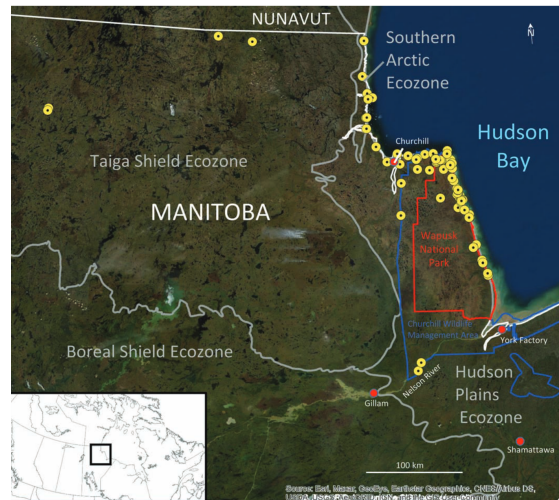


Be Grizzly Bear Aware in Northern Manitoba

Grizzly bears have been listed as extirpated from Manitoba since the late 1800s. There has been an increase in sightings in Northern Manitoba in recent years. While the species remains listed as extirpated within Manitoba, the recent rise in sightings calls for the need to be 'Grizzly Bear Aware in Northern Manitoba'.

In 2017, grizzly bears in Canada were listed as "Special Concern" under the Species At Risk Act (SARA). This act helps to prevent species from becoming extinct and provides legal conservation protection to listed species.

The increase in grizzly bear sightings has been particularly high within Wapusk National Park, where the population has most likely originated from Nunavut. Little is known about the ecology or the population of the species in northern Manitoba.



Map of confirmed grizzly bear occurrences in northern Manitoba from 1980-2020.

The potential re-establishment of a large predatory species into our province requires a proactive approach to management to educate northern residents before conflicts become more common. Further research will need to be done to determine key habitat areas, whether the bears are breeding or denning in Manitoba, what food resources they are utilizing, and other biological and ecological information. These bears are different than the plains grizzly that once inhabited the province, and this situation gives us a unique opportunity to study how grizzly bears colonize areas, and allows us to implement management techniques to mitigate human conflicts.

Barren-ground grizzly bears are new to the area and are different from the historic plains grizzly that inhabited the province over a century ago. Management of the species will require local community involvement and we are encouraging public participation in reporting observations on <https://www.brandonu.ca/manitoba-grizzly-bear-safety-program/> or on the iiNaturalist group <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/manitoba-grizzly-bear-observations>

To Prevent Conflict

- Reduce the use of bear attractants and use bear-safe practices when spending time in known bear areas
- Potential attractants include garbage, compost and recycling, food, bird feeders, fruit trees, berry bushes, pet foods, BBQs, fish nets, smokers, and gardens
- If a bear gets an easy meal from improperly stored food or garbage, it is likely to return and look for food in similar places.
- Bear spray should be used at close ranges on aggressive or attacking bears, this is only successful as a weapon NOT as a deterrent to keep a bear from entering an area
- If no other option is available and the use of a firearm is necessary, do not aim to wound the bear. If a bear is attacking you aim at its chest. Only wounding a bear is likely to escalate the situation more. Using a firearm should only be used in life-threatening situations, and followed by reporting the incident to conservation officers as soon as possible.

Become aware of grizzly body language:

- Subtle signs of stress are a stiffened stance, change in body orientation, yawning, or a pause in activities.
- Signs of aggression include huffing, moaning, teeth popping, slapping the ground, and ear pinned back
- Extreme signs of danger include salivating, roaring, paw swatting, swaying their head back and forth, lunging, stalking, or charging

ID Guide

To identify a grizzly bear, from a brown phase black bear you should look for the distinguishing shoulder hump, short rounded ears, and dish-shaped face profile. They have front claws that are 2-4 inches long that cannot be retracted back into the paw.



	Black Bear	Grizzly Bear
Shoulder:	No hump	Hump
Ears:	Taller	Short and rounded
Face:	Straight profile	Dished profile
Front Claws:	Dark ~ 1.5" long	Light ~ 2-4" long



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If you Encounter a Bear

- Stay calm, identify the species of bear, grizzly bear, or brown phase black bear, and refer to the 'ID Guide' to help identify distinguishing features between the two.
- **DO NOT RUN!** You will not outrun a bear and may encourage the bear to chase you, causing an attack
- Do not harass the bear
- If your vehicle is nearby, enter it quickly and calmly
- Look for cubs, if they are in the area, move away from them as quickly and safely as possible
- Try to leave the bear an escape route
- If the bear "bluff charges" this is a way for them to express dominance. It may do this several times, followed by its retreat.
- During a charge stand your ground and show the bear you are not a threat, and that you are human, by speaking in a low calm voice
 - Avoid eye contact, this could be seen as a threat
 - If the bear continues to charge, make eye contact, jump up and down, and shout as loudly as you can in an attempt to intimidate the bear
 - Use bear spray if you have it by pointing the nozzle end at the bear and pulling the trigger towards the nose and eyes of the bear

If The Bear Attacks

The most common attack is defensive and occurs when the bear is surprised, protecting food or its cubs.

- If you are attacked by a grizzly bear do not fight back, Fighting back as it has been known to increase the severity of the attack. Instead, play dead by laying face down using your hands and arms to cover and protect your face and neck.
- A defensive attack lasts no longer than a few minutes
- If you are stalked by a predatory grizzly bear adopt a dominant stance, and make eye contact while shouting and jumping. If a predatory bear attacks, fight back as hard as you can

How can you help?

- Petition governments for subsidized community bear-proofing materials such as electric fencing, garbage incinerators, or bear-proof waste disposal sites. This will help to eliminate any chance that a grizzly will become food-conditioned and is a proactive approach to minimize the opportunity that a grizzly will develop bad habits and become a problem bear in your community
- Practice bear safety when venturing into the wilderness and ensure that all attractants are properly disposed of and managed around your home and cabins
- Become a grizzly bear expert and educate yourself through available online resources such as reaching out to other communities that coexist with grizzlies, using local knowledge, and sharing sighting locations with other community residents
- If you are interested in participating in or helping the grizzly bear efforts, develop a 'Grizzly Alert Program' committee within your community, work to encourage residents to immediately report all sightings, and alert community members through social media, or other ways about the location of observation so community members know to be on the lookout for grizzlies in the area
- Attend workshops or educational events being hosted in your community and encourage others to come as well
- Partake in the iNaturalist Manitoba Grizzly Bear Observations page to help monitor the species in the province



Grizzly bear



Black bear

Have you seen me?



Report any sightings of Grizzlies in Manitoba to conservation authorities and participate in citizen science by reporting observations on our iNaturalist group, or website by scanning the QR codes below!



QR code for iNaturalist group



QR code for Website