

Limiting Factors: How Many Bears?

Over 2,000 black bears can be found within Maryland. Black bears are located primarily in Garrett, Allegany, Washington, and Fredrick counties. Bears are the largest land mammals in the state with adult bears usually weighing between 125 and 400 pounds. Bears weighing 600 pounds or more are not uncommon, however. Adult female bears achieve a maximum weight of 150 to 300 pounds while adult male bears achieve a maximum weight of 300 to 600 pounds or more. To be able to sustain those sizes, black bears need to eat a lot of food!



What percentage of a black bear's diet is typically made up of plants? _____

How many total pounds of food did you collect for each category?

B _____	I _____	M _____	N _____	P _____

How many total pounds of food did you collect overall? _____

What percentage of your diet was made up of:

- **B:** _____
- **N:** _____
- **I:** _____
- **P:** _____
- **M:** _____

In the fall, black bears typically need up to 20,000 calories per day to fatten up for winter. That amount is almost equivalent to 65 cheeseburgers a day! Below is a list of foods and the total amount of calories per pound by Linda Masterson in her 2005 Living with Black Bears Handbook.

Food	# calories/ lb
Acorns	2,082
Black oil sunflower seeds	2,585
Blueberries	256
Tent caterpillars	430
Peanut butter	1,382

How many pounds of acorns would a black bear need to get 20,000 calories? _____

Blueberries? _____

Black oil sunflower seeds? _____

Tent caterpillars? _____



Black bear image by Tracey Saxby, Integration and Application Network, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (ian.umces.edu/imagelibrary/).