The brown bear is a priority species in the European Union, such that its presence is a key factor for selection of the areas forming part of the Natura 2000 Network. The species is included in the Spanish Catalogue of Threatened Species as “At risk of extinction”.

For more information on brown bear ecology and distribution, please visit the website of the Brown Bear Foundation: www.fundacionosopardo.org

Why are National Parks, Natura 2000 Network sites and the brown bear motors for revitalising rural areas?

- Because they are a quality mark for natural areas.
- Because they promote sustainable tourism and local products.
- Because they contribute towards the generation of local employment.
The Picos de Europa National Park forms part of the Natura 2000 Network. Although the probability is minimal, it is important to respect the following recommendations to avoid bear encounters. 

**THE PICOS DE EUROPA NATIONAL PARK FORMS PART OF THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK**

The Natura 2000 Network is a network of natural protected areas of the European Union and is the largest in the world. As Europeans we all form part of this network, with Spain contributing the largest surface area, some 30% of Spain’s territory. Its objective is to conserve the biodiversity present and favour sustainable socioeconomic development. Protecting Natura 2000 Network sites signifies favouring the traditional production activities and also those new ones which respect biodiversity conservation.

Brown bears are present in the Picos de Europa National Park. Respectful and sustainable tourism is perfectly compatible with the conservation of the National Park and with the conservation of the brown bear, but this requires knowing and respecting the park’s regulations and to act responsibly when visiting and carrying out activities in brown bear areas.

**ENCOUNTERS WITH BEARS**

Although the probability is minimal, it is important to respect the following recommendations to avoid bear encounters:

- **DO NOT ENTER AREAS OF DENSE VEGETATION or access rock faces**
- **DO NOT Approach ANY DEAD ANIMALS**
- **DO NOT FOLLOW BEAR TRACKS**
- **DO NOT LEAVE FOOD REMAINS BEHIND which may attract bears or other wildlife**
- **DO NOT POSITION YOURSELF BETWEEN the mother and her cubs**
- **DO NOT RUN, shout at the bear or threaten it in any way, which might result in an aggressive reaction**
- **If it approaches, ALERT the bear of our presence WITHOUT USING AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AND BY TALKING WITHOUT SHOUTING**
- **If it feels threatened, keep calm, talk gently, DO NOT use aggressive movements and MOVE SLOWLY AWAY without losing sight of the animal.**

**IF WE COME ACROSS A BEAR**

- **If it hasn’t seen us**
  - Back off slowly, WITHOUT ALERTING IT TO OUR PRESENCE
- **If it’s a family group**
  - Do not approach, ALERT THE BEAR OF OUR PRESENCE WITHOUT USING AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AND BY TALKING WITHOUT SHOUTING

**IF IT FEELS THREATENED**

- It will charge aggressively, STOP BEFORE REACHING US and then retreat immediately.

**IF IT HASN’T SEEN US**

- It will charge aggressively, STOP BEFORE REACHING US and then retreat immediately.

- **If it’s a family group**
  - Do not approach, ALERT THE BEAR OF OUR PRESENCE WITHOUT USING AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AND BY TALKING WITHOUT SHOUTING

**IF THE BEAR HAS SEEN US**

- It will charge aggressively, STOP BEFORE REACHING US and then retreat immediately.

- **If it’s a family group**
  - Do not approach, ALERT THE BEAR OF OUR PRESENCE WITHOUT USING AGGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS AND BY TALKING WITHOUT SHOUTING

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