



Ted

Ted is gentle and trusting to his human caretakers. The years of playfulness with his playmate Lucky changed in 2012 when Lucky matured and became competition.

Ted's pleasant vocalizations assures us that he is trusting of his caretakers, but he reacts to Lucky as wild males would react to one another when a female is present during mating season.

Ted enjoys resting on the logs in front of the viewing area windows and continues to vocalize with warm grunts as his caretakers approach him. Ted enjoys daily swims in the pond as well as showers in his private enclosure. Ted also enjoys watching people on the observation deck. It is not uncommon for him to make pleasant grunts toward people on the deck. One of Ted's favorite supplemental foods is red grapes.

He has developed arthritis over the years and is under the constant care of his veterinarians, caretaker team and Dr. Rogers.

Ted and Honey (now deceased, 2016) were raised together for about ten years in captivity in Wisconsin. Ted was born in January 1997, the smallest of three cubs. He is black most of the year but bleaches to dark brown in mid-summer when he begins shedding.

After a decade of caring for Ted and Honey, their owners were faced with new insurance rules that prevented them from keeping the bears any longer. They asked the North American Bear Center to give their beloved bears a home, and they arrived at the center in April 2007, just prior to its opening in May 2007.

You can watch Ted in his chalet den when he is not out and about in the main enclosure. [Click here](#). *When I first met Teddy he made sweet grunts and tongue-clicks, I knew his intentions were friendly and gentle. Bears are not deceitful, so I trusted him. I'm not sure why we bonded so quickly, but Teddy is the first bear I ever met that preferred human contact over food.*

Teddy is a sweetheart without a nervous bone in his body. He obviously likes people, which is a tribute to the people who raised him. A memory I will always carry of Ted is the first time I trusted him to do whatever he wanted with me. He stood up, put both paws on my shoulders and pulled me to him. He licked my face, then went to gently biting it, especially my beard. He opened his mouth wide, practically engulfing my head ever so gently. Finally, he snuggled his big head against the side of my neck and just held it there as his claws clasped my arms and shoulders. Too human. I wondered if he was feeling the need for closeness that people feel. He sure seemed to.

Touch is a universal language. And Ted backs that up every time I see him by making the same contact sounds I have learned to trust and by coming up and being gentle, which is pretty amazing for the largest bear in Minnesota.

I've hesitated to let visitors see his gentle affectionate behavior for fear people will say I'm sending the wrong message, but on the other hand it is a powerful message about an aspect of bear behavior that is overlooked. Many people think it is okay to demonize bears to teach fear but wrong to tell the truth—to let people know that not all bears are killers. Practically no one dares to attribute a need for closeness to bears, but under circumstances of being raised with love, a need for closeness might be understandable. To me, it seems right to tell the truth about bears—they can be dangerous and they can be gentle.

The Bear Center bears have become great ambassadors for teaching the truth about bears. People initially come to see gentle Ted and beautiful Honey, and then learn a whole lot more about bears from the wild bear video exhibits here than they ever anticipated. The lives of these bears will change attitudes and save

the lives of countless wild bears, and the enclosure will be a model for improving the lives of captive bears around the world.

Written by: Lynn Rogers, PhD

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