

Wildlife on Mount Baldo

Brown Bear

Order *Carnivora*
 Family *Ursidae*
 Genus *Ursus*
 Species *U. arctos arctos* L.



Bears are imposing massive animals with thick brown fur. Cubs generally have a white collar around their neck that disappears in the second year of age. Bears are plantigrade, which means they walk with the entire sole of the foot touching the ground. Feet have large digital pads and robust non-retractable claws. They have poor eyesight, but their sense of smell and hearing are highly developed.

The brown bear is carnivorous, but because of its eating habits it ought to be considered omnivorous as vegetables account for 60% of its diet while the rest consists of insects (mainly ants and bees) and carrion or animals it occasionally preys upon. It is an opportunistic eater since it adapts its diet to seasonal availability of food throughout the year.

Brown bears live in vast forests rich in undergrowth, where they find a quiet environment and food for nourishment. Shy, wary and solitary, they are extremely difficult to meet. Contrary to popular belief, they are not aggressive and do not attack, unless they feel in danger or without a way of escape. Brown bears normally spend the winter in a den they usually obtain from a small natural cavity that they sometimes enlarge to adapt it to their needs. During winter, bears fall into a deep slumber, body temperature drops, metabolism decreases and the fat that was accumulated during the fall is slowly consumed.

