

Bears in This Area

Safety Tips for Hiking in Bear Country



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Ministry of the Environment
Editing: NPO Shinshu Black Bear Research Group

You Are in Bear Country

Stay alert to bears. Asiatic black bears are usually not aggressive and rarely injure people. However, bears may become aggressive if they learn to take food or trash.

Keep Bears Away from Food and Garbage

- Keep food and garbage in airtight bags or containers to prevent odors, and never leave them outside.



A Hungry Bear That Feeds on Garbage Is a Threat to Humans



Avoid Close Encounters

- Make NOISE! (Bells, radio, clap your hands, make voice)



If You Encounter a Bear

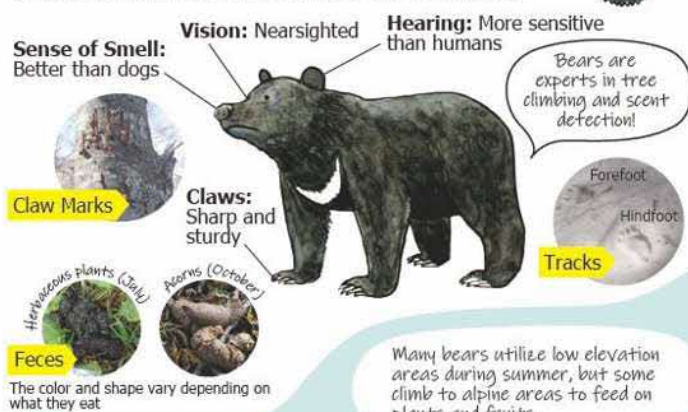
- Slowly back away.
- DON'T SCREAM!
- DON'T RUN!



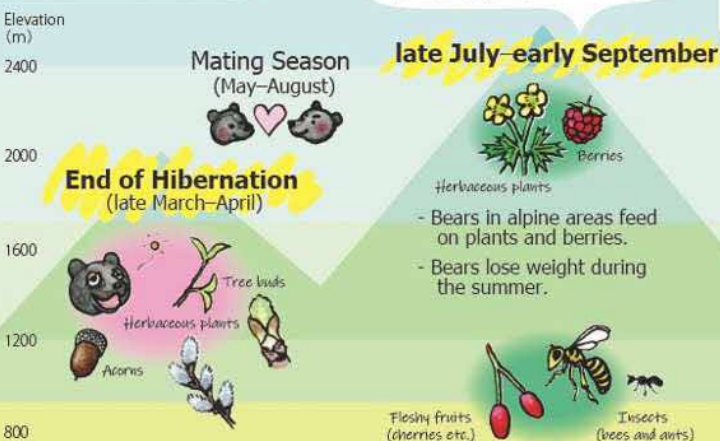
Please refer to the reverse side for details. Fold this leaflet in four, and take it on your hike.

Asiatic Black Bear (Carnivora, URSIDAE)

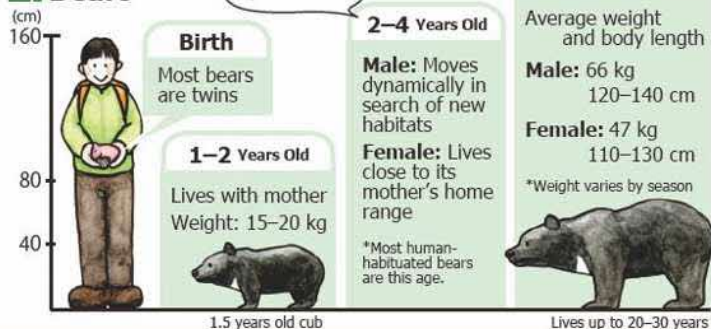
In Japan, Asiatic black bears live in Honshu and Shikoku. They need highly diverse forests that support many creatures. Their moon ring patterns and personalities are also diverse.



Many bears utilize low elevation areas during summer, but some climb to alpine areas to feed on plants and fruits.



Growth of Bears



Food habits and habitat

- Omnivorous: Bears feed mainly on plants, fruits, and insects (food habits change seasonally).
- Bears utilize different elevations seasonally.

Range of Bears
Travel distance: approx. 1–3 km/day
Home range: approx. 10–700 km²/year

Periods of Activity

Spring–Summer: Bears are primarily active during the day. They may switch to nighttime activity near human settlements.
Autumn: Bears are active throughout the day.

Denning Period



Cubs are born in early February.

*Most bears enter dens by the end of December.

Never allow bears to take your food or garbage!

Once a bear has tasted these, it learns,
"There is food near humans."

To enjoy the mountain safely,
please be mindful of food and garbage.



At Camp Sites:

Keep Bears Away from Food and Garbage

- ✓ Never leave food and garbage outside or under a tarp.
- ✓ Store food and garbage in airtight bags or containers in backpacks. Odors can attract bears.
- ✓ Thoroughly wipe your cooking pots and dishes, and store them like food and trash.



- Wrappers, recycling cans, and plastic bottles also attract bears.
- Select food items: Avoid food that is greasy or has a strong odor, and do not leave scraps of food.
- Follow the campsite regulations.



Don't Leave Food and Garbage Unattended

- ✓ Always store food and garbage in airtight bags or containers in backpacks.
- ✓ TIGHTLY store food and garbage in airtight bags or containers. Odors can attract bears.



If bears have tried to open your backpack, report this to a nearby facility.

At Rest: Keep a Clean Trail

- ✓ Make sure to pick up any trash or leftover food before moving.

Avoid Close Encounters: The Best Approach

- ✓ Make NOISE* to let the bears know you're there.
*Bear bells, radio, clap hands, call out, etc.
- ✓ Travel in groups.
- ✓ Be especially aware of close encounters in areas of low visibility, streams, and windy/stormy days. Make noise in multiple ways.
- ✓ Always remember to avoid close encounters along the trail.



Bears usually run away or hide when they notice humans.



If You Encounter a Bear



- ✓ Stay calm, and SLOWLY back away while watching the bear.

- ✓ DON'T SCREAM!

- ✓ DON'T RUN!
(Running may trigger pursuit.)

- ✓ DON'T throw backpack or stones, etc.!



Sudden movements may trigger an attack!

If a Bear Attacks You

- ✓ Lie on your stomach, and lock your hands behind your neck. Protect your neck, face, and vital organs.
- ✓ Remain still.

Bears may attack humans to defend themselves or their cubs.



Wear a helmet to protect your head.

Never approach cubs: A mother with cubs is the most dangerous bear.



If You Encounter a Bear that Doesn't Run Away

- ✓ Slowly move out of the bear's path, and wait until the bear walks away.

- ✓ DON'T APPROACH the bear.
(Approaching the bear may trigger an attack.)

- ✓ DON'T APPROACH the bear to take pictures!



If you have encountered a bear that didn't run away, report this to a nearby facility.