

Inspiring: Bears Are Helpless After Wildfire Burns Their Paws But Vets Try a New Treatment

Humanity measuring up to its moral potential.

By [The Greenville Post](#)

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These kind vets wanted to help these bears thrive. During a wildfire in Southern California, two bears and a mountain lion sadly had their paws burned by the scorching hot ground. Thankfully, the animals were found by rescuers, and they were rushed to a wildlife vet for help.

The two adult bears and the mountain lion were brought to the veterinarians at the University of California for treatment. One of the bears was pregnant, and both had third-degree burns on their paws. This made it almost impossible to walk and hunt, and without treatment, they would have died quickly in the wild.

The plight of the bears made it to nightly news shows, including PBS:

All three of the animals had to have bandages applied to their paws. This isn’t an easy task for vets. Most wild animals aren’t very trusting of humans and won’t put up with medical treatment.

The animals had to be sedated before they could be treated. This worked fine for the original treatment, but they were all given bandages that needed to be changed often. That meant putting them to sleep often, which just can’t be done.



Jamie Peyton, chief of the Integrative Medicine Service at the university's vet school, explained.

"You can only anesthetize them so many times," Peyton said. "It's hard on them. We can't do that to them every day."

The vets decided to try some new treatments on the animals while they were already anesthetized for bandage changes.

This would help the animals recover faster and reduce the number of times they would need to be sedated.



One of the unique treatments the vets applied to the animals was the use of fish skins as bandages. They stitched the skins to the paws of the animals and then wrapped them in corn husks. This protected the paws, allowed them to heal, and helped soothe the pain in the process. These bandages were also safer for the animals.

Many animals eat their bandages, and regular cloth ones could have gotten stuck in their intestines and caused blockages and other issues.

The fish skin and corn husks are all-natural, so they won't cause any internal problems if eaten. The mountain lion did attempt to eat his, so this proved to be beneficial. Once the treatments were applied, the animals seemed to do well.

The bears both woke up easily and walked around on their paws. They ate well and were interested in their surroundings. The mountain lion showed similar progress.

It took several weeks for the bears to get used to their bandages and recover.

They also had to learn to use their injured paws with the bandages on them. They wouldn't be able to hunt, walk, or climb with sore paws. Once the bears recovered from their treatment, they were released back into the wild.

The bears did well, but the mountain lion was too young to be returned. Wildlife officers believed that he would not be able to survive on his own in the wild.

They decided to send him to a care facility in Northern California where he will be cared for properly for his entire life.

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