



# WGFD

*Conserving Wildlife, Serving People*

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## News Release

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## **KNOW YOUR BEAR!**

**Cody-** The fall archery season for black bear is open in the Absaroka black bear management unit and the firearms season will soon follow--now is a good time for hunters to tune up their bear identification skills.

According to Dennie Hammer, Cody region information specialist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, low light conditions and adverse weather can hinder proper bear identification. "Early morning and evening may be the best time of the day to harvest a black bear, but this is also the time when light conditions can impair a hunter's ability to make a proper identification," Hammer said. "If there is any doubt, the hunter should pass on the shot."

The characteristics considered reliable to make a proper black bear identification are the straight face profile, the lack of a shoulder hump, ear shape and short claws. "Color and size are not reliable and can be misleading," Hammer added. "Hunters need to observe as many reliable characteristics as possible before making a determination."

In contrast, grizzly bears have a concave or dished face profile, a shoulder hump, short and rounded ears and considerably long claws, generally two inches in length or longer. As with black bears, color and size are not reliable characteristics.

As part of the effort to recover and conserve grizzly bears in Wyoming, the department has conducted an extensive, multi-faceted public information and education program. A major component of this program are the annual "Staying Safe in Bear, Lion, and Wolf Country Seminars" offered each spring throughout Wyoming. In addition to this effort, the Department added a bear identification test to its website at <http://gf.state.wy.us>. The bear test is highlighted under the "What's New-Grizzly Bear Management" tab.

The test is a compilation of bear photographs and questions to help hunters and others learn to distinguish between black and grizzly bears. The test's sixteen multiple-choice questions are designed to test observation and bear identification skills.

For more information on bear identification or human-bear safety contact the Cody regional Game and Fish office (1-800-654-1178 in-state or 307-527-7125).

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