



Bears

There are now known to be eight species of bears, but in the days of Linnaeus, it was supposed there was only one kind of Bear in existence - the common Brown bear of Europe. It is true that Linnaeus before his death had heard of the great Polar bear, but he had never seen one, and was not certain of its being a distinct species. Not only has the Polar bear proved to be a very different animal from the brown bear, but other species have turned up in remote quarters of the globe, differing not only in size, shape, and color, but also in many more essential characteristics. Bears have been found in North America, and others in South America; some in Asia, and still others in the islands of the Indian Archipelago; as entirely unlike the brown bear of Europe, as they are to one another. Generally speaking, bears are large animals. They have a plantigrade walk, meaning they walk on their heels, like humans; they have a large body, short legs, a stub of a tail, small, round ears, and forward facing eyes. Though bears are classified as carnivores, they all eat plants to some degree, and the panda eats plants almost exclusively. The polar bear, on the other hand, is almost entirely a carnivore.

Adapted from *Quadrupeds, What They Are and Where Found, A Book of Zoology for Boys* by Mayne Reid

Describe the relationship of the different species of bears. How are they alike? How are they different?



DID YOU KNOW: Carolus Linnaeus is one of the fathers of natural science as we understand it today. Linnaeus created the formal two-part naming system we use to classify all lifeforms, for example, *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Homo sapiens*. In the 1700s, when Linnaeus lived, people believed that humans were different from animals and should be classified in a special way. But Linnaeus expanded the boundaries of science in his own time by describing and classifying the human species the same way that he classified other lifeforms.