

In 1953 the grizzly bear was reclassified and assigned to the ranks of brown bears, but even after this demotion it has to be conceded that the grizzly is a very special sort of bear. It is big, strong, powerful and mean when cornered. Its only natural enemy is man, though not so much through sport hunting as through the continual eroding of its habitat by the increase of human settlement.

Black bears are about half the size and twice as common. An adult male is 300 lb

rising to an occasional and very exceptional 600 lb. Black bears like carrion, honey, ants, grasshoppers and a wide variety of berries, but when they can, prefer to take the easiest food of all—handouts from unwise tourists in the national and provincial parks. Bears are unpredictable in behaviour, so those that hang around campsites are trapped, transported 200 miles out into the wilderness, and released.

*"Bear. There. Staring.  
She stared back.*

*Everyone has once in his life to decide whether he is a Platonist or not, she thought. I am a woman sitting on a stoop eating bread and bacon. That is a bear. Not a toy bear, not a Pooh bear, not an airlines Koala bear. A real bear.*

*Half a bear, actually, and not a very big half, for it lay tentatively in his doorway so that she had no idea of its size. It was only a dusty bulk of blackish fur in a doorway. It had a long brown snout, and its snout had a black, dry, leathery end. It had small, sad eyes."*

—Marian Engel, "Bear," 1976

## Whooping Cranes

In 1941 there were only fifteen whooping cranes left and they seemed doomed to extinction. Their habitat had been destroyed and they had been drastically over-hunted. Since then intense efforts to preserve and increase

them have been made until there are now fifty wild birds migrating between Canada and Texas. Another twenty are in a captive breeding programme in Maryland, USA. They are the tallest of all North American birds—over five foot.

