



GRIZZLY BEAR

CARNIVORA
Family: Ursidae
Genus: Ursus
Species: arctos horribilis



Range: Alaska, Western Canada, Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming

Habitat: High mountainous wooded areas, tundra and alpine meadows

Niche: Terrestrial, omnivorous, diurnal

Wild diet: Variety of plants and berries, insect, fish and small mammals

Zoo diet: Fruit & vegetables, fish and horsemeat, kibbles, bread & vitamin supplements

Life Span: (Wild) 25 – 30 years

(Captivity) 47 years had been recorded

Sexual dimorphism: Males more than 2 times larger than females

Location in SF Zoo: Bear grotto across from Terrace Cafe

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

A grizzly bear's pelt shows a variety of colors from blond, brown, black or a combination of these. The guard hairs on the back are tipped in white thus giving the "grizzled" appearance. The large shoulder hump provides the muscle power to the forelimbs to dig winter dens, dig up roots or strike down a prey animal or compete with rival males. The front claws are up to 4 inches in length; the back claws are 1 inches. They have large footpads and walk flat-footed (plantigrade) with a slow shuffle. They can move quickly when needed, up to 30 mph. The head is massive with small eyes and ears and a dish-shaped face with a long nose. They have an excellent sense of smell.

Dentition: I 3/3 – C 1/1 – PM 4/4 – M 2/3 x 2 = 42. The teeth consist of flatten molars and piercing canines for its omnivorous diet. Incisors are not specialized.

Weight: M – 350 - 800 lbs.
F – ~25% lighter than M
Weight depends on what they eat, where they live, and the season.

Body Length: up to 7 feet

Shoulder height: 3.5 - 4.5 feet

STATUS & CONSERVATION

The primary threat to the survival Grizzly is loss of habitat due to human encroachment, logging, energy and mineral exploration. Fewer than 2,000 grizzlies remaining in the continental U.S. (down from 50,000 in the early 1800s). Grizzlies are classified as "threatened" in the lower 48 States since 1975. The Yellowstone grizzly population was removed from the threatened species list in 2007. Alaska has an estimated 30,000 brown bears statewide. Legal hunting is regulated; in 2007, about 1,900 brown bears were harvested in Alaska. About 21,000 are in western Canada with most being in British Columbia.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Except for females with young and salmon runs, these bears live solitary existence. They rely on their acute sense of smell rather than their poor eyesight. Their hearing is also excellent and their ability to reach 30 mph makes them a formidable force. Will give occasional grunts.

Dens are found or dug in protective places such as caves, burrows or hollow trees. They are used for protection and security in winter. These bear enter a dormancy that is triggered by fat store and not cold weather. Depending on available resources a bear can gain around 400 pounds in the fall. Bears are not true hibernators since there is not a marked drop in their body temperature and pulse rates. Dens are used only once including day dens during spring and summer. Females hold exclusive home ranges while a male may overlap several of these ranges.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Breeding occurs during May and June with courtship lasting 2 –15 days. There is delayed implantation of the egg until the female is ready to den in October and November. Females will not reproduce without sufficient food. Males must cover large amounts of territory since only one out of three females will breed in any given year. An individual female may reproduce once in 3 – 5 years since they remain with their cubs for up to 3 1/2 years. Altricial cubs are born from January through March only leaving the den after April. Mothers protect them from adult males while teaching them how to hunt and fish. Females will rear their cubs for 2-3 years. When a female grizzly bear leaves her mother, they often set up their home range quite close to their mother's home range.

Estrous Period: Monoestrous April - July

Gestation: 210 – 255 days with delayed implantation

of Mammae: 3 pair (2 vestigial)

of Young: 1-4 (2 more common)

Sexual Maturity: about 5 years

Weaning Age: 4 – 5 months

Weight at birth: about 1 lb.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Grizzly (*U. a. horribilis*) and the Kodiak (*U. a. middendorffi*) are two generally recognized subspecies of the Brown Bear that are native to North America. Grizzlies tend to be smaller and more inland than Kodiaks that live along the SE coast of Alaska and have a richer diet and do not have the “grizzled” appearance. These subspecies will interbreed where their ranges overlap. The California Grizzly (*U. a. californicus*) disappeared from the state of California in 1922, but it is still on the state flag of California

Grizzly bears can also help ecosystems by distributing seeds and nutrients through their scat, and occasionally regulating ungulate populations.

Sources:

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Wild Furbearer Management and Conservation in North America © 1987 Jonkel, C p. 456 – 473

<http://www.bearlife.org/grizzly-bear.html>

<http://www.defenders.org/grizzly-bear/basic-facts>

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