

The Division of Fisheries & Wildlife has issued a Black Bear warning. While Sudbury has very limited exposure to Black Bears, it is not uncommon to have a sighting every once in a while.

Please review these Common Sense tips in dealing with Black Bear, and other wildlife that can become a problem if proper steps are not taken to discourage their presence in neighborhoods.

If you should encounter a Black Bear, call local police, do not attempt to follow, film, or agitate them! Mass Wildlife has a number to call as well; 508-389-6359. Please visit the bear web pages at www.mass.gov/bears for more information.



DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE
Jack Buckley, Director

Homeowners and pet owners - avoid conflicts with black bears

Black bears and other animals can become a nuisance if they wander into your backyard. With some simple steps, you can make your yard less attractive to bears. These efforts are even more powerful when neighbors work together.

Overview

When animals, including bears, turkeys, and coyotes, find food in residential areas, they tend to spend more time in neighborhoods where a meal may be easily found. This can result in wildlife losing its fear of people. Bears may break into sheds, cages, and homes in search of food. You can help keep wildlife wild and wary of people by following the suggestions below. To be effective, it's important for entire neighborhoods to follow these guidelines. Share this information with your neighbors! Bears that are frequently fed, either

through bird feeders or garbage, may completely lose their fear of people. If a bear then behaves in a way that is a threat to public safety it may be euthanized.

Bird feeders

- If you live in an area with bears, it is best to avoid bird feeders altogether. Bears finding a bird feeder, bird seed, corn or other bird food will often revisit that site. Bird feeders draw bears closer to people, resulting in bears losing their fear of people. This process is called habituation. It's not safe for bears or people to be close to one another. If you choose to put out feeders, doing so in the winter when bears are denning decreases the chances of a bear coming to your feeder. In general, most bears are denning from mid-December through February. Although most bears in Massachusetts enter winter dens, MassWildlife biologists have tracked bears that remained active for some or all of the winter if food is available. It is important that you remove the entire feeder at the first sign of bear activity.
- Many wild animals are attracted to bird feeders including wild turkeys and coyotes. Since bird feeders attract small mammals like squirrels, they can also attract animals like fishers and bobcats who prey upon the smaller animals.
- For those people who enjoy birds in their yard, MassWildlife suggests growing native plants, shrubs, and trees to attract birds. Adding a water feature is a big draw for birds. Taking these actions may increase the diversity of birds you see and will prevent the unnatural feeding of bears and other kinds of neighborhood wildlife.
- Some bears have learned to empty bird feeders without destroying the feeder. DO NOT continue to fill a feeder.
- Do not leave empty feeders out. Residual smell and the sight of feeders can still attract bears.

Garbage, compost, and other attractants

- Store all garbage in closed containers in a garage or outbuilding. Do not leave your garbage barrels outside overnight. Rather, put them by the roadside before pickup. Using double bags or sprinkling with ammonia will help reduce odors. Bears and other wild and domestic animals will tip cans and scatter garbage. Smelly cans may attract bears even if there isn't anything in them, so store garbage cans inside.
- Compost responsibly. Do not throw meat scraps, greasy, oily or sweet materials in your compost pile. These kinds of food attract bears and other animals.
- Bear-proof garbage cans may be available from municipalities or waste management contractors. In communities where bears are more common, bear-proof dumpsters are recommended for apartments, condos and campgrounds.
- Clean greasy barbecues and grills after each use. Do not leave food scraps, grease containers or spilled grease in your yard.

Pet owners

- Pet food is a tasty treat for bears so don't leave pet food outdoors.
- The presence of a dog could trigger a bear to be aggressive. Keep dogs close by and never let dogs chase or interact with bears.
- Check your yard for bears before letting your dog out.
- If you encounter a bear while with your dog, back away slowly and leave the area.