

Black Bear Facts



Black bears don't always live up to their name; their color can vary from white to black and every shade of brown.

Although they're carnivores, meat makes up less than 10 percent of a typical black bear's diet, and much of that is from scavenged carcasses and insects; the rest of

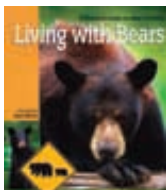
its diet is typically nuts, berries, grasses and other plants.

Black bears are not true hibernators. In colder climates, black bears sleep in dens through much of the winter because of a decreased food supply, but those that live in warm climates skip the winter napping.

Black bears live 25 years or more in the wild.

A typical female black bear weighs 120–250 pounds; a typical male is 180–300 pounds. The largest male on record weighed 880 pounds.

Black bears are extremely adaptable, occupying a greater range of habitats than any bear in the world. In the US, they can be found in 41 states.



Want to learn more?

This brochure was adapted from the book *Living with Bears* by Linda Masterson, © 2006.

Who to Call If You Meet a Bear

If you encounter a bear in a residential area or if you have an encounter with an aggressive bear, please alert the Division of Wildlife Resources.

During regular office hours (8 am–5 pm, Monday–Friday), please call the office closest to you (offices and numbers are listed below). A division employee will notify a conservation officer of your encounter or transfer you directly to law enforcement personnel. If the encounter or sighting occurs after hours or on the weekend, please call the police, who can contact a conservation officer to handle the situation.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Regional Offices

Northern Region
515 East 5300 South
Ogden, UT 84405
(801) 476-2740

Central Region
1115 North Main
Springville, UT 84663
(801) 491-5678

Northeastern Region
152 East 100 North
Vernal, UT 84078
(435) 781-9453

Southeastern Region
475 West Price River Drive
Price, UT 84501
(435) 636-0260

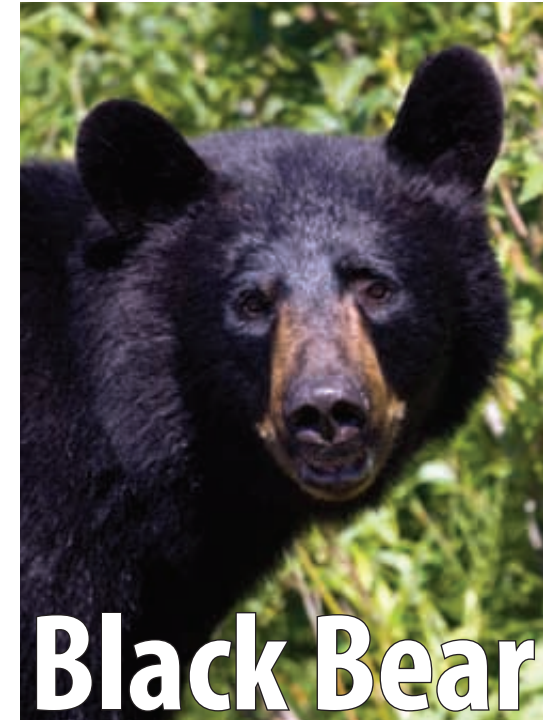
Southern Region
1470 North Airport Road
Cedar City, UT 84720
(435) 865-6100

Salt Lake Office
1594 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84114
(801) 538-4700

wildlife.utah.gov

Cover photo by Suzann Julien

LIVING IN



Black Bear COUNTRY

Safety Tips for Living with Bears





Photo by Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Keeping Your Property Safe

The best way to prevent bear conflicts around your home is to make your home as uninteresting and unfriendly to bears as possible.

Avoid Trash Trouble—Store trash in a secure location or in a bear-resistant container; put your trash out for pick-up in the morning, not the night before; clean your trash container regularly.

Use Deterrents—The following tactics can help keep bears away from areas you don't want them to be: bear unwelcome mats (wood planks with nails or screws protruding) in front of doors or windows; motion-activated lights or noisemakers; barking dogs; garden hoses or sprinklers; bear spray; pine sol or ammonia; radios.

If a Bear Is in Your Yard—Be sure the bear is not cornered and has an obvious escape route, then assertively look at the bear, make loud noises, and, if necessary, spray the bear with water from a garden hose or use bear spray from a safe distance.

Safe Recreation

Camping—Keep a very clean camp; stash your food and trash; wipe down picnic tables; burn food off stoves or grills; avoid scented toiletries; don't put anything in your tent that could attract bears; always sleep inside your tent.

Hiking—Hike at mid day when bears are less active; hike in groups; make noise as you travel; double-bag food, trash and other products with odors (such as sunscreen) in zippered plastic bags; stay away from animal carcasses; leave your dog at home; keep kids in the center of the group.

Cars and Campers—Like campsites, cars and campers should be kept clean; clean out the car every night, lock doors and close windows when away; secure food, trash, coolers, pet foods and other items likely to attract bears.



Photo by Larry Dalton and Linda Romin

The average black bear is significantly smarter than a German shepherd, widely regarded as the smartest dog.

What to Do If You Encounter a Black Bear

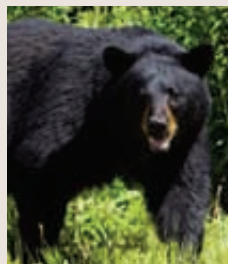


Photo by Suzann Julien

Black bears are shy and usually avoid contact with people, but encounters in the woods or other bear territory are possible. Remember these tips if you encounter a black bear in its territory:

Don't play dead. Instead, stand still, stay calm, and talk to the bear in a normal, calm voice. Avoid direct eye contact, as the bear may consider eye contact hostile.

Don't climb a tree. Bears are excellent climbers, and you don't want to face the bear in the tree.

Don't run. Bears can run up to 35 mph; you can't outrun it. Back away from the bear, but don't turn your back.

Know bear behavior. If a bear stands up, grunts, woofs, moans or makes other sounds, it's not being aggressive. These are ways a bear gets a better look or smell, and expresses its concern about the situation.

Use bear spray if you have it. Be sure to remove the safety cover and point it toward the bear.

If the bear does attack, fight back. People have successfully defended themselves with whatever is handy, including rocks, sticks, backpacks, water bottles and their hands and feet.