

REMEMBER, BEARS CAN'T CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR, ONLY HUMANS CAN!

Protect yourself. . . protect a bear. Store garbage inside until the day of collection.



HOW CAN I DISCOURAGE BEARS?

If you live in black bear country, take responsibility for not attracting them. Always work with your neighbors to achieve a consistent solution to the problem situation, and keep in mind that doing a combination of things is better than doing just one. Follow these tips to discourage bears from entering areas of human use:

- Store garbage inside a secure building or in bear-proof containers.
- Place trash containers outside at the last possible time on the day of pickup.
- Hang bird feeders at least 10 feet above ground and away from buildings, including porches, and use a tray to catch spills. Discontinue feeding if a bear is in the area.
- Do not feed wildlife.
- Feed pets inside or remove uneaten pet food between feedings.
- Clean barbecues and store in a secure area.
- Do not leave food inside vehicles, and remove food smells with a neutralizing spray.
- Plant fruit trees away from residences and remove any fallen fruit.

A FED BEAR IS A DEAD BEAR

KEEP BEARS WILD!

People have inadvertently created conflicts by building homes in bear habitat and providing them access to food. Continued contact with humans can make bears lose their fear of people. The only real solution is to remove or block access to the attractants.

RESOURCES

For more information on living with urban wildlife, see the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Living with Wildlife Web pages at www.azgfd.gov/urbanwildlife or call the Department at:

Flagstaff (928) 774-5045 Pinetop (928) 367-4281
Kingman (928) 692-7730 Tucson (520) 628-5376
Mesa (480) 981-9400 Yuma (928) 342-0091
Phoenix (602) 942-3000



www.azgfd.gov

Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086-5000
(602) 942-3000

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April 2008

L I V I N G W I T H

BEARS



PROTECT YOURSELF. . . PROTECT A BEAR. STORE GARBAGE INSIDE UNTIL THE DAY OF COLLECTION.



**BEAR
COUNTRY**

Bears are a part of life in Arizona. The black bear is the only bear species found in the state. Although fur color varies and includes brown, cinnamon and blond, they are all considered black bears. It is the smallest and most widely distributed North American bear.

Bears and humans are sharing more of the same habitats as development occurs throughout Arizona. Bears in search of food are often attracted to homes and into close proximity with people. This close contact puts both humans and bears at risk. Most conflicts are the result of people unintentionally feeding bears, most often by allowing them access to household garbage or bird feeders.

Even though bears have a cute and cuddly image, they can be dangerous. Fed bears can lose their fear of humans and begin to associate humans with food, sometimes causing property damage and even injuring people. Conflicts between humans and bears are preventable.

BEAR TRAITS AND BEHAVIORS

- Weighs 125-400 pounds with males being larger than females
- 3 to 3 ½ feet tall when on all four feet
- Eats primarily acorns, berries, insects and cactus fruits
- Lives in most forest, woodland and chaparral habitats, and desert riparian areas
- Roams an area of 7 to 15 square miles
- Produces two to three cubs born in January or February
- Lives up to 25 years in the wild
- Most active at dawn and dusk (crepuscular)

WHAT ATTRACTS BEARS?

Bears may visit areas of human use because they find food. Bears are particularly attracted to household garbage continuously stored outside. Birdseed, pet food and fruit trees are also attractants. Drought, wildfire and development can cause bears to roam farther in search of new food sources.

WHAT KEEPS BEARS AWAY?

Since garbage stored outside is the biggest attractant, storing garbage in a secure garage or shed until the morning of collection will virtually eliminate the chances of a bear visit. If a bear does not find a food source, it will move on.



Fences, lighting and dogs have not been found to be effective, long-term deterrents. Bears are good climbers, so to reduce a bear's ability to get over a fence, it should be at least 6 feet tall and constructed of non-climbable material.

WHY NOT MOVE THE BEARS?

Recognizing the potential risk to both humans and bears, the Arizona Game and Fish Department spends considerable time and money each year relocating bears. Unfortunately, this effort does little for the bears or homeowners. Some bears must be destroyed because they are considered too dangerous, have lost their fear of humans, or continue to get into conflicts with people. Following removal or relocation, the homeowner might experience more problems from a different bear if the original attractant is not eliminated. Relocating a bear is also traumatic for the animal and does not guarantee it will live. Some are killed by bigger, older bears that already live in the relocation area.



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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE A BEAR OR ONE IS IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD?

First, never approach a wild bear. Black bears usually avoid people, but if they start to associate people with food they may become aggressive. If a bear is in your yard or neighborhood, immediately contact the Game and Fish office in your area. Depending on what the bear is doing, department personnel may respond if it remains in the area. Deter the bear by making loud noises, such as yelling, whistling or banging pans.

If you see a bear in the distance, alter your route to avoid it. On the rare occasion that a bear approaches you, discourage it by:

- Making yourself as large and imposing as possible. Stand upright and wave your arms, jacket or other items, and make loud noises.
- Do not run and never play dead.
- Give the bear a chance to leave the area.
- If the bear does not leave, stay calm, continue facing it, and slowly back away.

KNOW THE LAW

It is your responsibility to know the law. Bears are classified as big game animals in Arizona and are protected by state law. They can only be captured or killed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, legally permitted hunters, or in defense of yourself or another person.

It is unlawful to feed wildlife, including bears, in many counties per Arizona Revised Statute 13-2927. Violations can result in a fine of up to \$300.



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