

Zoocheck
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Toronto, ON
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March 29, 2017

Dear Julie Woodyer,

I write this letter following our health assessment of Yupik, a polar bear currently housed at a zoo in Morelia, Mexico, performed on March 22, 2017. I am a veterinarian with particular expertise in bear medicine and welfare. I was a former senior veterinarian of animal welfare charity, Animals Asia, where I had the privilege of providing extensive veterinary care to over 150 bears rescued from the bear bile industry. I have anesthetized and provided extensive veterinary care to hundreds of bears for various procedures, including routine health checks, extensive dental treatments, abdominal surgeries, and emergency exploratory procedures. The China Bear Rescue Center is an award winning sanctuary that practices integrated veterinary and behavioral management and preventative medicine. I also have experience providing comprehensive health examinations on free-ranging and captive bears in Sweden, Vietnam, U.S., and Japan.

Yupik was successfully anesthetized and underwent a comprehensive health assessment including examinations of her eyes, teeth, heart, abdomen, blood, urine, and musculoskeletal and gastrointestinal systems. The bones of Yupik's pelvis and shoulders as well as her spine were very easily palpated, indicating a poor body condition. Yupik lacks appropriate muscle mass, an indication that she is lacking appropriate nutrition and sufficient levels of physical exercise. Yupik required significant dental treatment as three of her four canine teeth were fractured with exposed pulp cavities with evidence of long-term infection. Yupik's teeth were noted to have been fractured over two years ago and were left untreated until now. This would have caused her pain and infection and the risk of infection spreading to other organs. Due to lack of timely treatment, the infection of Yupik's fractured upper right canine led to infection of the bone surrounding that tooth root causing erosion of the bone, creating a hole into her nasal cavity, an oronasal fistula. Yupik's cardiac exam was normal with no evidence of cardiac disease.

In my professional opinion, based on the findings of her comprehensive health assessment, Yupik appears fit to be moved to another facility. It is also my professional opinion that the findings of her health assessment provide evidence that Yupik should be moved to an appropriate facility that is better equipped to meet the veterinary, nutritional, environmental, mental and behavioral needs of a polar bear. Yupik's current environment is in a climate that is inappropriate for a species that is evolutionarily adapted to surviving in cold climates. Yupik's poor body condition and lack of appropriate muscle mass is evidence that Yupik's current environment and management are not meeting her physical needs. Yupik's long-standing dental disease is evidence that she has not received an appropriate standard of veterinary treatment.

I am happy to address any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



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