

Bear Facts for Kids

Facts about Black Bears

SIZE

Black bears are the largest land mammal in New Jersey. Adult female bears, called sows, weigh about 175 pounds. Adult male bears, called boars, weigh around 400 pounds. Black bears are about 3 feet high when standing on all four feet and 5 to 7 feet tall when standing upright.



HABITAT

Bears live in various types of habitat, such as hardwood forests, dense swamps and forested wetlands.



SENSES

Black bears can smell and hear very well.

They can also climb trees and are strong swimmers. Black bears can run 35 miles per hour and can live for more than 25 years.

COLOR

Not all black bears have black fur. Some bears may be brown or cinnamon colored and some have a white patch of hair on their chest called a chest blaze.



DIET

Black bears are omnivores. They eat plants like skunk cabbage, grasses, berries, acorns and nuts. They also eat bees, ants, termites, eggs, small animals like deer fawns and dead animals. They are an opportunistic feeder, which means that they will eat any food they find available, including people's garbage.

WINTER DENS

Black bears spend the winter in dens to avoid the cold weather and the lack of available food in forests. They make their dens in rock cavities, hollow trees, in nests on the ground and beneath branch piles.

Inside of their dens, they go into a long winter's sleep, called torpor. They are not true hibernators, so they may wake up and leave their dens to search for food on mild winter days.



CUBS

Adult females give birth in dens to baby bears called cubs. Cubs are born in January and they weigh about 8 ounces at birth.

They are born blind, covered with fine hair and they nurse on their mother's milk.

Female bears may give birth to 1 to 6 cubs at a time, but 3 is the average litter size in New Jersey.

Cubs grow very quickly and they weigh about 80 pounds by the time they are one year old. Young bears between the ages of one and two years old are called yearlings.

Young bears stay with their mother for about one and a half years. Then, they leave the family unit in search of their own area to live, called a home range.

