

# THE FLORIDA BLACK BEAR

Activity Guide



WalkAbout Adventures, Defenders of Wildlife  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida Black Bear Activity Guide is a joint project of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Defenders of Wildlife and WalkAbout Adventures.

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# THE FLORIDA BLACK BEAR

## STATUS:

The Florida black bear, *Ursus americanus floridanus*, is a unique subspecies of the American black bear. Prior to the late 1800s it occurred throughout Florida from the Panhandle to the Keys, and the southern fringes of neighboring Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. At that time an estimated 12,000+ black bears roamed Florida. Since then, deforestation, unregulated hunting prior to 1950, habitat loss and habitat fragmentation (the process of breaking large areas of natural habitat into smaller pieces, often a result of urbanization) have resulted in today's population estimate for Florida of less than 2,000. Today, the Florida black bear occurs in isolated and scattered populations throughout the state. As a result, the black bear was listed by the state of Florida as a threatened species in 1974 except in the Apalachicola National Forest and Baker and Columbia counties.

## RANGE:

Six major bear populations are restricted to expansive, undeveloped forest tracts, mostly public lands including the Apalachicola National Forest, Ocala National Forest/Wekiva River Basin, Osceola National Forest, St. Johns River area in northeast Florida, Eglin Air Force Base in Florida's panhandle and Big Cypress National Preserve in southwest Florida (See figure 1). Two smaller populations occur; one north of the city of Tampa in the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge area and one in forested private lands in Highlands and Glades counties in central Florida.

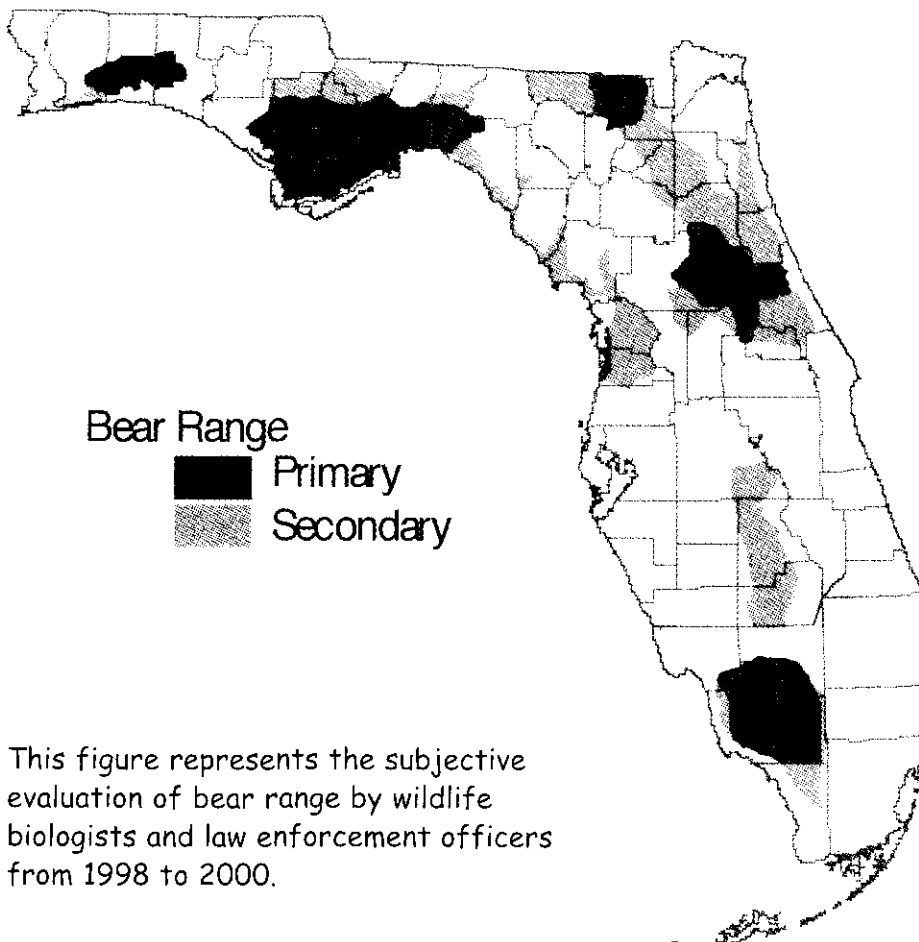
## DESCRIPTION:

The Florida black bear is the state's largest native land mammal. Among other traits the length and shape of their skull differs slightly from those of other black bears. A distinguishing characteristic of bears is how they walk,

planting the soles of their feet on the ground heel to toe (this is called plantigrade motion) as compared to a cat or dog that walks on their toes (called digitigrade motion). Florida bears are normally black with a tan muzzle and may have a white chest marking called a blaze.

## SIZE:

The average weight of a Florida black bear is 350 pounds for males, called boars, and 200 pounds for females, called sows. The largest male on record weighed 624 lbs; the largest female weighed 342 lbs. They are generally 4.5 to 6.5 feet long and on all fours approximately 3 feet tall.



**LIFE SPAN:**

Male bears can live from 15-25 years, while females can live up to 30 years. For every 100 cubs born in a given year, 67 or more (less than two-thirds) do NOT live a normal life span. Most Florida black bears live less than two decades.

**HABITAT:**

Florida black bears can be found in a variety of habitats throughout Florida, including mixed hardwood hammocks, cabbage palm forests (dominated by cabbage palm and tupelo), pine flatwoods (the most common plant community type in Florida), uplands such as sandhills and sand-pine scrub (considered the deserts of Florida), and forested wetlands, such as cypress/blackgum and riverine swamps. Depending on the quality of habitat, a male bear requires between 57 to 303 square kilometers (approximately 14 to 75,000 acres) for its home range, while a female requires between 30 to 65 kilometers (approximately 5 to 16,000 acres). The four primary habitat requirements are food, water, shelter and space. An optimal habitat provides enough food, water, shelter and space to support a healthy population of animals. Scientists estimate that ideally an area as large as 500,000 to 1,000,000 acres may be necessary to support a viable population of Florida black bears.

**FOOD:**

Bears are descended from meat eating (carnivore) dog relatives. However, the Florida bear is not an herbivore (eats only plants) nor carnivore, but an omnivore, meaning that they enjoy a wide variety of foods. Eighty percent of the bears diet is plant material including berries, acorns and other fruits. Favorite plants include grasses, the seeds, hearts and tender shoots of the saw palmetto, alligator flag, the seeds and hearts of sabal palm, nuts (especially acorns) and a wide variety of berries such as tupelo, saw palmetto, blueberry, gallberry and many others. The other 12 percent of their diet is composed

of insects, (e.g. yellow jackets, bess bugs, ants, honeybees, walking sticks, carpenter ants and termites), with less than six percent of the bears diet consisting of meat (e.g. armadillos, white-tailed deer, raccoon, wild pigs and occasionally birds and carrion). Bears use a type of feeding behavior called foraging. Foraging means the animal meanders through an area feeding on appropriate foods it comes across.

**BEHAVIOR:**

Florida black bears do not truly hibernate. Instead, from late December to late March, they have a period called "winter denning." During this time, pregnant females give birth in the den and go without food. Males and non-pregnant females sometimes leave the den for a few weeks at a time.

**OFFSPRING:**

Every two years during January or February, females give birth to one to four cubs. Their dens may be high in a tree, in a hollowed out stump or on a forest floor protected by plants. The cubs are dependent on the their mother's protection for nearly 1 1/2 years, during which time she teaches them lessons of survival.

**THREATS:**

The biggest long-term threat facing the Florida black bear is habitat loss due to development and urbanization. Vehicle-caused mortality (or "road kills") is the number one direct cause of death for this species. Habitat fragmentation is another danger as highways built through bear habitat can divide and isolate large areas of habitat that bears depend on for food, water and shelter. Habitat fragmentation also makes it difficult for bears to find mates and limits their chances to move into more suitable habitat.

**LIFECYCLE:**

A Florida black bear's life can be divided into four stages: cub, yearling, young adult and mature adult. The cubs are born blind, helpless

and weigh about half a pound. They will stay in the den with their mother for three to four months. When they emerge in the spring, they may eat some solid food but will continue to nurse until they are nine to ten months old. Young cubs spend their first winter denning with their mother and emerge the following spring as yearlings. Approximately 25% of all black bear cubs do not survive their first year. Natural causes of death include drowning, den cave-ins, hypothermia (very low body temperature) due to den flooding, starvation, falling from trees, infections from injuries and predation (the act of capturing and feeding on other animals) by older or male bears, bobcats, coyotes and other natural predators.

Yearlings stay with their mother throughout the spring until she is ready to mate in the summer. Yearlings are run off to fend for themselves when they are 18 months old. They must now establish their own home range. Most females will establish a range near their mother's but do not usually interact with her. Males, on the other hand, will travel long distances to find unoccupied territory. Mortality (death) rates for yearlings are very high. Inexperience results in them being killed by other bears, collisions with vehicles and starvation. About 23% of all yearlings die before they are two years old.

About 46% of young adult males do not survive to adulthood. Many are killed by collisions with vehicles while looking for food or a denning site. Some starve or are killed by other bears. Young females have a higher survival rate, with only 20% dying before reaching adulthood. Mature adult bears die of old age, collisions with vehicles, poaching, starvation, disease and other factors.

### **WHY CARE ABOUT FLORIDA'S BEAR:**

The Florida black bear is considered an "indicator species" and an "umbrella species." An indicator species is a species whose population

size and population health is used to gauge the overall health of an ecosystem. An umbrella species is one that utilizes large natural areas of habitat containing many different kinds of plant and animal species. This means that protecting Florida black bear habitat means protection for the many other plants and animals, including common animals such as red-shouldered hawks, raccoons and opossums and some endangered species (species in danger of becoming extinct throughout its natural range) such as the Southern bald eagle and wood stork, that use the same habitat.

### **PROTECTION:**

Over the past 50 years, more than eight million acres of forested land have been cleared in Florida. The primary factor threatening the survival of the black bear in Florida is habitat loss and degradation. The best way to save a species like the Florida black bear is to restore, protect and connect large tracts of undisturbed natural habitat (corridors) and to find ways to reduce human caused bear deaths. Although Florida black bears currently do not receive protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act, they are protected as a threatened species in Florida (except in Apalachicola National Forest, Baker and Columbia counties).



# WHAT CAN I DO?



Organize a bear festival at your school.



Arrange with a local bookstore to adopt bears as its theme for a month. Highlight books about and have story time with bear books.



Make bookmarks educating others about the Florida black bear and ask a local library to put them on the check-out counter.



Volunteer with a local nature center or park on a habitat restoration or habitat management project.



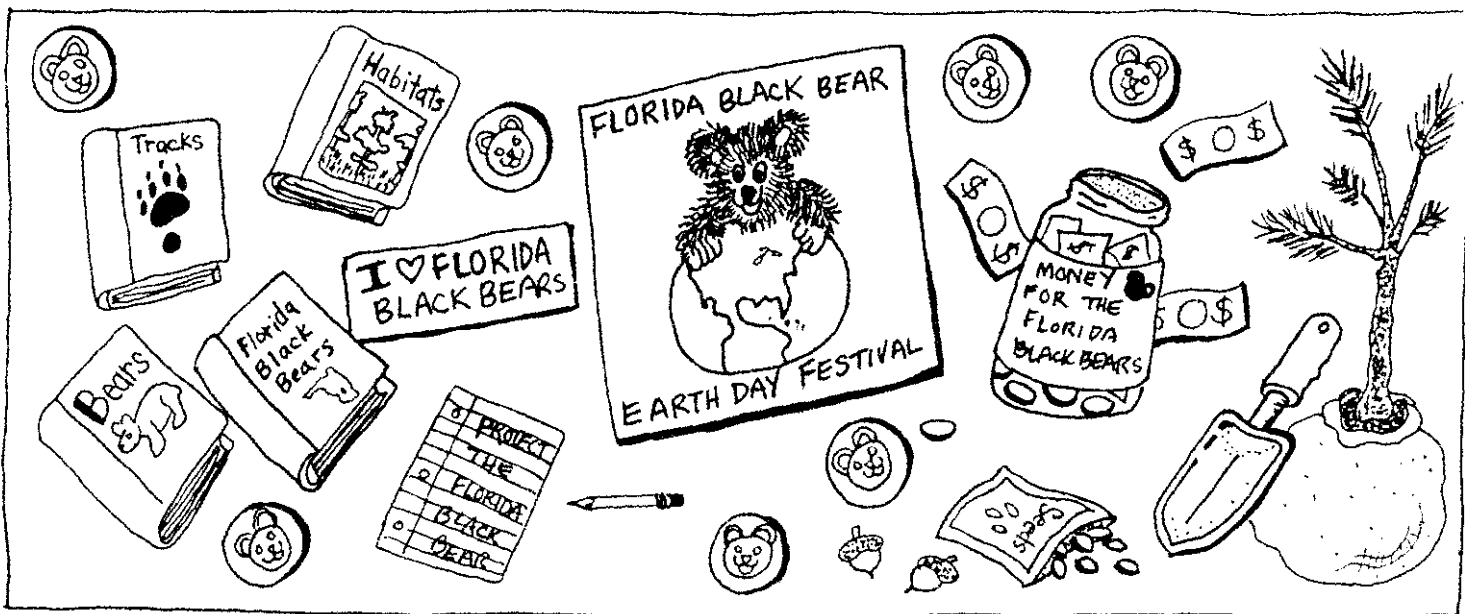
Volunteer to assist organizations involved with conservation of Florida black bear habitat at Earth Day festivities.



Hold a fundraiser for organizations involved in Florida black bear education, research or conservation, like Defenders of Wildlife's Habitat for Bears Campaign or The Wildlife Foundation of Florida. (check with the organization first to see if there is an appropriate project for your school).



Share your new "Be Bear Aware" knowledge with your parents, teachers and friends. (see pages 22-27)



# BEAR NEIGHBORS

The Florida black bear is called an "umbrella species." In other words, protecting enough land for the black bear to live, you also protect homes for many other animals. Find some of these animals in the puzzle below.

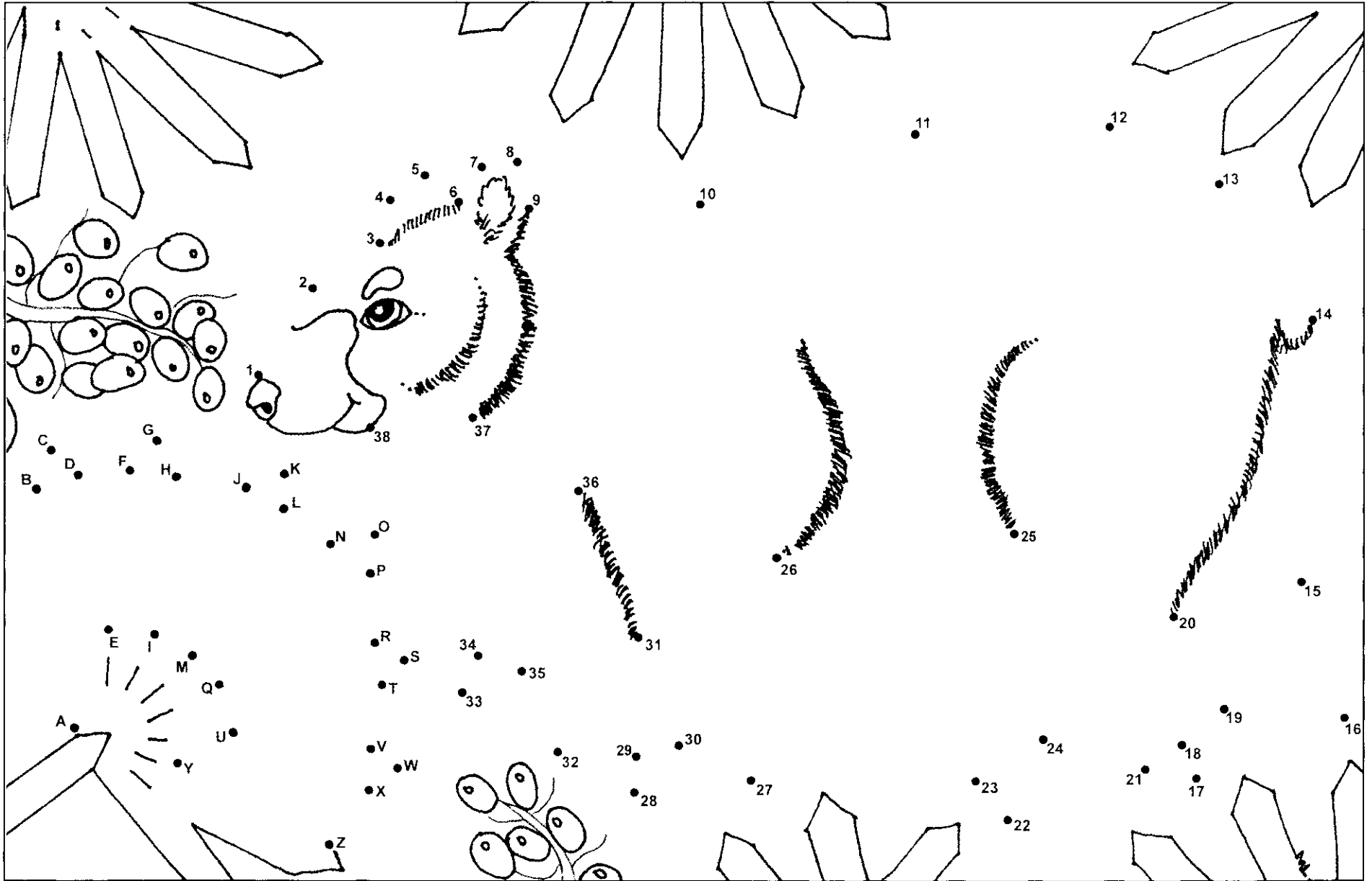


A N T S K Q A L L I G A T O R E Y S B  
 L A Y A N W H I T E I B I S W U Q A A  
 E B J X I X Q R S C R U B J A Y N E T  
 L A O A K T O A D L E A B I W O E A T  
 G A G I S W A C I A E X A X L E K R E  
 A E R E D S H O U L D E R E D H A W K  
 E I A M N W X S T I D R N E I T N A C  
 D X Y A A K Y O E M E A O R R R S L A  
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 B O X T U R T L E I A O T L N F I N O  
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 G S A E L E Q X E O E N E V M O P S L  
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 E S I O T R O T R E H P O G A E L C S  
 B U R R O W I N G O W L Y E S X E K T

ALLIGATOR  
 ANOLE  
 ANTS  
 ARMADILLO  
 BALD EAGLE  
 BARN OWL  
 BOX TURTLE  
 BURROWING OWL  
 EGRET  
 FOX SQUIRREL  
 GOPHER TORTOISE  
 GRAY FOX  
 KITE  
 LIMPKIN  
 MANATEE  
 MOLE

OAK TOAD  
 OPOSSUM  
 OTTER  
 PINE SNAKE  
 RABBIT  
 RACCOON  
 RED-SHOULDERED HAWK  
 SALAMANDER  
 SAND SKINK  
 SCRUB-JAY  
 TREE FROG  
 VULTURE  
 WHITE IBIS  
 WHITE-TAILED DEER

# WHO IS EATING THE BERRIES?



Starting at number 1, connect the dots in numerical order. Starting with A, connect the dots in alphabetical order. Have fun coloring the picture.



# DECODE THE HABITAT

An animal's habitat is the area where it finds food, water, shelter and space. Using the code below, fill in the blanks with the correct letter to discover the type of bear habitats in Florida.

Q    W    E    R    T    Y    U    I    O    P    A    S    D  
 01   02   03   04   05   06   07   08   09   10   11   12   13

F    G    H    J    K    L    Z    X    C    V    B    N    M  
 14   15   16   17   18   19   20   21   22   23   24   25   26

Example:                                          decodes to    H A V E    F U N  
 16 11 23 03    14 07 25                                    16 11 23 03    14 07 25

                                                                                    
 10 08 25 03    14 19    11 05 02 09 09 13 12

                              /                                                                                       
 22 06 10 04 03 12 12    24 19 11 22 18 15 07 26    12 02 11 26 10

                                                                                                                       
 26 08 21 03 13    16 11 04 13 02 09 09 13    16 11 26 26 09 22 18 12

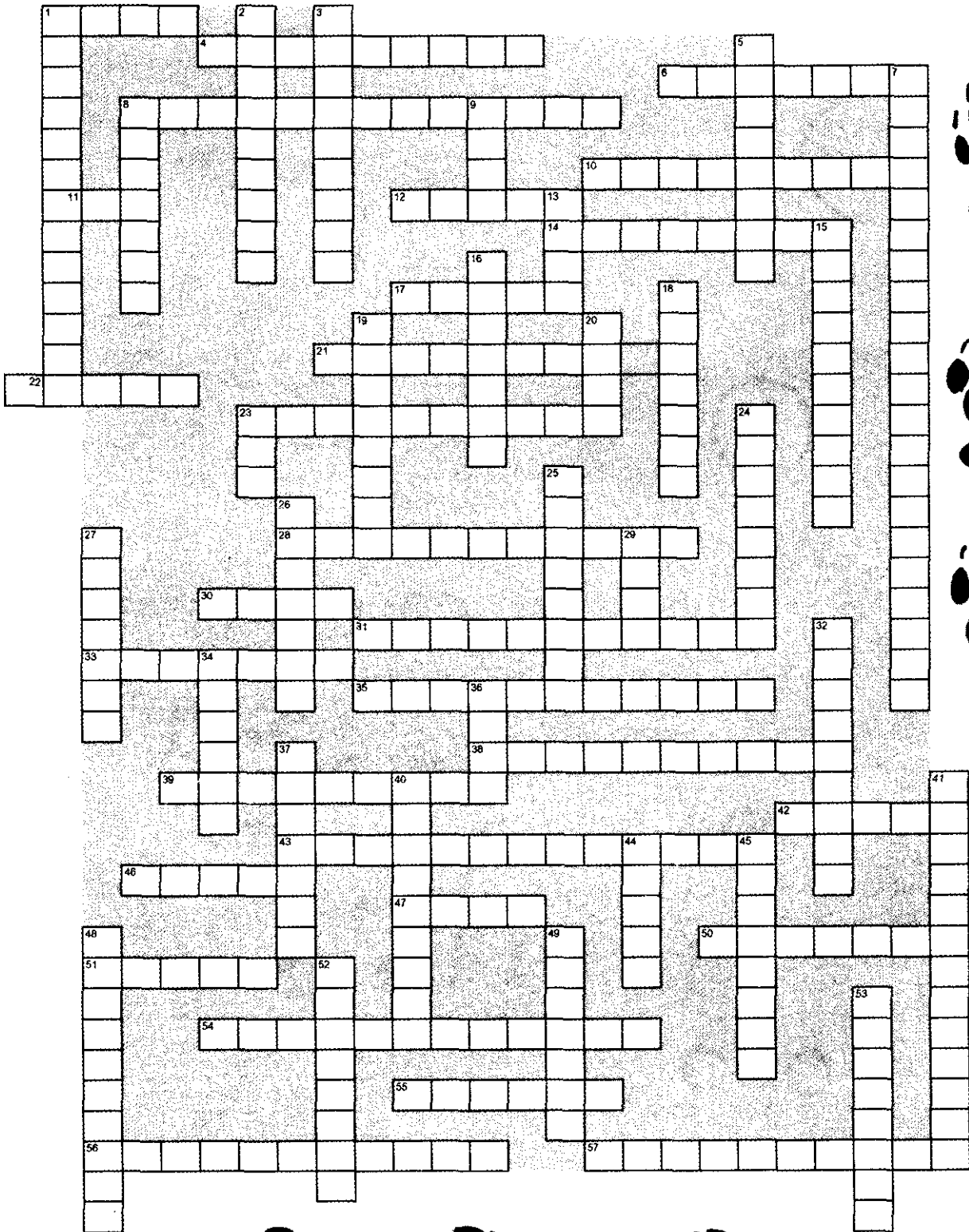
                                                                                                   
 12 11 25 13    10 08 25 03    12 22 04 07 24

      
 22 11 24 24    11 15 03    10 11 19 26    14 09 04 03 12 05



# A BEAR OF A CROSSWORD PUZZLE

(Suggested for Ages 12 and up)



Use the clues below to fill in the crossword puzzle. (Hint: Most of the answers are in this activity guide.)

**ACROSS**

- 1) This bird of prey, called a red-shouldered \_\_\_\_\_, lives in the forest with the bear.
- 4) A meat eater.
- 6) The only marsupial found in North America.
- 8) This bear habitat is considered to be the deserts of Florida (3 words)
- 10) A plant eater.
- 11) This nocturnal bird is thought to be "wise."
- 12) The Florida black bear's genus  
(Hint: 1st word in the scientific name).
- 14) Eats a combination of plants and animals.
- 17) Adult male bears (plural).
- 21) (The Florida black bear's species classification (Hint: the 2nd word in the scientific name).
- 22) The four basic requirements are food, water, shelter and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 23) The Florida black bear's subspecies classification  
(Hint: the 3rd word in the scientific name).
- 28) An animal that walks on the flat soles of its feet such as a bear or a human.
- 30) The white \_\_\_\_\_ is a bird that forages along the banks of rivers, streams and lakes.
- 31) An animal that walks on its toes, such as a dog or a cat.
- 32) This reptile hides in the pine litter on the forest floor. (2 words)
- 33) This jumping amphibian is the smallest species of its kind in the U.S. Its name tells you what kind of trees it likes.
- 35) Bears like to eat the heart of the \_\_\_\_\_, which is found in the center of a bud at the top of this tree.
- 38) This mammal is originally from Texas and is a favorite food of the bears (plural).
- 39) This famous Florida reptile lives in the water and is usually thought to be green (It really is black).
- 42) The four basic requirements are food, \_\_\_\_\_, shelter and space.
- 43) This bear habitat is the most common plant community in Florida.
- 46) This animal is well known for its scent and the white stripes down its back.
- 47) The four basic requirements are \_\_\_\_\_, water, shelter and space.
- 50) This bird is called the "garbageman" of the wild because it eats dead or decaying animal matter.
- 51) "Quiet as a \_\_\_\_\_."
- 54) This bear habitat is a fresh water plant community dominated by a canopy of cypress trees.
- 55) A pocket \_\_\_\_\_ is a mammal that lives underground and digs tunnels.
- 56) The movement of animals into an area.
- 57) A group of animals of the same species living in the same area.

(See next page for DOWN)

## DOWN

- (1) This bear habitat is found in narrow bands along the rivers and consists of bald cypress, red maple and swamp ash.
- 2) This majestic bird is the symbol of our country. (2 words)
- 3) A species whose population size and health are used to gauge the overall health and quality of an ecosystem.
- 5) Areas of land or water that connect isolated areas of wildlife habitat with each other.
- 7) A bear habitat dominated by trees such as tupelo and cabbage palm (3 words).
- 8) The four basic requirements are food, water, space and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9) Young bears (plural).
- 13) Adult female bears (plural).
- 15) A species that is in danger of becoming extinct.
- 16) A natural area that provides the basic requirements an animal needs to survive.
- 18) The majority of animal matter eaten by bears are \_\_\_\_\_ (plural).
- 19) A species of animal that utilizes large natural areas of habitat containing many different kinds of plants and animal species. Thus, if habitat for the \_\_\_\_\_ species is protected, habitat for many other species is protected as well.
- 20) These insects live in colonies and are eaten by bears.(plural)
- 23) This "sly" animal lives in the forest with the black bear.
- 24) This insect makes a sweet syrup that bears like to eat.(Bears eat this insect too).
- 25) A type of feeding behavior where an animal meanders through an area feeding on appropriate food it comes across.
- 26) An \_\_\_\_\_ habitat provides enough food, water, shelter and space to support a healthy population of organisms.
- 27) This common animal "wears" a mask on its face.
- 29) The white-tailed \_\_\_\_\_ lives in the forest and is sometimes food for the bear.
- 32) This reptile hides in the pine litter on the forest floor. (2 words)
- 34) This reptile has a hard shell to protect it from danger.
- 36) This activity guide is about the Florida black \_\_\_\_\_.
- 37) This slender grayish-brown bird likes to hunt for snails on the water plants
- 40) These amphibians have enlarged toe pads which they use for climbing trees.
- 41) Habitat \_\_\_\_\_ is the process of breaking large areas of habitat into smaller pieces, often as a result of development.
- 44) This playful animal is known for its method of entering the water by sliding down slippery river banks.
- 45) This relative of the blue jay only lives in scrub oak.
- 48) The movement of animals out of an area.
- 49) This water mammal is also called a sea cow.
- 52) A \_\_\_\_\_ habitat provides minimal or less than ideal amounts of food, water, shelter and space for a particular species.
- 53) A young bear that is between one and two years old.

# SCRAMBLED FOOD

The Florida black bear's diet consists of about 80% plants, 12% insects and 6% animals. This last 2% is an assortment of debris. Unscramble the words below to find out what bears eat. For help with this activity, read the Food section on page 2.

OACNSR

\_\_\_\_\_

WAS ALPMTOTE

\_\_\_\_\_

BASLA ALPM HARET

\_\_\_\_\_

ALGRRYBEL

\_\_\_\_\_

AGOLLTRIA GLAF

\_\_\_\_\_

ALKWIGN KTSIC

\_\_\_\_\_

DILMAROLA

\_\_\_\_\_

LWDI IPG

\_\_\_\_\_

ETITHALIW ERED

\_\_\_\_\_

NOEYH

\_\_\_\_\_

WELYOL EJAKCT

\_\_\_\_\_

SSIEEB GBU

\_\_\_\_\_

PTNEAERRC TAN

\_\_\_\_\_

YHNEO EBE

\_\_\_\_\_

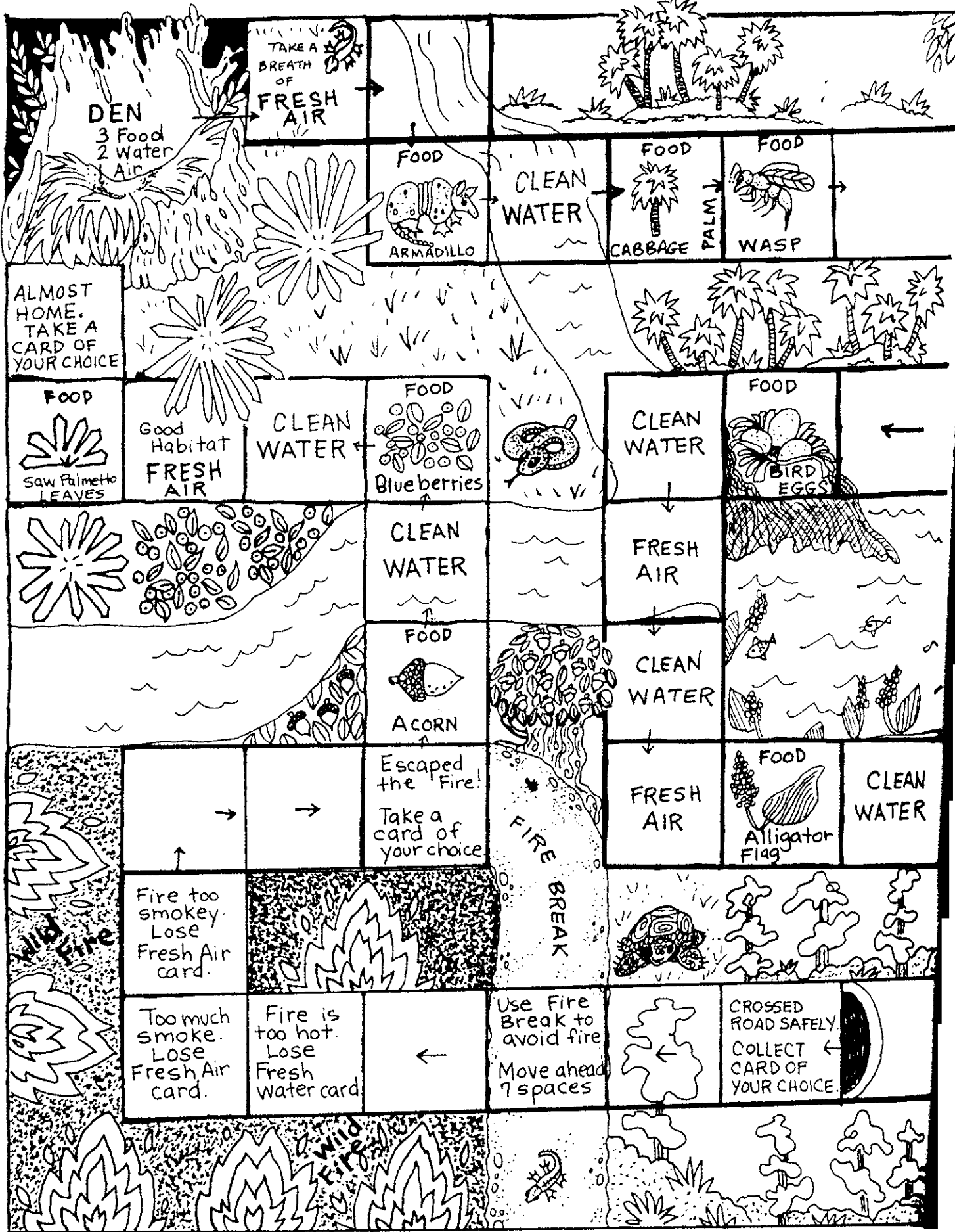
ARNCOCO

\_\_\_\_\_

BEURBLRISSE

\_\_\_\_\_





# THE BEAR BARRIERS GAME

(Game includes pages 12, 13, 14 & 17)

## READ ALL OF THESE DIRECTIONS FIRST!

- Pull this page out.
- Glue this side down to a piece of cardboard.  
(Empty cereal box, file folder or poster board.)
- Carefully cut out the game pieces, cards and die on page 14.
- SAVE the rules.
- Fold die and tape together.

HAVE FUN!



# Rules of the game

The object is to leave the den, travel around the habitat collecting food, clean water and fresh air.

To SURVIVE, your bear must get back to the den with 3 food cards, 2 water cards and 1 fresh air card.

## TO START THE GAME

Place all the food cards in one pile, all the water cards in another and the air cards in a third pile.

Each player chooses a token and places it in the den. Take turns rolling the die and move your bear that number of spaces. Follow the directions on the space you land on. If a bear is already on that space, go to the space behind them and follow the directions on that space instead.

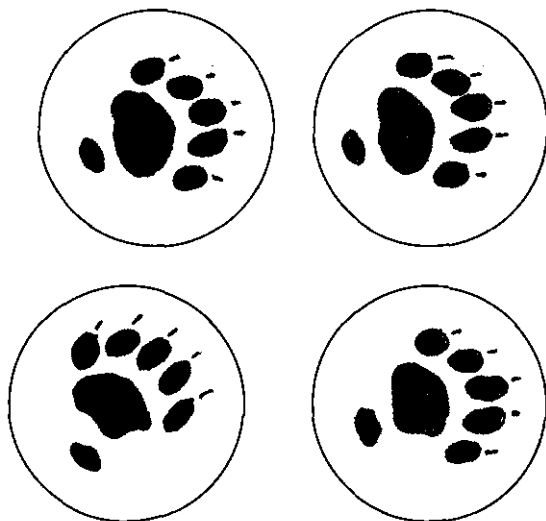
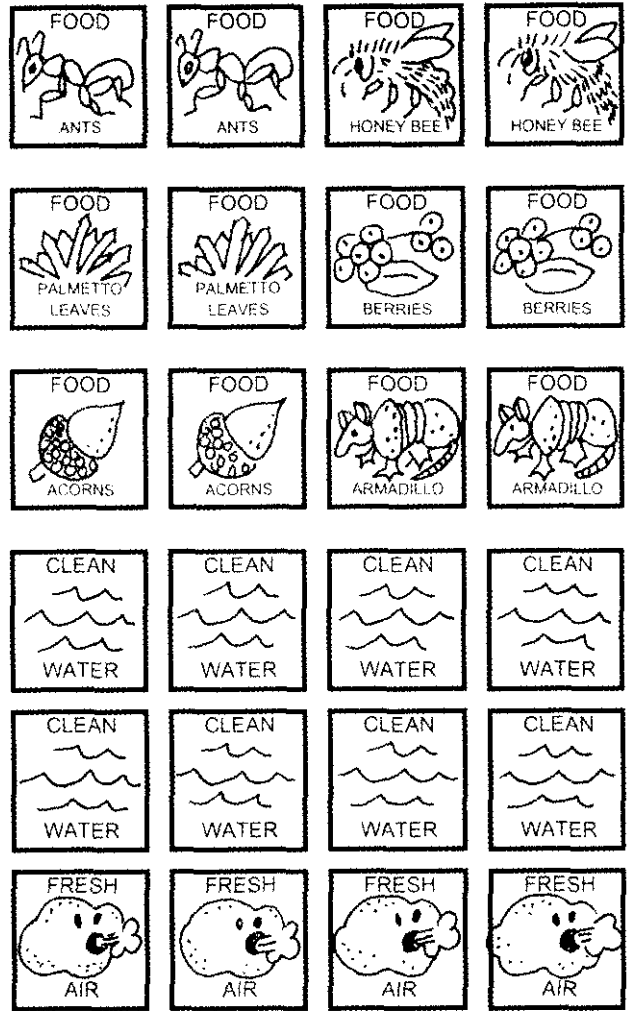
When you land on a space that says "collect a card," pick one card out of the pile.

You may not collect more cards than you need. If you land on a "collect a card" space and you already have the total number of that card allowed, DO NOT take another card. (If you have 3 food cards, do not take another)

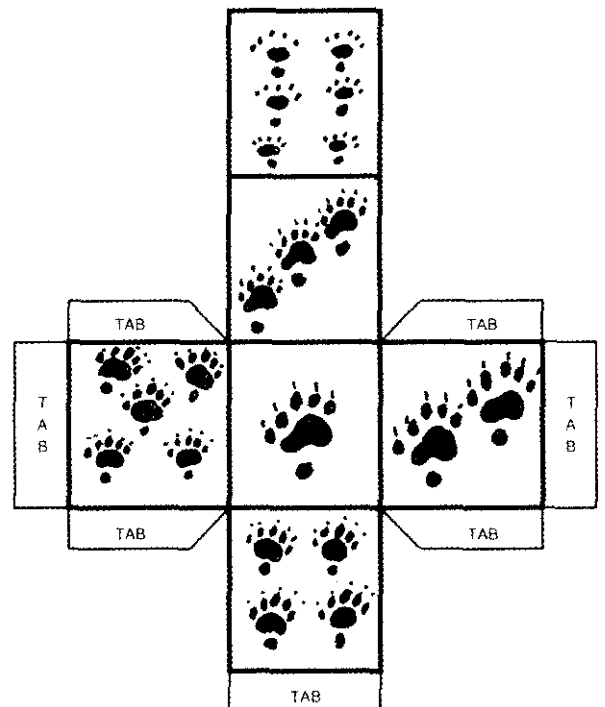
If you land on a "lose a card" space, place one of your cards in the pile. If you do not have one, the next player takes their turn.

If you reach the den and do not have the correct number of each card, continue past the den back into the habitat.

You do not have to land on the den by exact count. If you are two spaces away and roll a 4, YOU ARE HOME! CONGRATULATIONS!



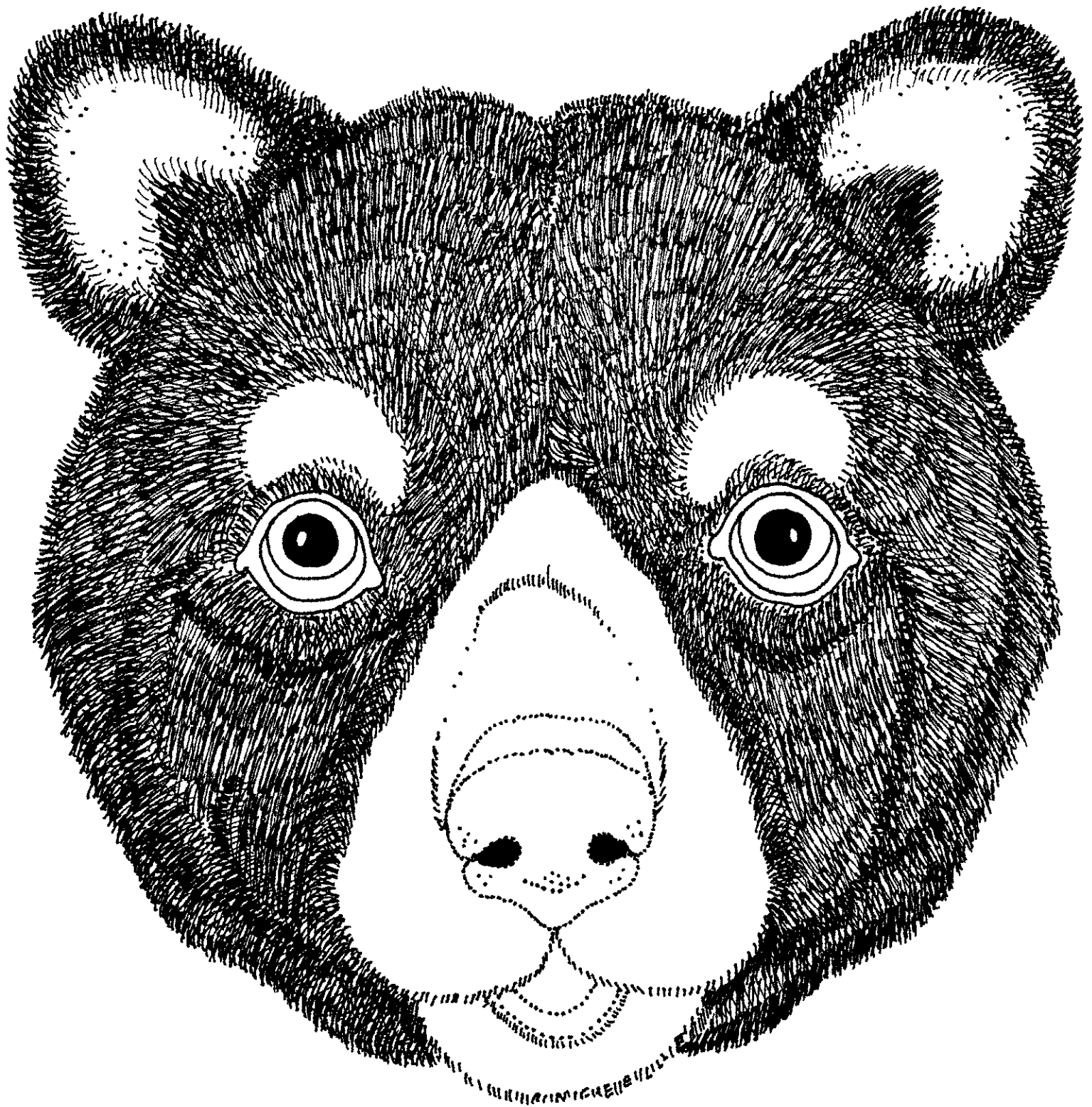
Game Pieces



Carefully fold the die first and then tape together



# MAKE A FLORIDA BLACK BEAR MASK



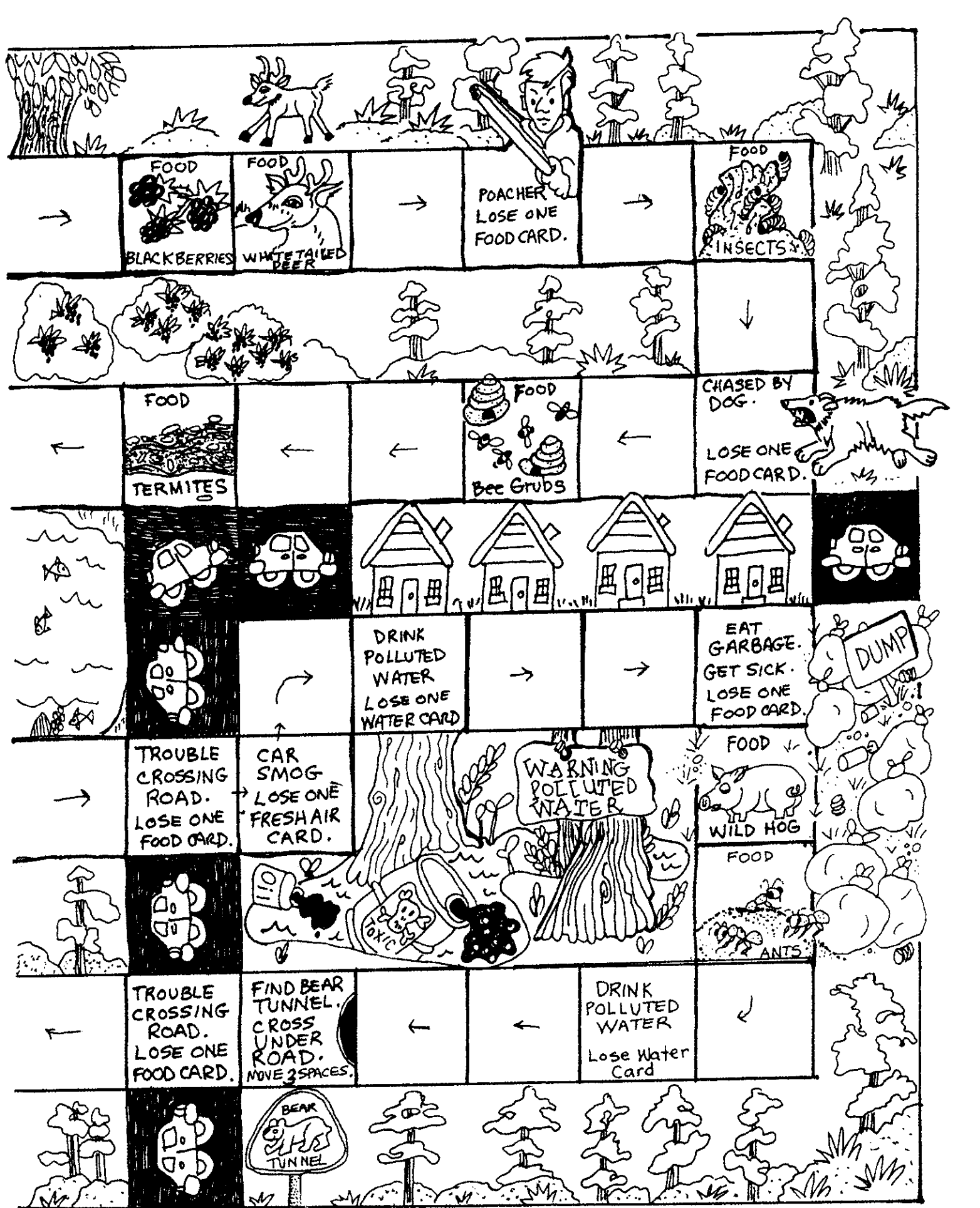
Remove this page from the book.

Glue to a piece of cardboard, such as an empty cereal box, file folder or poster board. Carefully cut out the mask and two eyeholes.

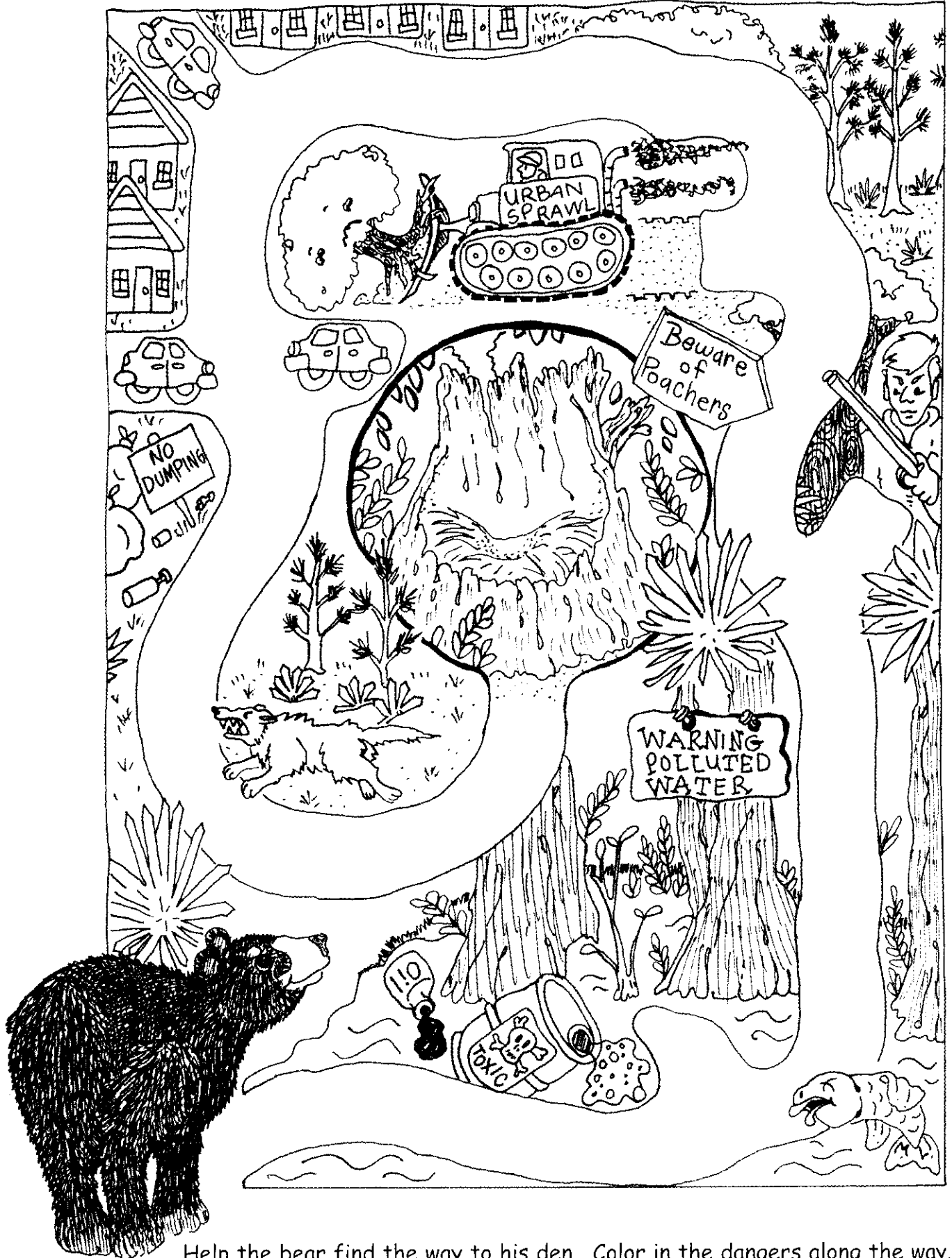
Color the eyebrows and muzzle brown or tan and the nose black.

Punch a small hole on either side of the bear's head and add string.

Tie on the mask and HAVE FUN!

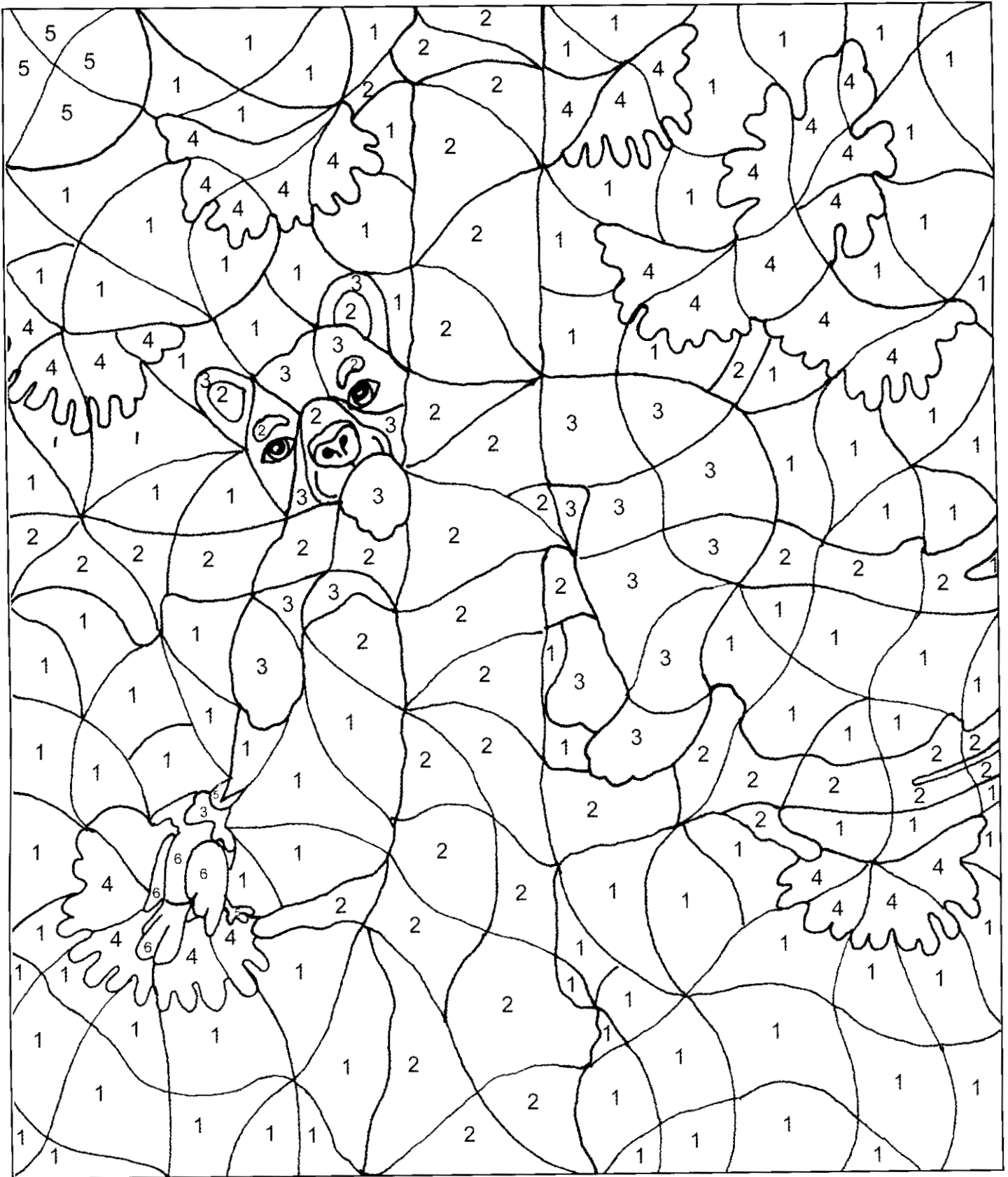


# AMAZING DANGER



Help the bear find the way to his den. Color in the dangers along the way.

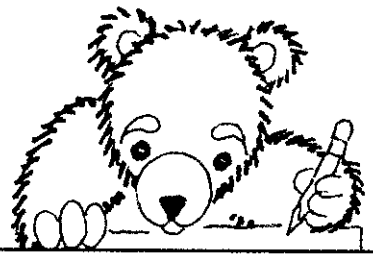
# BEAR BY THE NUMBERS



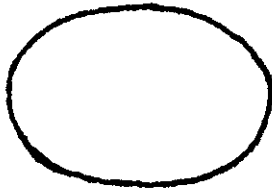
Using the key below, color in the picture.

1 - Blue 2 - Brown 3 - Black 4 - Green 5 - Yellow 6 - Red

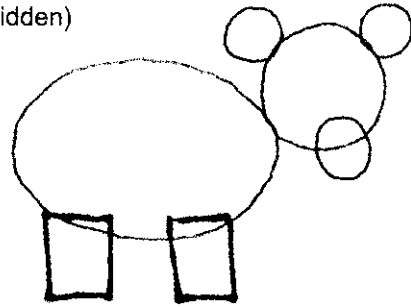
# HOW TO DRAW A BEAR



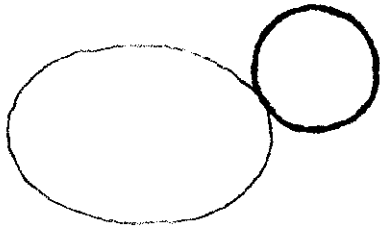
STEP 1 Draw an oval for his body.



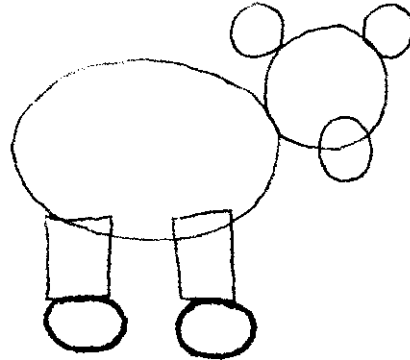
STEP 5 Draw 2 rectangles for his legs (the other legs are hidden)



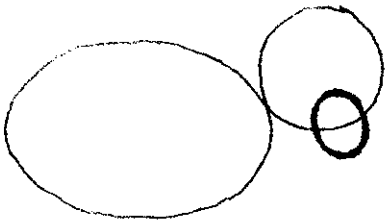
STEP 2 Draw a circle for his head.









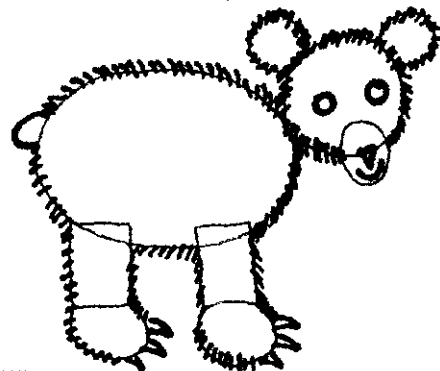
STEP 6 Draw 2 small ovals for his feet.



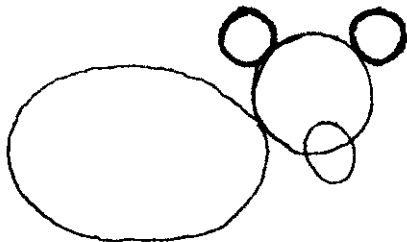
STEP 3 Draw a small oval for his snout.



STEP 7 Add eyes , a nose , a mouth , a tail , fur , and claws .



STEP 4 Draw 2 small circles for his ears.



STEP 8 Add a background: trees, bushes, plants, etc.



# **BE BEAR AWARE!**

## Living With Florida's Black Bear

### **WHAT IS "BE BEAR AWARE":**

The new "Be Bear Aware" program teaches ways to avoid unwanted or unsafe encounters with bears. By learning how to Be Bear Aware, and teaching others what you've learned, you can help bears from becoming a problem at your home, in your neighborhood or at your campsite.

### **WHAT'S A "NUISANCE" BEAR:**

A "nuisance" bear is one that has lost its natural fear of people. Nuisance bears get into all kinds of trouble from raiding garbage cans and eating pet food to occasionally killing livestock and causing property damage.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) reports that the annual number of human/bear problems has risen from one in 1978 to over 1,000 in 2000. Records have been broken for each of the last six years and are expected to continue to increase. There have been numerous cases of bears in buildings, bears attacking livestock and pets and other serious problems.

No bear attacks on humans have been documented in Florida, but as the state's human population continues to grow and encroach upon the remaining bear habitat, and as bear populations expand, confrontations are anticipated to grow in number and possibly intensity.

### **LIVING WITH BEARS:**

As Floridians, we all have a responsibility for keeping our wildlife wild. Conflicts between humans and bears are most often created by people. The prevention of nuisance bears relies on actions taken by every person living in bear country. To control the situation, it is necessary to take personal responsibility to reduce conflicts, and prevent the loss of property and possible human death.

There are benefits to living in harmony with bears. The bear's presence (in nature) indicates the health of our natural environment. Natural areas that support bears are home for many other animal species. Steps taken to prevent bears from becoming nuisance animals also prevent other species from becoming problems (such as raccoons, skunks, fox, opossums, mice and rats), and thereby decreases human and pet exposure to diseases (e.g. rabies) and damage to crops and property.

### **YOU CAN HELP:**

Nuisance bears are created by common mistakes that homeowners, campers and hikers innocently or unknowing make. Feeding bears either by accident or on purpose is the number one source of the problem.

**IF YOU REALLY CARE, DON'T FEED THE BEARS**

Bears do not know public land boundaries, and roam throughout forests and even farming areas in Florida. Bears are attracted to residential areas and camp sites because they investigate food smells and are attracted to many different foods such as garbage, bird seed, squirrel feed, pet foods, compost piles and grease and juices on barbecue grills. Once a bear finds something it likes, it may return to the same area several times (even after food is removed) or search around the general area for similar foods.

Some bears become used to people and may even appear tame. However, remember that bears are wild animals and are unpredictable. Therefore, if you live in bear habitat, the best solution is to remove the source of attraction before problems occur, and to know what to do should problems arise.

### **AVOIDING PROBLEMS:**

- Never approach a bear; bears are wild animals and can be dangerous.
- Never feed a bear; this brings both you and the bear into harm's way.
- Don't leave food out -unclean BBQ grills, pet food or garbage etc...because it can attract bears.
- Keep pet foods and livestock feed in a secure indoor area, even at night.
- If bird feeders are being visited by bears, stop feeding birds for one to two weeks.
- Store garbage in a secure indoor area until pick-up day.
- Don't overfill garbage cans.
- Install bear-proof garbage cans and bear-proof community dumpsters in chronic problem areas.
- Keep a clean campsite by removing trash and cleaning up immediately after meals.
- Clean BBQ grills after use.
- Don't compost meat products or sweet scraps.

Noise can scare bears. Shouting, clapping, blasting a car horn or installing motion sensitive lights outside of your home may scare off a bear. A bear should not be teased if it fails to respond to efforts to frighten it. But these methods are only temporary solutions; the best solution is prevention, keeping areas clean and stop feeding the bears.

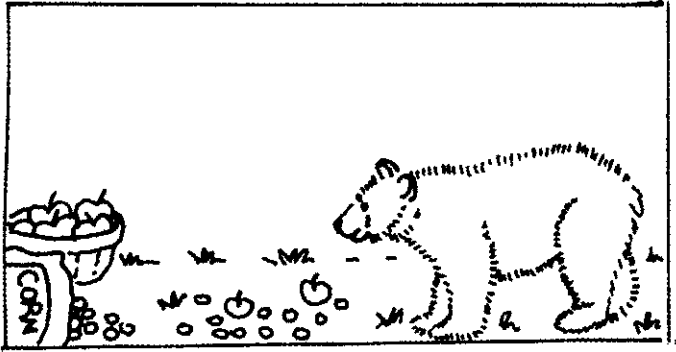
It is important to remember that most problems are temporary.

Report bear problems to the FWC and educate your parents, teachers and friends about ways to avoid having problems with bears.

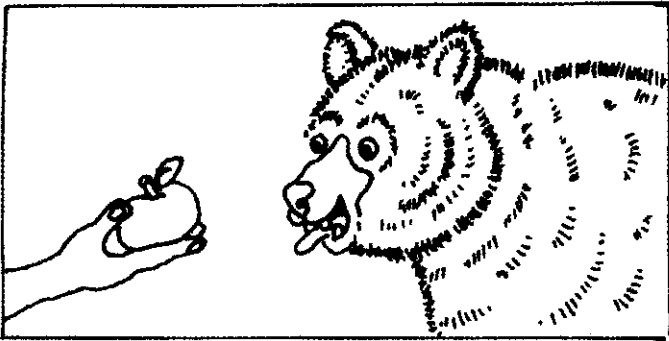
The "Be Bear Aware" campaign is a cooperative public education program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Defenders of Wildlife and USDA Forest Service.

# BE BEAR AWARE: DON'T FEED THE BEARS

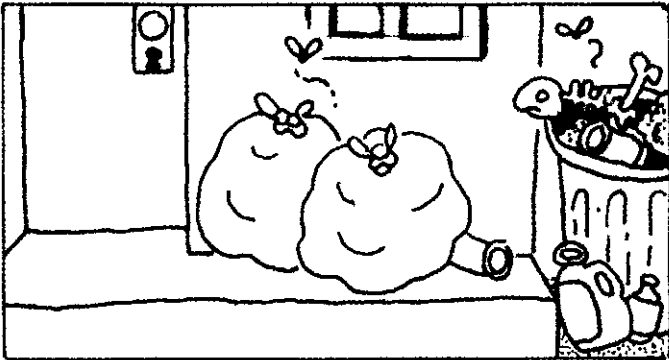
Look at each picture and fill in the blanks.



1. Bears love to eat and have a very good sense of smell! Keep animal feed and harvested fruits and vegetables \_\_\_\_\_.



2. Bears are wild animals, never approach one. \_\_\_\_\_ a bear brings you into harm's way.



3. Bears are attracted to the strong smells of \_\_\_\_\_. Keep garbage \_\_\_\_\_ in tightly sealed containers.

Answers:

3.) Garbage; Indoors

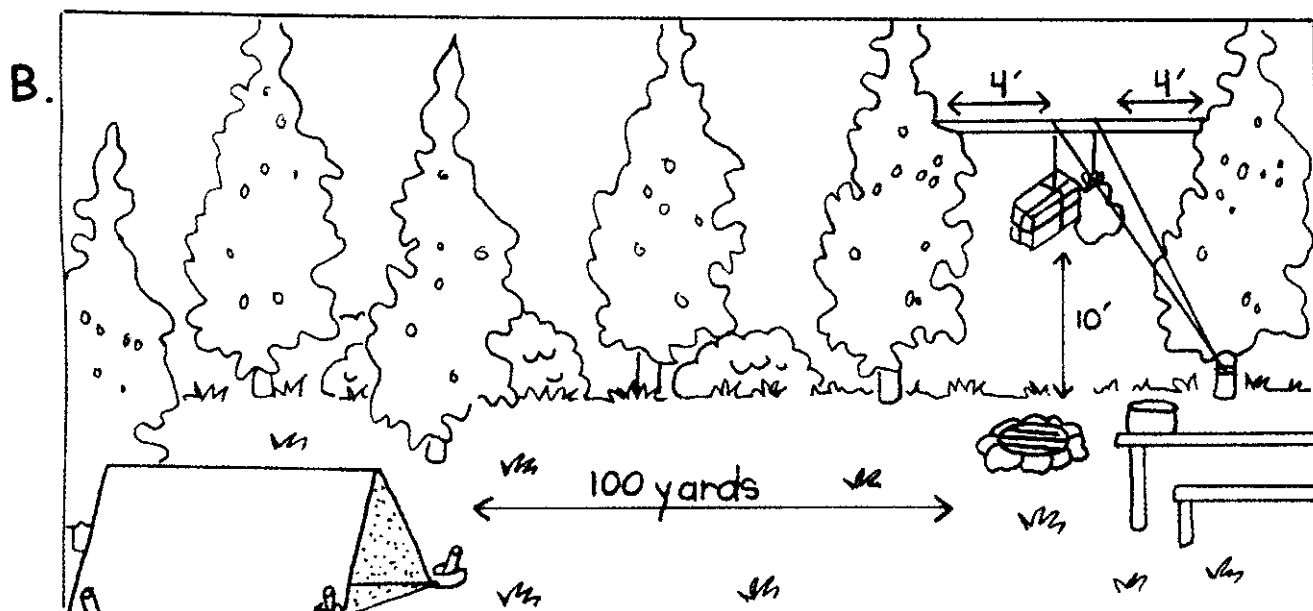
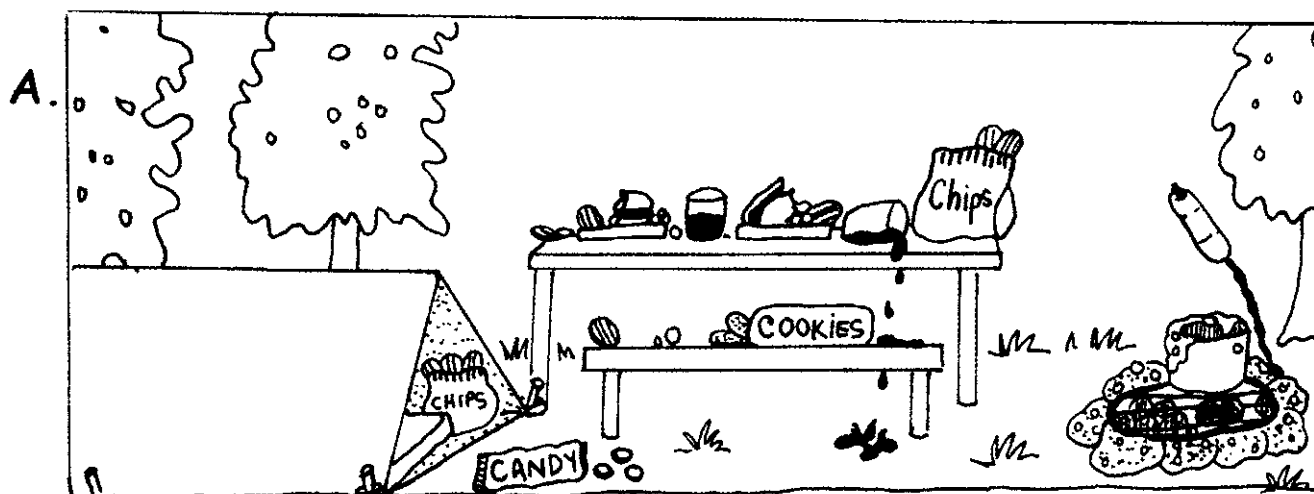
2.) Feeding

1.) Indoors



# BE BEAR AWARE AT YOUR CAMPSITE

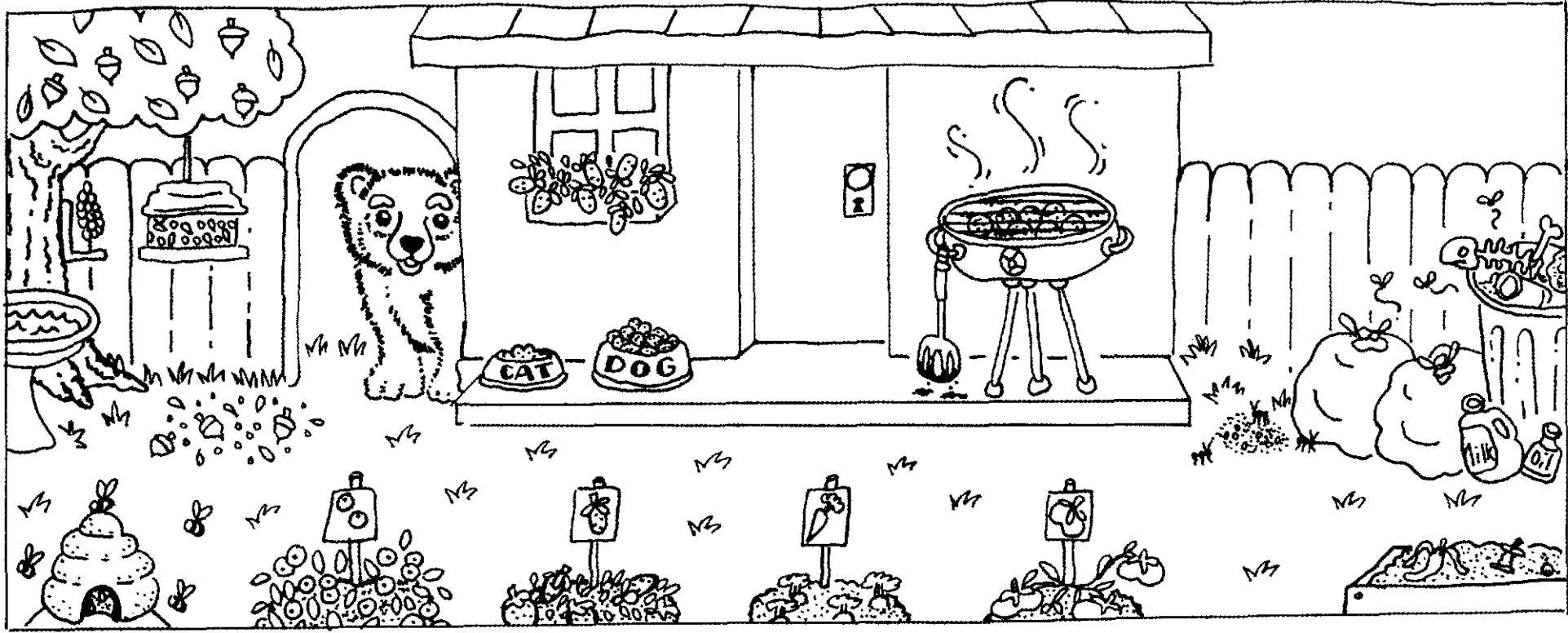
Which campsite would most likely attract a bear? Circle all the items that would attract a bear.



Remember, bears love to eat. If you keep a clean camp, bears won't be attracted by food smells. **Always:**

1. Put food and trash in tightly sealed containers so the bear can't smell it.
2. Place the containers at least 100 yards from the tent and up in a tree at least 10 feet up and 4 ft from any branches. (Bears can stand on their hind legs and can climb trees.)
3. Keep food secure in tightly sealed containers. Never leave food in your tent.
4. Set-up the cooking area at least 100 yards away from the tent.
5. Keep pots and dishes clean.
6. Bury coals with meat juices and crumbs away from the campsite.
7. Change your clothes and wash your hands before sleeping so you don't smell like food.

# BE BEAR AWARE IN YOUR BACKYARD



A. Can you find at least 8 things that are attracting the bear to this backyard? \_\_\_\_\_

B. You live in bear country! What can you do to stop attracting bears to your backyard? \_\_\_\_\_

- A. 1. Pet food, 2. Dirty grill (meat pieces and juice), 3. Overflowing garbage can, 4. Compost bin, 5. Garden full of ripe fruits and vegetables, 6. Beehive, 7. Squirrel and bird feeders, 8. Oak tree full of acorns.
- B. Remove all food sources. Take the pet food, wildlife feeders, ripe fruits and vegetables inside. Put an electric fence around the garden, compost pile and beehive. Put garbage and recyclables in tightly sealed containers.

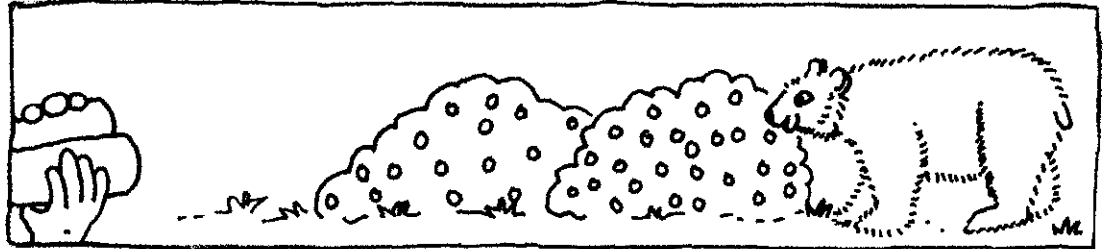
# BE BEAR AWARE

## IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR

The following pictures are trying to tell you something about what to do when you encounter a bear.

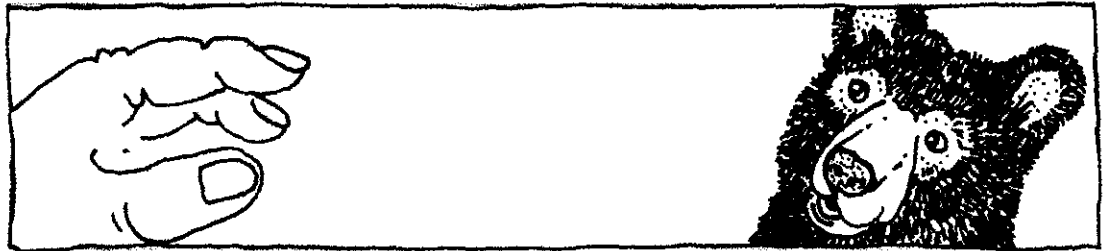
### 1. BEARS ARE WILD ANIMALS, YOU SHOULD ...:

- A. Never approach one.
- B. Watch from a distance.
- C. Slowly back away and go back the way you came
- D. All of the above



### 2. IF A BEAR GETS TOO CLOSE, YOU SHOULD ....

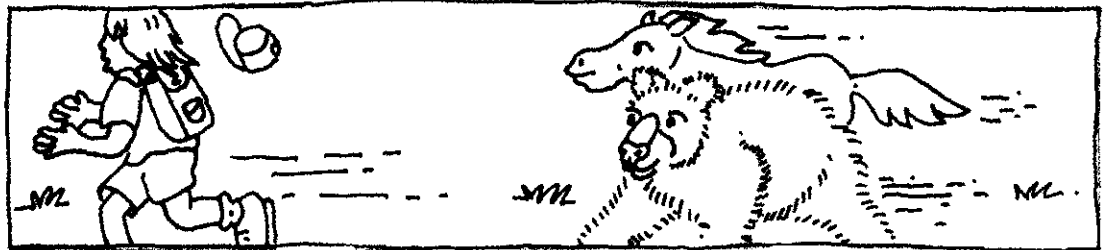
- A. Back away slowly
- B. Make loud noises and wave arms. Noise may scare off the bear.
- C. Reach out to touch it
- D. Climb a tree
- E. A & B



Remember - Bears are wild animals and like all animals they can bite or hurt you if they are frightened - Never try to pet a bear or any wild animal. FUN FACT - Bears are good climbers too.

### 3. BEARS CAN RUN AS FAST AS HORSES. IF A BEAR APPROACHES YOU, YOU SHOULD....

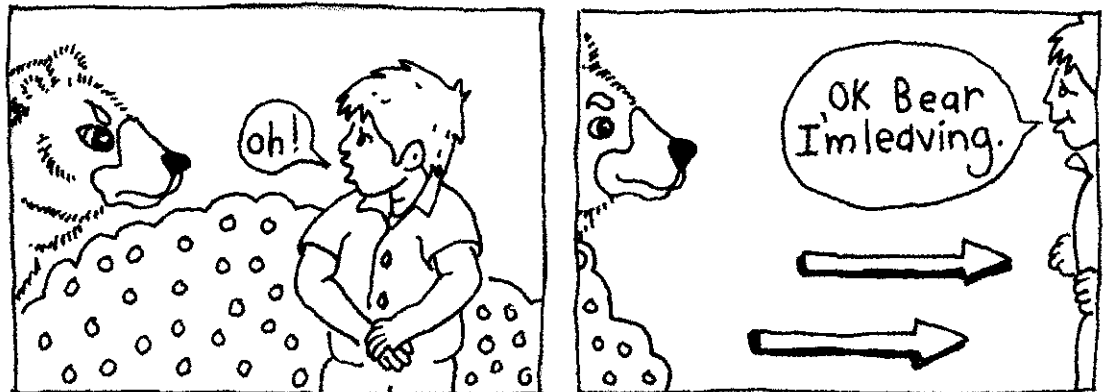
- A. Back away slowly.
- B. Shout, clap hands
- C. Run
- D. A & B



Never run. Instead leave slowly or try to frighten the bear by shouting and clapping.

### 4. YOU AND A BEAR ARE SURPRISED BY YOUR ENCOUNTER. WHAT IS THE BEST THING YOU SHOULD DO?

- A. Run
- B. Shout and clap
- C. Stay and watch
- D. Back away and leave slowly



The best way to deal with a close encounter is to face the bear and back away slowly. The next best thing is to clap and shout.

ANSWERS: 1. D, 2. E, 3. D, 4. D

# ANSWER KEY

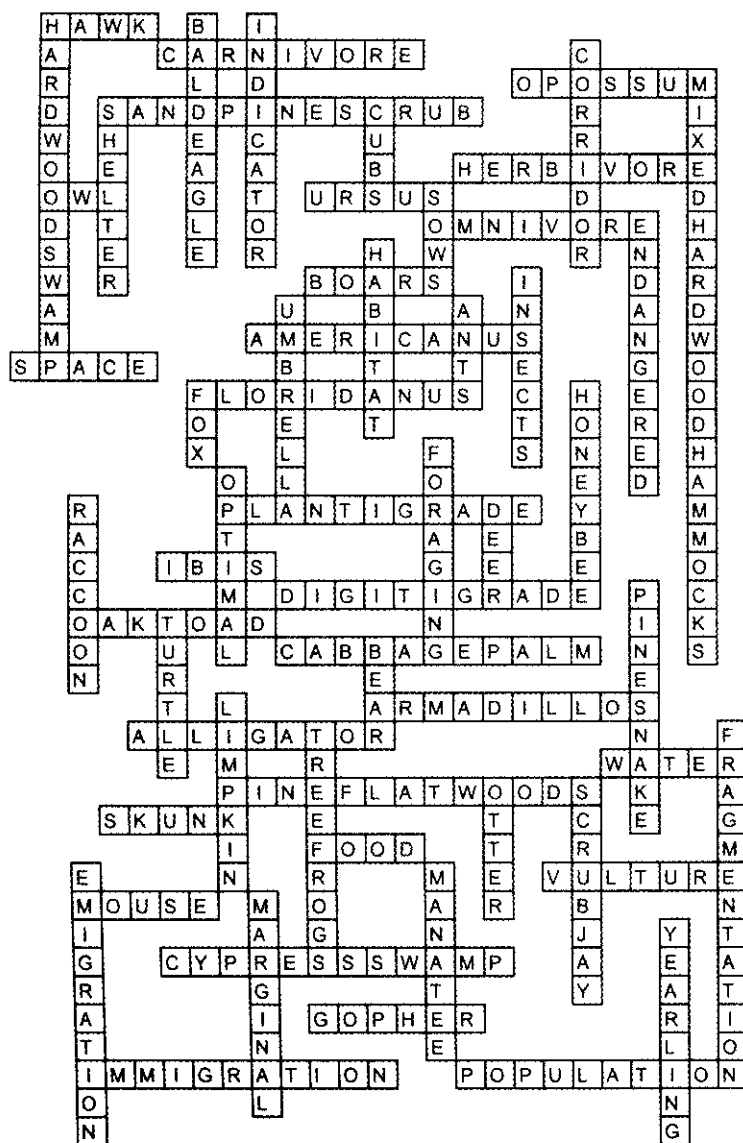


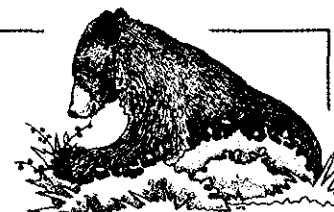
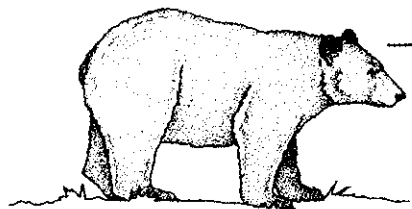
## Decode the Habitats

- Pine flatwoods
- Cypress/blackgum swamps
- Mixed hardwood hammocks
- Sand-pine scrub
- Cabbage palm forest

## Scrambled Food

- Acorns
- Saw palmetto
- Sabal palm heart
- Gallberry
- Alligator flag
- Walking stick
- Armadillo
- Wild pig
- White-tailed deer
- Turtle
- Yellow jacket
- Bess bug
- Carpenter ant
- Honey bee
- Raccoon
- Blueberries





# I CARE FOR FLORIDA'S BEAR

This is how I will help the Florida black bear :

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Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

