



Black Bear Country Safety Guide



Aussi disponible en français.

Reduce Bear Attractants

Bears thrive best on natural foods, but they will take an easy meal. These items attract bears:

- Birdseed and peanuts (including hummingbird feeders)
- Barbeques
- Garbage
- Human food, dishes, pots, pans
- Coolers, even when empty
- Pets and pet food
- Recycling (even containers and bottles that have been rinsed)
- Composters
- Gasoline
- Toiletries and cosmetics



When camping:

Keep yourself and your campsite odour free.

Keep sleeping bags, tents, and sleeping clothes free of food, all toiletries, food odours and beverages. Store items with strong odours in vehicle, designated food storage lockers or elevated food caches.

Store food, pet food, livestock feed and garbage away from your tent.

Keep these in a bear proof place (vehicle, hard-sided trailer, food lockers, backcountry elevated food caches).

Wash and store all dishes and food utensils immediately after use.

Dump strained dish water in designated areas (front country: sewer site or washroom toilets; backcountry camping: pit toilets). Dispose of strained solids in garbage.

Pack out garbage.

Do not burn or bury it. Store your garbage the same as food.

Dispose of fish parts.

Dispose in the deep part of a lake, never along stream sides or lake shores. In the front country, use fish cleaning shacks and containers.

In the townsite of Waskesiu:

Store garbage/recycling, food, pet food and any items with strong odours in secure bear-proof areas.

Make use of available bear-proof garbage and recycling bins.

Use birdhouses and bird baths in place of bird feeders.

Thoroughly clean barbeques after each use.



Carrier of Medicine

First Nations people call me the 'carrier of medicine'. We are also known as a symbol of wisdom, peace and as devoted caregivers. First Nations people place a high and valued esteem on our way of teaching and child rearing. Our little maskwa (bear) are born during Bear Moon, in January.



Jennifer Brown

Bear Behaviour



Why bears behave the way they do

Give bears space as they generally prefer to avoid people. A bear's natural avoidance behaviour can shift to aggression because of the following factors:

- You surprise them.
- They are protecting young.
- They are protecting a food source.
- Your dog provokes them.
- The bear has lost its natural fear of humans.
- The bear feels trapped.

Bears might appear to be slow moving or unconcerned with your presence but they can be unpredictable and potentially dangerous. Be aware of your surroundings. Take responsibility for your safety and actions. Black bears can run at speeds up to 50 km/hr.

Contact Information

Visitor Centre

1-306-663-4522
panp.info@pc.gc.ca
parkscanada.gc.ca/princealbert

For wildlife conflicts:
1-877-852-3100

In case of emergency:
Dial 911

Avoiding a Bear Encounter

Never approach bears.
Give wildlife space.



Travel as part of a group
if possible and keep children close by.

Make noise!
Let bears know you're there. Call out, clap hands, sing or talk loudly – especially near streams, dense vegetation and berry patches or on windy days and in areas of low visibility. Some research shows bear bells are not enough.

Watch for bear signs.
If you see fresh tracks, droppings, digging, and torn-up logs, leave the area.



Keep your dog on a leash at all times.
Dogs can provoke defensive behaviour in bears and other wildlife.

If you come across any dead animals,
leave the area immediately and report it to park staff.

Area closures.
For the safety of everyone, obey all area closures.

Cyclists & Trail Runners

Your speed and quietness put you at risk for sudden encounters with bears. Make noise, stay alert.



Handling a Bear Encounter

- 1 STAY CALM**
Don't alarm the bear with loud noises or sudden movement. Remain still and stand your ground while you assess the situation. Bears may show stress by 'woofing', growling, and snapping their jaws. Bears may bluff charge. It's difficult, but important to remain calm if a bear reacts to you this way.
- 2 SPEAK TO THE BEAR**
Let the bear hear your voice. Talk calmly and firmly. This lets the bear know you are human, and not a prey animal. If a bear rears on its hind legs and waves its nose about, it is trying to identify you.
- 3 BACK AWAY SLOWLY, NEVER RUN**
If a bear charges, stand your ground as it may be a bluff charge. You can't outrun a bear.
- 4 MAKE YOURSELF LARGE**
Pick up small children and stay in a group.
- 5 DON'T DROP YOUR BACKPACK**
It can provide protection in the event of an attack.
- 6 LEAVE THE AREA OR TAKE A DETOUR**
If this is impossible, wait until the bear moves away. Always leave the bear an escape route.



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Handling a Bear Attack

If a bear actually makes contact, you may increase your chances of survival by following these guidelines. In general, there are 2 kinds of attacks:

DEFENSIVE

The bear is surprised by you and/or is protecting food or young. The bear perceives you as a threat. Use bear spray.

Play dead if the bear makes contact with you.

Lie on your stomach with your arms over the back of your neck and legs apart to avoid being flipped over. Remain still until you are sure the bear has left the area. If the attack continues, the bear may have become predatory.

PREDATORY

The bear is stalking or hunting you along the trail then attacks. Or it attacks you at night.

If the bear is stalking you, don't play dead. FIGHT BACK!

Try to escape into a building or a car.
If you can't escape, use bear spray, shout and fight back using whatever tools are at hand (branch, rock, your camping gear). Let the bear know you are not easy prey.

Research shows that bear spray can be an effective tool in deterring a black bear attack. Know how to use it and keep it handy.

