

VIETNAM'S TWO NATIVE BEAR SPECIES

Vietnam is home to two species of bears: the Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) and the Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*).

THE MALAYAN SUN BEAR



The Malayan sun bear is the world's smallest bear species. They are about half the size of the Asiatic black bear, and have a U-shaped crescent on their chest. The sun bear is nocturnal and an excellent climber, spending a lot of time up in trees. Sun bears also have very long tongues, which they use to eat honey and termites. Their diet is similar to the Asiatic black bear's, but contains a larger proportion of insects. Bees, termites and earthworms are especially common staples for the Malayan sun bear.

THE ASIATIC BLACK BEAR



The Asiatic black bear is the larger of Vietnam's two native bear species and can be identified by the V-shaped marking on its chest. This bear is most active at night, and feeds on a variety of food, including fruits, grasses, berries, seeds, insects and honey. The Asiatic black bear also eats small mammals, birds, fish, mollusks and carrion, and in at least one case has been known to take down an adult buffalo.

BOTH SPECIES FULLY PROTECTED BY LAW

Both the Asiatic black bear and the Malayan sun bear are protected under Vietnam's principal wildlife protection law, Decree 32/2006/ND-CP. It is illegal to hunt, trap, kill, keep, sell, or advertise bears and bear products in Vietnam.

Trade of both bear species is also protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), an international treaty that regulates the trade of endangered wildlife across international borders.

VIETNAM'S BEARS DISAPPEARING

The demand for bear bile poses a major threat to Vietnam's bears. Live bears are hunted and trapped from the wild and kept on farms, where they are used to produce bile.

In addition to the bear bile trade, bears are also hunted for their meat and body parts, kept as pets, or displayed at business establishments to attract tourists and customers.

Vietnam's bears are also losing their homes. Thousands of hectares of natural forest are cut down every year due to agricultural expansion and human settlement, resulting in fewer and fewer available habitats for bears to live in. Deforestation is a major threat faced by Vietnam's bears and other wildlife.

THE BEAR BILE INDUSTRY

As Vietnam's economy grew in the 1990s, the use of bear bile became more popular as a form of traditional medicine. Bile also became fashionable amongst an emerging middle class of young consumers.

Today, the National Forest Protection Department estimated that there are more than 4000 bears in captivity across the country.

PRIORITY: PHASE OUT BEAR FARMING

In 2005, the government launched efforts to phase out bear farming in Vietnam. The first step in this process was aimed at preventing new bears from entering the trade through registration of all existing captive bears. Bear registration can now be confirmed during inspections, using implanted microchips with encoded identification numbers that can be used to identify each individual bear. This registration process was completed in 2006, after which wildlife protection authorities committed to aggressively pursue cases where unregistered bears are discovered.



WAYS YOU CAN STOP THE BEAR TRADE

- Do not use bear bile, purchase, or consume products made from bears.
- Join the thousands of others that have committed not to use bear bile or consume bear products by pledging your support to Vietnam's bears online: <http://www.thiennhien.org/>.
- Contact the local authorities immediately or the ENV national toll-free Wildlife Crime Hotline if you see bears or bear products being advertised or sold.
- Encourage others to help protect bears.

HELP PROTECT VIETNAM'S BEARS

Report illegal trade of bears and bear products to your local Forest Protection Department or the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline

1800-1522

YOU can make a difference!