

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE #83



Bear Scat

HYPERPHAGIA

In late summer to early fall, bears begin a season of hyperphagia (pronounced hi-per-fay-jee-uh). This is when bears are storing up fat to help them survive colder months when food will be hard to find. While bears don't truly hibernate ("denning" is the name for their winter nap), they do need to prepare for winter by eating up to 20,000 calories every day during this time of hyperphagia.



HAVE YOU EVER FOUND WILD ANIMAL SCAT?

Below are three piles of bear scat (poop) I recently found, along with where I spotted them, and what I believe they were eating.



ALPINE WILDERNESS

Twinberry honeysuckle



RIVER VALLEY

Chokecherries



BY MY MAILBOX

Neighbors Apple Tree

This time of year, my family often finds large piles of bear scat in the wilderness as well as around our neighborhood. Bears are very busy before winter, and their digestive systems are, too! The scat we find is often a deep purple or blue color and full of seeds from berries. Black bears eat up to 20,000 calories every day during hyperphagia, which can last a few weeks to a few months. They get most of those calories from plants, including berries. One pound of berries might only offer 200 to 300 hundred calories. That means a bear would need to eat around 80 pounds of berries each day! They can mix up their diet and get calories from nuts, insects, worms, and other creatures. But black bears often fill their bellies with berries.

The word hyperphagia means a hunger that does not go away, even when you eat a lot of food. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus said, "People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." God's Word, the Bible nourishes our souls.

In John 6:35 Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again." We can try to satisfy ourselves with many things, but we will be like a bear in hyperphagia, always looking for more. Only God's Word truly satisfies and fills us up with what we need: His truth, love, and goodness.