

Colorado is Bear Country

Black bears have lived in the foothills and forests of Colorado since long before the pioneers arrived. Today 8,000 to 12,000 black bears are trying to share space with an ever-growing human population. With many more people living and playing in bear country, human/bear encounters are on the rise.

Colorado Bears Have People Problems

Every year, bears attracted to human food sources damage property, vehicles and even homes. Bears don't know they're doing anything wrong. They're just following their super-sensitive noses to the most calories they can find.

Bears that find food around homes, campgrounds and communities often lose their natural wariness of people. Even though black bears are not naturally aggressive and seldom attack or injure people, they are still strong, powerful animals. A bear intent on getting a meal could injure someone who gets in its way. Every year bears that have become too comfortable around people have to be destroyed.

Bears Need Your Help

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is charged with protecting and preserving the state's wildlife. Every time we must destroy a bear, it's not just the bear that loses. We all lose a little piece of the wildness that makes Colorado so special.

Black Bears at a Glance

Bears are intelligent, resourceful and amazing animals.

- Black is a species, not a color. In Colorado many black bears are blonde, cinnamon or brown.
- Over 90 percent of a bear's natural diet is grasses, berries, fruits, nuts and plants. The rest is primarily insects and scavenged carcasses.
- Black bears are naturally shy, and very wary of people and other unfamiliar things. Their normal response to any perceived danger is to run away.
- In Colorado most bears are active from mid-March through early November. When food sources dwindle they head for winter dens.
- With a nose that's 100 times more sensitive than ours, a bear can literally smell food five miles away.
- Bears are very smart, and have great memories — once they find food, they come back for more.
- During late summer and early fall bears need to consume 20,000 calories a day to survive the winter hibernation without eating or drinking.
- Bears are not naturally nocturnal, but sometimes travel at night in hopes of avoiding humans.

Please Do
Your Part
to Keep
Bears
Wild



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We're Here to Help

On the Web

Visit cpw.state.co.us/bears for more information. You'll find fact sheets, a homeowner's checklist, information on safe camping and hiking and much more.

Through Bear Aware

Bear Aware volunteers can answer questions, offer practical advice and even make house calls. They also do educational programs and staff informational booths at events. To find a Bear Aware volunteer in your area or join or form a Bear Aware team, call your local office.

Colorado Parks & Wildlife Offices

Our offices are open Mon. – Fri., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For after-hours emergencies, contact the Colorado State Patrol or your local Sheriff's Department.

CPW Headquarters - Administrative Offices

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COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Living With Bears



HOW TO AVOID WILDLIFE CONFLICTS



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Only People Can Prevent Problems With Bears

Black bears are curious, smart and very adaptable. They're not fussy and will eat just about anything with calories. Bears want to get the most energy they can with the least amount of effort. Every bear's goal is to get fat enough to live through the winter.

Most conflicts between people and bears can be traced to easy-to-get-at human food, garbage, pet food, bird seed or other attractants. When people allow bears to find food, a bear's natural drive to eat can overcome its wariness of humans.

Bear Calorie Counter

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| Bird seed (7 lbs.) | 12,180 |
| Dog Food (25 lbs.) | 42,425 |
| Peanut Butter (28 oz.) | 4,750 |
| Shortening (3 lbs.) | 12,430 |
| Berries (1 lb.) | 2,000 |



Bears that get too comfortable around people can destroy property or even become a threat to human safety. Habituated bears must often be destroyed. Please don't let bears die needlessly. Do your part to bear-proof your home and property, and help keep bears alive and wild.

Garbage Kills Bears

Much of what people throw away smells like food to a hungry bear. Standard metal or plastic trash cans won't keep out bears. Once bears learn where it's easy to get at the garbage, they'll come back again and again.

Never leave trash or recyclables out overnight. Empty cans and boxes still smell like food. One study showed that simply putting trash out the morning of pick up cuts the chances of a bear visit from 70 percent to 2 percent.



If you must leave trash outside, buy a bear-proof container, build a bear-proof enclosure or install an electric fence. To avoid attracting bears, clean containers regularly with ammonia or bleach.



Bears that learn garbage = food sometimes come inside homes looking for more. Don't make it easy for bears to visit; keep bear-accessible windows and doors in your home and garage locked.

Bird Feeders Kill Bears



Studies show that a big meal of tasty, nutritious seeds — a natural food for bears — is often the first reward a bear gets for exploring human places. Letting your bird feeders turn into bear feeders teaches bears that it's safe to come close to people and homes looking for food. And for bears that can be a deadly lesson.

We recommend not feeding birds during the months when bears are active.

Instead, use water features, plantings, nest boxes and flowers to attract birds. Use bird feeders only when bears are hibernating.

If you don't want to stop feeding birds, you need to hang your feeders at least 10 feet off the ground and 10 feet away from anything bears can climb.

Keep the area underneath feeders clean and free of bird seed and hulls, or switch to a hulled bird seed with no waste.

Never store bird seed outside, under your deck, or in a garage or shed a bear could break into. A 50-pound bag of bird seed has over 87,000 calories — a reward for the bear well worth the effort of breaking in.

Help Keep Bears Wild

Get in the habit of being bear-responsible. It's like recycling — at first it's a little extra effort, but soon it becomes a better way to live. And you can be proud you're helping to make Colorado a better place for people and bears.

- Don't feed bears, and don't put out food for other wildlife that attracts bears.
- Be responsible about trash and bird feeders.
- Burn food off barbecue grills and clean after each use.
- Keep all bear-accessible windows and doors closed and locked, including home, garage and vehicle doors.
- Don't leave food, trash, coolers, air fresheners or anything that smells in your vehicle.
- Pick fruit before it ripens, and clean up fallen fruit.
- Talk to your neighbors about doing their part to be bear-responsible.

If You See a Bear

If a bear comes near your home, do your best to chase it away. Yell, blow a whistle, clap your hands and make other loud noises. But never approach or corner a bear.

