

Bear Safety

Summer is here and berry-picking has begun. Tourists are hiking and camping. The outdoors has plenty of space for people, and for bears.

Bears are everywhere and usually hiding from people. Just because you don't see a bear doesn't mean they aren't around.

The most dangerous are:

- Bears used to eating human food.
- Females defending cubs or a fresh kill.
- Cute and friendly bears.

Bear Facts:

- Bears can run as fast as horses, uphill or downhill.
- Bears can climb trees.
- Bears have excellent senses of smell and hearing.
- Bears are strong. They can tear cars apart looking for food.
- Every bear defends a "personal space," from a few metres to a few hundred meters.
- Bears aggressively defend their food.
- All female bears defend their cubs, usually chasing her cubs up a tree and defending them from the base.

Bear Safety:

- Respect them.
- Never surprise, approach or try to feed them.
- Be alert.
- Look for signs of recent activity - droppings, tracks, evidence of digging, and claw or bite marks on trees.
- Make your presence known by talking loudly, clapping, or singing. Some people wear bells.
- Photographing bears can be dangerous.
- It is best not to hike with dogs, as they can antagonize bears and cause an attack.

- Children should not run or play unsupervised, or make animal-like sounds. They should not approach, pet, feed, or pose for photos with bears, even if the bear appears tame.

If you encounter a bear at the roadside:

- Remain in your vehicle with your windows up.

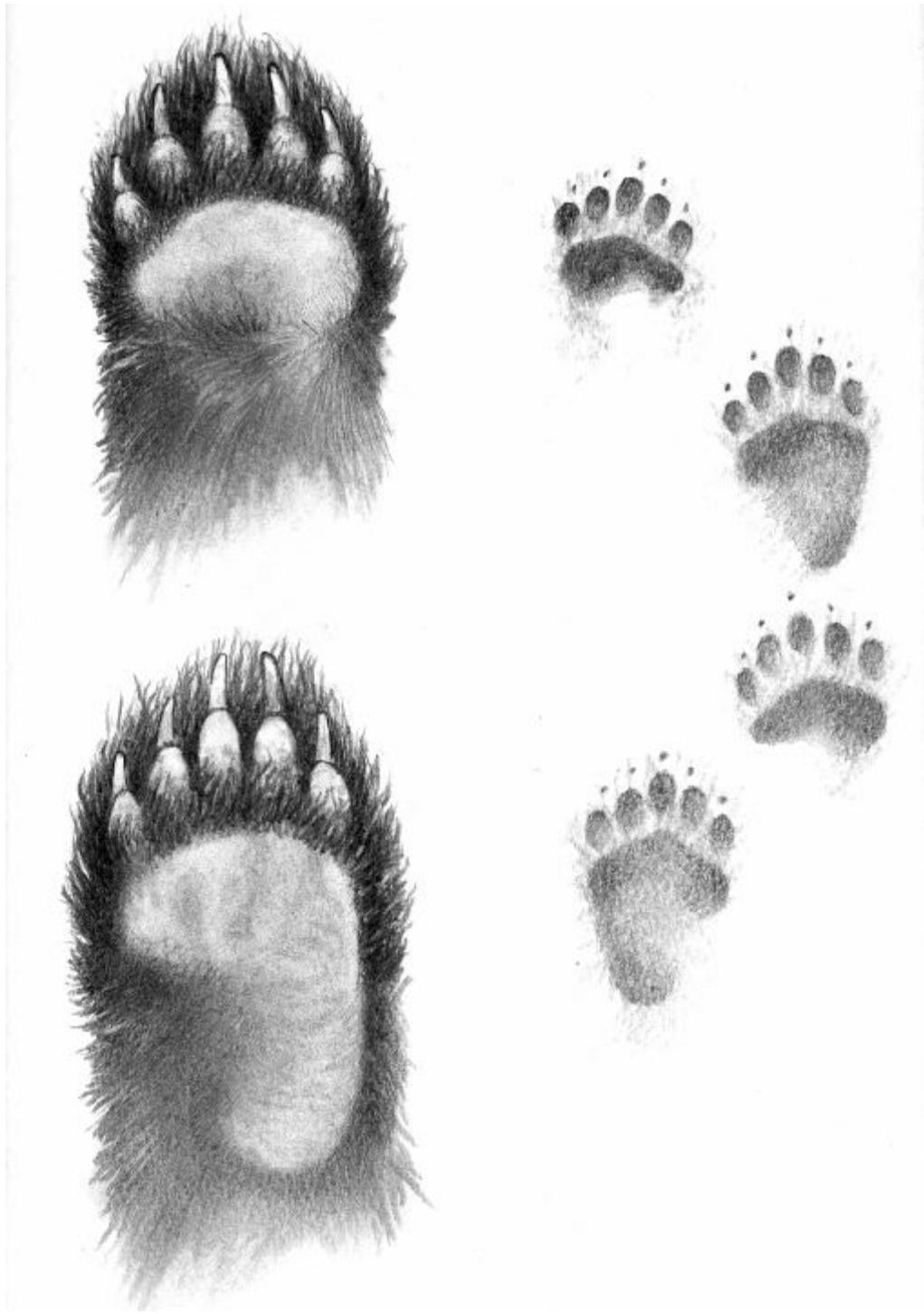
Food and garbage:

- Reduce or eliminate odours from yourself, camp, clothes, and your vehicle.
- Don't sleep in the same clothes you cook in.
- Store food so that bears cannot smell or reach it. Don't keep food in your tent - not even a chocolate bar.
- Properly store and pack out all garbage.

Have a safe summer. When you see a bear anywhere in the province and need assistance, call the Ministry of Environment toll-free 1-877-952-7277.



(Artwork by Michael Hames)



Bear Paw Prints – Artwork by Michael Hames