

Bear Facts

for Kids

Artwork by Jessica Dean



Black bears live in New Jersey. They are large, wild animals. You should never go near a black bear. Watch them from far away.



Never feed or try to pet a black bear. Treat them with respect.

Playing In Bear Country

Did you know that black bears live in New Jersey? As a matter of fact, they were here long before people were.

Today, there are more bears and more people in New Jersey than ever before. People see them in the forests when they are hiking and camping. They see them in their yards. Have you ever seen a black bear? Was it in the forest, your yard or maybe at the zoo?

Black bears can smell very well. In fact, their sense of smell may lead them into your backyard. What do you have in your backyard that might smell good to a black bear?

Black bears like the smell of garbage. They may come into your yard to see what smells good. So what can you and your family do?

Keep the garbage in airtight containers -this will keep the smells inside. Try keeping the garbage inside your house, garage or shed. Wash the cans once a week to keep them from smelling.

Pets that stay outside need to be kept safe. Protect them with an electric fence or bring them inside at night. Feed them during the day and clean up any pet food that they don't eat. Bring the food bowl inside and wash it as soon as your pet is done eating.

Birdseed smells good to bears too. You should only feed the birds in the winter, when the bears are in their dens. Hang birdfeeders 8 feet off the ground. You can hang them from a tree, but make sure the birdfeeder is far away from the trunk, out on a thin branch. That way, bears will not be able to get it.

Bears learn quickly. Bears that get food from people may be dangerous.

Never feed a black bear!



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Be Black Bear Aware

When you hear the word "bear" what do you think of? A big, scary, wild animal? A teddy bear? Most kids do. You don't have to be afraid, but remember that bears aren't cute and cuddly either. They are wild animals.

Here are a few things you can do if a bear comes into your yard when you are outside.

Don't get scared and run. Talk to the bear and let it know you are there.

Never feed the bear!

Do not go near a black bear.

Make sure the bear can get out of your yard easily if it wants to. Don't stand in front of the exit!

Make lots of noise. It could scare the bear away.

If you are playing with friends, get in a big group. Talk and wave your arms. You will look really big and the bear might leave. Don't look at the bear's eyes.

Bears make a lot of noise. They may huff, snap their jaws or slap the ground. What are they trying to tell you? They are saying you are too close. Back away slowly.



A bear that stands on its back legs is not about to attack you. It is trying to see and smell you better. It wants to know what you are. Let a bear know you are there by waving your arms and talking to it.

Bears may pretend to attack by running at you. **DO NOT RUN!** Back away slowly and get to a safe area.

Black bears very rarely hurt people. If a black bear attacks, fight back. Do not play dead!

Do not be afraid. Treat bears with respect. To learn more, visit our website at www.njfishandwildlife.com.

Black Bear Facts

- Black bears live in New Jersey.
- The forest is their home.
- There are more bears each year.
- Bears can live where there are people.
- Black bears can live more than 20 years.
- Bears learn quickly.
- Bears can smell and hear well.
- Black bears will eat anything, even garbage!
- Bears eat plants like skunk cabbage, grasses, berries, acorns and nuts.
- They also eat bees, ants, termites, small animals, eggs, deer fawns and dead animals.
- Adult females weigh about 200 pounds.
- Adult males weigh about 400 pounds.
- Cubs are born in January in dens.
- Cubs weigh 8 ounces when they are born. How much did you weigh when you were born?
- Cubs are blind and covered with fine hair when they are born.
- Female bears may have 1-6 cubs at a time, but 3 is average in NJ.
- Cubs live with their mother for one and a half years.
- Black bears go into a long winter's sleep.
- They make their dens in rock piles, on the ground, in hollow trees and in branch piles.
- Black bears can run as fast as a horse!
- Bears can swim well.
- Black bears can climb trees.