



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton  
National Park

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Grand Teton National Park News Release

### **Bears Emerge From Hibernation in Grand Teton National Park**

Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott reminds local residents and park visitors to be alert for signs of bear activity within Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. Bears have emerged from their winter dens and appropriate precautions for traveling in bear country should be taken accordingly. Recently, a female grizzly and two cubs were sighted in an open meadow just north of Colter Bay Village.

When bears come out of their winter dens, they begin to search for any food source that helps restore depleted fat reserves after hibernation. Winter-weakened animals and winter-killed wildlife carcasses provide an immediate source of protein and are vigorously defended by hungry bears. As snow banks recede, bears also dig up and eat burrowing rodents and spring wildflowers. Historically, adult male bears emerge from hibernation by mid to late March. Female bears, accompanied by their cubs, emerge later in the spring. Sows are especially protective of their young, and any bear will defend a food source against perceived threats. **Do not approach a bear under any circumstances.** This is particularly important for situations involving bears with cubs, or bears near a carcass.

When traveling in bear country, precautionary measures should include carrying pepper spray and keeping it easily accessible to use. Take time to become familiar with the proper handling of pepper spray and remember that it is not a substitute for being alert. While enjoying the park's backcountry, hikers should exercise good judgment and follow recommended safety precautions, such as making noise and traveling in a group – not alone.

Visitors should report any bear sightings or signs to the nearest visitor center or ranger station as soon as possible. This timely information will assist park staff in keeping visitors informed about recent bear activity, and in keeping bears away from unnatural food sources. Access to human food habituates bears. Habituated animals often lose their fear of humans, which threatens the safety of both park visitors and the bears themselves. Park visitors are reminded to keep food, garbage and other odorous items unavailable to bears by either storing attractants inside vehicles or disposing of garbage in a bear-resistant trash can or dumpster.

For further information on how to behave when hiking or camping in bear country, read the park's newspaper, *Teewinot*, online at [www.nps.gov/grte](http://www.nps.gov/grte) .

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