



ALASKAN BROWN BEAR

Ursus arctos horribilis



The brown bear, which is distributed throughout the northern hemisphere, includes several subspecies. In North America, these subspecies include the Mexican brown bear, the grizzly bear, and the Alaskan brown bear. Alaskan brown bears are found in coastal areas where salmon is the primary food source. Brown bears found inland are called grizzly bears. Brown bears have been known to live 34 years in the wild, although this is rare. Old females may live to 26 years of age. In comparison to the black bear, the brown bear is usually larger, has a more prominent shoulder hump, and has longer, straighter claws. The long claws are useful in digging for roots or excavating the burrows of small mammals. The musculature and bone structure of the hump are adaptations for digging and for attaining the bursts of speed necessary to capture moose or caribou.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

An extremely large Alaskan brown bear may be 9 feet tall when standing on its hind feet.

WEIGHT

Mature male Alaskan brown bears weigh between 500 and 900 lbs., with extremely large individuals weighing as much as 1,400 lbs. Females weigh one-half to three-quarters as much.

FOOD HABITS

Alaskan brown bears are omnivores. Their diet includes berries, grasses, sedges, horsetails, fish, ground squirrels, and the roots of many kinds of plants. The Alaskan brown bear specializes in eating salmon.

HABITAT

Alaskan brown bears are found in coastal areas.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The Alaskan brown bear is found in coastal areas of Alaska. Other subspecies of brown bear can be found in Canada, Mexico, Western Europe, the Middle East, the Atlas Mountains in Africa, the Himalayas, Siberia, Japan, and the continental United States.

FUN FACT

Brown bears have an especially good sense of smell, and under the right conditions they may be able to detect odors more than a mile away.