

KODIAK-Occurrence of Cannibalism in
brown bear 1961?

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AN OCCURRENCE OF CANNIBALISM IN BROWN BEAR

by
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Kodiak, Alaska

AN OCCURRENCE OF CANNIBALISM IN BROWN BEAR.

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KODIAK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Kodiak, Alaska

While live-trapping brown bear, Ursus arctos middendorffi, on the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, a female bear weighing 375 pounds was killed and eaten by another bear. The victim was captured in a steel trap sometime during the night of October 8, 1960, and tracks in the immediate area indicated that soon after being captured it was killed by a female bear accompanied by at least one yearling cub. The trap was attached to a ten-foot chain and a drag which permitted some movement, although it was handicapped in the fight since only one front leg was free. The carcass was buried under a pile of debris, consisting of grass, leaves, sticks and dirt scooped from the surrounding vicinity.

Personnel arrived at the scene at 9:30 A. M. on October 9, and uncovered the carcass which had been disemboweled and lacerated around the head and other parts of the body. Portions of the intestines were missing and may have been consumed. The right ^{upper} hamer

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was broken and the muscles behind the left shoulder and posterior muscles of the left thigh were badly mutilated.

When personnel returned at 1:30 P. M. the carcass was again buried and debris covering the bear was removed to collect the reproductive tract and skull. The following morning the carcass had been moved 150 feet into dense cover and over half of it was consumed. Traps were placed around the carcass in an attempt to catch the cannibal bears. At 9:00 A. M. on October 11, the area was again checked. The traps were sprung and portions of carcass had been moved another 30 feet. All the meat was consumed and only the hide and a few bones remained. Observation during succeeding days revealed that no further visits were made to the area by the family of bears. Hunger could not have been a motivating force in this act of cannibalism as an ample supply of salmon was available within 20 feet of the spot where the bear had been killed.

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