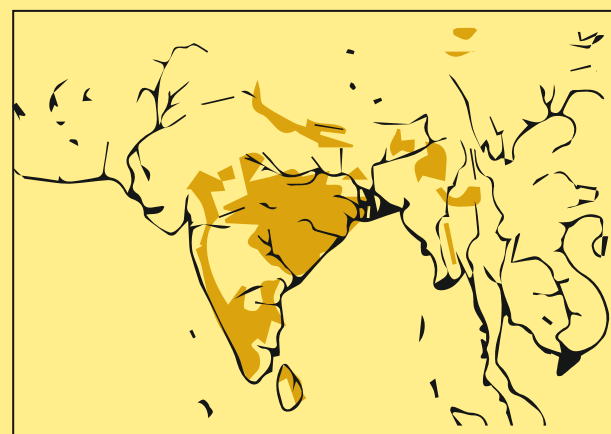


SLOTH BEAR

Habitat

Dry deciduous forests, found in the Indian subcontinent



Diet

Termites, ants and other insects; sugar-rich fruits; flowers; honeycombs; roots and tubers



Omnivorous and opportunistic scavenger

Behaviour

Mostly solitary in nature, forages throughout the night but returns to roosting site during daytime. Prefer rocky or good forest area for roosting

Bears have weak eyesight and a poor sense of hearing. Hence, they do not sense our presence until we are very close

Breeding

Mostly gives birth in winters – late December to early January
Breeding season varies according to location

IUCN status

Vulnerable

Population

<10,000 to >20,000

Reproductive age

3.5 – 6 years

Gestation period

6 – 7 months

Reproduces every 3 years

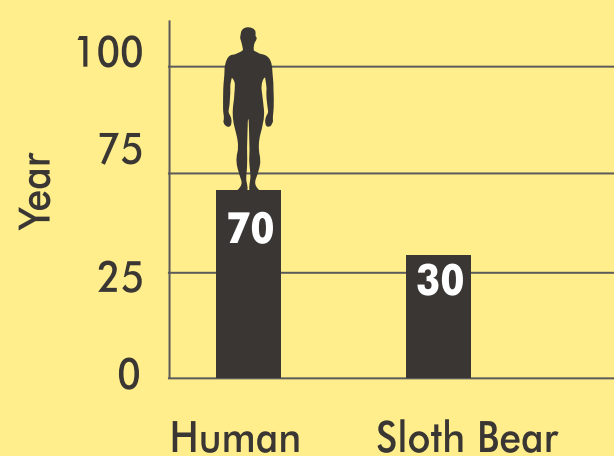
1-2 cubs in a litter



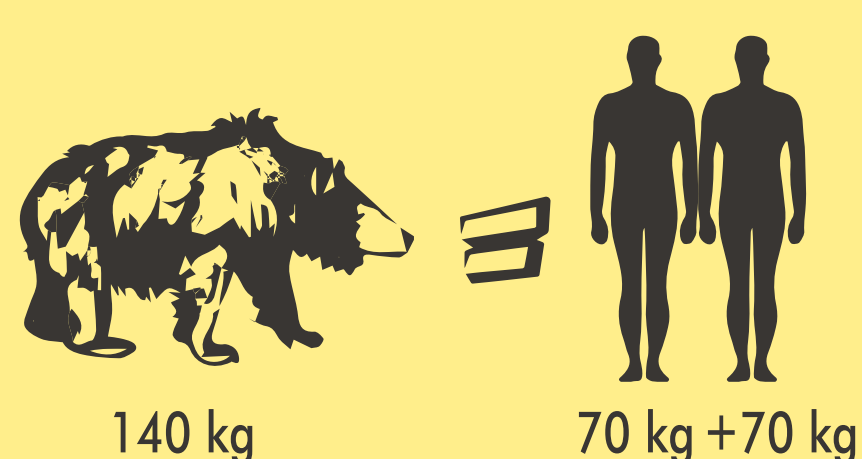
Carries cubs on its back

Cubs stay with mother for 1-2 years

Average lifespan



Max weight



- Nocturnal and active from late evening to early morning
- Has dusty-black coat with a V or Y shaped mark on the chest
- Noisy; grunts and snorts while digging or foraging for food
- Nostrils close while raiding insect nests or beehives to keep dust and insects away
- Can climb trees and knock down honeycombs for feeding
- Uses caves or digs dens to give birth
- Mothers can charge at humans to protect cubs
- If threatened, stands on two legs to increase the body size and shows claws as weapons
- Has good sense of smell but is near-sighted
- Adapts easily to human areas; gets attracted to garbage dumps

Do you know?

- Sloth bears provide important ecosystem services like seed dispersal and controlling termite populations
- Sloth bears were brutally exploited for circus and dance shows for over 400 years
- Agriculture, mining, encroachment, linear infrastructure like roads and grazing have destroyed and fragmented their habitat
- Water scarcities in summers push bears out to human areas
- Reduced availability of non-timber forest products (NTFP) like fruits, honeycombs and mahua due to over-collection by humans, forces sloth bears to enter human settlements for food, leading to conflicts
- They can walk for miles in search of food and often end up at garbage dumps in villages
- Chances of bear attacks on forest dwellers increase during collection of mahua flowers and honey, when sloth bears also get attracted to the flowers for feeding
- Switching from traditional crops to more economically beneficial crops has increased the conflict as bears get attracted to the energy-rich crops
- In summer, attacks occur during mahua collection, in winters during firewood collection and in the monsoon during mushroom collection

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MITIGATION IN INDIA

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2017-2023
Taking a Harmonious Co-existence
approach to Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation in India



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