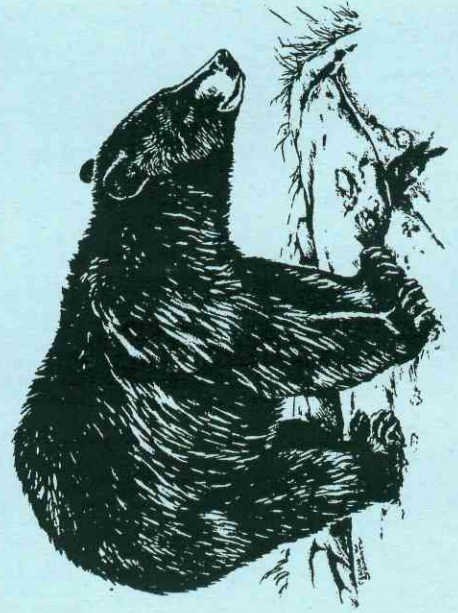


Black Bear Facts

- Black bears primarily inhabit the Ozark Region of southern Missouri, but there have been sightings in northern Missouri. Prime habitat consists of mixed hardwood forests.
- Black bears have been increasing in number and expanding their range since the inception of Arkansas' restoration program. Missouri's bear population has grown to approximately 200-300 bears.
- Bears are highly adaptable, living and feeding among human development. Home ranges in good habitat include up to 60 square miles for males and 10 square miles for females.
- Bears can live more than 20 years.
- Bears learn quickly and have an excellent sense of smell and hearing.
- Black bears are omnivorous, eating plant and animal matter. They are opportunistic feeders and will supplement their diet with food derived from humans.
- Approximately 90 percent of a black bear's diet consists of plant material, including grasses, forbs, tubers and bulbs, berries and nuts. Acorns are the most important food in Missouri in the fall.



CAMPING IN Black Bear COUNTRY



- Animal matter, approximately 10 percent of the bear's diet, includes ants and other insects (adult, larvae and eggs), small mammals, bird eggs, honey, road-killed deer and carrion.
- Adult females weigh 200 pounds; adult males weigh 300-500 pounds.
- Breeding season runs from late May until August, peaking in June and July.
- Cubs are born in January, weigh about 8 ounces when born, are blind and covered with thin hair. Average litter size is three, ranging from one to six.
- Cubs travel with the female until she breeds again, 16-18 months later.
- Black bears den for the winter, becoming dormant to avoid periods of food shortage and severe weather. Bears do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate while denning. Den sites include rock cavities, brush piles, open nests and hollow trees.
- Black bears can run up to 35 miles per hour. Bears are strong swimmers.
- Bears are excellent climbers. Both adults and cubs will climb trees for food and to escape disturbances.

If a Bear Seems Aggressive

Black bears almost never attack people. If you follow the precautions listed in this brochure, you probably won't have any trouble with bears. However, in the unlikely event that a black bear does attack, fight the bear aggressively with anything close at hand—rocks, sticks, or even your fist. Black bears are usually intimidated by an aggressive counterattack.

Never Feed Bears

Black bears are large, powerful wild animals and should be treated with respect. Be alert in areas where bears are active. DO NOT approach any bear in the wild.



The 10 Commandments of Camping in Black Bear Country

To fully enjoy your camping or outdoor experience in Bear Country, the following "10 Commandments of Camping" must be observed to avoid problems with bears.

1. Keep a clean camp. Food and all items that come in contact with food carry odors that bears find attractive.
2. Thoroughly clean all utensils immediately after use. Never deposit food residues such as cooking grease in campfires.
3. Place garbage where bears cannot smell or gain access to it, either in bear-proof containers or dumpsters. DON'T burn or bury garbage. Bears will dig it up.
4. Do not eat or cook in your tent. Avoid storing food or attractants in tents, sleeping bags or backpacks. Suspend such items from trees when backpacking.
5. Treat nonfood items such as gum, soap, toothpaste or deodorant as food. They are attractive to a bear's acute sense of smell.
6. Immediately store food articles (including pet food, livestock feed and garbage) in airtight containers after every use. Coolers are not airtight, and bears often associate them with food. Secure coolers in a locked trunk or truck cab concealed from view.

7. Plan your meals. Generate as little food garbage as possible.
8. Never attempt to feed a bear or any other wild animal.
9. Never approach wildlife, especially black bears. They are dangerous.
10. Keep your dog on a leash, and clean up leftover food and scraps after your dog has finished eating.

Hiking/Fishing in Bear Country

- Normal trail noise should alert bears to your presence and prompt a bear to leave before you ever see it. Bears usually run and hide from people.
- Use caution in areas such as berry patches where bears are likely to venture.
- Never approach the animal, and observe it only from a distance. Make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing or making other sounds.
- If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm, assertive and assuring voice.

Bears primarily inhabit the Ozark Region of southern Missouri, but there have been sightings in the northern part of the state.



If a Bear Comes into Camp

- Remain calm. Make the bear aware of your presence.
- Do not feed the bear! Bears leave more easily if they have not obtained food.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.
- Yell, bang pots and pans, throw rocks, wave your arms, or use an airhorn to scare the bear away.
- If the bear utters a series of huffs, snaps or pops its jaws, and swats the ground, you are too close. Slowly back away.
- If the bear will not leave, move to a car or building, if available. Notify authorities immediately if you encounter an aggressive or nonyielding bear.
- If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect smells in the air.
- Black bears will sometimes "bluff charge" when cornered, threatened or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, and then slowly back away.

A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear

Bears learn very quickly. Black bears that associate food with people may become aggressive and dangerous. This may lead to personal injury, property damage and the need to euthanize problem animals.

Report all bear damage and nuisance incidents to your camp office immediately. To learn more about Missouri's black bears, visit the Missouri Department of Conservation's web site at www.missouriconservation.org

Right front foot



Right hind foot

