

# Be Bear Aware.org



Seeing a bear is an exciting and memorable experience. When visiting, recreating, or living in or near black bear country, it is always important to be aware that you may encounter a bear at any time.

Most conflicts between people and bears are the result of people approaching and/or feeding them or allowing them to obtain garbage and pet/livestock feeds. Learning the appropriate safety techniques will minimize the possibility of a conflict.

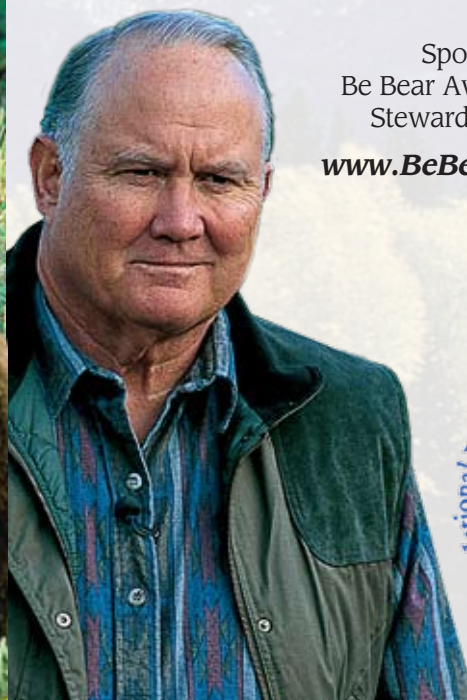
You are responsible for your safety and the safety of bears. Please help keep bears wild by not approaching or feeding them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "H. Norman Schwarzkopf".

General H. Norman  
Schwarzkopf

Spokesman for the  
Be Bear Aware & Wildlife  
Stewardship Campaign

[www.BeBearAware.org](http://www.BeBearAware.org)



[www.bebearaware.org](http://www.bebearaware.org)

## DON'T FEED BEARS!



Bears should never obtain human food, pet/live-stock feeds, or garbage. Bears that receive these “food rewards” may become aggressive towards humans or cause property damage. To protect people, these bears may have to be destroyed.

- ◆ Wild bears have a natural fear of humans and will attempt to avoid people and developed areas—fed bears do not.
- ◆ Wild bears rely on natural foods, such as berries, fish, ants, roots, and grubs for proper nutrition. Fed bears will abandon these vital food sources for human foods and garbage.
- ◆ Bears quickly become conditioned to being fed and will teach their cubs to approach people to do the same.
- ◆ Wild bears fed along roads tend to stay near roads, increasing the number of vehicle-animal accidents.

***Remember—A FED BEAR  
IS A DEAD BEAR!***



## HIKING TIPS

- ◆ Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- ◆ Read all signs at the trailhead, and carry bear spray. Don't leave backpacks unattended.
- ◆ Hike in a group; keep children close at hand. Make your presence known; call out, “Hey, ho.”
- ◆ Scan ahead for signs of bear activity.
- ◆ Watch for bear signs: scat, claw marks, diggings, logs and stumps torn apart.
- ◆ Avoid taking pets; they may attract bears to you. If they are allowed, keep them leashed.



**All wildlife has the potential to be dangerous**



## BEAR SPRAY

- ◆ Bear spray is a unique formula specially prepared for use on bears. Personal defense (pepper spray) is not formulated for bears. Bear spray must be monitored by the EPA and have an EPA registration number.
- ◆ Bear spray must contain 1–2% of the active ingredients capsaicin and related capsaicinoids.
- ◆ Suggested spray distance is **at least 25 ft.**; suggested spray duration is **at least 6 seconds.**





## CAMPGROUND TIPS

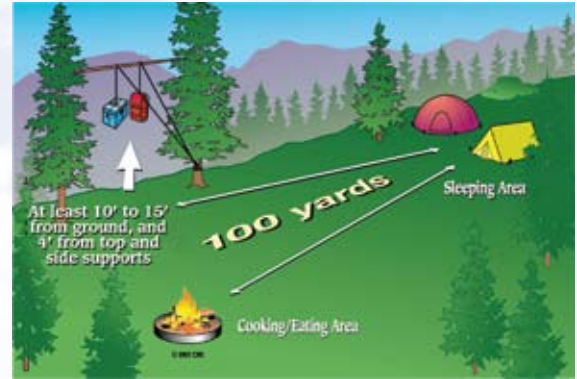
Whether camping in a campground or in the backcountry, make your campsite a bear avoidance campsite by:

- ◆ Always keeping a clean camp.
- ◆ Keeping your sleeping area, tent, and sleeping bag free of food and odors. Don't sleep in clothes that you wore while cooking or handling fish or game.
- ◆ Cleaning barbecue grills and storing them so they are unavailable to bears.
- ◆ Using bear-resistant trash receptacles and food storage lockers.
- ◆ Keeping pets under control at all times.



- ◆ Setting up tents in a line with space between them, *not* in a circle, so that tents don't restrict a bear's line of travel.
- ◆ Keeping a flashlight and bear spray readily available at all times.

**The Pittsburgh Foundation,  
Thyresa W. Amos,  
Helen P. Rush,  
and Savina S. Skewis Fund**



## BACKCOUNTRY TIPS

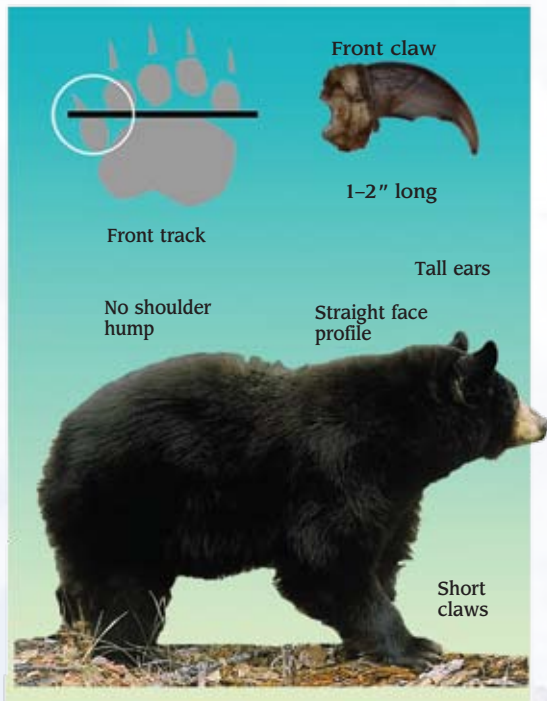
- ◆ Select a campsite away from animal trails, thick brush, and such bear food sources as berry patches and fish spawning streams.
- ◆ Place tents so there is viewable space on all sides. Tents should be set up in a line, not a circle.
- ◆ Strain food particles from dishwater and store with other garbage so that they are unavailable to bears.
- ◆ Pack everything out—never bury garbage or burn it in the fire pit.
- ◆ Set up the sleeping area 100 yards from food storage and cooking/eating areas.
- ◆ Electric fences can be used for protecting attractants. Light-weight fences for backpackers and semi-permanent fences for outfitter camps are available. Check with your local wildlife/land management agency for recommendations.



**Wildlife  
Management  
Institute**

**CounterAssault.com**

Grizzly Tough Bear Spray  
& Food Storage Units

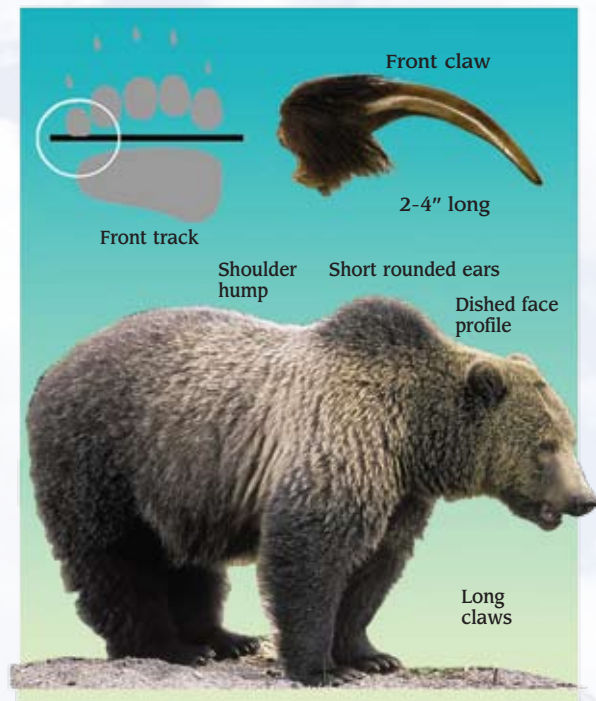


## BLACK BEARS AT A GLANCE

Black bears can be found across most of North America. Black bear habitat varies from the lowlands of Florida to mountains and subarctic tundra. Black bears are sometimes found in and adjacent to metropolitan areas.

- ◆ **Colors:** Black, brown, blond, rust, or cinnamon. Rare colors are white and blue.
- ◆ **Size:** Adults measure about 3 feet at the shoulder and 5 to 6 feet when standing.
- ◆ **Weight:** Adults weigh 125 to 425+ lbs. Some can weigh as much as 700+ lbs.
- ◆ **Life Span:** Approximately 20 years.
- ◆ **Eyesight:** Similar to humans.
- ◆ **Sense of Smell:** Excellent; can span miles.
- ◆ **Attributes:** Very agile; climb trees well; good swimmers; and can run as fast as 35 mph.

A black bear's diet includes acorns, berries, insects, vegetation, fish and other live prey, and carrion. They generally mate during May and early June. They usually hibernate between November and April when food is scarce, though this may vary. Healthy mothers produce 1-3 cubs every 2-3 years.



## GRIZZLY BEARS AT A GLANCE

Grizzly/brown bears are found in the northwestern states, Alaska, and western Canada. Their habitat varies from plains, to rugged mountains, to coastal shorelines, to arctic tundra.

- ◆ **Colors:** Blond, brown, or black.
- ◆ **Size:** Adults can be 3-4 feet at the shoulder and 6 to 7 feet when standing upright.
- ◆ **Weight:** Average 300-600 lbs, with some weighing as much as 1,000 lbs.
- ◆ **Life Span:** Can live as long as 30 years.
- ◆ **Eyesight:** Similar to humans.
- ◆ **Sense of Smell:** Excellent; can span miles.
- ◆ **Attributes:** Very agile; climb trees; good swimmers; and can run as fast as 35 mph. Shoulder hump contains extra muscle for digging and rolling rocks and logs.

In the northwestern states, wildlife and land management agencies have been working to recover the grizzly. Grizzly bear numbers are increasing.

To learn more, visit [www.IGBC.org](http://www.IGBC.org)



## ENCOUNTERS

Bears, like all wild animals, are potentially dangerous, though they will usually detect your presence and leave the area.

**Remember: distance = safety.**

- ◆ If a bear is **visible but not close**, alter your route so that you will move away from its area.
- ◆ If a bear **approaches**, *do not run*. Remain calm, group together, and pick up small children. Continue to face the bear, and slowly back away. If the bear continues to approach, try to scare it away by shouting and taking an aggressive stance.
- ◆ If a **black bear attacks**, use bear spray and fight back using everything in your power—fists, sticks, rocks, etc.
- ◆ If a **grizzly bear attacks**, use bear spray or play “dead” by dropping to the ground, lying flat on your stomach with hands clasped together behind your neck, and bracing yourself with your elbows and toes. Leave your backpack on for added protection. Remain in this position until you are sure the bear has left the area..



## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Minimize odors and the availability of food rewards throughout your yard and community.

- ◆ Put garbage out on the day of pick up, not the night before. Store in a sturdy building or place in an approved bear-resistant trash receptacle.
- ◆ Hang bird feeders from a pulley system with a catch tray so they're out of reach of bears. Take feeders down between April and November.

- ◆ Keep barbecues clean. Store with other attractants (livestock/pet feed, garbage) inside a sturdy building. Windows, doors, and shutters should close *against* reinforced jams.
- ◆ Pick all ripe fruit from fruit trees promptly, and keep the ground clear of fallen fruit.
- ◆ Vegetable gardens, compost piles, orchards, and beehives may attract bears. Electric fences can be used to keep bears out.
- ◆ Place children's play areas close to your house with viewable space around them and away from brushy or forested areas.



- ◆ Provide outdoor lighting at entrances and walkways.
- ◆ If a bear enters your home, **leave immediately**. If you can't get to an exit, go to the nearest room where you can shut the door securely. Call for assistance from your local wildlife agency, police, or fire department. When help arrives, open doors and windows to provide the bear with as many exits as possible.

Bear activity may intensify in spring when bears are emerging from their dens, in the fall when bears are bulking up for hibernation, and during periods of drought when bear's natural food sources become scarce.

To learn more, go to **[BeBearAware.org](http://BeBearAware.org)**

