

## The Grizzly

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**Image:** *The Grizzly.*

Dusk is fast approaching, and we are winding down our day, now aboard the *Awen*, anchored just offshore from our home site. Ken sees something moving along the shore. This “something” resolves into a rather large, gangly-looking bear. We are not sure if it is a very large black bear or a small grizzly. As we debate, it disappears into the bush.

Next morning, shortly after dawn, the bear is back. It's a rather odd looking creature – long-legged, rather thin, with very short fur, making it appear almost nude. The bear is a dark brownish-black on the face and forequarters, but lightens to a cinnamon color past the shoulders. Clearly a male, the bear's short fur leaves little to guesswork. The bear ambles along the beach and heads up into the site that we have been clearing. We don't really want the bear hanging around while we are working, so Ken fires a bear banger over its head from our position on the *Awen*. The bear looks up and around, but otherwise continues to walk through our site. So much for bear bangers – I guess you need to be a lot closer to be effective. We wait an hour until we are sure the bear is gone before we head out to the site for the morning's work.

We still aren't really sure if the bear is a grizzly or a black. It has a small shoulder hump, but definitely more of a Roman nose than a dished nose. We finally decide that it is a smallish grizzly, possibly a two-year-old that isn't doing too well for itself yet. As I work on cutting back salmonberry and rose bush, I find a trail bashed through the bush with a pile of steaming bear scat. The contents of the pile tell me what the bear is interested in – salmonberries. Bears must consume huge quantities of berries at this time of year – their scat is full of barely digested seeds and remains of berries.

The bear returns again the next morning. By now, we are beginning to realize that these dawn and dusk forays are a part of the bear's regular patterns. We are clearly invading his territory. However, the bear remains shy, and though we occasionally spot him along the beach, we never actually have an "encounter". Seeing a grizzly on the property does make us very aware of the potential of unexpected meetings with bears, and it also reminds us that this land was theirs before we came. Clearly, we will need to invest in an electric bear fence if we want to have a garden!