

# Living in Bear Country

This information is for brown or black bear country and suggested by Fish and Wildlife and National Park Services.

- Use bear-proof containers for your trash, or keep trash indoors until the pick up day.
- Keep garbage odors down, especially from fish and meat scraps.
- Don't leave pet food outside of your home.
- Keep your BBQ grills clean and odor free.
- Use enclosed composting devices.
- If you have fruit trees, pick up fallen fruit regularly.
- Keep pets indoors at night and securely fence in goats, chickens, etc.
- Install and electric fence.
- Encourage your neighbors to follow these steps.

## Hiking and Camping in Bear Country

Hiking and camping in bear country should not be a frightening experience. Learning to live with wildlife will help reduce your chance of conflict.

### HIKING:

- Stay alert to your surroundings and learn to identify bear signs.
- Travel in a group during daytime hours.
- Make yourself heard; talk loud, sing or whistle.
- Keep dogs on a leash.
- Avoid wearing strong perfumes.
- Purchase bear deterrent pepper spray and learn how to use it. Do not spray yourself, belongings or tent with the spray.

### CAMPING:

- Always keep a clean camp. Bears have an excellent sense of smell, so keep the camp odor-free.
- Set up your cooking area at least 100 feet downwind from your sleeping area.
- Do not eat in your tent or bring in odorous cosmetics, toothpaste, etc.
- Avoid cooking strong-smelling food items that could attract bear.
- Wash your hands and face well after a meal.
- Store food in bear-resistant containers or store in your vehicle trunk. Be aware that bears can open truck cabs. Don't bury garbage.
- You can also store your food in several layers of sealed plastic bags, and hang it at least 15 feet off the ground. Hang garbage and cooking utensils too.

# Encountering a Bear

- If you see a bear, remember to give it space. Observe it from a distance and do not try to approach the bear.
- Do not feed the bear.
- If you come too close to a bear, remain calm. Do not run. Identify yourself as a human by talking in a low voice, stand upwind so the bear can catch your scent and slowly start backing away.
- Do not make eye contact with the bear; it may feel challenged.
- A bear may snort, paw at the ground or make short charges to try to intimidate you. Hold your ground and do not run. Usually the bear leaves after this display.
- If a bear attacks, play dead and roll in a fetal position, clasp your hands behind your neck and tuck your head close to your knees. Remain still. Once the bear determines that you are not a threat to it, it will usually leave.
- Use bear pepper spray to stop an attack only if you know how to use the product.

**For more information on bears or to report a problem with bears, call:  
1-866-4USDAWS**

**Poaching Hotline:  
1-800-662-DEER**

Call is toll-free and can be confidential.

For more information about bears contact:  
**Utah's Hogle Zoo at 801-582-1631**  
or visit our web site at: [www.hoglezoo.org](http://www.hoglezoo.org)

# Living With Predators

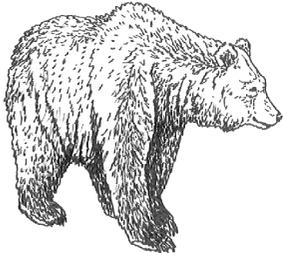


# Bears

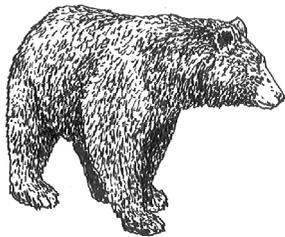
Brown, black and polar bears

# Can You Identify A Bear?

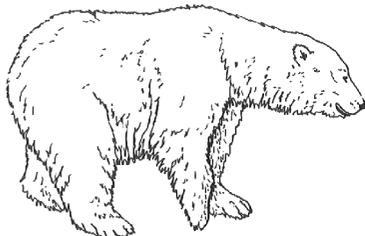
**Brown bear:** Their coats can be dark to blond in color. Males can weigh 300-900 pounds and females 200-500 pounds. They stand about 4½ feet tall at the shoulder. Brown bears have a distinctive hump between their shoulders. Like other bears, their claws are non-retractable and can be up to four inches long.



**American black bear:** Although called a black bear, their coats can be black, cinnamon brown or blond. Sometimes they have a white patch on their chests. Males can weigh 150-400 pounds, females 90-200 pounds. Black bears' muzzles are long and straight and are lighter brown or cream color. They are smaller than brown bears and lack a hump.



**Polar bears:** These bears are the largest bears found in North America. They are fully furred with white, waterproof coats. Their feet are partially webbed for swimming and have thick fur around their pads. Males can weigh 500-1200 pounds, females 350-700 pounds.



## Bear Facts

**Species:** There are three species of bear found in the United States and Canada. The brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) with subspecies including grizzly and Kodiak bear. There is the American black bear (*Ursus americanus*), with subspecies including the Florida black bear. And lastly, the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*).

**Range and Habitat:** Brown bears are found in Canada and Alaska, Europe, northern Asia. In the lower U.S., brown bears inhabit Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington in isolated populations and are considered *threatened* under the Endangered Species Act. American black bears are found in Canada, Mexico, Alaska and from California to New York. Some states list the black bear as *threatened* under the Endangered Species Act. Both brown and black bears can be found in forest, grasslands, mountains and Arctic tundra. Polar bears are found in Alaska, Canada, Russia, Greenland and the northern islands of Norway. They inhabit Arctic tundra plains, coastlines, islands and pack ice.

**Behavior:** Most bears are solitary animals, but will gather in groups in areas where there is an abundant food supply. Bears have their own territories and mark the boundaries by urinating, rubbing throat scent glands or scratching up tree trunks. All bears have long, non-retracting fore claws they use for digging or attacking prey. Black bears can also use them for climbing trees.

In the fall, bears eat more food to build up a layer of fat to sustain them during the lean winter months when food supplies are lower. When winter arrives bears will seek out a den in caves or dug in the ground. There they will sleep for several months but do not truly hibernate. If the days are warmer, the bear will leave the den briefly to find food. When an adult bear leaves the den for good in the spring, it may weigh less than half of its weight from the previous fall.

Polar bears will sometimes go into a 'winter lethargy.' Their metabolism slows but they continue to be active and hunt. Female polar bears will dig a den in the snow in the fall and remain there with her cubs until spring.

**Breeding:** Breeding takes place in the summer months, but female bears have delayed implantation of the fertilized egg and will usually not start gestation until the fall. Females give birth in the den. The cubs are only 12-24 ounces at birth and must remain in the den with their mother all winter. They nurse and grow while their mother sleeps.

In the spring, the cubs and their mother emerge from the den. Cubs stay with their mother for about two years before separating to find their own territories. During that time the mother bear is very protective of her young.

**Diet:** Brown and black bears have a very acute sense of smell but poor eyesight. They rely more on their nose to find food. These bears are omnivorous. Their diet varies, depending on what is the most abundant food source available. They will eat berries, fruit, grasses, insects such as ants and grubs, fish, deer, rodents, birds and carrion. Polar bears have excellent eyesight and hearing to locate prey. Polar bears are strict carnivores. Their main prey is seals, but they will also eat walrus pups, fish, birds, small mammals and carrion.

### Don't Create a Nuisance Bear!

Bears and humans compete for space and this creates conflict. In the U.S., hundreds of bears a year considered 'nuisances' are relocated or killed by wildlife officials. Many of these incidents could have been avoided if humans were more aware of how their behaviors affect bears.

When humans leave food or garbage outside around their home or camp, bears associate meals with human activities and become accustomed to food provided by people. The bears become nuisance bears when they continue to return to human dwellings to receive food. If a bear continues this behavior it may become a danger to humans and must be relocated or euthanized.

**Remember:** Never feed a bear!  
A fed bear may be a dead bear!