

Legal Personhood: The Case of Chucho the Spectacled Bear

Chucho is a 24-year-old spectacled bear, also known as Andean bear or mountain bear, that is currently living in the Barranquilla Zoo in Colombia. Spectacled bears are the only surviving species of bears native to South America and are classified as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Chucho and Clarita, his sister, were born in captivity in La Planada Reserve in Nariño, Colombia. They lived there for four years and were then transferred to the Río Blanco Reserve in Manizales as part of a conservation program. Clarita died from cancer in 2008. Chucho continued to live there on his own and became depressed. The environmental authority decided to transfer Chucho to the Zoo after living in the reserve for 18 years because he would live in better conditions there. This decision has triggered a complex judicial process that started with a *Habeas Corpus* petition filed on behalf of Chucho and has reached the Colombian Constitutional Court, the most important Court in the country. Throughout this process, the lower and higher Courts have held different positions on animal rights and their legal status. I will discuss these arguments and their implications during the presentation.



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