

Black Bear

General

There are very few hunters that are not familiar with the hulking dark shape of *Ursus Americanus*, or the American Black Bear. Typically a shy and reclusive animal they are also very opportunistic and will readily seek out convenient sources of food, including garbage. This is one reason that “baiting” works so well and is so widely used when hunting the black bear.

Habitat

The black bear is widely distributed throughout Canada, but is not found in Southern Saskatchewan, Southern Alberta, or Prince Edward Island.

The preferred habitat of the black bear is in areas of dense woodland where they can remain reclusive. However, this is only a guideline because they can be seen almost anywhere at any given time.

Feeding

Black bears are omnivorous and opportunistic. They basically will eat whatever is at hand, from carrion, to seasonal fruit, to spawning fish, to garbage. It is common to see a black bear standing on its hind legs and use its keen sense of smell to seek out sources of food.

They usually tend to keep within easy access of a good water source.

Breeding

With some minor regional variances the black bear mates during the months of June and July, with cubs being born during the winter months of January or February while the sow is still in her winter den. Typically she gives birth to two cubs, but up to four is not uncommon.

Hunting Considerations

Here are a few points to consider when hunting black bear:

- Black bears have extremely acute hearing and a keen sense of smell; however they have very poor eyesight.
- They are great swimmers and it is not uncommon for a bear to cross a small lake.
- The black bear has been clocked at over 50 kph for short distances.
- It is an adept climber so trying to avoid an attack by climbing a tree is not recommended. This is also something that hunters in tree stands should keep in mind.
- Bears in wilderness areas are typically active from dawn till dusk, but it is important to note that this may reverse in areas of higher population, such as Ontario’s cottage country, where they may tend to be more nocturnal to avoid contact with humans.
- Black bears are creatures of habit and big males often stick to regular trails as they travel between ranges.
- For their large size, stealth is a prime characteristic of these forest phantoms. A hunter can sit for hours and suddenly, without sound or warning, a bear appears. Diligence and a keen eye are absolutely necessary when hunting black bear.