



Ursus thibetanus

(G. Cuvier, 1823)

Common names: engl.: Asiatic black bear, Himalayan black bear, Moon bear
esp.: Oso de collar
fr.: Ours de l'Himalaya, Ours à collier
de.: Kragenbär
ital.: Orso dal collare, Orso tibetano

Scientific synonyms: *Selenarctos thibetanus*

**Characteristics:**

Size: Medium, length 120 - 220 cm, shoulder height 75 cm, tail 7.5 - 10 cm. Weight: 90 - 180 kg.

Head: Rather short muzzle and straight facial profile, thick neck, large widely spaced ears. Nose black.

Coat: Jet black or occasionally dark brown or reddish brown (Baluchistan race only) with a brown, grey or tan muzzle, buff or white lower lip and chin and usually a white, cream or buffy brown breast mark or "collar" highly variable in shape, feet sometimes dark brown. Hair smooth, dense, shiny and relatively short (40 - 85 mm) except on the neck where longer hair (to 155 mm) forms a "fringe" or "crest". This is apparently not found in animals from Japan or Taiwan. Animals from lower elevations in the southerly part of the range have shorter, coarser coats with no underwool, elsewhere the hair is longer, more luxuriant with lots of greyish brown underwool.



Feet: Soles naked, claws markedly curved, black or brownish, slightly longer on fore foot (30 - 45 mm) than back (18 - 36 mm).

Distribution:

Forested regions of east Asia from the Ussuri region in South-eastern Siberia south to Cambodia and Vietnam and west through the Himalayan foothills to Kashmir, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and possibly Iran. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China People's Rep., India, Iran, Japan, Kampuchea Dem., Lao P.D.R., Nepal, Pakistan, Taiwan, Thailand, USSR, Viet Nam.

**Population:**

Wild population: Total numbers unknown, declining throughout range with some populations or races endangered. Less than 200 in Baluchistan.

Captive population: 45 in North American collections.

Trade:

Local for fur and medicinal uses. 1 live specimen recorded by CITES Parties in 1979.

Intraspecific variation:

Several subspecies have been described using variation in length and density of hair. These differences are now believed to be environmental rather than subspecific. The following subspecies may be valid:

S.t. japonicus Japan, small (to 120 cm) with blacker muzzle and no prominent bushy cheeks, breast mark small or absent.

S.t. ussuricus Manchuria and eastern Siberia, larger form.

S.t. gedrosianus Baluchistan relict population, small size, reddish brown colour variety. *S.t.*

thibetanus Typical form of Himalayas, China and Indochina.

Similar species:

Some pelts may resemble those of *Ursus americanus*. If the lower lip and chin are white and the soles of the front feet are naked it is *U. thibetanus*.

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