Black Bears in the U.S.

“

Black Bear

Ursus Americanus

Physical Characteristics

· Black, brown, blond, or cinnamon in color. Black with a light brown snout is the most common coloration in Yellowstone National Park.

· Average weight is Yellowstone is 100-300 pounds, with males usually larger than females.

· Height is 2.5-3 feet at the shoulder when standing on all fours and and 5 feet when standing upright.

· Rump is higher than front shoulders.

· Face profile is straight; muzzle is relatively long. Ears are long and prominent.

Behavior

· Usually less aggressive than grizzlies.

· Cubs:- weigh about one-half pound at birth-Stay with their mother up to 1.5 years.

· Black bears often make dens under roots of trees at low to middle elevations.

· Active mainly from dawn to dusk, but may be active any time of day or night.

Excellent tree-climbing ability is used-to escape predators-to feed on nuts and fruit in trees.

Distribution

· Black Bears once ranged widely–from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans and from the tree line in the northern Arctic to northern Mexico.

· Currently exist in 75% of their former range, and are not listed as threatened as are grizzlies.

· Have shown more ability to live near people than have brown or polar bears; some live in forest habitats not as far from cities.

· Primarily forest creatures, black bears rarely travel far from the shelter of trees.

· Black bears frequent areas of mixed woodland and small meadows in the sub-alpine zone.

· Black bears are returning to many forested areas near major cities.