

## Animals Asia Brings 101 Bears Home!

At the beginning of this month, Animals Asia announced big news from its accredited sanctuary in Chengdu, China: 101 moon bears had been transferred to the sanctuary from a former bear bile farming and breeding facility, and they were finally home.

While this marks the beginning of a new life for these bears, it is also the conclusion of a story that began eight years ago. At that time, the facility had a new owner who saw the conditions in which the bears were living, being held in tiny barren cages, and decided that he did not want to be part of the bile farm industry. He contacted Animals Asia to ask for their help.

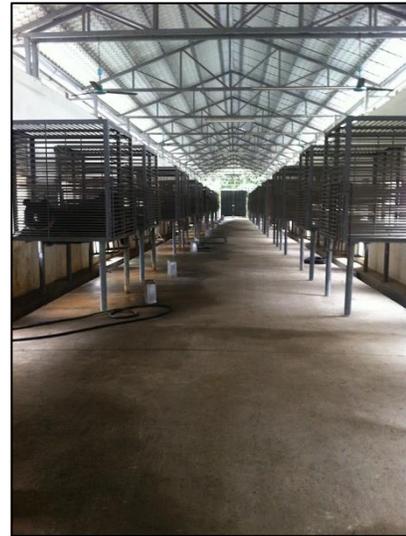
The facility, located in Nanning, was some 750 miles from Animals Asia's Chengdu sanctuary. Initially, it was agreed that Animals Asia would take over the health and vet care of the bears and convert the facility into a second sanctuary in China. However, a series of legal and logistical challenges presented themselves, and it was then determined that the bears would be brought to the existing sanctuary in Chengdu. Through all of this, Animals Asia staff continued to care for the bears in Nanning, observing them and getting to know each bear's individual needs and temperament. The bears, who had all been kept in individual cages, were slowly introduced to one or two other bears so that they could finally experience companionship.

For eight years, Animals Asia navigated legislative and proprietorship issues, and then faced the additional challenges brought by the COVID pandemic. Then, on April 9 of this year, it happened: Animals Asia received news that the final permit needed to bring the bears to Chengdu had been signed. Animals Asia was ready and eager to face the challenge of moving the bears into individual transport cages, loading them into trucks, and making the 750 mile journey to bring them home. At the sanctuary, staff prepared enclosures and planned group integrations, getting ready for their arrival.



*Moon bear Serena makes the journey to Chengdu.  
Photo ©Animals Asia.*

The journey took place in three phases between April 19 and May 27, with nine trucks per convoy and each phase lasting around three days. Throughout their travels, each bear was constantly watered, fed, and cared for by a team of vets and bear carers, as well as monitored by CCTV cameras. As Animals Asia's China Bear & Vet Team Director, Ryan Marcel Sucaet, explained, most of the bears "have spent their entire lives in confinement on the bear farm. To be suddenly transported halfway across China to their new home could have been very distressing for them, but our team did such an incredible job of keeping them calm, well-fed, stimulated, and comfortable along the way."



*The former bile farming facility, now empty. Photo © Animals Asia.*

Upon arrival in Chengdu, each bear began 30 days in quarantine, and after completed, their new lives await: being outside, feeling the sun, with grass under their feet. Sanctuary staff will monitor both their physical and mental well-being before taking steps to integrate them into the main sanctuary where they will live with other bears, including those from Nanning as well as some established sanctuary residents.

Reflecting on this incredible achievement, Animals Asia Founder and CEO Jill Robinson said “We’ve rescued over 600 bears across China and Vietnam in the last two decades, but we have never attempted anything on this scale.” And now, 101 bears can experience the gift of a new life in sanctuary, where they will be recognized and respected as individuals, and where they will experience safety, freedom, care, companionship, and the comfort of knowing that they are home.



*Christiann, who lived on concrete for over a decade, feels the grass under her feet. Photo © Animals Asia.*

GFAS congratulates Animals Asia and each member of the amazing team that cared for these bears for eight years, transported them to sanctuary, and prepared for their arrival and the next steps in their care. If you would like to learn more about these bears, and how you can support them, visit [www.animalsasia.org](http://www.animalsasia.org) and follow the hashtag #101bearshome on social media.