



Remember:

- There are about 1000 black bears for every one grizzly bear in Washington.
- Grizzlies can be found outside "recovery zones".
- Telling the two species apart is important for both you and the endangered grizzly; look at shoulders, face, ears, and claws because color and size are not reliable differences.
- Both bears are wild animals that don't like surprises and are attracted to food and odors; take precautions to have a safe experience with them.

The future of the grizzly depends on you.

Shooting a grizzly bear is both a federal and state felony that can bring criminal and civil penalties of up to \$56,000 and a year in jail. Up to \$3,500 in rewards are available for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of a grizzly poacher.

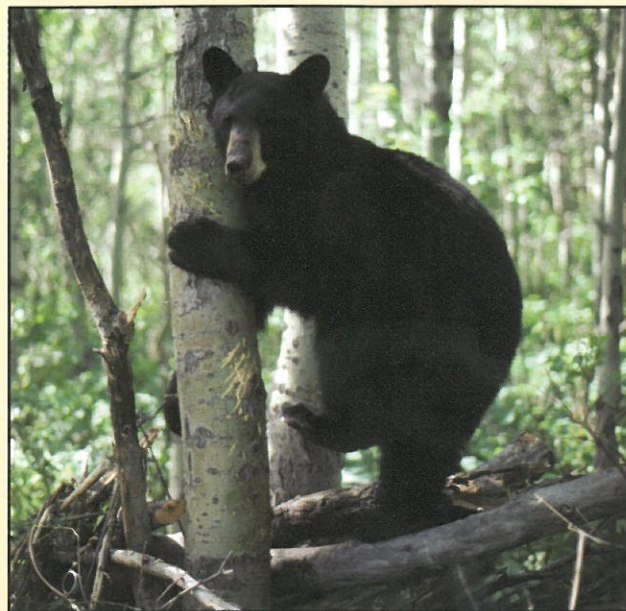
**Washington's 24-hour poaching
hotline number is
1-800-477-6224**

This publication is excerpted from "Telling the Difference," an article by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researcher Wayne Kasworm.

For more information contact:
Washington Department of
Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, Washington
98501-1091
(360) 902-2515

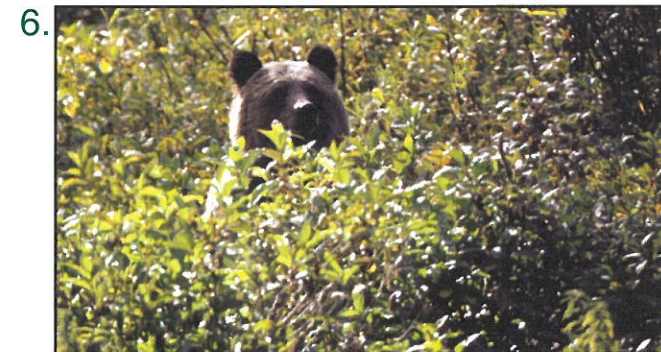


Who's Who?



Washington's Grizzly and Black Bears

Can you tell which is a grizzly bear and which is a black bear?



(Answers inside.....)

Washington is home to both the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the black bear (*Ursus americanus*).

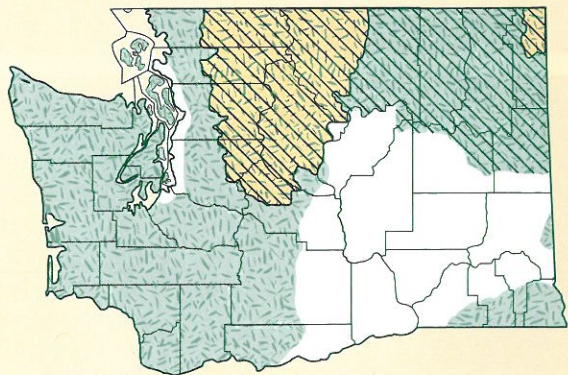
Grizzly bears are rare in Washington, but there is a small population in the Selkirk Mountains of north-east Washington and grizzly bears have been documented in the Okanogan Highlands and in the North Cascades. At the state level the species is listed as “endangered” (in danger of extinction from Washington), and at the federal level, throughout the contiguous U.S., it is listed as “threatened.”

Black bears, on the other hand, are abundant in Washington. At least 25,000 bears roam the state, especially in the west, northeast, and Blue mountains of the southeast. They are a game species, hunted annually by about 29,000 licensed hunters who kill about 1,300 black bears each year.

For every one grizzly bear in Washington, there are at least 1,000 black bears. **For the sake of both people and grizzlies, it’s critical for outdoor recreationists to be able to tell the two species apart.**

Because the grizzly is both state and federally protected, shooting one is illegal and can have costly consequences. Hunters are responsible for telling the difference between black bears and grizzlies and being sure of their target before pulling the trigger. The future of the grizzly and recovery of a healthy population depends on you.

The map below shows the approximate range of both bear species in Washington. “Recovery zones” for grizzlies in both the North Cascades and Selkirks are the areas where land practices are specifically managed for conservation of grizzlies. But as this map indicates, grizzlies have been sighted and could occur beyond these zone boundaries.



Map Legend:

-  Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones
-  Black Bear Range
-  General area within which grizzly bears have been sighted or are possible

Grizzly and black bear identification is based on several physical characteristics.

Despite the names “grizzly” and “black,” coat color is the least reliable identifying feature, since not all grizzly bears are “grizzled” and not all black bears are black. Grizzly bears can be light-colored and many shades of brown, including brown so dark it looks black; not all grizzlies have the silver-tipped guard hairs that give the animal a frosted or grizzled appearance. Black bears can be blond, cinnamon, dark brown, or black.

Size is also not a reliable indicator of species. Most people overestimate the size of grizzlies. A typical adult female grizzly bear weighs 200-350 pounds and adult males weigh 300-550 pounds. An adult male black bear can easily weigh as much or more than a female grizzly, and definitely more than a young or sub-adult grizzly of either sex.



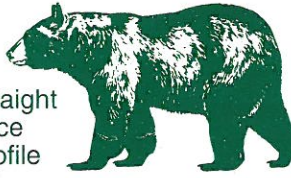



The distinguishing characteristics are shoulders, face profile, ears, and claws.

Grizzly bears have well-developed shoulder muscles for digging and turning over rocks and boulders when they forage for food. These muscles often appear as a **shoulder hump**, even when the animal is standing still, walking, or running. Black bears lack this distinctive hump.

Grizzly bears have a **concave face profile**, or noses that seem to dip or dish inward in the middle. Black bears have a fairly straight face profile from forehead to nose tip, sometimes called a “Roman” nose. The concave shape of the grizzly profile makes the face appear broader than that of the black bear.

Grizzly bears tend to have **smaller, more rounded ears**. Black bears’ ears tend to be larger, more erect, and more pointed.

Grizzly bears have **long, gently curved claws** adapted for digging. Black bears have shorter, more sharply curved claws adapted for climbing trees and tearing logs apart when foraging for insects.

BLACK BEAR	 Shorter Claws < 2"	Larger Pointed Ears	No Shoulder Hump
 Front Track		Straight Face Profile	
Note: Color and size can't be used for identification.			
GRIZZLY BEAR	 Longer Claws 2"-4"	Smaller Rounded Ears	Shoulder Hump
 Front Track		Dish Face Profile	

All of these characteristics can vary with the sex and age of the bear; for example, young grizzlies’ ears may appear larger because they’re still “growing into them.” Body position, behavior, and light conditions can also vary what is seen; for example, a black bear engaged in digging may appear to have a shoulder hump.

Proper identification should include as many of these characteristics as possible. Responsible hunters always make sure of their target; they don’t shoot when the light is poor or when a brief glimpse of a fleeing animal makes identification difficult.

Grizzly and black bears also share some behaviors that are important to know for a safe experience with either one.

• Food and odors attract bears

Bears are omnivores (they eat everything) and use their keen sense of smell to find food. Keep a clean camp, store food and garbage in a vehicle trunk or, especially with game meat, hang from a tree branch or line at least 10 feet above ground and 4 feet out from the trunk. Never bury garbage. Avoid cooking smelly, greasy foods.

• Bears don’t like surprises

Bears don’t have the best eyesight, but they can smell and hear well and will usually leave an area if they know you’re around. Make your presence known by making noise (talking, singing), especially in areas where visibility or hearing is limited (like heavily vegetated streamside areas). Travel in groups and don’t hike after dark.

• Bears are wild animals

Enjoy bears at a distance, even if you’re looking for them as a hunter or photographer. Bears usually avoid people, but both grizzlies and black bears can be unpredictable. A female in particular may be quickly provoked if she believes her cubs are being disturbed. A bear family can be encountered at any time because black bear cubs stay with their mother for up to a year and grizzlies for up to two years.

If you encounter either a black bear or grizzly, move away slowly, do not run, and avoid eye contact, which bears perceive as a threat. Give the bear plenty of room for an escape route away from you. If the bear has not noticed you, try to detour upwind so that the bear will get your scent and know you are there.

If a black bear cannot be avoided, try to scare the bear by clapping hands, yelling, screaming, or throwing rocks. In the unlikely event that a black bear attacks, fight back.

If a grizzly cannot be avoided, drop a coat or other non-food item to distract the bear, look for a climbable tree, and quickly climb up at least 12 feet. If tree climbing is not an option and the grizzly is attacking, curl into a ball or lie flat on the ground on your stomach and cover your neck and head with your hands and arms. Don’t look up or move until you are absolutely sure the bear is gone.

The differences between responses to attacks are based on the typically more defensive nature of grizzlies and the sometimes predatory nature of black bears. Any bear can be dangerous and situations vary. Young grizzlies sometimes climb trees or can be predatory, and black bears can be defensive.

Answers to photo quiz:

1. Black bear. Ears larger, more pointed; shorter claws; face narrow.
2. Black bear. Ears larger, more pointed; face narrow; no shoulder hump.
3. Grizzly bear. Long claws, but little else helps identify this yearling bear!
4. Black bear. Ears larger, more pointed; no shoulder hump.
5. Grizzly bear. Face broad; ears smaller, more rounded; coat grizzled.
6. Grizzly bear. Face broad; ears smaller, more rounded.
7. Grizzly bear. Face broad; shoulder hump; ears smaller, more rounded; coat grizzled.
8. Black bear. Ears larger, more pointed; claws not evident; no shoulder hump, just body position.

How about the bears on the cover? Did you know the top one is a black bear and the bottom one is a grizzly? Check out the bears on the back cover. The top one is a grizzly and the bottom one is a black bear.

(Photos by Wayne Kasworm, Mike Madel, Richard Mace, Tim Manley and Keith Aune.)