

## 6 Hiking in bear country

**Emma:** Hi, this is Emma, and today we're reporting live from Yellowstone National Park. With us today is Greg Lakes, an experienced park ranger who will give us some advice about how to stay safe when visiting the park. So, Greg, what are the things visitors shouldn't do?

**Greg:** Well, first of all stay away from the areas which are closed. When we close a part of the park and put up a sign, that normally means that there are bears around at that time, and it's not safe to go there. It's when tourists ignore these signs that they get attacked.

**Emma:** So, what can you do when a bear attacks? It is much stronger than a human, isn't it?

**Greg:** Absolutely. A grizzly bear has got strong claws and big teeth and can easily kill a human. Without a gun you wouldn't stand a chance.

**Emma:** Are there lots of attacks then?

**Greg:** No, there aren't. Actually, only eight people have been killed since 1872, and since 1979 about 44 people have been injured. This year, there has only been one bear accident. So people shouldn't be too scared about the bears.

**Emma:** But wasn't there a deadly attack on a university student?

**Greg:** Well, yes, there was. A tragic accident. But that happened quite a long time ago.

**Emma:** Can you tell us more?

**Greg:** I can. You know, what happened is that visitors at that time, like that poor student, weren't very careful with their food. Bears have very, very good noses and they can smell food for miles. If you don't put your food away carefully, its smell will attract the bear. The bear will start looking for the food, so it might come to your campsite and attack you. And this is what happened to that student. Another mistake he made was that he went hiking all alone instead of in a group. And he didn't stay on the trail and put up his tent in an area with lots of trees and bushes.

**Emma:** So he couldn't see that a bear was coming.

**Greg:** Exactly.

**Emma:** Okay, but even if you do everything right, how do you know that there is a bear around?

**Greg:** Well, by looking around carefully. First, look out for signs – fresh tracks, you know, the bear's footprints, or holes they made in the ground when looking for food, or animals they might have killed. If you see any of this, then it's high time to leave. Especially when there is a dead animal. Then you can be quite sure that there are bears around, and they could get angry because they might think that you want to steal their food.

**Emma:** So should I run for it?

**Greg:** No, don't run. Just walk away. Running could lead to an attack. And don't forget that bears can run faster than you. A grizzly bear can reach 40 miles per hour. That's about 64 kilometers an hour. Even world class athletes can only do about 44 kilometers. So don't even try to run away from a bear. It's no contest.

But the best thing of course is not to go anywhere near the bears in the first place. You know, in the summer, bears are most active when it's a bit colder, that means they're looking for food in the morning, in the evening and at night. So, if you are in bear country, as we call it, you just stop hiking at those hours.

**Emma:** Right, Greg, thanks for talking to me. I'm sure I'll stick to all of these rules when I come to visit Yellowstone National Park next time. Better safe than sorry. Bye for now.