

Black Bear *Ursus americanus*

The Black Bear is the bear found locally in the Taylor County area. Bears have been hunted for their meat and fur. They have retreated from their original habitats as people have developed land areas. Some became dependent on humans for garbage found at dumpsites. When deprived of this source of food problems arose. Bears that usually avoided humans came to campsites in search of food and threatened humans. Rangers and farmers retaliated by killing or removing the animals. As more people began feeding birds, bears have become increasingly more common in urban areas.

- View the video of baby bears taken at the Czerniak home north of Medford.
- Use the following useful website to learn more about bears.
http://www4.uwsp.edu/biology/facilities/vertebrates/mammals_of_wisconsin/database.htm
- There are different types of bears with distinct characteristics and needs for special habitats. Do research to learn about their characteristics, needs and habitat changes.
- Scientists do not agree about whether bears truly hibernate or merely go into torpor. Check with local sportsmens' groups, traffic officers, and others to learn at what times of the year bears have been sighted in your locality.
- Sometimes bears awaken during warm weather. Why should we be careful around a bear's den in winter?
- Look at mounted bears in the taxidermy collections of a local museum or private collections. Learn where and how these specimens were collected.
- Read local newspaper accounts and local historical records and consult local historians and family members to learn about bear encounters and sightings in the past. Use references in the bibliography that are related to local stories.
- Who in the area has a trail camera? When and where have bears been recorded on these devices?
- Consult with local birders and supply stores to learn what kinds of feeders and feeder supports have been able to resist the efforts of bears to reach bird seed.
- Research and retell Native American tales about bears.
- Bears have been used as symbols on flags and other emblems or for sports teams. Research the reasons why they were chosen.
- Examine back issues of children's nature magazines to find related background material written for children.
- Read the cinquain about bears written by Loretta Kuse. Try writing your own poetry about bears.

**Bear
Big, black
Lumbering, plundering, slumbering
Powerful brute breaking brush
Bruin**

Loretta Kuse