

Neighborhood Wildlife Stewards

Teaching our Highlands neighbors how to live safely with wildlife and keep the wildlife wild.

American Black Bear



Black Bear

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The American black bear (*Ursus americanus*) population in Washington State is estimated to be between 25,000 and 30,000. Bears usually avoid people, but bears may become dangerous when people get too close to them.

As people move into bear habitat throughout Washington State, bear and human encounters are inevitably increasing. State wildlife offices receive hundreds of calls each year concerning black bear sightings, property damage, bear attacks on livestock and pets, and bear confrontations with people. According to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, 95% of these calls are the result of people not acting responsibly.

Preventing Conflicts with Black Bears

- Never feed bears.
- Don't give bears access to garbage. Put garbage out shortly before the truck arrives and not the night before. Keep garbage cans with tight-fitting lids in your garage until then.
- Store food in secure containers and clean up barbecue areas after each use.
- Feed pets indoors and keep them indoors at night.
- Don't put out bird feeders from early March through November and bring in hummingbird feeders at night.
- Only put plant material in compost bins.
- Fence your vegetable garden and fruit trees.

What to do if you come in close contact with a black bear

- Stop, remain calm, and assess the situation. If the bear seems unaware of you, move away quietly when it's not looking in your direction.
- If a bear walks toward you, stand up, wave your hands above your head, and talk to the bear in a low voice.

- Don't throw anything at the bear and avoid direct eye contact.
- If you cannot safely move away from the bear or the bear continues toward you, scare it away by clapping, stomping your feet, yelling, and staring the animal in the eyes.
- Don't run from the bear unless you are absolutely certain you can reach safety . Do not try to climb a tree.
- In the unlikely event a black bear attacks you, fight back aggressively .

To report dangerous wildlife

Contact the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife at 1-877-933-9847. If it's an emergency, dial 9-1-1.

For additional information about black bears, see:

- Living with Wildlife: Black Bears
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/bears.htm>
- Dangerous & Problem Wildlife
http://wdfw.wa.gov/enforcement/dangerous_problem_wildlife.html
- Black Bears: Close Encounters
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/blkbear/blkbear4.htm>

If you care about the welfare of the wildlife in our area, want to learn more about living safely with the wildlife, and would enjoy meeting your neighbors, join us for our monthly meetings.

April's topic: Black Bears

Time and place: 7:00 p.m. on April 14 at Blakely Hall

May's topic: Bird Migration

Time and place: 7:00 p.m. on May 12 at Blakely Hall

Written by:

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