



**COMMON GRIZLI BEAR
CANADA
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MECHISLAV KLIMOVICH**

PHOTO ENTRY

Grizzlybär (G), *Ours grizzly* (F). "Grizzly" is derived from the grizzled appearance of the white-tipped guard hairs in many individuals.

DESCRIPTION (*male*) Head and body length 6-8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 m). Tail length 3-4 inches (7.6 to 10.2 cm). Shoulder height 3-4 feet (0.9 to 1.2 m). Weight as much as 500-750 pounds (225-340 kg). Females are much smaller. Chromosome count is 74.

The grizzly is a powerfully built bear with long, thick hair that varies in color from dark brown to pale yellowish-brown. (The so-called **Toklat grizzly** from the Alaska Range is a striking pale golden color with chocolate-colored lower parts.) The body is massive and thick, with a prominent hump on the shoulders and a huge head supported by a short, muscular neck. The facial profile is concave. The front claws often exceed 3-3/4 inches (9.5 cm) in length, and are used primarily for digging and as weapons.

BEHAVIOR Except when mating, or in the case of a mother with cubs, grizzlies are solitary and unsociable. Males, especially, are great wanderers. Grizzlies mate from late May till the end of June. The female breeds every 2-3 years, with 1-4 cubs, but generally two, born in the den during January or February. She is a good mother and keeps the cubs with her for two years, or often longer. Full grown at 8-10 years, with a life expectancy of 25-30 years.

Except for polar bears, grizzlies are the most carnivorous of bears. They kill animals as large as moose and elk, dig rodents from their burrows, and eat spawning fish and carrion.

Nonetheless, the grizzly cannot obtain enough meat to sustain itself, and must rely on vegetable matter for much of its intake, eating grasses, sedges, roots, tubers, buds, berries and nuts. It dens in the fall and sleeps until April; however, if its sleep is disturbed, it can come to life quickly. Senses

of smell and hearing are excellent, eyesight not as good, but able to make out moving objects at a considerable distance. Surprisingly agile, it can run 30 mph (48 km/h) on the flat, and can gallop for miles over steep mountain slopes. An excellent swimmer, it crosses large rivers and lakes that are many miles in width. Cubs can climb trees, but mature bears cannot because their claws are too long and their bodies too heavy.

HABITAT Adaptable to a wide range of terrain and climate, including tundra, forests, mountains, and semi-deserts.

