

A Year in the Life of a Black Bear in Algonquin Provincial Park

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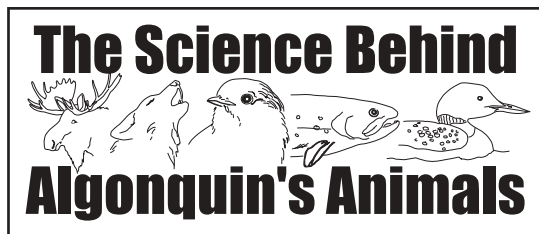
It is early April in Ontario's Algonquin Provincial Park. There is still a bit of snow on the ground but the warmer days of spring have arrived. Under the root system of an old, dead tree, sheltered from the weather, Bart the Black Bear is awakening from his long winter sleep. Bart entered his sheltered den late last October, and has been sleeping away Algonquin's long, cold winter as he has done for the past nine years of his life.

But now the days are warmer, spring has arrived and Bart is very hungry, and it is time for him to wake up. Emerging from his den, Bart begins to look for food. There is not much around, just a few plants poking through the melting snow.

After wandering a short distance from his den, Bart finds an open area where the melting snow has revealed some emerging spring grass. Being an omnivore Bart begins to feed on the grass for the next several days.

While wandering around his territory Bart comes across a slow moving stream. He remembers coming across a stream last year and remembers all the fat, juicy White Suckers swimming in the





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cold, clear water. These tasty fish kept him fed for several days. If he is lucky maybe he will find more of these yummy fish. Searching the stream for a while, Bart finally finds what he is looking for. Reaching into the water Bart tries to scoop up one of the fish but misses. He is a little out of practice after his long winter nap, but after a few more tries Bart has a good meal of fish on the shore.

As the weeks go by the weather becomes warmer and spring turns into summer. Insects begin to appear, and blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and juneberries start to ripen. For the rest of the spring and summer Bart eats lots of berries, and insects, grubs, and salamanders which he finds by tearing open rotting logs and stumps.

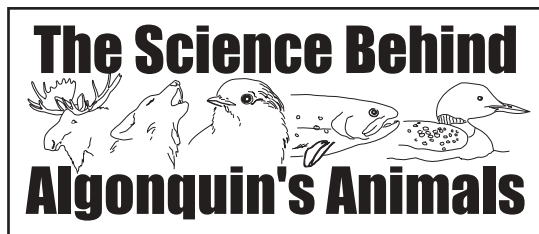
One day in June, while wandering through the forest, Bart came across a big Moose. The Moose is too big, strong and fast for Bart to try and catch so he decides to keep going. Just as he is about to leave Bart notices that the big Moose has a baby Moose with it. Now this is something that Bart could catch. Moving



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slowly through the forest Bart crept up to the Moose calf. When he was close enough he jumped out of the bush and ran at the calf. Just as he was almost at the calf the big mother Moose stepped in front of him and began to kick wildly with her front legs. Bart had to be careful of those strong legs as he had been kicked once before by a Moose and it really hurt him. Not wanting to get kicked again Bart decides to leave and look for something to eat elsewhere.

Pretty soon the days started to become cooler, and the leaves on the trees had started to change colour. Most of the berries had gone but there were lots of acorns and beech nuts high up in the trees. Bart was a good climber so it was not a problem for him to climb up the trees. For many days Bart would sit in the crook of a beech tree and pull the branches towards him to get at the tasty beech nuts. Bart knew he would have to eat a lot of beech nuts and acorns to help make him nice and fat for his long winter sleep.

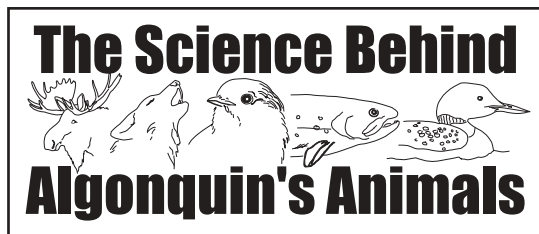
Soon the days became colder, and the leaves began to fall off the trees. Bart began to feel tired and knew it was almost time to go



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to sleep for the winter. He began looking for a place that would make a good den. After wandering for a bit Bart came across a leaning old tree. Some of the roots were showing but there was not enough room underneath for him to fit. Using his strong paws Bart began to dig out a den under the roots. In no time he had a den big enough where he could comfortable sleep away the cold winter months. All fattened up from a spring of eating fish, a summer of berries, and a fall of nuts, Bart was ready for his winter sleep. As he slept his heart beat slower, his body temperature dropped a bit, and he did not go to the bathroom, and yet he was not cold because his body had enough fat to keep him warm.

Outside the ground was covered with snow and the lakes and rivers were frozen. Although he might wake up from time-to-time, mostly Bart would sleep in his warm den until the snow melted in the spring.



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