

## **YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK BEAR-RELATED INJURIES/FATALITIES**

From 1980-2002, over 62 million people visited Yellowstone National Park (YNP). During the same period, 32 people were injured by bears. The chance of being injured by a bear while in the park is approximately 1 in 1.9 million.

### **Injuries to Humans - Grizzly Bears**

Grizzly bear-inflicted injuries to humans in developed areas averaged approximately 1 per year during the 1930's through the 1950's and 4 per year during the 1960's. Grizzly bear-caused human injuries in developed areas then decreased to 1 injury every 2 years (0.5/year) during the 1970's. In the last 20 years (1980-2002), there have been only 2 grizzly bear-caused human injuries in a developed area.

Human injuries from grizzly bears in the backcountry, a rare occurrence before 1970, increased to an average of approximately 1 per year during the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's. The slight increase in backcountry injuries from the 1970's through the 1990's may be related to the increase in backcountry recreational use since the early 1970's.

### **Injuries to Humans - Black Bears**

Human injuries from black bears have decreased from averages of 46 per year from 1931-1969, to 4 per year during the 1970's and less than one (0.17) per year from 1980-2002. Undoubtedly, some minor injuries were not reported by park visitors. Only 7 of the 45 injuries caused by black bears from 1970-2002 were in backcountry areas, and 2 of these were from females "defending cubs." Thirty-four injuries were from black bears along roadsides as a result of visitors getting too close while attempting to feed, take pictures, or get a better view of bears. Three injuries were from black bears in developed areas, and 1 injury was during a bear-relocation accident.

### **Human Fatalities**

Five known bear-caused human fatalities and 1 possible fatality have occurred within YNP. In addition, 1 fatality occurred in the Gallatin National Forest outside of the park.

In October of 1986, the fifth fatality in YNP occurred when a photographer approached an adult female grizzly bear too closely in Hayden Valley. The fourth fatality occurred in July 1984, when a grizzly bear killed a backpacker in a backcountry campsite located on the southern end of White Lake. The third fatality occurred in June 1972, when a man returned at night to an illegally established camp and approached to within 50 feet of a grizzly bear that was feeding on food that was left out. The second fatality occurred in August 1942, in the Old Faithful campground. The species of bear involved could not be determined. The first fatality occurred in 1916 when a grizzly bear killed a man in a roadside camp. A possible fatality supposedly occurred in 1907 when a man was attacked by a female grizzly bear after he prodded her cub with an umbrella. However, the validity of this incident is questionable. In late June 1983, a fatality occurred in the Gallatin National Forest outside the park when an adult male grizzly bear attacked a camper in the Rainbow Point Campground.

**YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK BEAR RELATED INJURIES AND FATALITIES, 1975-2002.**

Year	Total Visitors	Campgroun d Use Nights	Backcountry Use Nights <sup>a</sup>	Total Injuries			Backcountry Injuries			Developed Area Injuries			Roadside Injuries			Handling Injuries <sup>b</sup>		
				GR	BL	UNK	GR	BL	UNK	GR	BL	UNK	GR	BL	UNK	GR	BL	UNK
2002	2,983,051	564,132	43,590	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001	2,752,346	671,666	43,302	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000	2,838,233	671,666	39,469	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999	3,131,381	679,230	43,540	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1998	3,120,830	708,039	45,612	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1997	2,889,513	695,679	44,836	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1996	3,012,171	635,697	45,743	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1995	3,125,285	701,113	45,774	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994	3,046,645	713,036	45,460	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1993	2,912,193	624,735	45,135	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1992	3,186,190	724,815	42,124	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1991	2,957,856	702,444	41,476	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1990	2,857,096	680,064	37,318	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1989	2,680,376	644,761	32,747	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1988	2,219,128	566,857	25,188	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	2,618,249	738,220	32,906	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1986	2,405,063	677,715	31,414	2 <sup>c</sup>	0	1	2 <sup>c</sup>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1985	2,262,455	635,900	32,532	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1984	2,262,969	651,895	34,936	5 <sup>c</sup>	0	0	4 <sup>c</sup>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	2,405,653	679,005	43,738	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
1982	2,404,862	692,018	49,400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1981	2,544,242	758,990	55,060	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1980	2,009,581	618,765	54,874	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1979	1,891,927	680,473	51,182	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1978	2,623,141	848,146	52,795	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1977	2,487,084	889,786	55,331	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1976	2,525,174	885,225	50,580	4	4	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
1975	2,246,132	685,986	44,374	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

<sup>a</sup> Includes overnight backcountry users only. Backcountry day use records are not collected.

<sup>c</sup> Includes one fatality

<sup>b</sup> Includes injuries that occurred during management or research handling of bears.

1974 Campground Use Nights = 751,501