

MOTHER BEAR AND HER BABIES



OF ALL the animals of the forest there is none that is more interesting or better liked than Mother Bear and her babies.

Baby bears are called cubs. When cubs are born they are about as long as a man's hand. Usually two baby bears are born at a time. They have no fur then. They sleep close to their mother and drink her warm milk. After while their fur grows, and Mother Bear takes them out of the den so they can walk and play; they become plump and fat.

Young bears like to play and romp just like school boys. They box each other, and wrestle with one another.

In appearance Mother Bear is a clumsy creature. She is naturally timid, good-natured, and inoffensive. But she is not a coward, and when it is necessary she will defend herself and her babies.

She has a short neck, round head, pointed nose, and small eyes.

Mother Bear and her babies have strong legs and walk flat-footed like a man. The soles of the feet are bare. Each foot has five toes which are armed with strong claws.

When bears walk they lift both feet on one side of the body at the same time. In fighting they frequently stand erect and use the forepaws as well as the teeth. Bears are good swimmers, and most kinds climb trees.

They eat berries, grubs, insects, roots, fish, mice, eggs, birds, and grain. They are very fond of honey, too, and will travel many miles to get it.

A bear can be tamed and taught to do tricks.

Did you ever see a tame bear?