

Behind the Scenes at *Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey*

"People who see this movie are not going to believe that those animals never got hurt," begins Ed Lish, AHA's representative on the set for *Homeward Bound*, "but they didn't." Lish spent seven weeks in the great outdoors of Oregon in the fall, watching over the filming of the animal action. Considering that the movie revolves around two dogs and a cat who journey alone through the wilds, there was a lot of animal action to watch.

Over a dozen different species of animals were used in this film, most of them wild. But most of the action was not tricky, it simply entailed having the various animals go from point A to point B, sometimes with other animals. "It got pretty busy when we had the cat and both dogs having to do something all at the same time," says Joe Camp, the trainer for the stars and many of the other animals. "Since each animal has his own trainer to watch and work with, the set can get pretty crowded."

Chance's Chases

One of the stars is Chance, an American bulldog, played mainly by Rattler, a puppy, and Bea, an adult. Chance naturally wants to investigate everything and tends to get into sticky situations. Throughout the movie, he chases a chicken, skunk, fish, raccoon, turkey, rabbit, butterfly, and a porcupine.

Most of the chases were done with the animals being filmed separately and then combining the shots to look as though the animals were reacting to each other, explains

Lish. "It looks like the animal is looking at the other animal, but they're not. They're looking at their trainers."

Chance would be told to move from one spot to another, stop, and look in certain directions. The other animals were usually motivated to

and kennel that was going out of business," says Camp. "When I arrived at the place, the cats and the Dobermans were running all over each other."

The other dog in the movie is Shadow, played mostly by Ben, a calm golden retriever who lives with a family when he's not playing in a movie. Camp says that Ben's personality is just like the character he played, "When things got hectic, it was his stability that kept everything together, just like in the script."

Faking Danger

When the dogs face two seriously dangerous wild animals, the bear and the cougar, again there was no interaction. "There was a safety wire between the dog and bear in the one shot they had together, but neither was interested in the other," says AHA's Lish. "The bear was more interested in the chili and

iced tea he gets as a reward for waving and 'smiling.'" The cougar scene was basically done the same way with separate filming and plenty of precautions, including leashes, if they had to be in the same shot.

In the movie, the dogs rid themselves of the cougar by catapulting it off a cliff. The cougar that gets catapulted over the cliff was a fake one actually thrown by a trainer, and the dog jumped onto a styrofoam "rock" that served as the catapult. In fact, all of those rocks were made with styrofoam and a special ledge was built just below the real one for trainers to stand on to direct the animals and prevent them from even coming close to dropping off.

Cat Catapult

In the movie, Chance initially pulls the catapulting trick on Sassy



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Each of the dog stars (Rattler, the American bulldog, and Ben, the golden retriever) had three stand-ins. Sassy, the cat, had eight available substitutes.

move from point A to B with food rewards. At times when Chance and the other animal were in the same shot, precautions were used to keep them apart, like leashes and wire fences.

Plus the dogs had all become accustomed to the various species prior to filming. "We have a ranch with exotic animals on it," says Camp. "We'd take the dogs around our animals. And that breed (the American bulldog) is very adaptable and not aggressive."

The Other Stars

The cat stars (played by eight different cats, mainly Tiki, Sassy, and Chubby) were Himalayans who were used to being around big dogs before they ever reached the set. "We got six of the eight cats used in the film from a combination cattery