

The Lowly Badger

When we look at the animals around us that God has created there are some that stand out because of size, some because of strength, some because of intelligence, and other because of beauty but for me an animal that stands out because of strength, beauty and courage is the badger.

Taxidea taxus, the North American badger is a member of the weasel family. The badger and its relative are inhabitants of grasslands, forest, and deserts in the northern hemisphere of the world. They live basically alone with each having its own territory. Their territories are very carefully marked and laid out using very potent chemical signals. Being a member of the same family as the skunk, the badger produces a musky scent.

The badger's sense of smell is very acute as well as its hearing. Its eyesight is very poor with just about the only sight being that they can see objects near by and movements near it. Eyesight is not always that important for the badger as they are active most often at dusk and night time.

The black and white stripe running from its nose to its shoulder make the badger a very easy animal to recognize. The hide is very tough with thick coarse hair covering them. The hide is very loose on the animal's body which allows it to be unharmed by a large predator getting hold of it with very sharp teeth. Their wedge shaped body and short, powerful front legs can move earth with amazing speed. If threatened, a badger can dig a hole and disappear to safety in as little as one minute when a predator attacks it. They are ferocious fighters and are usually more than a match for any animal, including bears.

Badgers eat frogs, rodents, birds, eggs, lizards, pocket gophers, ground squirrels, voles, grubs, mice, rabbits, reptiles, amphibians, insects, seeds, berries, and bulbs but earthworms are the favorite diet item. An adult badger can consume huge numbers of these each night as they might eat up to 200 worms. They hunt these animals by digging them out of underground burrows. Only those ground-burrowing animals with multiple exits ever escape the badger's dinner table. An apparent favorite is the rattlesnake. Venom from the bites of the rattlesnake is deposited underneath the loose fitting fur where it is far less deadly. Unconfirmed reports suggest that badgers are at least partially immune to the venom as well. Their diet differs seasonally and geographically with prey availability, but basically any animal which lives in the ground is at risk.

The reproduction in this species is quite interesting. Although mating occurs in early autumn, embryos are arrested early in development. Embryos are held in sort of a suspended animation until December to February, when they implant into the uterine wall and resume their development. Thus, although a female is technically pregnant for seven months, the embryos develop for a mere six weeks. Litters of one to five offspring are born in the early spring.

The word "badger" is found in the bible but only the skin of badgers is mentioned and even this is questionable whether it is the same animal. Exodus 26:14 and Numbers 4:6-25 speak of the covering for the tent of the tabernacle as being badger skins. The term badger skins is translated from the word tachash in Hebrew. However, no one really knows what the Hebrews meant by

this word. Other translations render it as “goatskins” in the Revised Standard version, “porpoise hide” in the New English Bible, or “hides of sea cows” in the New International Version. It is possible that this word did mean badgers as we know them. The coarse badger hair would certainly be a protective cushion between the fine fabrics in which the articles of worship were wrapped for travel. The King James Version translates the word as “badger skins” in Ezekiel 16:10, which refers to a foot covering. The Revised Standard Version translates “leather”. This information was found in the Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright ©) 1986

So in the holes and hollows of the ground we can see the amazing creative design ability displayed by God the Creator of the universe.