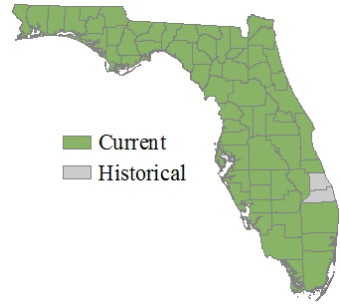


FLORIDA BLACK BEAR
Ursus americanus floridanus

Order: Carnivora
Family: Ursidae
FNAI Ranks: G5T4/S4
U.S. Status: none
FL Status: none



Description: A large mammal (3 to 3.5 ft. = 2.8 - 3.2 m at the shoulder) with glossy black hair and a brown muzzle. Females average approximately 180 lbs. (82 kg); males average approximately 250 lbs. (113 kg). Individuals in southern Florida may lose their dorsal guard hairs, exposing the woolly brown undercoat. A white chest patch may be present on some individuals. Tail is short and inconspicuous. Ears are round and widely separated. In males, front feet range from 3.5 - 5.5 in. (89 - 140 mm) by 3.3 - 5.9 in. (84 - 150 mm); rear feet measure 3 in. (76 mm) by 5.5 - 8.7 in. (140 - 221 mm). Sign may include shredded cabbage palm, torn-up logs, and large scratches on trees. Scat (droppings) generally similar to that of dogs, but may vary in consistency and may contain a mix of seeds, hairs, and grasses.

Similar Species: A large, black dog or a hog could be mistaken for a small black bear, but does not compare in size or foot measurements.

Habitat: A wide variety of forested communities is needed to support the varied seasonal diet of black bears. Forested wetlands are particularly important for diurnal cover. Baygalls (bayheads) are important for cover and dens.

Seasonal Occurrence: Active year-round.

Florida Distribution: Widely distributed throughout FL, occupying about 45% of its historical range. Concentrations occur in the Apalachicola basin, Osceola NF and adjacent Pinhook Swamp, Gulf Hammock, Ocala NF, St. Johns River basin, and Big Cypress region.

Range-wide Distribution: Florida, extreme southern Alabama, and southeastern Georgia.

Conservation Status: Protected on many large areas of public land, including Apalachicola, Ocala, and Osceola National Forests, Eglin Air Force Base, Pinhook Swamp Wildlife Management Area, Big Cypress National Preserve, St. Marks, Chazowhitzka, and Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuges. Green Swamp also contains a small but growing population.

Florida Black Bear

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Protection and Management: Maintain a diversity of habitats over extensive acreage, including dense baygalls that are inaccessible to humans.

References: Brown 1997, Hall 1981, Humphrey (ed.) 1992, Whitaker 1996.



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