

FOCUS

wild arizona

Key Words

Hibernation: spending part or all of the winter dormant or asleep

Slogan: a catchy sentence used in advertising or to help remember

MAY IS “BE BEAR AWARE”

month. Do you know why?

Spring’s warmer weather brings bears out of hibernation. Bear cubs, born during the winter, are now learning to find food with the help of their mothers—and they need a lot of it. At birth, a black bear cub weighs 8 ounces (the same as one glass of water). Obviously, the cub will get much bigger. But how quickly does a black bear grow? Does it grow more quickly than a human baby, or more slowly?

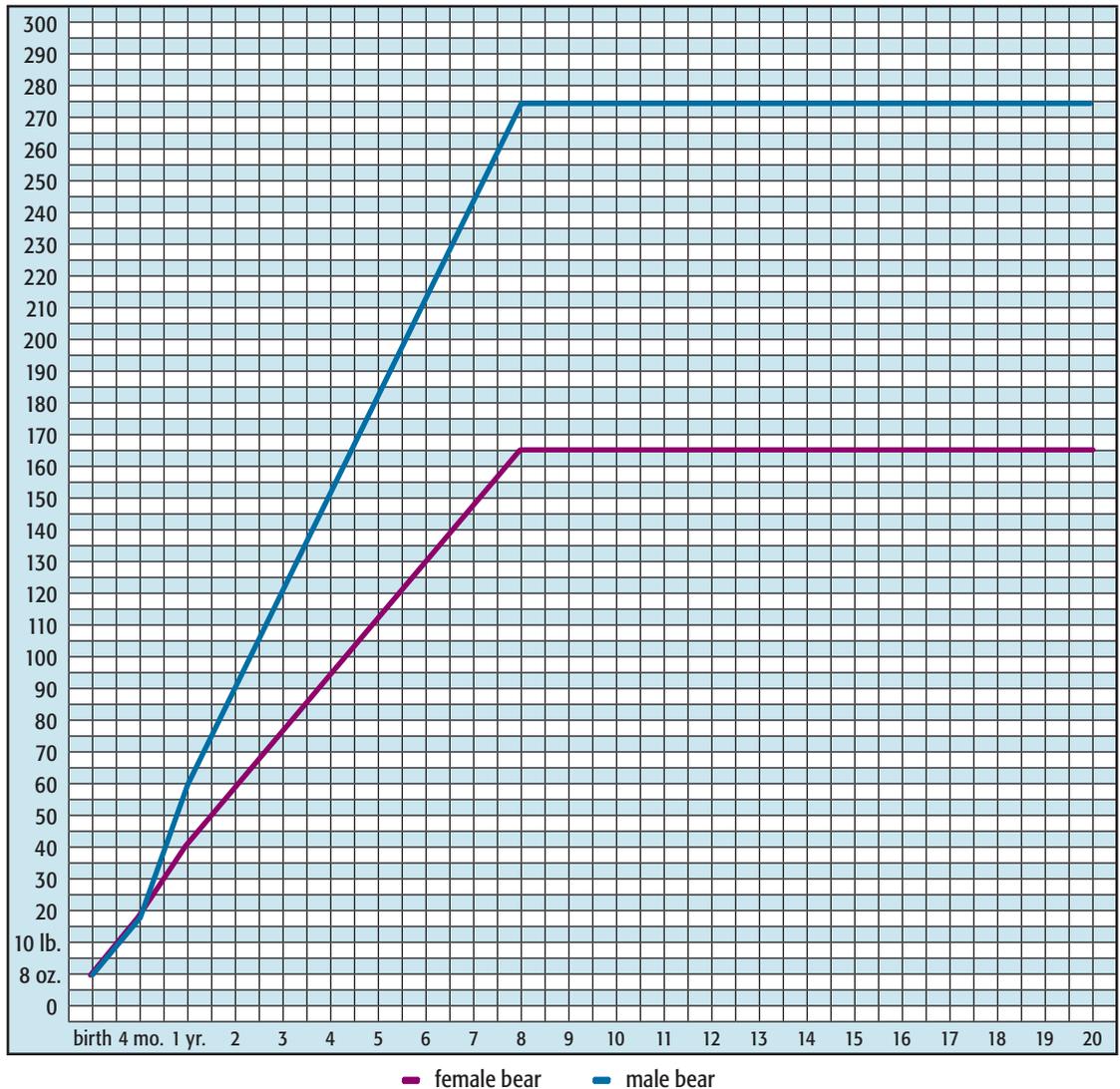
This graph shows the weight of a black bear as it ages.

- How much does a bear weigh when it is 4 months old?
- How much does a female bear weigh when it is 1 year old? What about a male bear?
- At what age does a bear reach full size?

How do you compare to a black bear? Let’s take a look. Using the same graph, place a mark for your weight right now. Be sure to line it up with your age! Do you know how much you weighed at other ages? If so, place them on the graph. Ask your parents how much you weighed when you were born. Draw a line connecting all of your weights.

- At birth, did you weigh more or less than a bear?
- Who weighed more at 1 year?
- If you were to continue growing at the same rate, how much would you weigh when you are 18?

BEAR GROWTH CHART





As we said, spring is an excellent time to see bears and other wildlife. So, what should you do if you see a bear (or any animal) in the wild or in your neighborhood?

Remain calm and “think like a bear”! What does the bear want? Well, just like humans, bears need food, water, shelter and space. Life as a bear can be tough, especially during really dry and hot times.

Remember that bears don’t want to be around you any more than you want to be close to them. Follow these rules to remain safe around any wildlife:

1. Stay as far away from the animal as possible.
2. Always face the animal—never turn your back to it.
3. Never stare at a wild animal—the animal may feel threatened.
4. Never touch or get close to baby or young animals, their nests or dens.
5. Always give the animal an “escape route” so it does not feel trapped.
6. Never feed the animal.
7. Enjoy the animal as it is: Don’t try to get it to move by shouting or by throwing rocks or other objects.

When you see a wild animal, it can be easy to forget these rules. So, people often use slogans, or catchy sentences, to help them remember. For example,



“A fed bear is a dead bear.” What does this mean? Does it help you remember not to feed bears?

Try to develop your own slogan that could be used to teach people one of the rules above. After you come up with a slogan, design a bumper sticker that uses it. Draw a rectangle that is about 10 inches long and 3 inches high, or use the smaller one on the right side of this page. Print the slogan inside the rectangle. You may also draw a picture that explains the slogan. You are welcome to keep your artwork, but if you would like to send your design to the Arizona Game and Fish Department, please mail it to Karen Schedler, Arizona Game and Fish Department IEED, 2221 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85023. Please send your name, school grade level, address, phone number and e-mail address (if you have one) with your submission. ✍

■ This feature is part of the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Focus: Wild Arizona program, a free education program for teachers, parents, students or anyone interested in learning about wildlife and habitat. Visit our Web site, azgfd.gov/focuswild, to find exciting lessons and resources.

