

FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

**American Black Bear**  
*(Ursus americanus)*

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Ursidae

Most Black Bears hibernate for up to seven months, and do not eat, drink, urinate, or exercise the entire time. In the South, where plant food is available all year, not all bears hibernate—but pregnant females do. The female gives birth to 1–6 cubs (usually 2 or 3) in January, while she is deep asleep in her den. The newborn cubs snuggle next to her for warmth and nurse while she fasts. They grow from a birth weight of 200–450 g each (about 7–16 pounds) to the 2–5 kg they will weigh when the family leaves the den in the spring. Black Bears eat a little meat, and some insects, but they rely on fruit, nuts, and vegetation for the bulk of their nutritional needs. They are not all black. Most are, with brown muzzles, but in some western forests they are brown, cinnamon, or blond, and a few, in southern Alaska and British Columbia, are creamy white or bluish-gray.



*Ursus americanus* – eastern, black variant

*Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)*

**Also known as:**

Many common names are given to the many subspecies that have been described, such as: Olympic Black Bear, Glacier Bear, California Black Bear, Florida Black Bear.

**Sexual Dimorphism:**

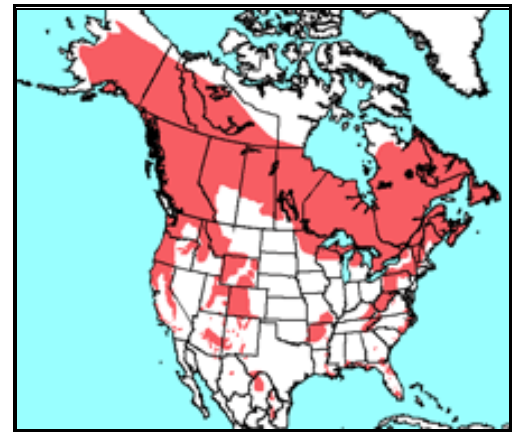
The largest males may be nearly twice as heavy as the heaviest females.

**Length:**

Range: 1,44–2,000 mm males; 1,200–1,600 mm females

**Weight:**

Average: 120 kg males; 80 kg females  
Range: 47–409 kg males; 39–236 kg females



**FIELD NOTES**

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FIELD GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN MAMMALS

**Brown Bear, Grizzly Bear**  
*(Ursus arctos)*

ORDER: Carnivora  
FAMILY: Ursidae

**Conservation Status:** The Mexican Grizzly Bear, *Ursus arctos nelsoni*, is Extinct.

Brown Bears are solitary, powerful predators who can be aggressive to one another. There is a social hierarchy: adult males are dominant, and females with cubs are dominant over juvenile males and females without cubs. Brown Bears are omnivorous, consuming everything from mosses, fungi, herbs, grasses, fruits, berries, small vertebrates, insects, birds, and fish especially salmon during their spawning run to other mammals. They dig after burrowing mammals and take down large hooved mammals caught in deep snow or otherwise disabled. They are excellent swimmers and have acute senses of hearing and smell, but poor eyesight, and can attack humans without warning. The largest North American males weigh more than 600 kg (1,325 pounds).

**Also known as:**

Bears from the interior of Alaska and Canada usually have pale-tipped guard hairs, and are called Grizzly Bears.

**Sexual Dimorphism:**

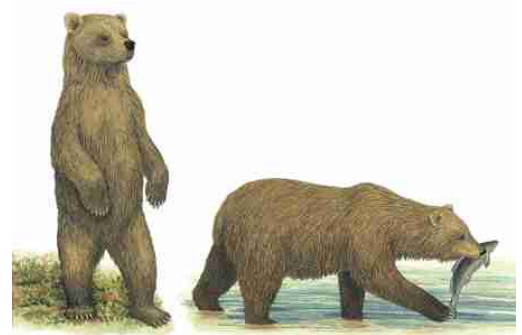
Males are 8%–10% larger than females.

**Length:**

Average: 1.28 m

**Weight:**

Average: 389 kg males; 207 kg females  
Range: 80–>600 kg



Credit: painting by Consie Powell from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)



**FIELD NOTES**

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