



BEARS

ARGYLE

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THE MIGHTY GRIZZLIES *of the* WEST



JULIE ARGYLE

\$50.00 U.S.

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THE NORTH AMERICAN BROWN BEAR, most often referred to as the grizzly, is an iconic symbol of power and strength. Primarily found in the Western United States and Canada, the still-endangered bruin has made strides into a tenuous sustainability. Julie Argyle explores their behavior, their family dynamics, and what it means to be a grizzly in the wilderness of the greater Yellowstone area through her stunning photography. She also includes her personal observations about individual bears: Raspberry, Snow, the Obsidian Sow, Snaggletooth, and the famous boar 791.

The strikingly beautiful images and the information and stories woven throughout the pages of *Bears: The Mighty Grizzlies of the West* showcase this beautiful, smart, and incredible species that still requires our protection so its future is ensured for generations, ours and the bears, to come.



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A BEAR *Called* RASPBERRY

IN 2007 ONE OF MY FAVORITE YELLOWSTONE GRIZZLIES WAS BORN. This grizzly is known as Raspberry, and she and her two siblings were born to a sow named Blaze. As far as Yellowstone grizzlies go, Blaze was a well-known bear, and a favorite to many.

Shortly after appearing out of the den, Blaze and her three COY (cubs-of-the-year) set out on a journey and headed toward Mary Bay. Unfortunately, not long after reaching the bay, one of the three cubs disappeared, leaving Raspberry with only one sibling. This sibling eventually became known as White Claws. Raspberry and White Claws grew up around Yellowstone Lake, and you could often find them alongside their mom in the areas of Mary Bay and Steamboat Point.

In an effort to protect their cubs, grizzly sows will often stay in a location close to the road. This is because the big male bears generally don't like the road, nor do they like the crowds of people. Most of the time the bears stay in the back country until it is mating season and then they venture out in search of a mate.

Blaze took good care of her cubs. They stayed in the lake area most of the time, and many park visitors were able to watch as Raspberry and White Claws grew into their teenage years.

By 2009 it was time for Blaze to mate once again. So, after being with their mother for two and a half years, Raspberry and White Claws were basically kicked out the door and sent into the world to start a life on their own. Even though the area around the lake was officially Blaze's territory, the two could still be seen there on a regular basis.

ALONG *Came* SNOW

ON A SPRING DAY IN JUNE OF 2015, the cutest little blonde grizzly cub made its way down a mountain in Yellowstone. This cub was accompanied by its mom, Raspberry, and one sibling. At that time, no one knew this little blonde bear would become one of the most loved, and most photographed, bears of its time.

The light coloring of this cub was very unique, and while park officials shy away from naming bears, because of the coloring, this cub was given the name Snow. I'm not sure whether it was a photographer or a visitor who came up with the name, but it fit perfectly.

Just like all young grizzlies, this little one was mischievous, playful, and full of trouble. After its sibling, who had been called Rocky, disappeared, Raspberry became its new best friend. Grizzly sows are very protective of their cubs and they are on high alert watching for danger at all times. Because of this, it's not very often that you will see them playing with their cubs. Raspberry, however, was different. She loved to play, and no one played with their cub the way that she did.

These two would spend hours playing together. They would wrestle and roll, bite, full out swat each other, climb over logs, and Raspberry would even grab Snow by the rear, with her teeth, and toss her in the long grass. This was all in the name of fun. Shortly after playtime was over, Raspberry would lie on her back, Snow would nurse, and the two would then snuggle in close for a nap.

Given the area they were in, you could often find them near Lake Butte Overlook, and watch as they scratched on their favorite rock or on the visitor sign that is located there. At times they would even wrestle on the concrete, giving the people who happened to be there an incredible show.





Cub survival rate is estimated based from the period when bears emerge from dens in the spring to the when the last cub observation happens prior families denning up for winter. Cub survival was sixty-four percent from 1983 to 2001, and decreased to fifty-five percent from 2002 to 2011. Yearling survival during the same time periods decreased from eighty-two percent to fifty-four percent.





JULIE ARGYLE is a professional photographer who has spent forty years observing and photographing grizzly bears, along with other wildlife, within the Rocky Mountain West. Her photography business, Wild Love Images, has grown to capture the lives and stories of much of the wildlife in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Argyle is an active voice for the preservation and protection of wildlife, particularly bears, wolves, and wild horses. She lives near Ogden, UT.

It would be fitting, I think, if among the last man-made tracks on earth would be found the huge footprints of the great brown bear.

—*Earl Fleming*