

The Truth about Bears

Biologist who befriended animals for BBC film insists they are misunderstood

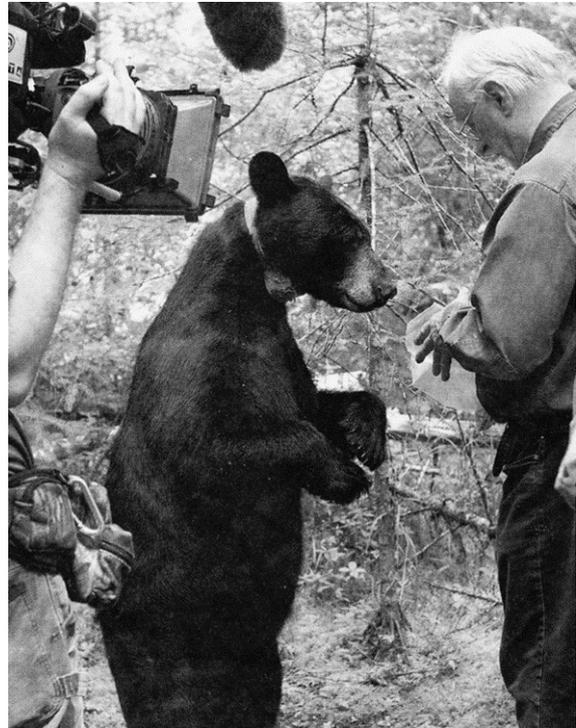
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(1) Wildlife biologist Lynn Rogers had logged thousands of hours observing North America's black bears. He had shot them with tranquilizers before fitting them with ear tags or radio collars. He had drawn their blood and mapped their DNA. And he had tracked their movements with pins on maps. None of that had allowed him to really know the creatures. When he did get close to a bear in the wild the animal was usually terrified, caught in a trap in the woods.

(2) Rogers realised he had to win their trust. So he abandoned scientific detachment and took the daring and controversial step of forming relationships with his study animals, using food to gain acceptance among an extended bear family in Minnesota. Gaining such trust has given him an insight into their behaviour and social organisation as well as allowing him to explode myths about them.

(3) The relationship between Rogers and his research subjects is explored in a BBC film, *Bearwalker of the Northwoods*. The film opens with Rogers – who is 70 – hiking through the woods of north-east Minnesota. Rogers approaches a mother bear and her cubs slowly and deliberately. "It's me, bear, it's me," he calls out. The adult female he calls Juliet slaps a few times at the opening of the mud and wood den. Rogers is not



alarmed. "She is not a mean bear. She is just a nervous bear, but she will calm down," he tells the camera. Within moments, it looks as if Juliet is about to nod off to sleep.

(4) Rogers has abandoned just about everything he knew about bears. Contrary to popular belief they do not like honey, and they are not ferocious. Rogers is determined about that. He has never heard a bear roar or growl, and he has never been seriously hurt, even though in his early years he displayed what he calls 'bad bear manners'.

(5) Actually, the bears he knows are timid. Defensive postures, such as slapping paws on the ground, are mistaken for aggression. "In my 42 years of working closely with bears

and testing every no-no, I have not found a way of getting a bear to attack. The more I push them the more they try to get away.”

(6) It's humans who are the more dangerous animal, he said. “If you look at the statistics, one black bear out of a million kills somebody. With grizzly bears it's one in 50,000. Among humans it's one person out of 18,000 who kills somebody.”

(7) Rogers's methods make him controversial with fellow researchers and he does not have a significant publishing record in academic journals. Tim Ginnett, an American university professor, said feeding the animals runs the risk of changing the behaviour you want to study. “We want to understand how they behave

and operate in a natural ecosystem, and feeding them – to my way of thinking – kind of disrupts that so it's not an approach we use,” he said.

(8) Rogers is no sentimentalist. Even after devoting 40 years of his life to the black bear of Minnesota, he is under no illusion that his interest is felt in return. Even his favourite bear, June, does not really like him, he said. “If she had feelings I think she would want to seek company like a dog does its master's,” he said, “but she doesn't think of me in those terms. I'm just the guy that brings her a treat once in a while and she can ignore ... that makes her so valuable to science.”

The Guardian, 2009

Tekst 6

- 1p 12 Which of the following about Rogers is true according to paragraph 1?
- A He became interested in live bears after he had first examined dead ones.
 - B He failed to understand bears despite spending time and effort on them.
 - C He felt he was better at studying bears in the wild than in a laboratory.
 - D He objected against scientifically accepted tests which traumatise bears.
- 1p 13 “to explode myths about them” (alinea 2)
→ In welke alinea worden deze misverstanden over beren verder uitgewerkt?
Noteer het nummer van deze alinea in de uitwerkbijlage.
- 1p 14 What is the main purpose of paragraph 3?
- A to explain what mistakes Rogers makes when dealing with bears
 - B to give a description of the contact between Rogers and the bears
 - C to make clear that the bears Rogers works with are not at all dangerous
 - D to show the dangers of making *Bearwalker of the Northwoods*
- 1p 15 How does paragraph 6 connect to paragraph 5?
- A It highlights what is said in paragraph 5.
 - B It supports what is said in paragraph 5.
 - C It undermines what is said in paragraph 5.
- 2p 16 Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze wel of niet overeenkomt met de inhoud van alinea 7 en 8.
Omcirkel achter elk nummer ‘wel’ of ‘niet’ in de uitwerkbijlage.
- 1 In de academische wereld is Rogers bekend om zijn wetenschappelijke publicaties.
 - 2 Andere wetenschappers vinden dat Rogers het gedrag van beren niet goed kan bestuderen door de manier waarop hij met ze omgaat.
 - 3 Collega-wetenschappers snappen niet hoe het Rogers lukt om dichtbij de beren te komen.
 - 4 Rogers gaat met June om alsof ze één van zijn huisdieren is.

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.