Name: _____

Brown Bears

By Guy Belleranti

My hiking partner and I are trekking through Montana's Glacier National Park. Suddenly, we stop in our tracks. On the trail just ahead, a grizzly bear cub is scratching on a tree trunk. The cub's mother stands beside it. I feel awe, then a little fear. Getting this close [illegible] especially a mother and cub, is very dangerous. We quietly

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A Kodiak brown bear catches a fish to eat.

where there are many fish to eat. Some Kodiaks get huge, about the size of polar bears.

Brown bears live in more habitats than any other bear. Some, like the Kodiak, live by the coast. Others, like the grizzly, live in forests and mountain meadows. Some even live in the Arctic tundra.

At one time, brown bear territory included most of North America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Unfortunately, habitat loss, overhunting, and killing out of fear have reduced their numbers. Today, North American brown bears are primarily in Alaska and western Canada. A few northwestern U.S.

states still have some as well, especially in or near national parks and other protected areas.

Brown bears are omnivores. They eat plants, nuts, berries, insects, rodents, fish, deer, and even carrion (dead animals). The bears' eating habits have an important impact in the ecosystem where they live. They carry seeds to other locations in their scat (waste) and fur. They also help keep deer and other animal populations under control.

Some people get brown bears and black bears confused because brown bears aren't always brown and black bears aren't always black. So how can you tell them apart? Well, brown bears are larger and have a muscular shoulder hump. They also have longer and straighter claws. The hump and claws provide strength, helping the bears dig up

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together to catch and eat spawning fish. They also come together to breed.

And, of course, mothers spend large amounts of time with their cubs. Mothers have one to four cubs, but most often two. The cubs are born blind, hairless, and tiny. They weigh only about one pound. They sleep next to their mother and grow quickly from her milk. After two to three years, they are ready to live on their own.

Name: _____

Brown Bears

By Guy Belleranti

1. According to the information in the article, how can you identify a brown bear from a black bear in the wild?

a. A brown bear is always brown and a black bear is always black.

b. A brown bear has a muscular shoulder hump and longer claws.

c. A brown bear is smaller than a black bear.

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3. Based on what you read in the article, why are there fewer brown bears in existence today than in the past?

_____

_____

4. When do brown bears spend time in the company of other brown bears?

a. when they are feeding on schools of spawning fish

b. when they bathe in rivers and streams

c. when they produce and care for their young

d. both *a* and *c*

5. Why isn't it a good idea to approach a brown bear cub if you see one?

_____

_____

Name: _____

Brown Bears

By Guy Belleranti

Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

1. _____ meadows
5. _____ omnivores
6. _____ tundra
7. _____ subspecies
8. _____ protected
9. _____ spawning
10. _____ coast

a. hiking or walking

e. laying eggs

f. defended against danger or harm

g. a community of living things interacting with their environment

h. the edge of land that meets the sea

i. animals that eat both plants and other animals for food

j. spending time alone

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Name: _____

Brown Bears

By Guy Belleranti

In the article, "Brown Bears," you learned that in the past, brown bears lived throughout most of North America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Today there are fewer brown bears because their populations have been reduced by habitat loss, overhunting, and killing out of fear. Now brown bears can mostly be found in and around national parks and protected areas.

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ANSWER KEY

Brown Bears

By Guy Belleranti

1. According to the information in the article, how can you identify a brown bear from a black bear in the wild?

   a. A brown bear is always brown and a black bear is always black.

   b. A brown bear has a muscular shoulder hump and longer claws.

   c. A brown bear is smaller than a black bear.

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3. Based on what you read in the article, why are there fewer brown bears in existence today than in the past?

   There are fewer brown bears today because of habitat loss, overhunting, and killing out of fear.

4. When do brown bears spend time in the company of other brown bears?

   a. when they are feeding on schools of spawning fish

   b. when they bathe in rivers and streams

   c. when they produce and care for their young

   d. both *a* and *c*

5. Why isn't it a good idea to approach a brown bear cub if you see one?

   A mother brown bear is always nearby her cubs and she can become dangerous if you approach her young.

ANSWER KEY

Brown Bears

By Guy Belleranti

Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

1. c. meadows
2. a. hiking or walking

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5. i. omnivores
6. b. tundra
7. d. subspecies
8. f. protected
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