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Life Science

Science

Science

Florida Everglades: Its Plants & Animals

by Patricia West



Genre	Comprehension Skills and Strategy	Text Features
Expository nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sequence• Draw Conclusions• Summarize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captions• Labels• Heads• Glossary

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Vocabulary

grand

memorial

peculiar

positive

prideful

recall

select

Word count: 670

Note: The total word count includes words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in chapter titles, captions, labels, diagrams, charts, graphs, sidebars, and extra features are not included.

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Scientists call the black bear *Ursus americanus*, which means “bear of America.” There are different kinds of black bears. One of them is *Ursus americanus floridanus*. In which place would you expect the black bear to live?

This setting?



Or this one?



Actually, the black bear lives in both places. It can be found in the northern states of the U.S., such as Minnesota, as well as in southern states, such as Florida. Florida is home to many plants and animals.

Black bear cub



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Bear Facts: *Ursus americanus floridanus*

A Florida black bear can weigh from 150 to 600 pounds. It has black fur and a brown muzzle, or nose area. Sometimes it has a white band of fur on its chest. Its tail is short. It has short, curved claws. It lives in many parts of Florida. This bear likes to live in many kinds of forests. The area which the bear roams is called its home range. It can be more than sixty square miles.

Black bears have short, curved claws.



Bear Trouble

Black bears can be dangerous to humans who are too **prideful** or curious to leave them alone. People are warned not to approach bears. They should not leave food where bears can find it.

The biggest danger to a black bear is a highway. The animal may **recall** a good place for food and water, and then try to cross highways to get to it. Each year more than fifty bears are killed on Florida roads. Maybe some day a **memorial** sign will honor all these unlucky bears.



Bear Food

Black bears are *omnivorous*. Omnivorous means that they eat both meat and plants. A special mealtime treat for the bear is the armadillo. This **peculiar** animal has a shell made of bone that covers its back.

Bears also gobble up termites and carpenter ants. They **select** the tastiest berries, acorns, and fruit. Maybe you have already guessed that bears love to eat sweet, sticky honey too!

Black bears like to eat many different things.



Some of the Black Bear's Animal Neighbors

The black bears that live in or near Everglades National Park in Florida have lots of neighbors. More than forty kinds of animals live here. One **grand** neighbor is the alligator. The largest alligator ever found in Florida measured more than seventeen feet long.

Stay at least fifteen feet away from this reptile for your own safety.

A hungry alligator can chase its prey on land. It can run on its toes with most of its tail off the ground. An alligator can run thirty miles an hour for a short distance.

Alligators live in the wetlands of the Everglades National Park.



GATOR XING
NEXT 1/2 MILE



Some Florida Birds

Florida has many kinds of birds. In 1927 Florida decided to make the mockingbird its official state bird. The mockingbird got its name because it can mock, or copy, the songs of other birds.

Florida's state bird:
the mockingbird



Flamingos

Florida's beautiful birds include pink flamingos, egrets, and roseate spoonbills. Many of these birds, especially the egrets, were killed for their feathers. The feathers were used to decorate hats. Now the egret is protected.



Roseate spoonbill



Egret

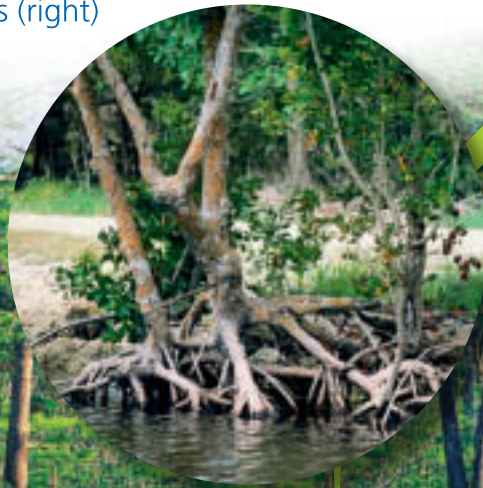
Some of the Black Bear's Plant Neighbors

Florida has some unique trees. The mangrove tree of Florida can grow in salt water. Its roots help keep mud and sand from being washed away by the tide.

The cypress tree grows along the edges of rivers and wetlands. Around a cypress tree are brown stump points that look something like knees. Scientists are not **positive** what these "knees" do, but they may help the tree get oxygen.

More than four thousand types of plants and flowers grow in Florida. The names of the flowers are beautiful and fun to say: hibiscus, bougainvillea, and bird of paradise.

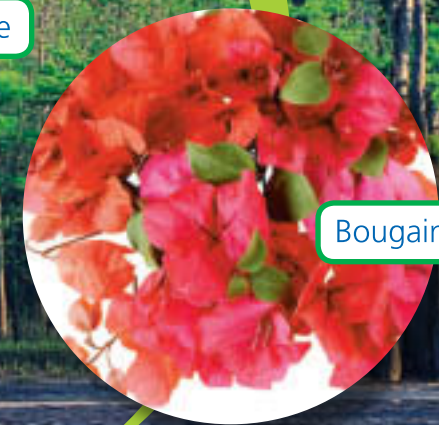
Cypress trees (below) and mangrove trees (right)



Hibiscus



Bird of paradise



Bougainvillea

Animals and Plants Together

There are many other animals and plants that live in the Florida Everglades. Fourteen different kinds of endangered animals make their homes in this habitat. Many animals and plants have almost become extinct. Luckily, the Everglades is now a protected habitat.

One day you might visit the Everglades. Make sure to keep your eyes open if you do! You might just see some of the beautiful plants and animals talked about in this book!



Florida is home to many different animals and plants.

Glossary

grand *adj.* excellent; very good.

memorial *adj.* helping people remember some person, thing, or event.

peculiar *adj.* strange; odd; unusual.

positive *adj.* permitting no question; without doubt; sure.

prideful *adj.* haughty; having too high an opinion of oneself.

recall *v.* to call back to mind; remember.

select *v.* to pick out; choose.

Reader Response

1. Reread page 5. What can sometimes happen after a black bear recalls a good place to find food and water?
2. Reread page 12. Tell a partner a short summary about trees that grow in Florida.
3. Find the word *prideful* on page 5. Using a chart similar to the one below, write the word's suffix and the base word. Find other words in the selection to add to the chart.

Word	Suffix	Base Word
prideful		

4. If you were to visit the Everglades, which animal or plant featured in this book would you most like to see? Why?