

Opinion: Saving bear cubs, while upping hunting quotas doesn't make sense

By Jennifer Fearing

The Humane Society of the United States applauds the California Department of Fish and Game's heroic and resource-intensive efforts to rehabilitate little Shasta, a yearling black bear cub orphaned when his mother was shot, and four other cubs in a unique partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the nonprofit Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care. Yet, at the same time the department is working to save Shasta and bears like him, it is seeking an increase in opportunities to kill them.

Fish and Game has proposed increasing the number of bears hunted each year by nearly 20 percent – from 1,700 to 2,000. Pressures on California's black bears come from poachers seeking trophies or highly valuable bear parts for the illegal wildlife trade, marijuana farmers protecting their illicit crops, and the rest of us who neglect to bear-proof our garbage and thus draw unwanted attention from bears in search of easy food. These stresses are unlikely to abate anytime soon; in fact, they are what put cubs like Shasta in jeopardy in the first place.

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