

Root canal performed on Ursula the black bear at Buttonwood Park Zoo



Ursula the brown bear getting a root canal at the New Bedford Buttonwood Park Zoo. Photo by Josh Souza.

The American black bear is the smallest of the three bears species found in North America, and are found only in North America. Three black bears call the Buttonwood Park Zoo home – Ursula, Amy and Toby. Black bears are omnivorous eating plants, fruits, nuts, insects, honey, salmon and small mammals. Occasionally, black bears, as with all animals, will experience tooth problems. The black bears at the Buttonwood Park Zoo are fortunate enough to have their own veterinary team at hand to assist them with their dental needs.

A couple of months back, it was determined that Ursula, one of the zoo's black bears, was in need of a root canal. Ursula was born in January, 1999. She was found as an orphan on March 22, 1999 by the Virginia Fisheries and Wildlife. Ursula was hand-reared for 100 days and then sent to the Bear Rehabilitation

Center near Knoxville, TN. After determining that Ursula was non-releasable due to human imprinting, she arrived at the Buttonwood Park Zoo on October 27, 1999. She has resided her for almost 16 years.

The Buttonwood Park Zoo's veterinarian, Dr. Elizabeth Arnett-Chinn, called upon a specialist to assist with Ursula's dental care. Dr. Schor received his veterinary medical degree from Oklahoma State University in 1984. He is the owner of the Acoaxet Veterinary Clinic in Wesport, MA, a six doctor practice, where he has been accepting referrals for oral surgery and dentistry for the past 25 years. Since all animals have teeth and experience the same problems that we humans do with our teeth, Dr. Schor enjoys bringing relief to all animals including Ursula, the zoo's black bear.



It was determined that Ursula also needed a tooth extraction.