

Siberian Zoo Saves Abandoned Cub (Photo)

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The bear cub Tikhon standing on its hind legs outside its cage at the Seversk zoo.

A zoo in the Tomsk region has nursed back to life a bear cub found by villagers along a railroad.

Residents of Kirgizka, population 117, discovered the skinny and starving bear cub outside their settlement in late April and turned it over to the nearby Seversk zoo.

"Apparently it had been left behind by its mothers and siblings," the zoo, the Seversk

Nature Park, said in a [statement](#). "It was facing imminent death from starvation or at the teeth of dogs, so the people decided to pick it up and give to the zoo."

At first the bear, which the zookeepers named Tikhon, flatly refused to suck milk from a bottle. But gradually its caregivers managed to coax it to eat porridge, first out of their hands and then from a bowl.

"It has now nearly recovered, is active and curious to master its cage, and reaches out to people, who have replaced its missing mother," the zoo said.

A photo of the cub released by the zoo shows a cuddly brown animal standing on its hind legs near a bowl of porridge and peering curiously at a caregiver.

It was unclear what had happened to the mother bear and why it had abandoned the cub.

Bear cubs, which are born while their mothers are in hibernation, are initially blind, deaf and about the size of a mitten, the zoo noted. Cubs emerge with their mother from the den when they are two to three months old, usually as the snow is melting in April. At three months, the cubs start to eat berries, vegetation and insects. But they continue to drink their mother's milk to the age of six months and older, and they usually stay close to their mother until they are three to four years old.

Tikhon has been placed in a cage in a row of foxes at the zoo. In the future, the zoo hopes to place it with a circus.

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