Habitat preferences

The most important characteristics of bear habitat may be divided into three groups: food, shelter and wintering den (Swenson et al. 2000). Persecution significantly impacted the current range of the species, which is why the habitats bears currently use might not be the most adequate to their needs (Gibeau 1998).

Bear habitats need to be rich in preferred food and enable them to hide, the requirement which is usually met by dense forests (Swenson at al. 2000). A mosaic of forests and open area is considered the optimal bear habitat (Nielsen et al. 2004b). Additionally, different aspects of bear activity may require different habitats. Scandinavian research indicates that bear preferences differ while foraging and resting (Moe et al. 2007). In Poland the brown bear lives mainly in mountains and foothills, in mixed and coniferous forests of fairly natural character. The same forests are inhabited by bears in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic. The species is mostly observed in mountains, from 700 to 1250 m altitude.