
Prints, Tracks and Claws! How To Tell The Difference Between A Black Bear and A Grizzly Bear

Grizzly Bear Claw

This diagram of a claw is that of a Grizzly Bear. Grizzly Bears evolved on the Steppes of Russia and the Great Plains of North America.

To find food they had to dig or turn over huge rocks. So their claws were used for digging with its long strong, thick curve shape with a relatively flat tip and scooped under side.

These claws are made for excavating. They can grow from two to over 4 inches in length depending on the size and age of the bear.

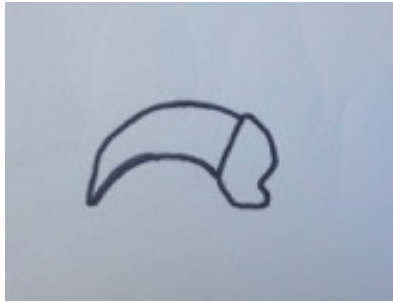


Black Bear Claw

This claw is that of a Black Bear. Black Bears evolved in the forested habitats of North America and so they became tree climbers.

Black Bears would climb trees to get away from their predators so their claws has a shorter for rounded curve with a sharp point.

The shape of this claw allows any Black Bear of any age and size to climb a limbless tree.



Polar Bear Claw

This claw belongs to the Polar Bear. It is short, thick has a point and a rough almost barbed like under curve.

Polar Bears evolved on the ice flow of the Arctic. They require a claw that would provide traction on the ice and a claw that would not let its prey slide off when hooked into the blubbery flesh of a seal.



Survival Secrets of Grizzly Bears and Black Bears!

Fact Sheet #2

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Bear Claws!

Have you ever taken a really good look at your pet's claws? Did you notice a difference and ever wondered why they were that shape?

When I first became a bear viewing guide, I never put any thought into the different shapes of claws that animals have. I always thought that claws were claws! I was definitely mistaken.

Here are three claws from three species of bear found in North America. Each one is shaped according to the habitat that they evolved in and what type of food was available and how that food was obtained.

Prints and Tracks!

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Bear Prints!

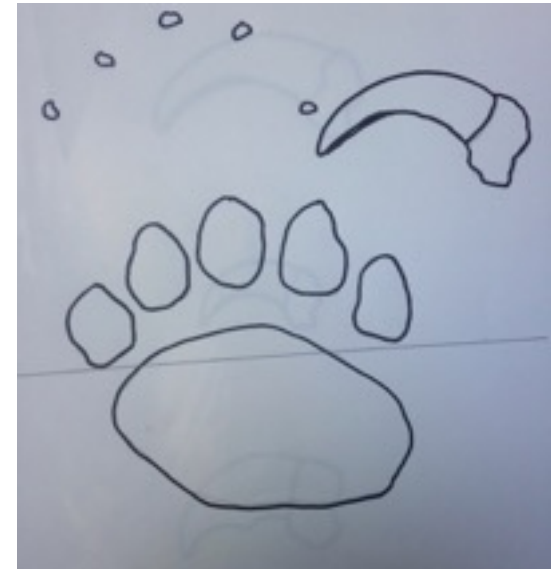
Can you tell the difference between a black bear print and a grizzly bear print? This information might be handy when traveling through “Bear Country” to determine which specie of bear you might meet. Here is how you can tell the difference between a black bear and a grizzly bear by examining the print it left behind.

Yes, there is a difference between a black bear and a grizzly bear. The difference is the way the toes and claws present themselves in the print. Black bear and grizzlies on the first glance look very similar.



Grizzly Bear Print

This is a sketch of a grizzly bear front pad. See how the smallest toe is above the line between the pad and the toes. The distance between the toes and the imprints of the claws is another indicator as to the type of bear print you might be looking at. Black bears claw imprints are much closer to the toes.



Black Bear Print

A black bear paw has the little toe below an imaginary line where the toes meet the pad. A grizzly bear paw has all the toes above that imaginary line.

This is a sketch of a black bear front pad. See how the smallest toe is below the line between the pad and the toes.