



## TIPS FOR SAFE DRIVING IN BEAR COUNTRY



[WWW.WILDWISE.CA](http://WWW.WILDWISE.CA)



### WATCH OUT!

Drive carefully. Bears are killed by vehicles on Yukon roads every year. Bears are often seen eating along Yukon roadways. Keep an eye on the shoulders and stop for bears crossing. Speeding increases your chance of a collision with a bear.



### KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Never approach a bear on foot. Stay in your vehicle for viewing and leave immediately if the bear seems stressed, changes what it is doing or approaches you. Don't follow it in your vehicle.



### SNAP AND GO

Stay in your vehicle to take photos and move along quickly. Never approach a bear to get a better shot.



### NEVER FEED BEARS



A fed bear is a dead bear. Never try to hand food to a bear, tempt them with food or leave food behind for them. There is plenty of natural food for bears in the Yukon. Keep all food in your RV and lock up when you leave. Bears are good at getting into vehicles if they are unlocked.

### KEEP IT CLEAN

Bears are attracted to garbage. Keep it inside your RV at all times and never leave your garbage behind. Always dispose of garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters and don't leave it beside a dumpster that is full. Find one that closes and locks.



### AVOID BEAR JAMS



If you see a lineup of people in vehicles watching a bear, please move along. "Bear jams" are dangerous for humans and bears. You will likely have another opportunity for viewing down the road.



## THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BEARS

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### HABITUATION

Bears tend to be very tolerant of humans. This means they can easily get comfortable being around people if there are no negative consequences. This is called habituation and can lead to bears coming too close and to people thinking it is safe to approach and/or feed a seemingly 'friendly' bear. It is never safe to approach a bear!

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### FOOD CONDITIONING

A 'food conditioned' bear is one who has had a food reward from humans. Bears are smart, learn fast and may aggressively defend their food. If they think that humans = treats they will come looking for more, a dangerous situation for humans and especially bears. Many food conditioned bears are destroyed every year in Yukon.

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### HIBERNATION

Yukon bears hibernate to survive the long, cold winter. Bears need to eat a lot of food to hibernate successfully. This means they are eating all the time, especially in late summer and fall when berries are ripe and salmon are spawning. Most bears are in their dens by November and emerge as early as March. During hibernation a bear's heartrate slows and they 'recycle' their urine to make proteins. If a bear has not taken in enough calories they may emerge mid-winter to forage.

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### BIRTH

Sows (female bears) give birth in their dens during the winter months in Yukon only if they have taken in enough calories to feed their cubs. Bear cubs are born tiny and naked, weighing just a few hundred grams. Newborn cubs grow quickly on their mother's milk throughout winter and nursing sows wake regularly to tend to their cubs.

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### BEHAVIOR

Sows will protect their cubs and all bears are likely to protect their food resources. However, bear attacks on humans are very rare. In general, Grizzly bears are known to be shy and easily scared away. Black bears are considered to be more bold and curious. However, it is impossible to tell how any individual bear will react to humans and no bear should ever be approached or fed.

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### 1-800-661-0525

Call this number to report negative encounters with bears, people feeding bears and bears killed or injured by motor vehicle collision.