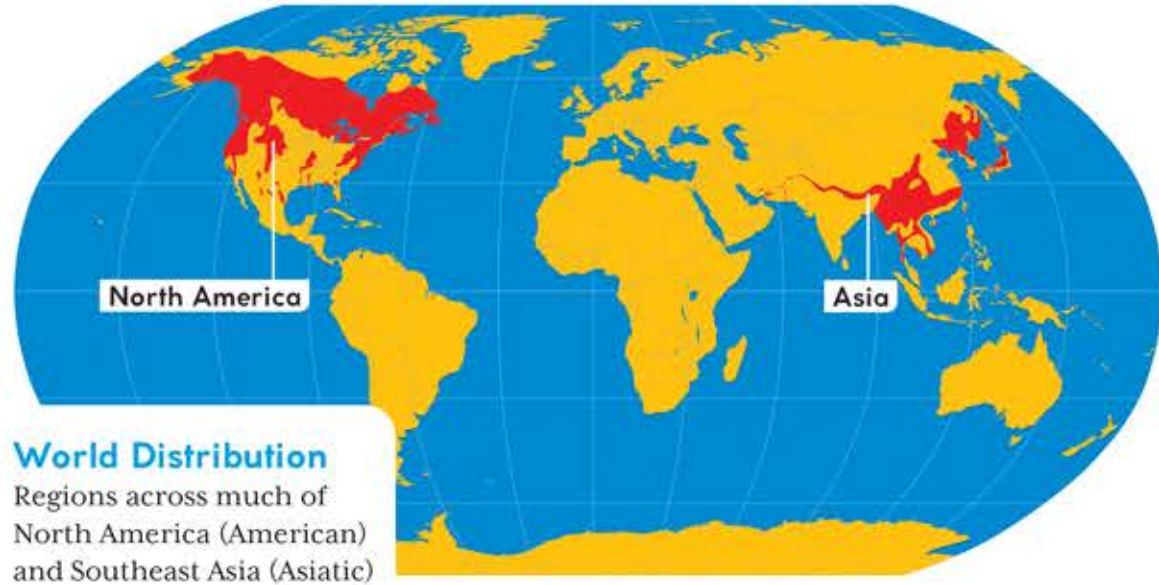


# Fact File: Black Bears



## World Distribution

Regions across much of North America (American) and Southeast Asia (Asiatic)

## Habitat

Forested areas, streams, swamps, meadows, and open tundra

## Habits

Mostly solitary except for mothers and cubs; typically spend the morning and evening looking for food and rest at midday and at night; in colder areas, spend winter in a sleeplike state to save energy

## Diet

Mainly fruits, berries, nuts, roots, and stems; also honey, fish, insects, rodents, and animal carcasses

## Distinctive Features

Big bodies with short, stocky legs; short tails; curved claws; small eyes, round ears, and long snouts

## Fast Fact

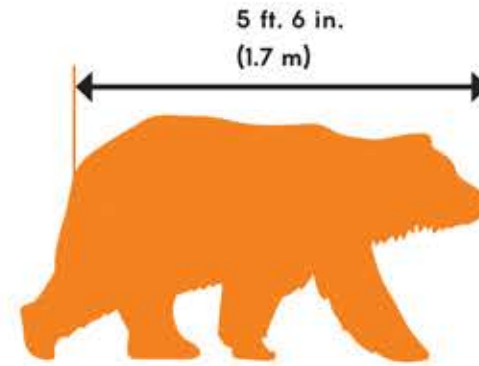
Most black bears in the wild live for 10 to 15 years.

## Average Size



4 ft. 6 in.  
(1.4 m)

Human (age 10)



5 ft. 6 in.  
(1.7 m)

Black Bear (adult)

## Classification

### CLASS

Mammalia  
(mammals)

### ORDER

Carnivora  
(tigers, bears, hyenas, seals, related animals)

### FAMILY

Ursidae  
(bears)

### GENUS

*Ursus*  
(brown bears, black bears, polar bears)

### SPECIES

- *Ursus americanus*  
(American black bear)
- *Ursus thibetanus*  
(Asiatic black bear)



◀ A black bear eats salmon in a part of Canada known as the Great Bear Rainforest.



## CHAPTER 1

# Bears Everywhere

It's a chilly fall morning in northern Wisconsin. The birds in the forest are starting to chirp and stretch their wings. High up in a tree, something furry starts moving. The tree branches begin to tremble as a 300-pound (136.1-kilogram) American black bear climbs down the trunk to the ground.

Black bears are the most common bears in North America. They can be found from the Alaskan **tundra** to the woods of Florida, and from Canada to northern Mexico. They make their home in at least 40 U.S. states. Their closest relatives, Asiatic black bears, live in Southeast Asia. There are more black bears alive today than all other **species** of bears combined.

American black bears often live close to humans. Sometimes they wander into places where people live. This can cause problems. But typically, black bears are peaceful animals that just want to keep to themselves.

► **Black bears climb trees to feed, rest, and hide.**



## A Bear's Body

An adult black bear is about 3 feet (0.9 meters) tall and 6 ft. (1.8 m) long on all fours. When it's standing on its hind legs, this **mammal** can reach 7 ft. (2.1 m).

Black bears have short tails, small eyes, and round ears. Their noses and mouths form a pointed **snout**. A black bear has curved claws that it uses to tear apart food. The bears' claws also enable these animals to be excellent climbers. Unlike some animals, bears can't **retract** their claws. They scratch them on trees to keep them sharp.

A black bear's weight depends on its age and the season. A typical adult female weighs from 90 lb. (40.8 kg) to 250 lb. (113.4 kg). Males weigh from 130 lb. (59 kg) to 500 lb. (226.8 kg). That makes black bears the smallest of the three bear species in North America. Brown bears can weigh 1,000 lb. (453.6 kg) or more. Polar bears, the largest, can weigh more than 1,200 lb. (544.3 kg)!

### Fast Fact

Black bears can walk on two legs but usually use all four.

