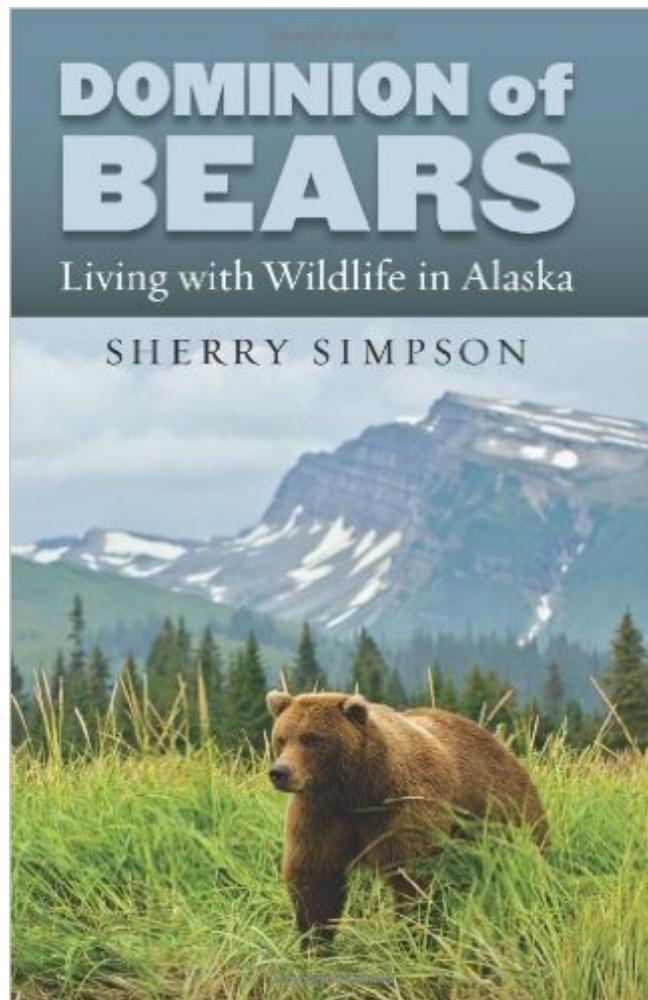


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Dominion Of Bears: Living With Wildlife In Alaska



Synopsis

Long ago we invited bears into our stories, our dreams, our nightmares, our lives. We have always sought them out where they live, for their hides, their meat, their beauty, their knowingness. Human country and bear country exist side by side. As Sherry Simpson suggests, the relationship between bears and humans is ancient and ongoing and, in Alaska, profoundly and often uncomfortably close. A huge number of North America's bears live in Alaska: including at least 31,000 brown bears, 100,000 black bears, and 3,500 polar bears. And nearly every aspect of Alaskan society reflects their presence, from hunting to tourism marketing to wildlife management to urban planning. A long-time Alaskan, Simpson offers a series of compelling essays on Alaskan bears in both wild and urban spaces "because in Alaska, bears are found not only in their natural habitat but also in cities and towns. Combining field research, interviews, and a host of up-to-date scientific sources, her finely polished prose conveys a wealth of information and insight on ursine biology, behavior, feeding, mating, social structure, and much more. Simpson crisscrosses the Alaskan landscape in pursuit of bears as she muses, marvels, and often stands in sheer awe before these charismatic creatures. Firmly grounded in the expertise of wildlife biologists, hunters, and viewing guides, she shows bears as they actually are, not as we imagine them to be. She considers not only the occasionally aggressive behavior bears need to survive, but also the violence exacted upon them by trophy hunters, advocates of predator control, or suburbanites who view bears as land sharks that threaten the safety of their families. Shifting effortlessly between fascinating facts and poetic imagery, Simpson crafts an extended meditation on why we are so drawn to bears and why they continue to engage our imaginations, populate indigenous mythologies, and help define our essential visions of wilderness. As Simpson observes, "The slightest evidence that bears share your world" or that you share theirs "can alter not only your sense of the landscape, but your sense of yourself within that landscape."

Book Information

Hardcover: 440 pages

Publisher: University Press of Kansas (October 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0700619356

ISBN-13: 978-0700619351

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.5 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds ([View shipping rates and policies](#))

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars  See all reviews  (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #315,025 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #35 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Bears #87 in Books > History > Arctic & Antarctica #153 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Nature Travel > Ecotourism

Customer Reviews

First let me say, by way of my credentials, that I have lived in Alaska for forty years and have had thousands of encounters with bears. Sherry Simpson's descriptions and stories are accurate, informative, and a pleasure to read. She captures the essence of our most iconic symbol of wilderness, and does it in a way that makes the reader appreciate the bears and all that they represent. This should be high on the list of anyone who cares about wildlife, wilderness, or Alaska.

It is very well researched, understandable for the non-scientific person, and presents the information in a clear, yet compassionate manner. There are obviously many differing opinions, both in and out of Alaska, on the role of wildlife in the modern world but she does an outstanding job of presenting those viewpoints. Highly recommend for the those interested in the future of bears both in and out of Alaska, even if I am the author's mother. LindylouUPDATE: Sherry Simpson has been awarded the 2015 John Burroughs Medal "to honor the best in nature writing" which will be presented at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City in April.

As I ran along the road this morning, I hop-skipped over what looked like bear scat. Pretty sure it was. But I didn't stop to examine the pile more closely. I know that black bears wend and weave their way through my neighborhood, which is only a mile or so from the three-million-acre Gila National Forest, which is their neighborhood. I often enough see bear prints on the trails where I am running, or down by the Gila River, or in the untamed area behind my house, even though I have only seen an actual wild bear a few times in my life. I suspect they have seen me much more regularly. But running on, I did think of Sherry Simpson's Dominion of Bears, which is very comprehensive and fun. You can't help but feel hot flashes of envy toward this author since writing this book gave her permission and excuse to go out and actively seek bear-viewing opportunities—game reserves and bear-watching stations mostly in Alaska where the interaction between bears and humans is carefully mediated. She saw plenty of bears! Black bears, grizzly bears, polar bears! Lucky woman! Lucky reader. Because she writes about them with wonderful detail in this award-winning book—recipient of the 2015 John Burroughs Medal for Distinguished

Nature Writing.

This book is outstanding. I have even resorted to making notes as I go along. She mentions other books etc that I could never remember without writing it down. Although there is a massive section in the back with notes.. One of the men at Katmai National Park referred this book to several of us online. Anyone that's really into bears, this is the "go to" book for everything. In the back there's a huge section of "notes". That will keep me busy for a long time. Then there's a Bibliography with tons of info. Then there's an Index. There's 16-17 pages of GOOD quality photos. I usually buy Kindle but not this time. This is one I wanted to hold. (-; Enjoy!

Sherry has a way of bringing the reader into the places and experiences she writes about. Coupled with some humor, this book is a must read to anyone who has a desire to live in and save Alaska.

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