

Black Bear, *Ursus americanus*



Description

- The Black Bear is the smallest and most widely distributed of the bear family in North America.
- Colour can vary from black, cinnamon, brown and blonde. A white coloured-morph, called Kermode or Spirit Bear is reported most frequently on the north-central coast of BC.



Dens can be under logs, within the trunk of a tree or in a cavity higher in a tree

Similar Species

- Black Bears can sometime be mistaken for Grizzly Bears, as their ranges do overlap.
- Grizzlies are usually larger and are seldom completely black. Grizzlies have a prominent shoulder hump, and a wider dish-shaped face, which are both lacking in Black Bears.

Biology

- Black Bears are classified as carnivores, but are omnivorous.
- Mating occurs in June and July and cubs are born during hibernation in January-February. In coastal BC dens are in or under large diameter trees, snags, logs or stumps. Dens can be up to 25 meters above ground.

Habitat

- Population is higher in wet climatic zones where vegetation is more plentiful and there is greater access to spawning salmon.
- Black Bear habitat includes areas that provide structure for denning habitat (large diameter trees and stumps with cavities) and optimal forage, which can include salmonberry and skunk cabbage, as well as other berries.
- Found at all elevations.

Occurrence: DSI, DCR, DSC

- Natural range includes forestland across the province, coastal islands including Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Status:

BC: Yellow-listed (Not at Risk)

Canada: Not at Risk

Action Required:

If a den is found:

- Notify BCTS and document location of the den and whether it is occupied.
- Contact a qualified professional if you are uncertain about occupancy.
- Retain den site within a windfirm WTP (preferably 1 ha or tied to a riparian reserve); ensure there is security and thermal cover around the den, some larger trees or snag where adult females and cubs can "escape" to and a healthy shrub layer for forage.
- If den is active, do not harvest around retention patch between Nov 1 and May 15.