

Brown Bears in Alaska's National Parks: Conservation of a Wilderness Icon

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The nature essays in *Brown Bears in Alaska's National Parks* represent an enormous swath of scientific, cultural, and biological knowledge on the iconic brown bear.

A treasure trove of information on the majestic brown bear, these thirteen essays touch on subjects including scientific methods for researching and learning about brown bear populations and stories about how Indigenous Alaskan communities interact with and understand bears within their cultures. "Bears and Humans" delves into specific Native community rituals and beliefs, describing traditional methods for handling a bear carcass such as burying the eyes so that the bear's spirit will not see how its body is butchered and laying down the skull so it faces east. Elsewhere, the book focuses on modern techniques for measuring the health of bear populations, counting bear numbers, and the rising problem that tourism brought to Alaskan national parks.

Magnificent, full-color photographs enhance the essays, dovetailing with the diversity of scientific perspectives and voices. They show bears in a vast array of environments, from carrying their young across rivers to investigating human equipment. The images become useful didactic tools in sections that explore scientific research techniques, depicting survey modeling designs, graphs that track human-bear conflicts, and other data.

The text itself, while traversing dense scientific topics, remains accessible, flowing, and enlightening. Each essay is organized around discerning, bite-sized sections that turn discussions of ecology, biology, and history into dynamic stories. An essay on the effects of climate change elaborates on the bear's diet through stories about animals like salmon and moose that the bear depends on.

A collection of expert essays on the brown bear, *Brown Bears in Alaska's National Parks* combines history, contemporary research, and stunning photographs.

WILLEM MARX (May / June 2025)

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