

Vocabulary

Ursus arctos – The Latin name of the brown bear according to the classification system developed by Carolus Linnaeus in the mid-18th century.

Ursus arctos horribilis – The Latin name of the grizzly bear. Usually translated as “terrible bear,” the name gives some indication of the awe the animal inspired in the people who first saw it.

Important People

Coronado, Francisco Vasquez de – Spanish soldier who in the 1540s led an expedition that explored what is now the southwestern United States. He may have been the first European to see a grizzly bear.

Craighead, Lance – Executive Director of the Craighead Environmental Research Institute and adjunct assistant professor of Biology at Montana State University. He has been instrumental in studying the grizzly bear population of the U.S. Northwest.

Jonkel, Charles -- co-founder, scientific advisor, and president of the Great Bear Foundation, an organization based in Missoula, Montana, that is dedicated to conserving all eight bear species and their habitats world-wide.

Lewis, Meriwether, and Clark, William – Leaders of a U.S. expedition that explored the territory of the Louisiana Purchase and beyond from 1803 to 1806. They reported many unpleasant encounters with grizzlies and may have contributed to the bears’ reputation as useless poachers who were aggressive toward humans.

Important Places

Selkirk Mountains – Rugged range of the Rocky Mountains extending some 200 miles from northern Idaho through British Columbia near the Alberta border. Home to the Selkirk Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Recovery Project.

Yellowstone Park – The world’s first national park. Lying mostly in Wyoming, it extends into Montana and Idaho and is home to a protected grizzly population.

Things To Think About

Although the Native Americans gave the grizzly bear such names as “elder brother,” the first white explorers to see the animal called it “terrible bear.” Why do you think the two peoples looked at the animal so differently? What does this tell you about the differences in their cultures? Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne denounced a plan for trying to reintroduce grizzly bears into his state, calling them “massive, flesh-eating carnivores.” Following his lead, in June 2001, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton decided to shelve grizzly bear recovery in central Idaho and western Montana. Do you think a case can be made for their viewpoints? Is it too dangerous to mix grizzly and human populations?

The episode talks about the importance of preserving predators as part of the “food chain.” How do such animals help keep nature in balance?

SAVING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES

THE GRIZZLY BEAR

It can outswim an Olympian, outrun a horse, and drag a thousand pound carcass for miles. Unfortunately, feared and labeled a “mankiller,” the Grizzly bear has become the target of man’s destructive nature. In this episode, biologists Dr. Lance Craighead and Dr. Charles Jonkel work in conjunction with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to reintroduce the grizzly bear to the American Northwest.

The Great Carnivore

The scientific name of the grizzly bear is *Ursus arctos horribilis*; the animal is a subspecies of the brown bear, or *Ursus arctos*. Brown bears were once common in Europe and even northwestern Africa, as well as China, Japan, and Siberia. Like the first Americans, they came to North America from Asia across the frozen arctic waters. Of all the many subspecies of brown bears, the grizzly is undoubtedly the most impressive—it can weigh as much as 1200 pounds and, when standing on its back legs, as it often does, it can rear a terrifying 12 feet into the air. Grizzlies could once be found throughout western North America all the way from the Arctic Ocean to central Mexico, but the encroachment of human settlers steadily destroyed their habitat and the actions of hunters dramatically curtailed their population. Today, researchers reckon that there may be no more than 800 grizzlies left in the lower 48 United States, and in 1975 the animal was classified as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. A group of dedicated scientists, however, are committed to preserving this magnificent creature, and, with luck, it will not only hang on, but also flourish once again.



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Internet Resources

<http://www.katmaibears.com/ursusarctos.htm> – A nice site on the bears of Katmai National Park in Alaska. Has good information on the grizzlies, with some profiles of individual bears.

<http://endangered.fws.gov/i/A41.html> – A useful page, with links to other sites, on the grizzly bear. From the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Web site on endangered species.

<http://www.grizzlybear.org/> -- The Web site of the Craighead Environmental Research Institute.

<http://www.greatbear.org/aboutgbf.html> – The Web Site of Dr. Charles Jonkel's Great Bear Foundation.

<http://www.owens-foundation.org/docs/selkirk2.htm> – An informative page on the Selkirk Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Recovery Project.

<http://www.nwf.org/grizzly/> -- From the National Wildlife Federation, a good page on grizzly bears with useful news stories on conservation efforts.

Other Resources

For students:

McDonald, Mary Ann. *Grizzlies : Naturebooks Series*. Childs World, 1997.

Owen, Oliver S. *Cub to Grizzly Bear*. Abdo & Daughters, 1996.

Parker, Janice. *Grizzly Bears (Untamed World)*. Raintree/Steck-Vaughn, 2000.

Silverstein, Alvin, et. al. *The Grizzly Bear (Endangered in America)*. Millbrook Press, 1998.

For adults:

Craighead, Frank C. *Track of the Grizzly*. University of California Press, 1982.

Great Bear Foundation. *Field Guide to the Grizzly Bear (Sasquatch Field Guide Series)*. Sasquatch Books, 1992.

Jonkel, Charles, and Brown, David E. *The Grizzly in the Southwest:*

Documentary of an Extinction. University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.

McNamee, Thomas. *The Grizzly Bear*. The Lyons Press, 1997.

Ward, Kennan. *Grizzlies in the Wild*. NorthWord Press, 1994.



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-THE GRIZZLY BEAR-**