

BEAR SAFETY AT HOME

Respect bears! If you see a bear in a residential area, please act responsibly.

Let's keep our black bears wild!

- If you encounter a bear
Remain calm and slowly back away. Raise your arms to appear larger. DO NOT turn and run, as this may initiate a chase response and result in injury. Bears can run 35 mph. and are excellent tree climbers.
- Keep well away; don't approach or corner the bear. Restrain pets and go indoors. If a bear or cub is up a tree, just leave it alone, and it will eventually leave.
- Let the bear know it is not welcome.
Often the bear is just passing through, and if it finds no food, will simply move on. Do not allow the bear to feel comfortable staying in your yard. From a safe distance, look it in the eye, yell and bang on a pot; use an air horn or whistle; spray it with a garden hose to encourage it to leave. Afterwards, remove anything that may have attracted it.
- When to call for help
Call local law enforcement to report a problematic human-bear conflict or property damage caused by a bear. Some officers are trained to manage conflicts in a non-lethal manner. However, there are instances when the bear will be destroyed. Bears in N.C. will not be relocated.
- Call NC Wildlife Resources Commission at (800) 662-7137 to report the illegal killing of a bear, or (828) 646-9913 to report a serious incident.

A fed bear is a dead bear!

It is up to humans to change their own behavior to avoid conflicts.

B.E.A.R.'s Mission: To promote safe, harmonious coexistence between humans and bears

Bear Education And Resources
is a task force of the
Western North Carolina Alliance



For more information contact:
BEARWNC@gmail.com
Or call (828) 526-9227

Please support B.E.A.R.!
and our efforts to keep
both bears and people safe. Volunteer or
Make a tax-deductible donation payable to:

B.E.A.R. - WNCA
P.O. Box 1238
Highlands, NC 28741

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~Bear Education 101~



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PEOPLE AND BEARS CAN SAFELY CO-EXIST



The black bear (*Ursus Americanus*) is a common resident of western North Carolina. As this area continues to develop and encroach on wildlife habitat, the need increases for people to be educated about reducing conflicts with bears.

Black bears are most active from April to November. They den in winter, but may remain active during mild winter months if food is available.

Females give birth every 2 years in January. Cubs stay with mothers for 1 1/2 yrs. Mother bears are very affectionate and protective.

Bears don't understand property lines, so whether you're hiking in a forest or strolling through the neighborhood, you may encounter a black bear.

You are most likely to see bears in morning or evening, but they may be seen at any time of the day or night.

Residents & visitors in bear country have a responsibility to respect bears and adapt their own behavior to safely coexist with them.

Communities should strive to be "porous" to bear activity so that bears may pass through but are not tempted to stay and get into trouble with people and non-natural attractants.

Encourage your friends and neighbors to help make this a Bear Smart Community. It takes a concerted effort on everyone's part to prevent conflicts.

BE SCENTS-IBLE ABOUT BEARS!

Bears live to eat, consuming 2500 to 25,000 calories a day. Although classified as carnivores, 90% of their diet is vegetable matter.

A black bear's natural diet includes clover, dandelions, leaves, buds, mushrooms, acorns, roots, berries, seeds, nuts, fruits, ants, bees, larvae, and carrion. Occasionally they will kill and eat an animal.

While they prefer wild foods, bears will eat almost anything and will do almost anything to obtain food.

A bear's nose is 100 times more sensitive than a human's; it can smell food over a mile away. They are attracted by scents as diverse as vinyl and citronella. They can even smell food inside a car or refrigerator.

Bears are curious and smart and will repeat behaviors that succeed in procuring food. Carelessly stored garbage, birdfeeders, and BBQ's are open invitations to bears and the largest cause of problems.

The key is prevention. Human behavior is ultimately responsible for creating "problem bears." If addressed quickly, problems are often resolved, and bears will move back to natural food sources.

Some people love their bears to death

People who feed bears think they are helping them.

However, when bears repeatedly find food around homes, they become habituated, losing their natural fear of humans. They may damage property, invade homes, or, rarely, injure pets or people. Some eventually need to be killed.

By feeding bears we are creating addicts, and we all know that addicts don't live very long!



BEAR-PROOF YOUR PROPERTY



- **Most important!** Keep garbage and recyclables securely inside until disposal/pick-up. Use a bear-proof container or enclosure.
- Regularly clean & spray garbage container with vinegar, PineSol, bleach or ammonia.
- Freeze meat and fish waste to reduce odors
- Keep doors and windows closed and locked when bears are active. Food smells can invite bears inside and result in damage.
- Bears can break into refrigerators and freezers that are kept outside.
- Don't leave food, trash, coolers or any odorous items in your vehicle. Bears can easily pry open vehicle windows and doors.
- Ensure that bird feeders are inaccessible to bears; use seed-catching trays.
- Bring birdfeeders, including hummingbird feeders, inside in the evening. Consider not feeding birds when bears are active.
- If you grow fruits and vegetables, harvest them as they ripen; gather fallen fruit daily.
- You can protect trees, gardens, chickens and bee hives with electric fencing.
- Clean BBQ after use and empty grease can; store in secure location; spray inside with apple cider vinegar to repel bears.
- Do not leave pet food outside.
- Pets that are tied up, as well as old, sick dogs are more vulnerable to bear attacks.
- Don't let pets roam free at night.

- Remember—*there is always a first time!!*