



Bears in Mind - Fund for bears
 Grebbeweg 111
 Postbus 9, 3910 AA Rhenen
 P.O. Box 9, NL-3910 AA Rhenen
 The Netherlands
 T. +31 (0)317 650 220
 info@bearsinmind.org
 www.bearsinmind.org

IBAN: NL26TRIO0254692664
 BIC / SWIFT: TRIONL2U
 KvK Utrecht: 411 86 102

American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)



The American black bear is distributed throughout North-America and lives mainly in Alaska, Canada and in the north of the United States. They can also be found as far south as Florida and Mexico. The American black bear lives primarily in national parks, such as Yellowstone.

Origin

The American black bear is the most common species of bear and is closely related to the Asian black bear.

Habitat

This bear inhabits mainly forested regions such as coniferous forests (to 2,100 meters). The American black bear can also be found in the tundra and in lowland areas close to water. Their habitat depends however on the season: in the summer the American black bear prefers forested areas, while in the spring they migrate to lowland areas where fish are in abundance.

Appearance

American black bear fur can have many different colours. Initially it was assumed that this bear was only black in colour; however it soon became clear that the fur can also be brown, as well as cinnamon, grey and even almost white. The colour depends on the subfamily the bear belongs to.

<p>Size 120 - 190 cm length 75 – 90 cm height</p>	<p>Weight 60 – 300 kg.</p>	<p>Lifespan In captivity: 40 years In the wild: 30 years</p>
<p>Sexual maturity Female: between 3 -5 years (sometimes not before 7)</p>	<p>Mating season June, July and August Period: 2 - 3 weeks</p>	<p>Gestation period 235 days</p>
<p>Number of litters Ongeveer 1 x per 2 jaar</p>	<p>Number of cubs 1 to 5</p>	<p>Weight at birth 280 – 450 grams</p>
<p>Lactation period 7 to 8 months</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 American black bear consists mainly of vegetable products like berries, roots, acorns, twigs, nuts and fruits. They will basically eat whatever is available. The American black bear is an omnivore and will also feed on insects (ants), fish, carrion as well as small and bigger mammals like deer, elk and other vertebrates.

Hibernation

The American black bear generally goes into a dormant state during the winter months, although not all black bears do so. Some bear populations in the south, such as in Mexico, do not hibernate at all as winters are generally mild and food supplies remain constant. The American black bear is the most active of all bear species. The American black bear preferably hibernates in a hollow tree, a cave, underneath rocks or fallen trees.

Social behaviour

The American black bear is mostly solitary, with the exception of females that live with their young. Bears often gather in places where food is in abundance.

Status

It is estimated that there are more than 600,000 American black bears living in the wild. Threats to the American black bear population are loss of habitat and poaching. However, the population is reasonably stable and is even increasing in some areas, such as in national parks. The **IUCN-status** of the American black bear is listed as '**Least Concern**'. Some populations in the east of the United States are however threatened.

Did you know?

- ... famous Yogi bear is an American black bear
- ... the American black bear can reach a speed of up to 50 km/h, so be careful!
- ... the name 'teddy bear' comes from former United States President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt who, whilst on a hunting trip, refused to shoot a defenceless American black bear cub.

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