

Benny, the Bear of Wakayama Castle Park Zoo

Wakayama Castle Park Zoo is a rare zoo located on the grounds of a castle.

Benny, an Asian black bear, lived here and was loved by many people in Wakayama Prefecture. In 2015, she was elected director of the zoo. She passed away of old age on July 18, 2024.

Profile

Species : Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*)

Gender : Female

Date of birth : January 31, 1993

Body length : About 140 cm

Body weight : About 100 kg

Favorite foods : Peaches, Melons



Benny's life

- **1993** Birth
- **1994** Came to the zoo from Kyoto city zoo
- **2015** Elected a director in the first zoo director election
- **2024** Died (31 years old)

Preserving Benny for Future Generations

After Benny passed away, a volunteer group called “Wakayama Friend-Zoo Guide” launched a project to preserve her memory for future generations. The group received Benny’s remains from Wakayama City and raised funds through crowdfunding to have her preserved as a taxidermy specimen. Benny’s taxidermy specimen, made with these funds, was later donated to the Wakayama Prefectural Museum of Natural History.

What Benny tells us

Keeping and displaying animals, as well as preserving taxidermy specimens, gives us valuable opportunities to learn about wild animals up close. Learning about their behavior and ways of life is the first step toward understanding the natural world around us.

Benny was preserved in three way

Taxidermy

You can see what the animal looked like when it was alive.

Skeletal specimen

You can see anatomy of the body and bone.

Tissue specimen

You can get genetic information.