

KNOW YOUR BEARS—THE BLACK BEAR



Sharing the stream with their larger cousins, black bears gather at Fish Creek to feed on spawning salmon.

Black bears are the most abundant and widely distributed of North America's bears. They live in most parts of Southeast Alaska. An estimated 100,000 black bears live in Alaska.



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A bear's diet

Although usually found in forests, bears follow their appetites from sea level to alpine areas. Like a ravenous teenager, they will eat just about anything they can find.

Newly sprouted vegetation (like skunk cabbage) are important in the spring, while salmon and berries are critical in the summer and fall. Protein and fat-rich salmon help bears gain up to 20% of their average weight before they enter hibernation in the late fall. Deer fawns, ants, grubs, and other insects are additional sources of protein.

Bears can swim long distances.



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FRONT PAW PRINT

A line across the top of the pad crosses the toepad.



REAR PAW PRINT



The print has a distinct notch in the instep.



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Sows are very protective of their cubs.



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Black bears are generally black, but colors can range from cinnamon to white (Kermode bear), to a bluish-gray (glacier bear). Whatever the color, black bears are the smallest of North America's bears. An average-sized black bear stands about 29 inches (74 cm) at the shoulder and weighs about 200 pounds (91 kg).