

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Do Bears Form Relationships with Other Species?



Bears are powerful animals that mostly live alone, but they do interact with other species in their habitats. Some of these relationships can be described as symbiotic, meaning different species interact in ways that affect each other. Bears often form relationships involving mutualism, commensalism, and even parasitism.

One example of mutualism is when bears eat berries. Bears help plants by spreading seeds through their droppings after eating fruits. This helps plants grow in new areas, while the bears benefit from the food.

A commensal relationship involves one species benefiting while the other is not affected. Ravens often follow bears as they hunt for food. When a bear catches prey or finds a carcass, the ravens may eat leftover scraps. The bear is not affected, but the ravens get an easy meal.

Parasitism occurs when one species benefits while harming the other. Ticks and fleas often attach to bears, feeding on their blood. This harms the bear by causing discomfort and possibly spreading diseases.

Bears also play a key role in the ecosystem by influencing other species. For example, when bears dig up the ground for food, they help mix nutrients into the soil, which benefits plants. This interaction shows how important bears are to keeping their environment healthy.

Though bears do not often form close bonds with other animals, their interactions still have significant effects on the natural world.