



## Chapter VI – Reading Informational Text

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### Passage A

#### Be Bear Aware

**Directions:** Read the passage and answer the multiple-choice questions and open-ended item that follows.

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**Introduction:** Native to New Jersey, black bears are the largest land mammals in the Garden State.

The black bear's prime habitat consists of mixed hardwood forests, dense swamps, and forested wetlands. Nearly **annihilated** a century ago by habitat destruction and indiscriminate killing, black bears today are thriving, particularly in the northwestern area of the state. Their range is expanding south and east, and black bears have been sighted in all of New Jersey's 21 counties.



#### **Black Bear Information**

- Black bears are beautiful animals.
- Bears have excellent senses of smell and hearing.
- Black bears eat both plants and animals. Their diet mostly consists of skunk cabbage, berries, wild cherries, acorns, and beechnuts. They also eat bees and other insects, small mammals, bird eggs, white-tailed fawns, and dead animals. Black bears are opportunistic feeders and will supplement their diet with food or garbage left out by people.
- Adult females average 185 pounds; adult males average 400 pounds.
- Black bears hibernate during the winter to avoid periods of severe weather and food shortages. Den sites include rock cavities, brush piles, open ground nests, and hollow trees. Bears do not eat, drink, urinate, or defecate while hibernating, but females can give birth and nurse their young while hibernating.
- Breeding season runs from late May until August, peaking in June and July. Cubs are born in January and weigh about eight ounces. Average litter size is three. Cubs remain with the female until she breeds again 16 months to 18 months later.