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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 14, 2022**

Four Orphaned Bear Cubs Successfully Returned To Their Homes In the Wild *Cubs received care, grew strong at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center.*

RAMONA, CA — Four orphaned bear cubs who have been growing strong at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center for the past six months, have been returned to the wild. The bears were released on April 14, 2022 by biologists with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in Central and Northern California.

Three of the bears were released in Mariposa County, not far from where they were originally picked up by CDFW after a sow presumed to be their mother was found killed nearby on Sept. 22, 2021. The orphaned triplet sisters were approximately 7 months old when they arrived at the Ramona Wildlife Center. While they were close to weaning age, they would have remained with their mother for up to two years learning to hunt and survive. A fourth, male bear was released in Plumas County, not far from where he approached firefighters with burned paws during the Dixie Fire on Aug. 31, 2021. The cub was about 7 months old when he arrived in Ramona and needed continued care to heal his burned pad.

During their stay at San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center, Project Wildlife's animal care team prepared the bears for a successful return to the wild by minimizing human interaction and moving them to outdoor enclosures as soon as they were ready. The move outdoors last November was significant because the bears were given access to trees, shrubs and natural substrate. They also got acclimated to the weather and had more opportunities to run, climb, play and forage for their food. The increased activity and rough housing with each other helped the cubs build muscles. San Diego Humane Society's wildlife care specialists also worked with the bears to develop their wild instincts by having them search for food and grubs, setting them up for a successful reintroduction back into the wild. The bears have each been eating 10 pounds of food every day, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey and assorted proteins. Their enrichment included natural substrate in the form of pumpkins, different scents and prey items like fish.

Before release, the bears were fitted with radio collars so their movements can be tracked by CDFW. "This is the day we have been hoping for, the day that our team has been working so hard for," said Andy Blue, campus director of San Diego Humane Society's Ramona Wildlife Center. "It is always our goal to return a wild animal to their natural habitat and to see that these four bears get a second chance where they belong, is extremely rewarding."

San Diego Humane Society's Project Wildlife program is the primary resource for wild animal rehabilitation and conservation education in San Diego County. Each year, SDHS gives more than 13,000 injured, orphaned and sick wild animals a second chance. In 2020, SDHS announced a new Ramona Campus, where they specialize in caring for native apex predators and birds of prey, including hawks, owls, eagles, coyotes, bears, bobcats and, under special pilot authorization, mountain lions.





Photos, b-roll + video clips of return to wild for media use can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/3vaPvys>

Photos and b-roll of bears in care at SDHS for media use can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/3mMdSzw>

Suggested Tweet: 4 bear cubs who've been receiving care at @sdhumane's Ramona Wildlife Center for 6 months were returned to the wild by @CaliforniaDFW! One bear first arrived with a burned paw after the #DixieFire & the triplet sisters after a sow presumed to be their mother was found killed in Mariposa County.

About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.

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