

# MENHADEN FISHERY UPDATE

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## **“Bear” Necessities of Omega-3s**

### ***Refined Menhaden Fish Oil Dramatically Improves Skin Condition of Ailing Polar Bear***

Polar bears have long been one of the Cincinnati Zoo's most popular attractions. Visitors travel from all over the country to watch these beautiful, lumbering beasts swim, play and feed.

So when one of the resident bears developed a serious skin condition, Cincinnati Zoo Head Veterinarian Mark Campbell and Animal Specialist Dave Jardine turned to Houston-based Omega Protein Corporation, the world's largest manufacturer of heart-healthy fish oils containing omega-3 fatty acids, for help.

The long-chain essential fatty acids found in omega-3s have a long history in animal nutrition, due to their nutritional value and disease prevention benefits. Thousands of scientific studies have proven that omega-3s are effective in promoting proper growth and immune function in animals, as well as preventing dermatitis, dry skin and thick, brittle hair.

Restless and uncomfortable from chronic itch and inflammation, the Cincinnati Zoo's three-year old, 800-pound polar bear had lost interest in eating and interacting with other bears. His repeated scratching wore away patches of fur in several places on his body, exposing the black skin underneath. The lesions on the bear's skin made him look unhealthy and unsuitable for public viewing.

Jardine and Campbell concluded that the lack of omega-3s in the polar bear's diet was contributing to the bear's skin condition. The pair turned to Jane Crowther, Omega Protein's Senior Director of Technology for Refined Oils, for help in making the proper diet modifications, which would provide the bear with ample levels of omega-3s.

“Much like humans, members of the animal kingdom require omega-3 fatty acids

for optimal health,” said Crowther. “Insufficient levels of these essential nutrients, known for their anti-inflammatory properties, place animals at greater risk for a number of serious health problems.”

Based on the bear's weight, Crowther developed formulations for a supplementary omega-3 dietary regimen that would improve both the bear's energy level and his skin and coat condition. His new diet included bear chow, whole fish and four ounces of Omega Protein's highest refined feed-grade menhaden fish oil, enriched with vitamins.

Jardine and Campbell noted the bear's enthusiasm toward eating was restored almost immediately by his new and more appealing diet. Within two months, the animal was completely healed and returned to his normal zoo habitat.

Following the success with Omega Protein's refined menhaden fish oil at the Cincinnati Zoo, several other national zoos, including the Buffalo Zoological Gardens and the Detroit Zoo, have opted to include Omega Protein's fish oil as part of their animals' daily dietary regimen to ensure overall health and adequate intake of vital nutrients.



**A Cincinnati Zoo polar bear is returned to optimal health, thanks to Omega Protein.**

## **Omega-3s Reduce Depression Among Expectant Mothers**

At the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in May, Dr. Joseph Hibbeln, Chief of the Outpatient Clinic at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in Bethesda, Maryland, presented findings on yet another benefit of omega-3 fatty acids. A study of nearly 12,000 pregnant women showed a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids can prevent pre- and post-pregnancy depression.

According to Dr. Hibbeln, pregnant women are more susceptible to low levels of omega-3 fatty acids because a fetus will draw from its mother's supply for its brain development. Low levels of omega-3s result in low levels of serotonin in the brain, a condition highly correlated with depression.

Dr. Hibbeln's findings point to additional options for the treatment of depression in expectant mothers, as many opt not to take antidepressants. In addition, dietary supplements rich in omega-3s, such as the menhaden fish oil manufactured by Omega Protein, the largest single provider of fish oil, are produced from surface-feeding, non-predatory fish that do not accumulate environmental toxins. In addition, refined menhaden oil was granted GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) status by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Dr. Hibbeln did not receive funding from the fishing or nutritional-supplement industries to complete this study. For additional information, please visit the APA Web site at:

[www.psych.org/news\\_stand/womenshealth.pdf](http://www.psych.org/news_stand/womenshealth.pdf).