

BLACK BEAR BIOLOGY



The Louisiana black bear is our official state mammal and the largest land animal that inhabits our Sportsman's Paradise. As with any animal, understanding its biology and behavior can help with situations involving black bears.

HABITAT

The Louisiana black bear is a habitat generalist. It occurs primarily in bottomland hardwood forests, which are found in lowland and river floodplains. Hardwoods, such as oaks and hickories, produce valuable foods for bears and other wildlife. Other habitat types used by bears include upland forests, swamps, marshes, salt domes, and agricultural fields.

photo by Steve Uffman



FOOD



Bears quadruple their caloric intake during the fall months in preparation for their upcoming winter dormancy period. They can consume up to 20,000 calories a day in an effort to increase their fat reserves.

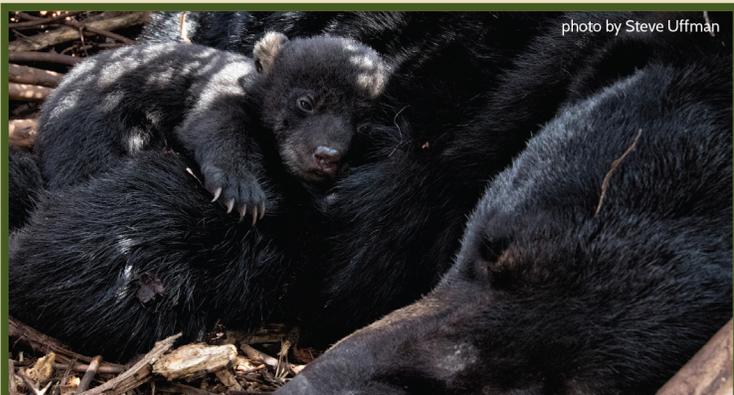
While searching for food during fall months, bears roam over large areas and may appear in residential locations, especially if calorie-rich natural foods (acorns, pecans, etc.) are present. They are also attracted to other calorie-rich food sources, such as pet food and household garbage.

DORMANCY

Louisiana black bears enter a period of dormancy during winter months. Bears do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate during this dormancy period, but it is not identical to hibernation that small mammals exhibit.

Female bears must den to give birth, but male bears may remain somewhat active during winter. Males emerge from their dens in early spring and females with cubs emerge several weeks later.

photo by Steve Uffman



MATING

Black bears mate during summer months, and may often be observed in pairs during this period. Both males and females increase their movement during mating season, displaying signs of courtship at this time. Males may fight for dominance/mating rights and follow females throughout their range.

photo by Steve Uffman

