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Moscow Veterinarians Save Siberian Polar Bear With Tin Can Stuck in Mouth

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Svetlana Rodionova / Rosprirodnadzor

Updated at 6:45 p.m. on July 21 to add that the bear has been rescued.

A team of Moscow veterinarians was dispatched to the Russian Far North to save a polar bear with a can of condensed milk stuck in its mouth, Russia's environmental watchdog said Wednesday.

The rescue team tranquilized the female bear and successfully removed the can from her mouth, Svetlana Rodionova, the head of environmental watchdog Rosprirodnadzor, said Thursday.

She added that the veterinarians treated wounds to the animal's tongue, which had been cut by the can.

Once she recovers, the bear will be taken to her natural habitat.

The exhausted young polar bear was spotted near Dixon, Russia's northernmost permanent

settlement.

A photograph shared by the Rosprirodnadzor watchdog showed the polar bear lying helpless on a grassy field next to a wooden shack and a pile of metal canisters.

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“Veterinarians from Moscow are flying to help the exhausted animal,” Rosprirodnadzor said in a statement.

Rodionova's social media followers blamed local workers for throwing tin cans of condensed milk and canned food at the bears “for fun,” the Fontanka news website reported.

Russian scientists have warned that polar bears are being forced to adapt to a land-based diet as they lose their Arctic ice habitat to climate change.

A rising number of encounters between polar bears and humans have been recorded in the Russian Far North in recent years.

With a global population of up to 30,000, polar bears are classified as vulnerable and endangered by the World Wildlife Federation and Russia’s Red Book.

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