

News Release



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Interior Regions 5 & 7, Missouri River and Upper Colorado Basin Regions
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

For Immediate Release

[Date]

Contact: Joe Szuszwalak, 303-236-4336, joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov

As Grizzly Bears Emerge from Dens, USFWS Urges Public to Stay Safe and Keep Bears Wild

Residents and visitors advised to be vigilant, keep their distance, and to never feed wildlife



A grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) and her cub in Yellowstone National Park.
Credit: Jennifer Fortin-Noreus / USFWS

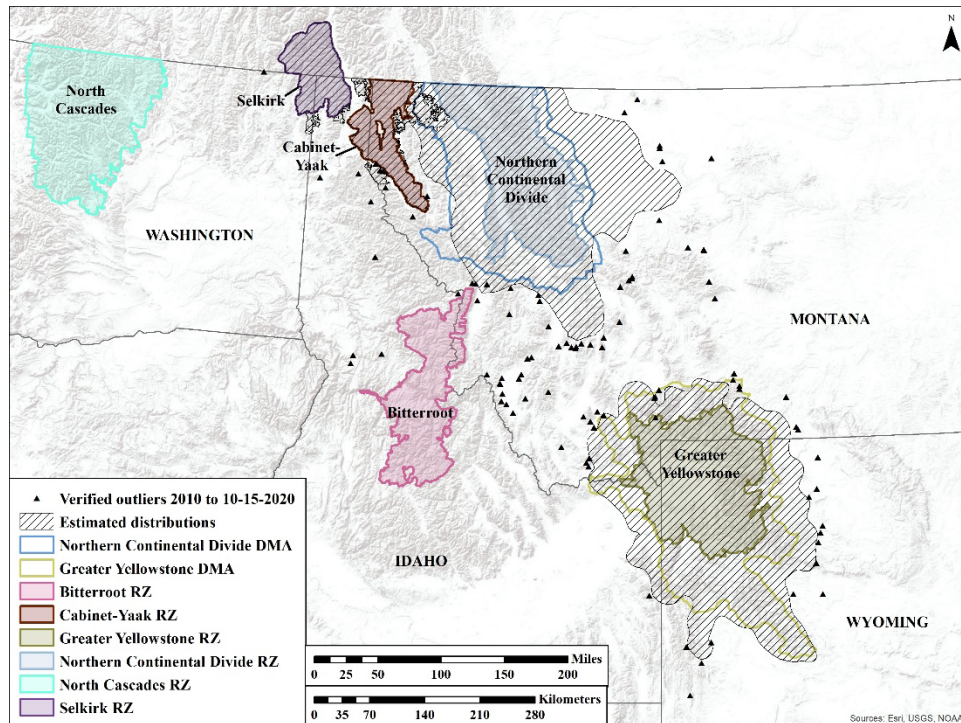
MISSOULA — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) reminds the public to remain vigilant as grizzly bears emerge from their dens this spring. Most grizzly bear conflicts can be avoided by practicing the basic bear safety guidelines below. Feeding, approaching, or otherwise disturbing grizzly bears not only poses a significant threat to humans and bears but is also a federal offense under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Approaching, disturbing, or feeding bears, intentionally or accidentally, is extremely dangerous to both humans and bears. Feeding wildlife is likely to habituate animals to human development and create dangerous human food conditioned behavior, when this happens bears can become aggressive and pose a threat to human safety. Feeding also discourages wildlife from seeking natural food sources. Be aware that anything with an odor such as bird seed, pet food, or food meant for other wildlife can lead to habituated and food conditioned behavior. Hazing, relocation, or euthanasia of habituated bears by wildlife managers may be needed to protect human safety. These actions are generally avoidable if attractants are stored properly and human interactions are minimized.

The most common human-bear conflicts involve unsecured attractants, such as garbage and human food. Protect yourself and bears by staying alert and following these guidelines:

- Never approach bears, always remain at least 100 yards (300 feet) away, or about the length of a football field
- Practice ethical wildlife viewing by remaining a safe distance and never disturbing natural behaviors
- Never feed, leave food for, or make food accessible to bears
- Store food, garbage, barbecue grills, and other attractants in locked hard-sided vehicles or bear-resistant storage boxes
- Carry bear spray, [know how to use it](#), and make sure it is accessible
- Hike or ski in groups of three or more, stay on maintained trails and make noise
- Avoid hiking at dusk, dawn, or at night
- Do not run if you encounter a bear
- Instead of traditional bird feeders, set up birdhouses or birdbaths, plant native flowers, or set up hanging flower baskets for hummingbirds
- Keep chickens and other small livestock properly secured using electric fencing or keep them inside a closed shed with a door
- Report bear sightings, encounters, and conflicts immediately to your state or tribal wildlife management agency

Residents and visitors in Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming are encouraged to familiarize themselves with areas where they may encounter grizzly bears. The  below represents the estimated distribution of grizzly bears and other verified sightings. People recreating and residing in the larger areas of western Montana, southeastern Idaho, the Idaho Panhandle, and northeast Washington should be prepared to encounter a grizzly bear and are encouraged to follow the guidelines above. 



Estimated distribution of grizzly bears in the Northern Continental Divide, Greater Yellowstone, Cabinet-Yaak, and Selkirk Ecosystems, and verified grizzly bear outlier observations between the occupied ecosystems. There are currently no known populations in the North Cascades and Bitterroot Ecosystems. [\[Full size map link\]](#)

Additional grizzly bear safety information is available from the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee for [residents](#), [hunters](#), [hikers/campers](#), [farmers/ranchers](#), and [wildlife watchers](#).

###

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#), and [YouTube](#).

– FWS –