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San Diego Humane Society Cares for Youngest Black Bear Cub in Its History

RAMONA, CA — San Diego Humane Society’s Project Wildlife team is currently caring for the youngest black bear cub the organization has ever taken in — an approximately 2-month-old cub who arrived weak, underweight and alone. After 30 days in care, he is now stable, playful and thriving thanks to round-the-clock attention and expert care at the organization’s Ramona Wildlife Center.

The cub was found on April 12, 2025, by campers in Los Padres National Forest. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) biologists initially attempted to reunite the cub with his mother by returning him to the wild overnight, but she did not return. With no signs of mom in the area, CDFW transported the cub to San Diego Humane Society’s Ramona Wildlife Center on April 14, 2025.



“He was extremely fragile when he arrived,” said Autumn Welch, Wildlife Operations Manager at San Diego Humane Society’s Ramona Wildlife Center. “After going several days without nutrition, it was touch-and-go at first. But now, he’s active, eating well and gaining weight steadily.”

Because of his age and condition, the cub will likely need to remain in care for up to a year. The hope is to ultimately return him to the wild, and if another cub enters care elsewhere in California, CDFW may try to pair them — a critical strategy to keep orphaned cubs wild and reduce the risk of imprinting on humans.

According to CDFW, this is only the fourth bear cub this young in the past five years who has come into rehab care in California. Raising a bear cub from this young age requires an extraordinary amount of time, expertise and resources. He currently receives four enrichment and feeding sessions each day, with overnight feedings required in his early days to help stabilize him. Enrichment sessions mimic maternal behaviors and help prepare the cub for life in the wild. “This is a very unusual case,” said Welch. “We don’t often see bears this young without their mother. It’s an honor to care for him, but it’s also a significant commitment. We rely entirely on donations to make this kind of specialized care possible.”

San Diego Humane Society receives no state funding for this work and depends on community contributions to care for wild animals in need. The Ramona Wildlife Center is the only facility in San Diego County permitted to rehabilitate native apex predators like black bears, mountain lions and bobcats.

Those wishing to help can donate or learn more at sdhumane.org/wildlife.

Photos/video of bear cub at San Diego Humane Society for media use can be downloaded here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/X7JhcXnYo1>

Photo/video credit: San Diego Humane Society

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.