



Care For Us

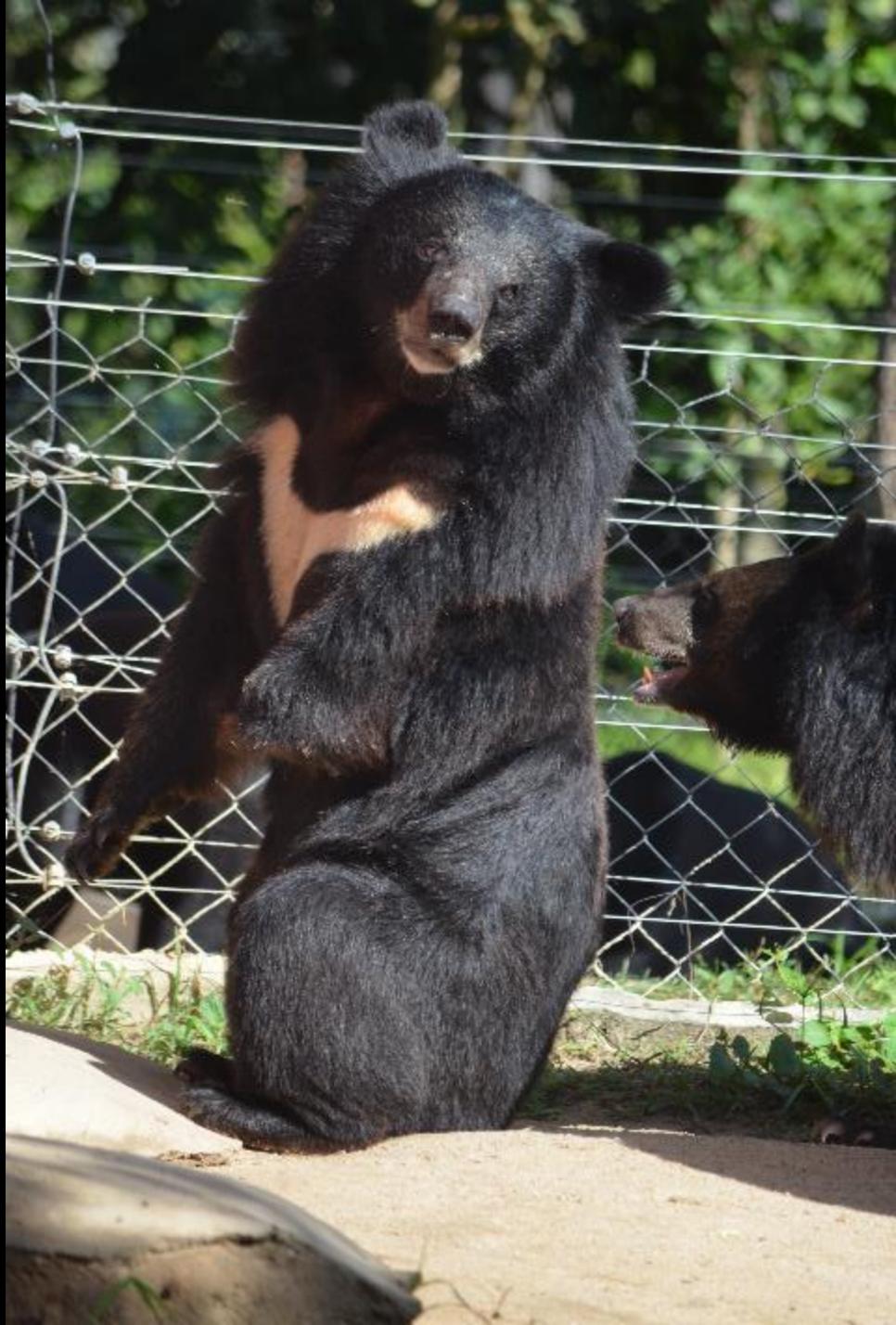
*Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*)*

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare refers to an animal's state or feelings. An animal's welfare state can be positive, neutral or negative.

An animal's welfare has the potential to differ on a daily basis. When an animal's needs - nutritional, behavioural, health and environmental - are met, they will have a good standard of welfare.

A good life in captivity might be one where animals can consistently experience good welfare - throughout their entire life.





Understanding that animals have both sentient and cognitive abilities as well as pain perception, reinforces the need to provide appropriate husbandry provisions for all captive animals, to ensure positive welfare.

In captivity, the welfare of an animal is dependent on the environment provided for them and the daily care and veterinary treatment they receive.

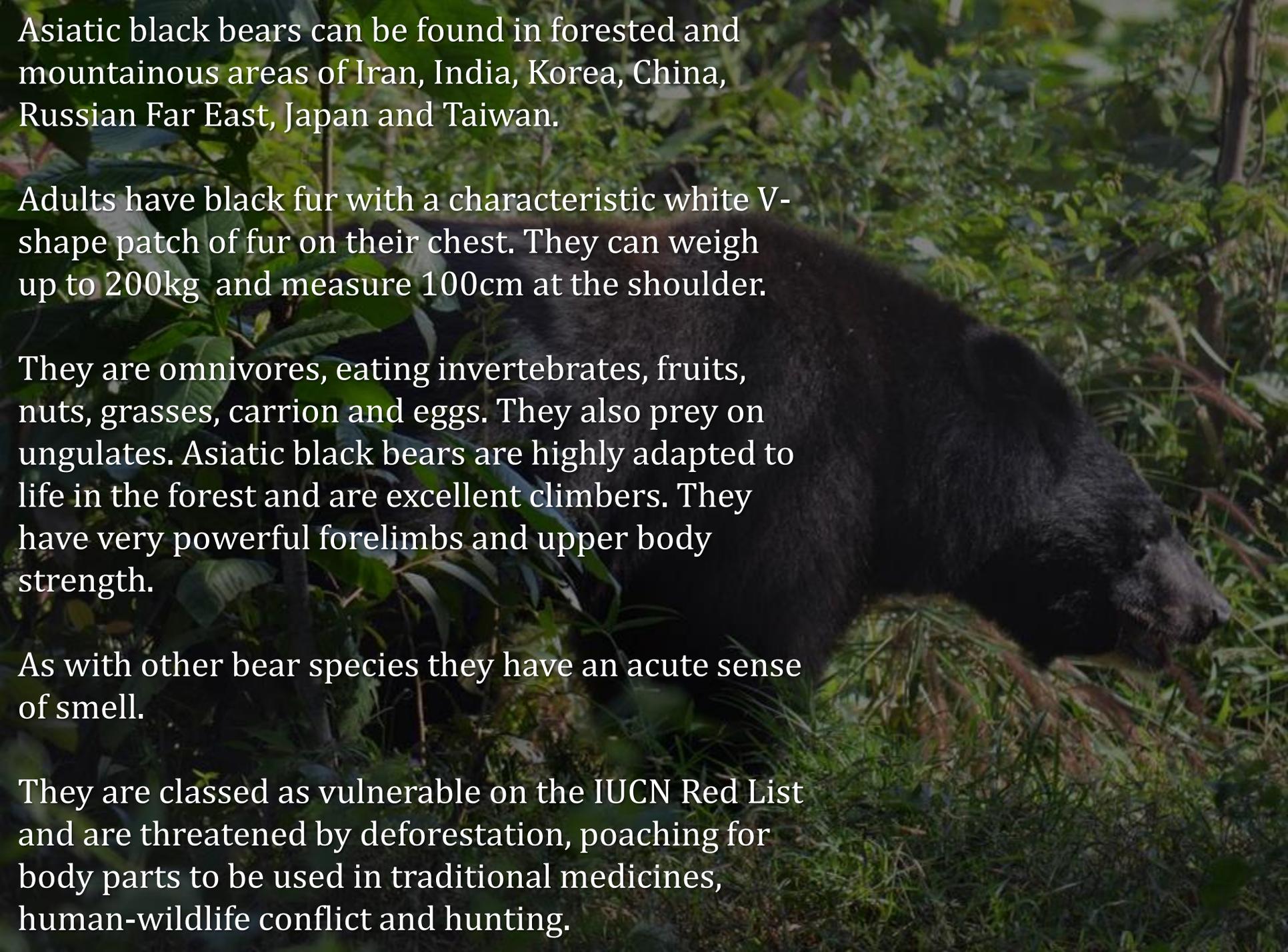
Asiatic black bears can be found in forested and mountainous areas of Iran, India, Korea, China, Russian Far East, Japan and Taiwan.

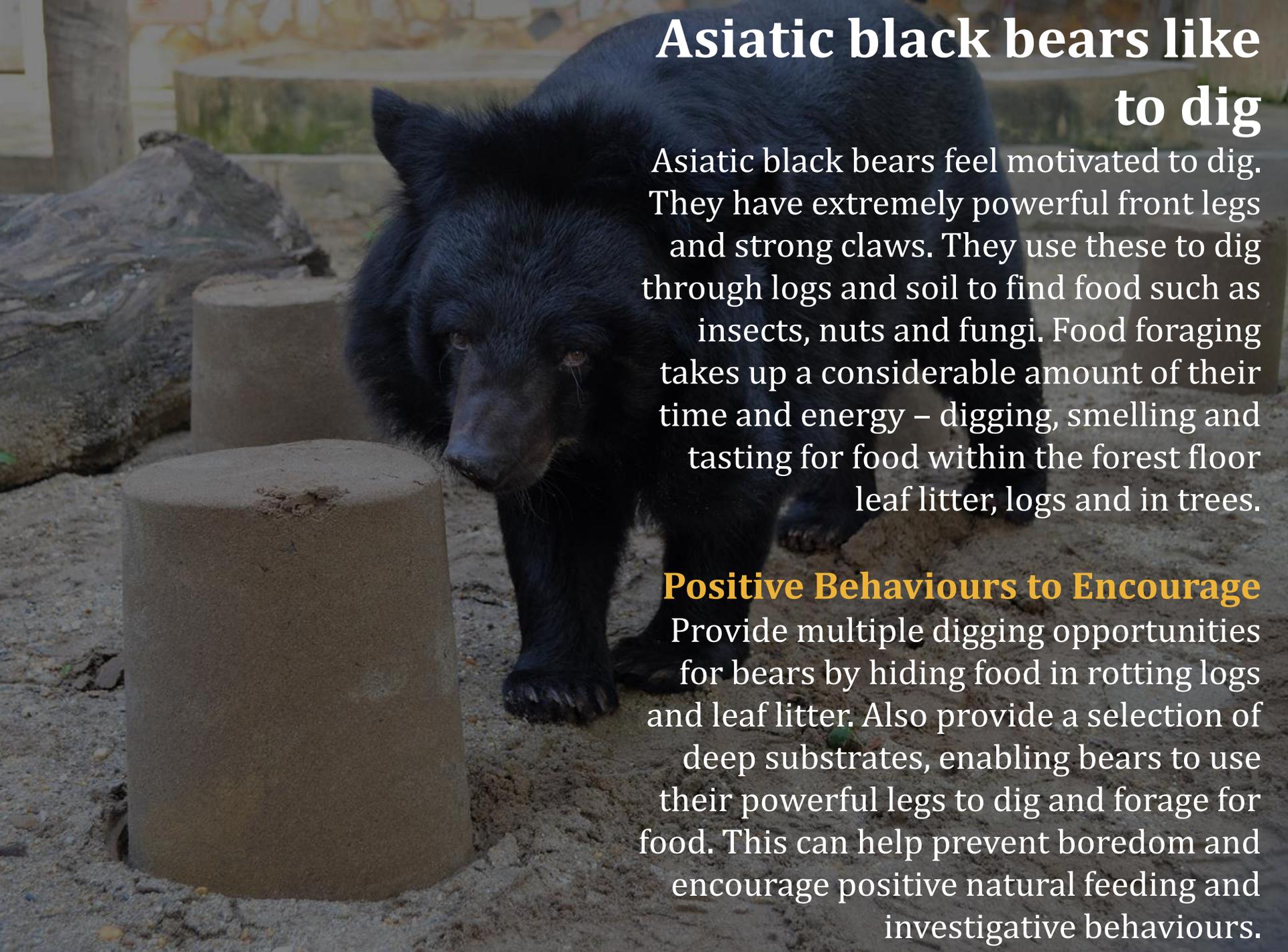
Adults have black fur with a characteristic white V-shape patch of fur on their chest. They can weigh up to 200kg and measure 100cm at the shoulder.

They are omnivores, eating invertebrates, fruits, nuts, grasses, carrion and eggs. They also prey on ungulates. Asiatic black bears are highly adapted to life in the forest and are excellent climbers. They have very powerful forelimbs and upper body strength.

As with other bear species they have an acute sense of smell.

They are classed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and are threatened by deforestation, poaching for body parts to be used in traditional medicines, human-wildlife conflict and hunting.



A black bear is standing in a sandy enclosure. In the foreground, there are several large, cylindrical logs. The bear is looking down towards the logs. The background shows a stone wall and some greenery.

Asiatic black bears like to dig

Asiatic black bears feel motivated to dig. They have extremely powerful front legs and strong claws. They use these to dig through logs and soil to find food such as insects, nuts and fungi. Food foraging takes up a considerable amount of their time and energy – digging, smelling and tasting for food within the forest floor leaf litter, logs and in trees.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

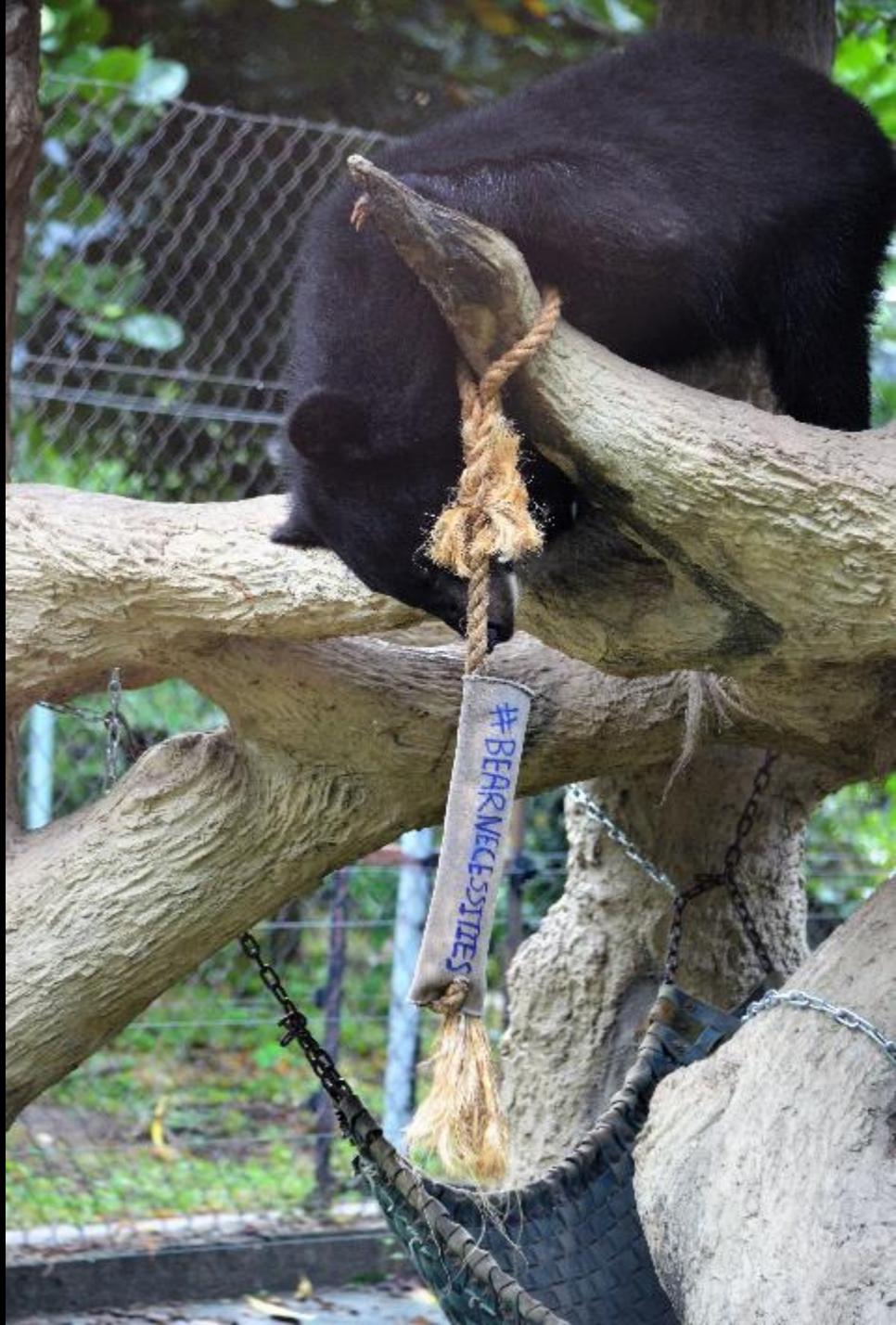
Provide multiple digging opportunities for bears by hiding food in rotting logs and leaf litter. Also provide a selection of deep substrates, enabling bears to use their powerful legs to dig and forage for food. This can help prevent boredom and encourage positive natural feeding and investigative behaviours.

Asiatic black bears like to climb

Large paws, strong limbs and claws mean Asiatic black bears are very good climbers. They will climb trees to search for fruit or other foods and to rest and sleep. In the wild they spend up to half their time high up in the trees and are one of the largest arboreal mammals.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing multiple elevated platforms and climbing poles and trees for bears to climb is vital for their health and welfare. Natural trees provide a more dynamic environment, but man-made platforms can provide different opportunities for feeding and sleeping.



A black bear is shown in profile, sitting on a thick, horizontal log. The bear is using its mouth and paws to tear at a piece of light-colored paper. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting a natural or semi-natural enclosure. The bear's fur is dark and appears thick. The paper it is tearing has some faint blue markings on it.

Asiatic black bears enjoy choice and control over their environment

Providing choices within different elements of an enclosure such as a variety of climbing and resting opportunities, substrates, control over food choices and foraging opportunities is important. A complex and varied enclosure which bears can explore and make use of will ensure optimum welfare for captive bears.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Allowing bears the option of when and how to explore their enclosure will give them control over their lives and make them feel safer and more secure.



Asiatic black bears are intelligent

Asiatic black bears are sociable animals, living in small family groups. In the wild they share their complex habitat with predators and prey.

Their survival is dependent on them being able to safely move around and finding insects, fruits and other foods within the forest. They use their amazing sense of smell to detect danger and find food in rotting wood and buried in the ground or in leaf litter.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

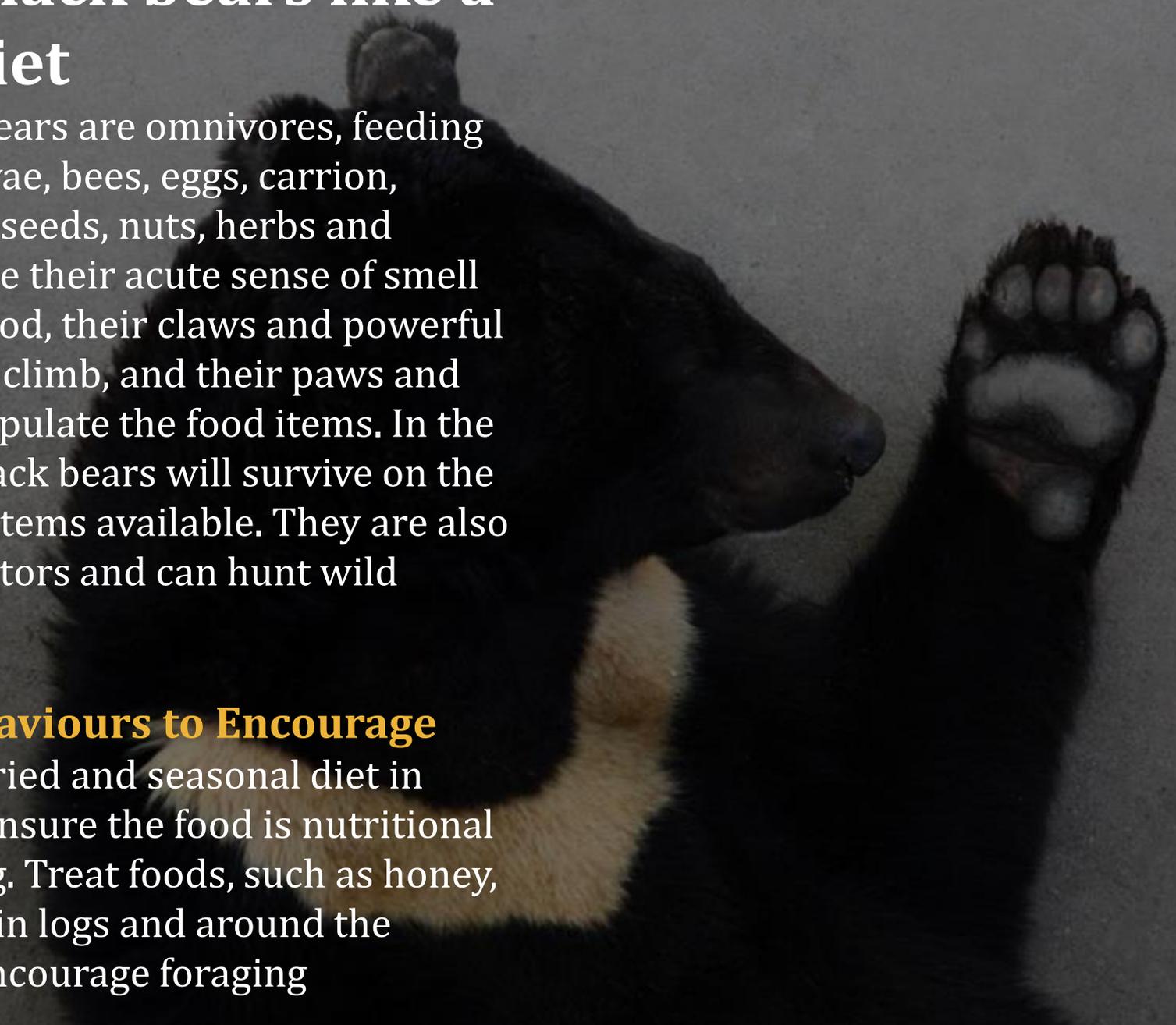
Providing an interesting and diverse habitat in bear enclosures with soft substrate, large areas to forage, elevated platforms and trees will increase investigating behaviour. Regular environmental enrichment such as scents and artificial objects will encourage natural behaviours such as exploring and provide olfactory stimulation.

Asiatic black bears like a varied diet

Asiatic black bears are omnivores, feeding on insects, larvae, bees, eggs, carrion, grasses, fruits, seeds, nuts, herbs and honey. They use their acute sense of smell to locate the food, their claws and powerful limbs to dig or climb, and their paws and mouth to manipulate the food items. In the wild Asiatic black bears will survive on the seasonal food items available. They are also effective predators and can hunt wild ungulates.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing a varied and seasonal diet in captivity will ensure the food is nutritional and interesting. Treat foods, such as honey, can be hidden in logs and around the enclosure to encourage foraging behaviours.



Asiatic black bears like to rest and sleep

Asiatic black bears like to rest and sleep high up in trees. Being up in the trees means they can evade predators and sun themselves in peace. In colder parts of their natural range they may hibernate, and females will dig dens in old trees and rear their young while the hibernating.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Sleeping and resting platforms and branches can be created and dispersed around the enclosure to give the bears a choice of where to sleep. Providing sleeping sites which are free of disturbance and feel safe will encourage sleeping and resting behaviours.





Asiatic black bears like water

Asiatic black bears like to be able to bathe and swim. Water is a great way to create diversity in an enclosure and provides enrichment for the bears. A pool big and deep enough for the bears to submerge or swim in helps keep their coat and skin in good condition.

Positive Behaviours to Encourage

Providing fresh, clean water for bears allows them to exhibit natural behaviours like swimming and playing, as well as thermoregulation. A pool is also a great way to for bears to wash and groom. Placing fruit and vegetables in the water encourages foraging and swimming behaviours.

Asiatic black bears enjoy...

A suitable environment that promotes all their natural behaviours. This might include trees to climb, a raised area or place to rest, a varied nutritional diet, and an opportunity to use their sense of touch, taste and smell.

In captivity we should always try and replicate their natural and normal behaviours, so they are happy and healthy throughout their lives.

