



Bears in Mind - Fund for bears  
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### Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*)



The Malayan sun bear is found primarily in south-east Asia and its habitat extends to Borneo, Java, Malaysia, Sumatra, Thailand and Myanmar (formerly Burma).

#### Origin

The Malayan sun bear used to be placed in a separate genus, however nowadays they are included in the subfamily *Ursus* (real bears).

#### Habitat

The Malayan sun bear lives in forested areas like tropical rainforests.

#### Appearance

The Malayan sun bear is the smallest of the great bears. They have a somewhat dog-like, relatively small and flat head with a short, cream-coloured snout. They have an extremely long tongue. On the chest they have a yellow-cream coloured crescent-shaped mark. The short, sleek fur is black and the ears are small and round. They have large paws with long, sharp claws which are easily the longest of all bear species (around 10 cm). The skin around their head and neck is very loose, which helps them to defend themselves against attacks by other predators.

<p><b>Size</b>            90 - 150 cm length            70 cm height</p>	<p><b>Weight</b>            30 – 50 kg.</p>	<p><b>Lifespan</b>            Unknown            Estimate: 20 – 25 years</p>
<p><b>Sexual maturity</b>            Female: 3 years</p>	<p><b>Mating season</b>            All year            Period: 2 – 7 days</p>	<p><b>Gestation period</b>            Around 100 days</p>
<p><b>Number of litters</b>            Around 1 x per 3 years</p>	<p><b>Number of cubs</b>            1 to 3</p>	<p><b>Weight at birth</b>            About 300 grams</p>
<p><b>Lactation period</b>            Approximately 1 year</p>		

Bears in Mind is door de Belastingdienst aangemerkt als algemeen nut beogende instelling. Dit maakt uw giften aan Bears in Mind aftrekbaar voor de inkomstenbelasting.



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### Diet

The diet of the Malayan sun bear varies widely and includes primarily fruits and vegetables. They enjoy the young tips of palm trees as well as the sprouts. Their diet also includes honey, nectar from flowers, roots, berries and seeds. They also eat many insects like ants and termites. The Malayan sun bear has an extremely long tongue which he uses to extract food. In addition, they also eat some vertebrates like small mammals and birds.

### Hibernation

The Malayan sun bear does not hibernate.

### Social behaviour

The Malayan sun bear is usually a solitary creature, but occasionally also lives in a small group. They spend most of the day sleeping in trees where they build their nests. At night they climb around in the treetops looking for food.

### Status

The Malayan sun bear is hunted for their gall bladder and paws which can fetch a lot of money due to their use in traditional Chinese medicine. In addition, their habitat is becoming ever more restricted which forces bears to seek food closer and closer to areas inhabited by humans (agriculture). The **IUCN-status** of the Malayan sun bear is listed as '**Vulnerable**'.

### Did you know?

- ... the Malayan sun bear can climb extremely well
- ... Malayan sun bear cubs can climb better than they can run
- ... unlike many other bears, the Malayan sun bear moves around in pairs

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