

BEARS

MAGAZINE

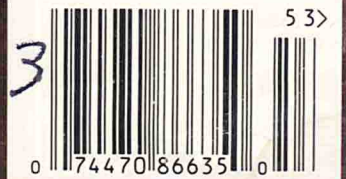
GHOST GRIZZLIES

DOES THE GREAT BEAR
STILL HAUNT COLORADO?

-BY DAVID PETERSEN

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BEARS OF AUTUMN
GRIZZLY ATTACK
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FROM THE FIELD—

First bear encounters are the best—the eye-opening sensations, an audible heartbeat, feeling really small in the presence of an incredible animal. Whether you're face to face or inspecting a fresh track on the trail, being near a wild bear, like falling in love, is one of the few moments that can change the course of your life. From then on, everything else is measured against that moment.

Two special encounters repeatedly pop into my mind whenever I think of bear country. Both of them happened during the seven years I spent hiking Yellowstone's backcountry. One time, in a large meadow, I stumbled across a bison carcass and the owner, a large **BLACK GRIZZLY**, came out of the trees to defend it. A rapid retreat saved my skin, and I feel lucky to be alive. On a different hike, a bear and I nearly walked headlong into each other on a trail, both thinking we were alone. I fearfully retreated and climbed a tree. In retrospect I don't think that juvenile bear posed much of a threat to me. I feel my instinct to run up a tree destroyed any possibility of a more peaceable encounter. After all, the griz vanished into the forest faster than I could climb a tree.

It's hard to know where to draw the line between fear and respect, especially on such short notice, but from these and other experiences I'm beginning to suspect our fear of bears is probably the root of our **"BEAR PROBLEMS."** Being one of our most unruly emotions, fear most often gets the better of us. It's well known that instead of fear, which will probably keep us on the destructive course we're on, we need to respect these bears. In a nutshell, that's what I hope *Bears Magazine* can do for the bears—help to bring them, as we've done with the wolf, out of the dark ages.

What you have in your hands is a good example of what we hope to bring you in each issue: a combination of fascinating photography and stories that include adventure, attacks, science, bear identification and backcountry ethics, history, and **CONSERVATION**. Issue after issue you will find a wealth of knowledge about the bears and their world, from the grizzlies and black bears to the spectacled and sloth bears to the panda and polar bears. We want *Bears Magazine* to be your connection to the wildest country and its wildlife.

In this issue we have the pleasure of introducing **Jim Halfpenny** (*Yellowstone's Top Predator: Bears or Wolves*, in our summer issue), who will be writing a regular column, **TRACKING THE GREAT BEARS**. Jim begins his column this issue with some questions about the evolution of Ursids, the first bear, and how do we know for sure what we're seeing is a black bear or a grizzly. Or is it a polar bear? (If you're like me, you'll think you know the answer.) Jim, who owns and operates the naturalist school, A Naturalist's World, in Gardiner, Montana, is a preeminent tracker and one of those talented scientists who can translate the complex **SCIENTIFIC NAMES**, graphs and numbers into readable, entertaining articles.

As a final note, we would love to hear from you. Please tell us your feelings and reactions toward the magazine. And please send us any clippings you run across about bear news so we can share it with the rest of the readers. Enjoy the issue—Drew Ross



EDITOR DREW ROSS AND BROWNIE, A BLACK BEAR
AT THE VINCE SHUTE BEAR SANCTUARY.