



Factsheets: Brown bear subspecies

#2: Eurasian brown bear (*Ursus arctos arctos*)

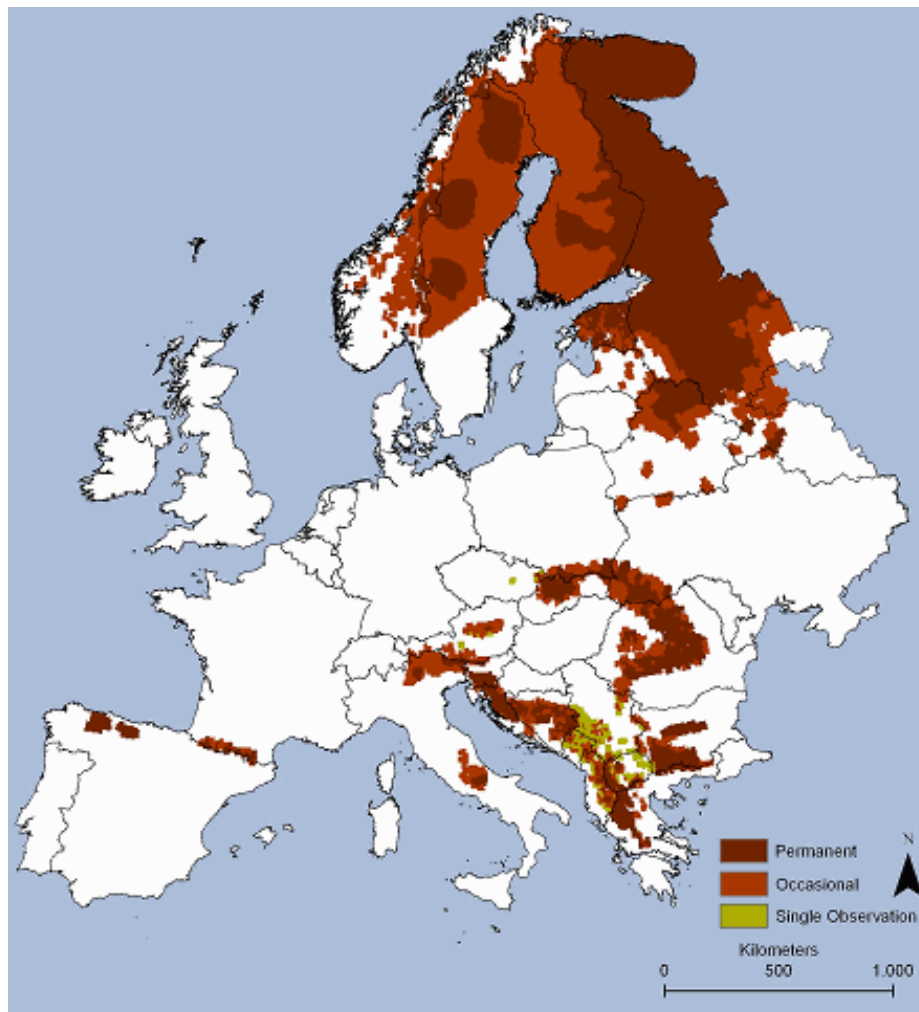


Eurasian brown bear (captive animal in Berlin Zoo) (Rami radwan)

Accepted scientific name: *Ursus arctos arctos* (Carl Linnaeus, 1758)

Description: Ranging from almost black to near-white the fur is more usually brown and is fairly dense. The head is quite round and the skull is wide. Paws and claws are large and males typically weigh between 265 and 355 kg (583-780 lb). Females range between around 100 and 250 kg. The largest Eurasian brown bear recorded weighed 481 kg and was almost 2.5 metres in length.

Range: Found in northern Eurasia. There are believed to be over 100,000 brown bears in Russia, about 36,000 of which are in European Russia. Elsewhere in Europe there are a total of around 15,000 brown bears and distribution is scattered and disconnected with small populations in the Spanish/French Pyrenees, the Cantabrian Mountains in Spain, in Italy and the Alps. Some of these populations may be too small to be sustainable. In Scandinavia the population is connected to the very large population of Russia. The population in the Balkans, mainly in Croatia and Slovenia, is relatively large but disconnected from the major population of Europe.



Habitat: European populations are now restricted mainly to mountain woodland areas.

Status: Brown bears are listed as "of least concern" by the [IUCN](#) and listed in [CITES](#) Appendix II but are endangered in much of Europe with the small, isolated populations in southern Europe especially at risk.

Life span: 20 to 30 years in the wild.

Food: The bears are omnivorous and feed on fruits, seeds, roots, insects, fish, mammals and carrion.

Behaviour: The bears reach sexual maturity between the ages of three and six years. Mating occurs between May and July. The bears go into winter dens usually in

October, November or early December and emerge in March, April or May. Cubs are born in the den in January and February, litters usually being of two or three cubs but can be of one or four. They will remain with the mother for two to three years during which time she will not become pregnant again. Except for mating and for mothers with cubs, brown bears are solitary.

Threats: Hunting, habitat loss and conflict with humans (particularly due to the clear-cutting of forests), and, increasingly, poaching on a commercial scale to obtain gall bladders and other body parts for use in medicine.

For more links see the web version of this document at
<http://www.bearconservation.org.uk/page72.html>

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