



Bears are powerfully built. They are covered with long, rough fur, usually of one color, although some have white marks on the chest or face. A bear paw has five digits, each ending in a strong, curved, unretractable claw.

Males are referred to as boars, and the females as sows. The young are cubs. Cubs are born early in the spring when the bear emerges from hibernation. A standard litter is 2-4 cubs every other season. A bear lives 20-30 years, and is mature after one or two years of living with the mother. A new litter is only born after the previous litter leaves the mother. A group of bears is called a sloth or a sleuth.

Bears eat fruit, insects and carrion in addition to meat. Like most Kethrian creatures, they will kill but will not eat Gargun. Bears of some species put on considerable fat in the fall, then den up and sleep through most of the winter. They awaken readily if disturbed, and may be active during periods of mild weather. Bears are territorial, with a single male territory overlapping those of several females. Bears are found throughout most of northwestern Lythia.

Bears are capable of unexpected speed when in peril or in combat. They are able to walk upright slowly. Many are capable climbers. Most are nocturnal, but Snow Bears are active whenever they are hungry.

Senses

Bears have an excellent sense of smell, but their eyesight and hearing are not as good. A bear can smell at 100 feet what a human can smell at 10 feet.

Skills

Bears are rated for the following skills. Skills improve with age.

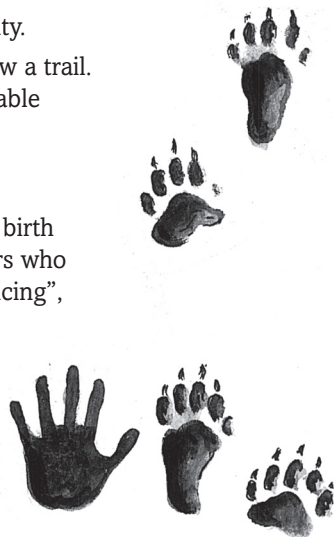
Bite: The bear's ability to inflict damage with its teeth.

Claw/Hug: The bear's combat ability.

Tracking: A bear can find and follow a trail. Snow Bears are especially formidable trackers.

Capture

Cubs raised in captivity from near birth can be trained by skilled animal trainers who specialize in bears. Tricks include "dancing", balancing on a barrel, and mock-combat. Trained black bears are often seen performing at large fairs. A healthy two-year-old well-trained bear can fetch 1000d or more in heavily populated areas.



*Tracks of an adult male black bear,
Handprint of an adult male human shown for scale.*

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Hunting Bears

Bear tracks are most often found along deep streams and in deep forest. Dens are usually found in natural ravines and caves and can be nearly inaccessible.

Bear fat is useful for waterproofing leather goods. Their claws and teeth are popular totemic jewelry among some tribes.

The pelt of a bear always brings a good price, but pelts obtained in the fall are thicker and more supple than those obtained in the spring. Pelts with heads attached are popular among the nobility.

Bear meat does not taste good to humans. Nonetheless it is thought to lend strength, if properly prepared after the kill. Bear meat that has been inexpertly preserved is of no value.

Enraged Bears

Bears can become enraged by the presence of dogs, Gargun, or humans between the sow and its cubs, or when cornered or trapped. An enraged bear increases its Initiative by +25, always Counterstrikes, and never flees. It always strikes at an opponent between itself and its young in preference to any other opponent. An enraged bear that has reached its young will not leave; essentially cornered, it remains enraged until killed or victorious.

Bear-Baiting

Bears are sometimes captured and sold to nobles and wealthy commoners for bear-baiting, a popular entertainment in which a bear is tied to a stake and forced to defend itself against one to four attack dogs.

BEARS 2

BLACK BEAR Forest Bear, Blond Bear, Peasant Bear

Black bears are the most common of the Lythian bears. They tend to be black or dark brown, though some Lythian species are blond to light brown.

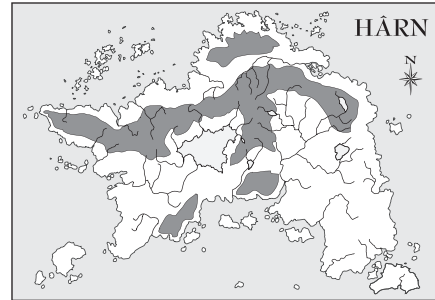
This is the bear most frequently captured and exhibited in the arena or by travelling entertainers. Black bears can be trained if raised from cubs with a combination of reward and punishment, and a great deal of persistence. If they get adequate exercise and are fed well and regularly, they can live quietly in cages for extended periods. Older bears are much more difficult to train; their use is limited to the Pamesani Arena.

Black bears are only mildly territorial. They are timid creatures. Foraging or migrating black bears avoid humans, travelling great distances to avoid contact. The exception is in the protection of a den or cubs; a bear will tolerate no human, Gargun, or dog close to its young. Dogs enrage bears, and are often a liability in the wilderness.

Habitat & Hunting

Black bears den in the deep forest and foothills for most of the winter. They can be found at all elevations and travel widely when food is plentiful. They consume 11-18 pounds of food per day. Black bears create new dens rather than reuse old ones.

Black bears are hunted with long spears, pit traps and nets. Hounds are used to track the bears, but pulled back quickly to save the bear's pelt. Cubs are caught in traps to be resold alive.



BLACK BEAR (MALE)

Habitat: Deep Forest/Hills
Length: 60"
Height: 36"
Weight: 260 pounds
Diet: Herbivore/Carnivore
Lifespan: 25 years
Cost: 150d (healthy cub)

ATTRIBUTES

16 STR 15 EYE 05 INT 14 END
13 STA 13 HRG 09 AUR 28 MOV
13 AGL 24 SML 13 WIL

SKILLS

65 INITIATIVE 68 AWARENESS
65 DODGE 52 STEALTH
52 BITE 4P 75 TRACKING
65 CLAW 4E

ARMOUR

B5 E2 P2 F4 GAC 1

STRIKE LOCATIONS

01-15 Head
16-25 Neck
26-30 •Fore Leg
31-50 Thorax
51-85 Abdomen
86-95 •Hind Leg
96-00 Tail

• Odd = Left, Even = Right

COMBAT OPTIONS

Offense: Evade/Attack

Defense: Counterstrike/Dodge