



If you encounter a bear...

- Do not feed or approach the bear!
- Remain calm and make the bear aware of your presence by speaking in a calm, assertive voice.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.
- Yell, bang pots and pans or use an airhorn to scare away the bear. Make yourself look as big as possible by waving your arms. If you are with someone else, stand close together with your arms raised above your head.
- The bear may utter a series of huffs, make popping sounds by snapping its jaws and swat the ground. These are warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away and avoid direct eye contact. Do not run.



- If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect scents in the air. It usually is not a threatening behavior.
- Black bears will sometimes bluff charge when cornered, threatened or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, avoid direct eye contact and then slowly back away. Do not run.
- If the bear will not leave, head for nearby shelter. Remember that black bear attacks are extremely rare. If a black bear does attack, fight back.

Did you know?

- Black bears are usually solitary animals that are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Black bears have excellent senses of smell and hearing.
- Black bears can run up to 35 miles per hour. They are strong swimmers and excellent climbers. Both adults and cubs will climb trees for food and to escape disturbances.
- Black bears eat both plants and animals. Their diet mostly consists of skunk cabbage, berries, wild cherries, acorns and beechnuts. They also eat insects, small mammals and dead animals.
- Black bears are opportunistic feeders and will supplement their diet with food or garbage left out by people.
- Adult females average 175 pounds; adult males average 400 pounds.
- Not all black bears are black. They can be brown, cinnamon, blonde, white and even gray-blue. Fifteen percent of New Jersey's bears have a white chest blaze.
- During winter, black bears undergo a period of dormancy in dens, called torpor, to avoid severe weather and food shortages. Since black bears are not true hibernators, they may leave their dens if disturbed or to search for food on mild winter days.
- Den sites include rock cavities, brush piles, open ground nests and hollow trees. Bears do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate while in dens, but females can give birth and nurse their young.
- Breeding season runs from late May until August, peaking in June and July. Cubs are born in January and weigh about 8 ounces to 16 ounces. The average litter size is three. Cubs remain with the female until she breeds again 16 months to 18 months later.

REMEMBER:

Immediately notify local police or the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife at 1(877) WARN DEP, if you encounter an aggressive bear.



KNOW THE BEAR FACTS
black bears in new jersey

Native to New Jersey, black bears are the largest land mammals in the Garden State. Their prime habitat consists of mixed hardwood forests, dense swamps and forested wetlands. Nearly wiped out a century ago by habitat destruction and indiscriminate killing, black bears today are thriving, particularly in the northwestern area of the state. Their range is expanding south and east, and black bears have been sighted in all of New Jersey's 21 counties.

The mere presence of a black bear is not considered a problem. Some residents might observe bears near their homes. Generally, bears tend to be wary of humans. But it is important not to tempt bears to linger in residential areas by leaving out food or garbage.

Black bears learn very quickly. Bears that are fed intentionally – or unintentionally by carelessly leaving out food or garbage – will associate food with people. These bears can become a nuisance or aggressive and may have to be destroyed.

You can help to prevent problems with black bears by following some simple tips when at home, camping, fishing or hiking in areas with large black bear populations.

REMEMBER:

**Never feed bears!
It's illegal in New Jersey, and it's dangerous.**

Report black bear damage or nuisance behavior to local police or to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife at 1(877) WARN DEP.



For more information on New Jersey's black bears, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com

Bear facts for homeowners



Taking steps to avoid attracting bears with food or garbage is the best way to prevent black bears from becoming a nuisance near your home.

- Use certified bear-resistant garbage containers if you live in an area frequented by black bears. They offer the best protection. Otherwise, store all garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids and place them along the inside walls of your garage or in the basement, a sturdy shed or other secure area.
- Wash garbage containers with a disinfectant solution regularly to remove odors.
- Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.
- Clean up after pets. If you feed them outside, do so during daylight hours only. Pick up any leftover food and remove bowls immediately after they have finished.
- Clean outdoor grills and utensils thoroughly after each use and store grills securely. Grease and food residue attract bears.
- Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.
- Avoid feeding birds if you live in an area frequented by black bears. Birdseed attracts bears. If you choose to feed birds, do so during daylight hours only between December 1 and April 1, when bears are least active. Suspend feeder from a free-hanging wire, making sure the bottom is at least 10 feet off the ground. Bring feeder indoors at night. Clean up spilled seeds and shells.
- Pick up any fruit or nuts that fall from trees and discard it in garbage containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Consider installing electric fencing to protect crops, beehives, livestock and compost piles if you live in an area frequented by black bears.

REMEMBER:

One person feeding bears can create problems for the entire neighborhood.

Bear facts for camping

To fully enjoy your outdoor experience when camping, follow these common-sense safety tips:

- Keep a clean camp. Food and all items that come in contact with food carry odors that appeal to a bear's acute sense of smell.
- Store food immediately in airtight containers after every use. Coolers are not airtight and bears often associate them with food. Keep coolers locked in a trunk or concealed in the vehicle's cab.
- Do not eat or cook in your tent. Never store food items or scented toiletries, such as soap, deodorant or toothpaste in tents, sleeping bags or backpacks.
- Avoid having leftover food by cooking only as much as you will eat at a meal.
- Clean grills and all utensils thoroughly. Never put food or food residue in campfires or fire pits.
- Place garbage in airtight containers or bear-resistant dumpsters. Do not burn garbage or bury it. Bears will dig it up.
- Keep dogs on a leash, and remove leftover food after your dog has finished eating.
- Never attempt to feed a bear or approach one. It can be dangerous.
- Report all bear damage and nuisance incidents immediately to your camp office, local police or the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife at 1(877) WARN DEP.

REMEMBER:

**It's easier to chase bears away before they obtain food.
Keep a clean campsite.**

When hiking and fishing...

- Normal trail noise should alert a bear to your presence and prompt it to leave before you ever see it.
- Use caution in areas where bears are likely to venture, such as berry patches.
- Never leave fish entrails on shorelines of lakes or streams. Sink entrails in deep water.
- If you see a bear, use common sense. Never approach the animal; observe it only from a distance.
- If you see a bear, make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing or making other noise.
- If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm, assertive voice.