

ABOUT THE REGION

In Slovenia and Croatia, highest densities of bears are found in predominantly hilly and mountainous areas of Dinarides. Frequent forest types are Dinaric beech and European silver fir forests. They host and provide shelter for a variety of wildlife species, many of which can be found on the protected plant and animal species list. This is one of the rare areas in Europe inhabited by all three European large carnivores - Eurasian lynx, wolf and brown bear. People living in these areas have always coexisted with large carnivores. As we wish to nurture this heritage in the future we have prepared a list of rules and guidelines every visitor in bear areas should follow.



**LIFE
DINALP
BEAR**



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BE SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE IN NATURE

The Dinaric region is one of the rare areas in Europe where we can still observe the three large carnivores (bear, Eurasian lynx and wolf).

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Beneficiaries:



Co-financiers:



We can all contribute to preserving the heritage of coexistence between humans and bears.

Photo: Edvard Sega

Photo: Marko Masterl

RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR VISITING NATURE

- **WE USE TRAILS.** To ensure our own safety and reduce our impact on nature we use trails or marked paths. We don't walk on farmland (through pastures, fields, orchards) or close to beehives.
- **WE DRIVE MOTORIZED VEHICLES ONLY ON DESIGNATED ROADS.** Driving motorized vehicles in nature is prohibited. Motorized vehicles can only stop or be parked within a distance of 5 meters from the road.
- **CAMPING IS ALLOWED ONLY IN DESIGNATED AREAS.** Camping anywhere else is prohibited.
- **WE RESPECT THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS.** Hunting (hides, feeding sites, etc.) and other structures can be used only with the owner's permission.
- **WE DO NOT DISTURB THE ANIMALS.** We alert the animals to our presence by talking so they can withdraw and avoid contact with humans. We do not approach wild animals and we do not feed them. Disturbing wild animals in forest reserves, quiet zones in the forests, dens or nests, wildlife feeding sites and in wintering areas is prohibited.
- **WE CONTRIBUTE TO NATURE CONSERVATION.** We only observe plants and animals and never access or enter dens, nests, nesting sites or wildlife feeding sites.
- **WE COLLECT PLANTS IN MODERATION.** As forest plants, mushrooms, wild fruit and moss are all vital for forest ecosystem, their collection is regulated.
- **STARTING A FIRE IN THE FOREST IS PROHIBITED.** Fire can cause damage to forest wildlife and plants.
- **WE LEAVE NO TRACE.** We never leave our trash in nature but bring it with us and dispose of it into designated bins or at municipal collection points.

When visiting nature we also follow other guidelines for proper behavior (either posted on information boards or as instructed by the authority). Disregarding the rules can earn you a fine.

With proper behavior we show respect for the nature and ensure our own safety.

We strongly suggest that for a safe and meaningful experience in bear areas you hire a local guide. All information regarding such offers can be found at local tourist centers.



Bears usually avoid contact with people.

Photo: Slaven Reljić



A bear might defend itself with an attack or false attack only when we surprise it and it feels threatened.

Photo: Christine Sonvilla

HOW TO BEHAVE IN BEAR AREAS

Bears are generally very shy. They perceive humans as threat and avoid confrontations. However, encounters may still occur. Therefore we should know how to behave when visiting bear areas:

- Do not leave any left-over food or other organic waste in the forest or close to settlements, roads and hiking destinations. It is very important that bears do not associate food sources with human presence, one of the main problems in human-bear conflicts.
- Our presence in bear habitats should not be silent to avoid surprising a bear. Make yourself noticeable, especially when walking through dense vegetation or in rugged terrain.
- Keep your dog on a leash. If your dog comes upon a bear it may lead the bear back to you.
- Do not enter the vicinity of a bear den or crawl into a den.

IN CASE OF BEAR ENCOUNTERS

- When you spot a bear from a distance, retreat slowly from the way you came and give the bear plenty of space to continue on its route. Never run away!
- If a bear is coming towards you and it has not yet seen you, make yourself known by speaking calmly and retreating slowly. Bears have poor eyesight, so the animal must identify you as a human. At the same time, let it know you are not a threat.
- Do not throw rocks or any objects towards the bear.
- Never run away from a bear or try to climb a tree. Bears are good climbers and can run up to 50 km/h.
- Do not approach bear cubs, even if they look curious or abandoned, because the mother bear is most likely nearby.
- Bear attacks are very rare and most attacks are false charges.