



Bear Specialist Group
35132 Hanna Rd.,
Cohasset, MN 55721

Mr. Johnny Wammock, President
Mr. Lee E. Mask, Vice President
WPF, Inc.
St. Petersburg, FL

10 April 2018

Dear Mr. Wammock and Mr. Mask,

Thanks for the opportunity to look at the tests you conducted with bears on your "Wild Pig Feeder". I'm a research scientist specializing in bears, with over 35 years' experience working for a state agency, and also Co-chair of the IUCN Bear Specialist Group. My interest is in the management and conservation of bears, bear ecology, and bear behavior.

You called me a few years ago to ask my opinion of how you might make the pig feeder bear-proof, so that it could be placed in the wild with poison-laced baits to eradicate pigs but not inadvertently poison bears. We've had some discussions over the years about your design, but this is the first I've seen it in action.

From the videos I watched, I was impressed by the effectiveness of the feeder in preventing the bears from accessing the food. You tried it with both American black bears and grizzlies, both large and small, and despite their concerted focus on getting to the food, they never succeeded. They approached the feeder in the same way a pig would, but the "bear bars" prevented them from depressing the trigger pan. The bears even stood bipedally on the bars, but never slipped through, even when repeatedly pushing and shaking the feeder door. They walked around it, sniffed it, banged on it, and even pushed it over (which they wouldn't be able to do if it was properly staked down), but no food ever came out, despite their very concerted efforts.

Having studied wild bears for so long, I greatly appreciate their food-driven behavior. I've suspended baits on a well-hidden string between two trees to make it inaccessible to them, and yet they have been ingenious enough to climb out on a tree limb and find the string and shake it. When the string is attached to a sapling that is too small to climb, they've been able to shake the whole sapling until the bait becomes loose. They are incredibly smart and persistent animals.

I've seen many of the early tests of bear-proof dumpsters and bear-proof backpacking containers. The videos of those trials look very much like the videos of your trials. The bears try to outsmart the device, and failing that, try brute force. The wild pig feeder held up to both.

Like any mechanical device designed to allow access by selected species, there is no guarantee that it can exclude all non-target species 100% of the time. I am convinced by your tests, however, that you have produced a device that will be very effective at excluding bears.

Please note that my opinion of this device is based solely on the videos that I observed. Also, please note that my opinion does not constitute endorsement of this product by my agency, the IUCN, or me personally. I am simply reporting my observations of how it worked in the tests that I saw.

I appreciate your concerns for protecting the bears.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Garshelis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Garshelis, PhD
Bear Research Scientist