

You Are in Bear Country



Black bears are large, powerful wild animals and should be treated with respect. Be alert in areas where bears are active. **DO NOT approach any bear in the wild.**



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Camping in Black Bear Country

To fully enjoy your camping or outdoor experience in Bear Country, the following "Ten Commandments of Camping" must be observed.

1. Keep a clean camp. Food and all items that come in contact with food carry odors that bears can smell.

2. Thoroughly clean all utensils immediately after use. Never deposit food residues (i.e., cooking grease) into campfires.

3. Place garbage where bears cannot smell or gain access to it, either in bear-proof containers or dumpsters. **DON'T** burn or bury garbage. Bears will dig it up.

4. Do not eat or cook in your tent. Avoid storing food or attractants in tents, sleeping bags, or backpacks.

5. Treat non-food items such as gum, soap, or deodorant as food. They are attractive to a bear's acute sense of smell.

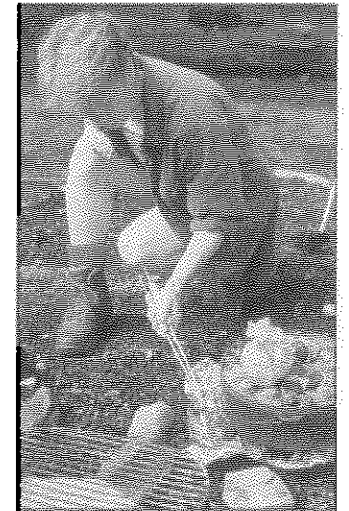
6. Immediately store food articles after every use in airtight containers. Coolers are not airtight and bears often associate them with food. Secure them in a locked trunk or truck cab concealed from view.

7. Cook only as much food as you will eat. Avoid as much food garbage as possible.

8. Never attempt to feed a bear or any other wild animal.

9. Approaching wildlife, especially black bears, can be a dangerous action.

10. Please keep your dog on a leash and clean up leftover food and scraps after your dog has finished eating.



Bears learn very quickly. Black bears that associate food with people may become aggressive and dangerous. This may lead to personal injury, property damage and the need to euthanize problem animals.

Report all bear damage and nuisance incidents to your camp office immediately. To learn more about New Jersey's black bears, visit the Division of Fish and Wildlife's web site at www.njfishandwildlife.com.

If A Bear Comes Into Camp:

Remain calm. Make the bear aware of your presence.

Do not feed the bear!

Keep at least 15 feet away from the bear.

Make sure the bear has an escape route.

Yell, bang pots and pans, or use an airhorn to scare the bear away.

The bear may utter a series of huffs, snap (pop) its jaws, and swat the ground. These are all warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away.

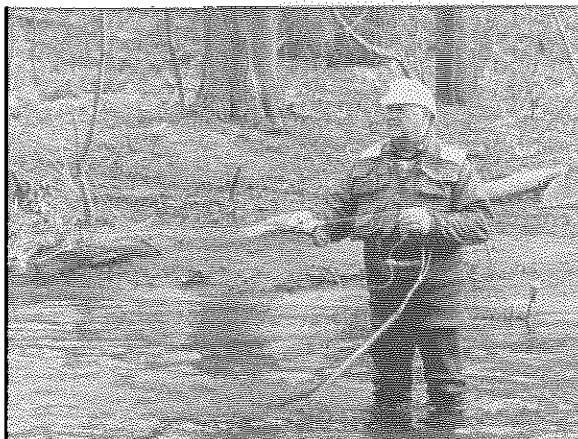
If the bear will not leave, move to your car or a building, if available. Notify proper authorities immediately if you encounter an aggressive or non-yielding bear.

**Remember: Bears chase off easier before they obtain food.
Keep a clean campsite.**

If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect smells in the air.

Black bears will sometimes "bluff charge" when cornered, threatened or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, and then slowly back away.

Hiking/Fishing in Bear Country



Normal trail noise should alert bears to your presence and prompt a bear to leave before you ever see it.

Use caution in areas (i.e. berry patches) where bears are likely to venture.

Do not leave fish entrails on shorelines of lakes or streams. Sink entrails in deep water.

Use common sense in a bear encounter – never approach the animal and only observe it from a distance. Make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing, or making other sounds.

If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm, assertive, and assuring voice.

Black Bears in New Jersey

Black bears are the largest land mammal in the Garden State and live in forested areas throughout northern New Jersey. They are native to New Jersey, but were negatively impacted by the clearing of land for settlements, timber and farms, and by indiscriminate killing. As a result, their numbers decreased and their range was reduced to the most remote areas in the northern part of the state. The population recovered after being afforded the protection of game animal status, and habitat improved as forests matured.



Black Bear Facts



- ❑ Black bears inhabit the forested regions of northern New Jersey. Prime habitat consists of mixed hardwood forests, dense swamps and forested wetlands.
- ❑ Black bear numbers have been increasing and their range expanding south and east since the 1980's.
- ❑ The New Jersey bear population has grown to at least 1400 in the year 2001 and it is estimated that a minimum of 350 new cubs are born each year.
- ❑ Bears are highly adaptable, living in and among human development. Home range sizes range up to 60 square miles for males and 10 square miles for females.
- ❑ Bears can live more than 20 years.
- ❑ Bears learn quickly and have excellent senses of smell and hearing.

❑ Black bears are omnivorous, eating plant and animal matter. They are opportunistic feeders and will supplement their diet with food derived from humans.

❑ Approximately 75% of a black bear's diet consists of plant material, including skunk cabbage, grasses, forbs, tubers and bulbs, soft mast (blueberries, huckleberries, raspberries, blackberries, wild cherries) and hard mast (acorns, beechnuts, hickory nuts).

❑ Animal matter includes bees and other insects (adult, larvae and eggs), small mammals, bird eggs, white-tailed deer fawns, road-killed deer, and carrion.

❑ Adult females average 185 pounds; adult males average 396 pounds.

❑ Breeding season runs from late May until August, peaking in June and July.

❑ Cubs are born in January, weigh about 8 ounces when born, are blind and covered with thin hair. Average litter size is 3, ranging from 1 to 6.

❑ Cubs travel with the female until she breeds again, 16-18 months later.

❑ Black bears den for the winter, becoming dormant to avoid periods of food shortages and severe weather. Bears do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate while denning. Den sites include rock cavities, brush piles, open nests and hollow trees.

❑ Black bears can run up to 35 miles per hour. Bears are strong swimmers.

❑ Bears are excellent climbers. Both adults and cubs will climb trees for food and to escape disturbances.