

If you encounter a bear ...

- Do not feed the bear!
- Remain calm, and make the bear aware of your presence.
- 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.
- 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 threatening behavior.
- Black bears will sometimes “bluff charge” when cornered, threatened or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, and then slowly back away.
- If the bear will not leave, head for nearby shelter. Immediately notify local police or the Division of Fish and Wildlife at (877) 927-6337, if you encounter an aggressive bear.



Be Bear Aware

New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fish and Wildlife
Division of Parks and Forestry

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.

Living with black bears

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.

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

- 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.
- Use bear-resistant garbage containers if you live in an area frequented by black bears.
- Wash garbage containers with a disinfectant solution at least once a week to remove odors.
- Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.
- Clean up after pets. If you feed them outside, remember to pick up any leftover food and remove bowls after they have finished.
- Avoid feeding birds, if you live in bear country. Birds will survive without the supplemental seed that 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 it's at least 10 feet off the ground. Bring feeder indoors at night. Clean up spilled seeds and shells.
- Report black bear damage or nuisance behavior to your local police department or the Division of Fish and Wildlife at (877) 927-6337.

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



Jon S. Corzine, Governor
Lisa P. Jackson, Commissioner

Camping in black bear country

To fully enjoy your outdoor experience in bear country, 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 a truck cab.
- Do not eat or cook in your tent. Never store food or items such as chewing gum, soap, deodorant or toothpaste in tents, sleeping bags or backpacks.
- Avoid making food garbage by cooking only as much as you will eat at a meal.
- Clean all utensils thoroughly. Never put food or food residues into campfires or fire pits.
- Place garbage in either airtight containers or bear-resistant Dumpsters. Do not burn garbage or bury it. Bears will dig it up.
- Never attempt to feed a bear or approach one. It can be dangerous.
- Keep your dog on a leash, and remove leftovers after your dog has finished eating.
- Report immediately all bear damage and nuisance incidents to your camp office, local police or the Division of Fish and Wildlife at (877) 927-6337.

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

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



When you go 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. 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.

Black bear attacks are extremely rare. If a black bear does attack, fight back. Do not play dead!

Black bear facts

-  Bears have excellent senses of smell and hearing.
-  Black bears eat both plants and animals. Their diet mostly consists of skunk cabbage, berries, wild cherries, acorns and beechnuts. They also eat bees and other insects, small mammals, bird eggs, white-tailed fawns and dead animals. Black bears are opportunistic feeders and will supplement their diet with food or garbage left out by people.
-  Adult females average 185 pounds; adult males average 400 pounds.
-  Black bears hibernate during the winter to avoid periods of severe weather and food shortages. Den sites include rock cavities, brush piles, open ground nests and hollow trees. Bears do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate while hibernating, 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. Average litter size is three. Cubs remain with the female until she breeds again 16 months to 18 months later.
-  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.