

# Northern Divide Bear Project



## General Description:

The black bear is approximately two and a half to three feet when standing on all fours. It has small eyes, rounded ears, a long snout, a large body, a short tail, and shaggy hair. It differs from grizzly bears in being smaller with a smaller shoulder hump, a furred rear instep, a less concave facial profile, smaller claws that are more tightly curved, and longer, smoother, and more tapered ears. Adult males average 220 pounds. Adult females average 140 pounds.



**Black Bears:** Their grizzled cousins get the limelight but the Glacier National Park area is also home to an even larger number of black bears. Little is known about these black bears, and while they more easily coexist with humans, they are also vulnerable to legal harvest when they venture outside of the park. Bear populations are being studied noninvasively by systematic collection of hair and use of DNA analysis to identify the species, sex, and individual identity of the bears. Analysis of the 18,000 black bear hair samples collected during a 2004 grizzly bear study would provide valuable information on the number and distribution of black bears and how they interact with grizzlies.

The largest study of its kind in the world, the Northern Divide Bear Project is estimating grizzly and black bear population size on 8 million acres in northwest Montana.

For more information visit: <http://nrm.sc.usgs.gov/research/beardna.htm>

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