



Honey (1996-2016)

Honey was the older of the two female bears at the NABC, she was a cinnamon-phase black bear. She turned 20 in 2016. She stood out from her two black brothers by having a rich cinnamon coat. This suggests that her heritage might have been from one of the western states where cinnamon-phase black bears are common.

Honey's cautiousness and personality endeared her to almost everyone. She preferred to be alone and was content with herself. She approached caretakers with gentle grunts of acceptance and provides them with a different look into bear personality.

Honey arrived at the North American Bear Center on May 1st, 2007, along with Ted, with whom she had grown up. Both Ted and Honey had lived with a family in Wisconsin for many years.

While Ted was in the Bear Center pond within days of their arrival, it was two weeks before Honey decided to go for a swim. However, once she 'took the plunge' she obviously enjoyed it.

Once they learned to read Honey's body language, the caretakers began to understand and appreciate her very special personality. By learning to read her eyes, they understood her limits and worked within them. She responded to soft voices and eventually to gentle touches. She was a very special bear who provided a wonderful opportunity to better understand bear behavior.

When Honey shed her winter coat over the summer, her old lighter sun-bleached

hair hangs in dreadlocks. Once she finished shedding she had a beautiful coat of shiny dark brown fur. Honey often spent the cooler days and shorter daylight hours of fall in a sunny spot in the open instead of in the woods.

Her owner told us that Honey fights going into hibernation, and that has certainly been found to be true. She was usually the last of the bears to go into a den.

We saw many of the same behaviors in Honey and Ted during the mating season that is seen among the wild study bears. She spent time marking trees and seemed flirtatious. Ted was obviously interested in her but she often ran from him. We have never seen either of them mate.

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