

Bears in the Northern Alps

Chubusangaku National Park

Safety Tips for Hiking in Bear Country



環境省
Ministry of the Environment

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Ministry of the Environment

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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.



Sense of Smell: Better than dogs

Vision: Nearsighted

Hearing: More sensitive than humans

Bears are experts in tree climbing and scent detection!

Claw Marks

Claws: Sharp and sturdy

Forefoot
Hindfoot

Tracks

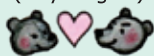
Feces

The color and shape vary depending on what they eat

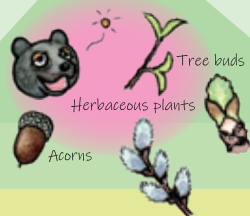
Elevation (m)

2400

Mating Season
(May–August)



End of Hibernation
(late March–April)



late July–early September



- Bears in alpine areas feed on plants and berries.
- Bears lose weight during the summer.

Fleshy fruits (cherries etc.)



Insects (bees and ants)

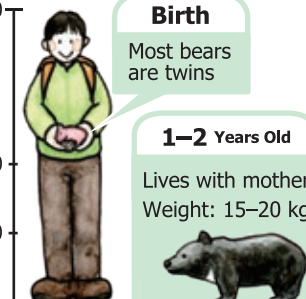
Growth of Bears

(cm)

160

80

40



Ages 4+ (Adult)

Average weight and body length

Male: 66 kg

120–140 cm

Female: 47 kg

110–130 cm

*Weight varies by season



Lives up to 20–30 years

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

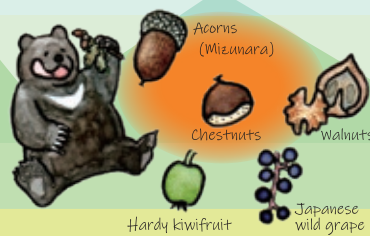
Travel distance: approx. 1–3 km/day
Home range: approx. 10–700 km²/year

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.

Hyperphagia Period (mid September–)

- Bears consume a lot of food to prepare for hibernation.
- Bears in alpine areas leave the mountains to feed on acorns.



Denning Period (mid November–)



Cubs are born in early February.

*Most bears enter dens by the end of December.

800

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.

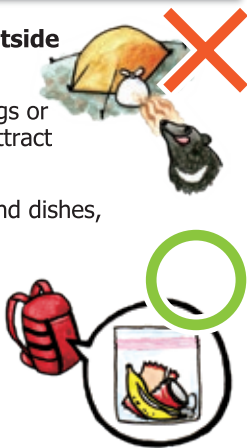
✓ Thoroughly wipe your cooking pots and dishes, and store them like food and trash.



- 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 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.

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!

