which they spread all over their field. Bears help vegetation to grow, giving a feeding source to other animals. Hence, their conservation is crucial.

ITA's Andean Bear Rescue Center

Five Andean Bear specimens, three males and two females, are currently hosted. The first rescued bear was 'Yogui'. It was found in 2001, held captive in inadequate conditions at Wilkapata community (Cusco). After getting medical treatment, it was transferred by helicopter to the rescue center at Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel. A year later, Inkaterra welcomed 'Pepe', a bear that lived in Universidad Nacional de Cusco. In 2009, 'Coco' was received after living in the province of Calca (Cusco) with a local family. In July 2013, two female bears were rescued from a circus in Arequipa, and were transferred by truck to Poroy station (Cusco), then by train to Machu Picchu. These bears, named 'Kina' and 'Yossi' (each specimen has maintained the names given before their transfer), have quickly integrated with the other.

'Yogui', 'Pepe' and 'Yossi' are currently live in the rescue center's captivity area, where they have trees and ramps to climb and a fresh-water pool. 'Kina' and 'Coco' now live at

the semi-freedom area, a 2980m² field that resembles wild conditions and is the proper environment for breeding and reinsertion programs.

After patient care and constant monitoring, aspects like a proper diet mainly based on fruits, bromeliads and other food resources that bears would find in their natural habitat. Each specimen has individual care and permanent medical controls at the rescue center, now a referent for specialists on methods to improve management on Andean Bear's diet, skin care and behavior.

If you wish to contribute with Inkaterra's Andean Bear conservation project, please click the following page: <http://www.inkaterra-asociacion.org/donate/>. Your help is much appreciated.

