

Black Bear

Ursus americanus

Description

The American black bear is the smallest North American bear. Typically black with a tan muzzle and a white chest patch, they can also be cinnamon brown, silver-gray, or white in certain regions.

Black bears have small, rounded ears and one-inch claws. Unlike the brown or grizzly bear, they lack a shoulder hump. They stand about three feet tall at the shoulder and measure 4 to 6 feet from head to tail. Males are larger than females, weighing between 130 and 350 pounds, while females typically weigh between 90 to 175 pounds.

Breeding occurs in June-July, with females giving birth to 1 to 5 cubs in January or February. Cubs are born blind and hairless, and learn to find food and survive from spring to fall, before hibernation occurs. Though cubs are weaned at 6 to 8 months, they stay with their mother through winter, only dispersing the following spring to establish their territories.

FUN FACTS

- They can be found in forests, meadows, mountains, and even swamps.
- They stock up on carbohydrates, such as berries, during the summer season to bulk up.
- The black bear hibernates, seeking shelter in caves, under fallen tree roots, crevices, hollow trees or logs, or dens it digs out.
- During hibernation, bears will curl up in a ball with their head between their front paws.



If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at 403-214-1312, for tips, instructions and advice.