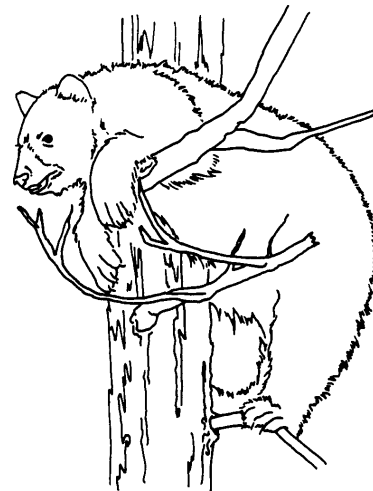


How Many Bears? – Idaho Style

The activity, *How Many Bears Can Live in the Forest?* as written in the *Project WILD* activity book, is for black bears living in Arizona. Since Idaho's black bears don't have nuts available to eat, they eat other foods, and **much more** of them. The average Idaho black bear will eat 20-25 pounds of food a day. That's 250 pounds in a 10-day period. The breakdown is as follows:



Berries	90 pounds	36%
Grasses	75 pounds	30%
Forbs*	35 pounds	14%
Insects	30 pounds	12%
Other	15 pounds	6%
Meat	5 pounds	2%
<hr/>		
Totals	250 pounds	100%

While keeping this activity as intact as written in your *Project WILD* activity book, the following numbers of cards and their values should be used:

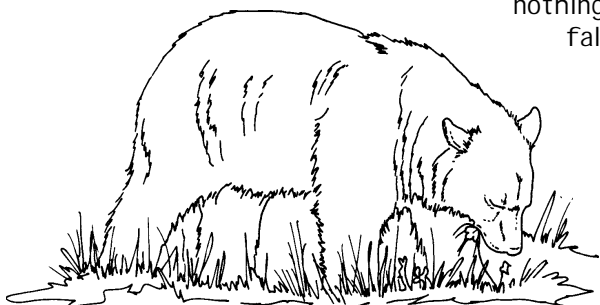
Food type:	Color:	Values (number of cards@pound value)
Berries	blue	5@90 lbs. and 25@45 lbs.
Grasses	green	5@75 lbs. and 25@37.5 lbs.
Forbs	brown	5@35 lbs. and 25 @17.5 lbs
Insects	yellow	5@30 lbs. and 25@15 lbs.
Other	white	5@15 lbs. and 25@7.5 lbs.
Meat	red	5@5lbs. and 25@2.5 lbs.

Note: these updated figures are more complex because of fractional addition. The figures can be rounded.

This activity can stimulate an excellent discussion of how animals adjust their food requirements in different environments. Why do Arizona black bears require only 80 pounds of food in 10 days while Idaho black bears require 250 pounds in the same period? How might these requirements differ for bears in Alaska, Pennsylvania or Michigan?

Nuts are highly nutritious -- so much so that 80 pounds of food in Arizona would be equivalent to 250 pounds of food value in Idaho. This even causes cubs to mature more rapidly. For example, in Pennsylvania (where nuts are plentiful), a one-year-old cub may enter the den weighing 100 pounds. In Idaho, that 100-pound cub would be three years old. A large, mature Pennsylvania black bear can weigh 800 pounds. In Idaho, a huge black bear will weigh 300 pounds.

One other point to remember on all these figures is bears generally eat nothing but grasses in spring and early summer, and berries in the fall. Other food items are interspersed in the diet throughout the year.



* - Forbs are broad-leaved plants such as dandelions.

