

# North Carolina's Black Bears



Black bears are **WILD** animals, just like squirrels, rabbits, **BIRDS**, turtles and **ALLIGATORS**. Wild animals need food, water, space and shelter to live and are naturally afraid of people. Bears are big wild animals, but they are **SHY** and hide from people most of the time. Because they are big animals they need lots of **HABITAT** (food, water, space and shelter) to live.

Bears live in the woods and find foods like **BERRIES, NUTS** and small animals to eat. They are excellent climbers and climb **TREES** to reach nuts and fruits. They also use trees for safety and bears often climb high in a tree when they want to hide.

In North Carolina, bears are not true hibernators. They sleep in a **DEN** for days or weeks at a time. It is not uncommon to see bears get up to move and eat. Every second year, female (girl) bears give birth to two tiny **CUBS** (baby bears) in February. The cubs will stay with their mother for two years.

The vast **POCOSIN** habitat in eastern North Carolina supports one of the largest populations of black bears east of the Mississippi River. Although some states black bear populations are **THREATENED** (reminds people that we need to help conserve a species and its habitat), the bears in North Carolina are state hunted.

## Word Find

Find the **GREEN** capitalized words from this page.

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Top left: Adult male bears can weigh up to 400 pounds. This 300 pound male is resting in its native habitat. Top right: Twin one-month old cubs climb on their mother in a cozy, safe den. Bottom: Female bears find a safe place to make a winter den and give birth to cubs. All U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photos.

## How you can help bears

### NEVER FEED a bear.

This teaches them not to be afraid of people. When wild animals learn to get food from people they can be a nuisance or danger to people, and they are in more danger from people too. Bears that find garbage or are given food by people may learn to visit houses and yards. Do not go near a bear outside of its natural habitat.

### DON'T RUIN HABITAT.

Wild animals of all sizes need habitat to live. Forests are home for many animals, including bears. Cutting trees, leaving trash or dumping in water ruins habitat – the home of large and small animals.

### DRIVE SAFELY.

Bears need a lot of habitat to live. They have to cross roads and canals to find enough food to survive. Pay attention while driving and try to help animals cross safely.

### LEARN.

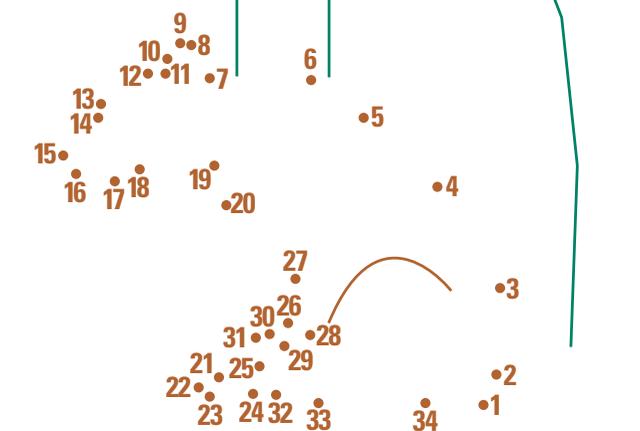
Learn about wildlife and enjoy sharing the world with wild animals and healthy habitat.

### REPORT DEAD BEARS.

Wildlife managers keep track of bears in North Carolina. It is important that they know when a bear is found dead. If you find a bear that has died, report it to a wildlife professional at 1 800/662 7137 and do not touch it.

## Dot to Dot

Connect the dots and color habitat for



Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge 252/473 1131  
[www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator\\_river/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator_river/)

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge 252/926 4021  
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Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge 252/796 3004  
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