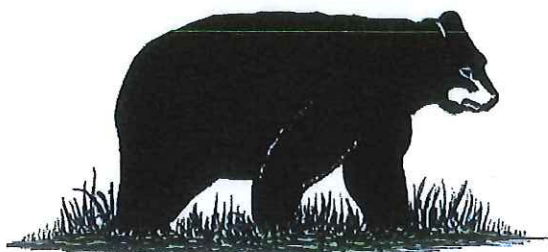


Be a Good Neighbor – Be Bear Aware



**Never feed a bear. It's dangerous,
and it's against the law.**

New Jersey is home to all kinds of beautiful wildlife – including black bears.

Black bears are getting a lot of attention these days, for the wrong reasons. They're venturing too close to homes and into backyards, looking for food. Bears that look for food near your home or in your yard likely have learned bad habits from people who feed them intentionally, or unintentionally by carelessly leaving out food or garbage.

People who feed bears think they're helping them. But it only invites trouble. It can make them a nuisance or even aggressive. When that happens, the bears must be destroyed to protect your family and your neighbors. What's more, it's illegal to feed bears in New Jersey. Anyone who feeds bears could face a penalty of up to \$1,000 for each offense.

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

Here's what you can do to Be a Good Neighbor – Be Bear Aware:

- Use bear-proof garbage containers, if possible. They offer the best protection. Otherwise, store all garbage in airtight containers and place them along the inside walls of your garage, or in the basement, a sturdy shed or other secure area.
- Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.
- Wash garbage containers with disinfectant solution at least once a week to remove odors. Draping rags soaked in bleach over your garbage bags also help to eliminate odors.
- Feed dogs and cats outside during daylight hours only. Immediately after feeding pets, remove all uneaten food and scraps as well as food bowls.
- Clean outdoor grills thoroughly after each use. Grease and food residue will attract bears.
- Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.
- Avoid feeding birds. They 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.
- Pick up any fruit that falls from fruit trees daily, and discard it in your airtight garbage containers.
- Consider installing electric fencing to protect crops, beehives and small livestock, if you live in an area with a large black bear population.
- Report black bear damage or nuisance behavior to your local police department or the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife at (877) 927-6337.
- For more information on black bears, visit www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/bearinfo.htm

Remember, if you care about New Jersey's bears, don't feed them.

**NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fish and Wildlife**

Know the Bear Facts - Black Bears in New Jersey

Bear Safety Tips

Black bears by nature tend to be wary of humans and avoid people. However, if you encounter a black bear in your neighborhood or outdoors while hiking or camping, follow these common-sense safety tips.

- Never feed or approach a bear!
- Remain calm.
- Make the bear aware of your presence by speaking in an assertive voice, singing, clapping your hands, or making other noises.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.
- If a bear enters your home, provide it with an escape route by propping all doors open.
- Avoid direct eye contact, which may be perceived by a bear as a challenge. Never run from a bear. Instead, slowly back away.
- To scare the bear away, make loud noises by yelling, banging pots and pans or using an airhorn. 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 jaw sounds by snapping its jaws and swat the ground. These are warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away, avoid direct eye contact and 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 is usually 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, then slowly back away. Do not run.
- If the bear does not leave, move to a secure area.
- Immediately notify the DEP's 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 1-877-WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337).
- Families who live in areas with high black bear populations should have a "Bear Plan" in place for children, with whistles, air horns and an escape route.
- Black bear attacks are extremely rare. If a black bear does attack, fight back!

