The Bare Bear

Consider the plight of the bare bear
There is certainly nary a hair there
This is no spoof
Just look at the proof
That the bare bear simply has no hair

by Bobbye Maggard

When I wrote that little limerick a few weeks ago, I had no idea “bare bears” existed, but being of a curious nature and addicted to research, I decided to find out and… “Eureka!” The Daily Mail and National Geographic both contain articles about bald bears that live in a German zoo.

I like this quote from The Daily Mail: “You'd have thought a fur coat would have been the ultimate bear necessity.”

The article goes on to say that veterinarians are puzzled about the bear’s hairlessness and have tried various methods of treatment to cure Dolores and two of her relatives, but haven’t as yet succeeded. Oil is applied to their skin to keep it from drying and itching.

A Rare Bare Bear
Bare bears in the Leipzig Zoo only have small tufts of fur around their heads. They’re called Andean bears because their natural habitat lies in the mountains of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

Zoo curator, Gerd Noeltzhold, told BBC that the bears have been afflicted by the peculiar skin disorder since 2007.

The baffling condition isn’t life threatening, but Dolores and her companions must get mighty cold without their protective fur.

Armando Castellano, head of the Andean Bear Conservation Project in Ecuador, reports having seen a similar case a few years ago. "We were very scared, because it was the first time we had seen this," declared Castellano.

Zoo-keepers decided to alter the bear’s diet from food that humans consume, to more natural and exotic foods like fruit and bamboo, similar to what he would eat in the wild. They also added toys to the bear’s enclosure to stimulate and provide recreation. Within four months the bear had begun growing hair. (Someone needs to clue the Germans)

*Spectacled Bears* are quite rare, but there are other animals that are either born hairless, bred to be bald, or contract a condition that causes them to loose their fur.
Some dogs and cats are bred to be hairless. The Sphinx joins the ranks of the Ukranian Levkoy, the Bambino and the Peterbald.

Baby kangaroo (joeys) are born bald and begin growing hair afterwards—as opposed to humans, who are born with hair and begin losing it afterwards.