



BLACK BEAR FACTS

- The only species of bears in California are black bears. However, they range in color from blonde to black, with cinnamon brown being the most common color.
- There are an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 black bears in California.
- Black bears will seek to avoid confrontation with humans. If encountered, always leave them an escape route.
- Bears can weigh up to 500 pounds, although average weight is about 300 pounds.
- Black bears can sprint up to 35 mph. They are strong swimmers and great tree climbers.
- A typical wild bear diet consists of berries, plants, nuts, roots, honey, honeycomb, insects, larvae, carrion and small mammals.
- As winter approaches, bears will forage for food up to 20 hours a day, storing enough fat to sustain them through hibernation. Bears often hibernate in large hollow trees 40 to 60 feet off the ground!
- Bears that are accustomed to people can become too bold and lose their fear of humans.
- To avoid this behavior, do not let bears become habituated to human sources of food.

BEAR SAFETY TIPS

- While hiking, make noise to avoid a surprise encounter with a bear.
- Never approach a bear or pick up a bear cub.
- If you encounter a bear, do not run; instead, face the animal, make noise and try to appear as large as possible.
- If attacked, fight back. Do not “play dead.”
- If a bear attacks a person, immediately call 911.
- If in doubt about what to do, ask your local Fish and Game warden or biologist, park ranger, or law enforcement officer. Visit [www.Keepmewild.org](http://www.keepmewild.org) for more info.

TO REPORT A BEAR PROBLEM

Contact the California Department of Fish and Game regional office nearest you:

Northern Region (530) 225-2300

North Central Region (916) 358-2900

Bay Delta Region (707) 944-5500

Central Region (559) 243-4005

South Coast Region (858) 467-4201

Inland Desert Region (909) 484-0167

Sacramento Headquarters (916) 322-8911

Alternate communication methods are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed, contact the Department of Fish and Game, (916) 322-8911 or the California Relay Service serving deaf and hearing-impaired residents using TTY/TDD phones, and speech-impaired callers, at (800) 735-2929



Camper's Guide to Being Bear Aware



California Department of Fish and Game



BEARS ARE IN TROUBLE DUE TO PEOPLE'S CARELESSNESS WITH FOOD & GARBAGE.



Black bears are increasing in California's wild habitats, alongside our own expanding communities.

Wild animals naturally respect humans, keep their distance and will not bother you, so long as they remain fully wild. But if they lose their wildness, their behavior changes.

If black bears are given access to human food and garbage, they rapidly become addicted. They lose caution and respect. They cause property damage. They might threaten human safety. They might be killed.

People have a responsibility to the wildlife whose habitat they are sharing.

NEVER FEED A BEAR!

**For more information, visit
www.dfg.ca.gov/keepmewild**

KEEP A CLEAN AND SAFE CAMPSITE

Bears and other animals are attracted to anything edible or smelly.

When camping at a campground:

Store food, beverages, toiletries and scented items in bear-resistant lockers at all times where available.

If bear-resistant lockers are not available, store food in airtight containers in the trunk of your car. (Note: Many campgrounds prohibit storing food in your vehicle, so check camp rules.)

Dispose of garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters, if available, and ensure they are closed properly.

Clean everything after preparing a meal, including the barbecue grill.

Keep sleeping bags, tents and sleeping areas free of food, beverages and scented toiletries.

Don't sleep in clothes you've worn during cooking.

When camping in the back country:

Always backpack in pairs or with a group.

Choose an open site away from dense vegetation, natural food areas, forest cover or natural pathways.

Never camp in an area that has obvious evidence of bear activity such as digging, tracks or scat.

Restrict all cooking, eating and cleaning activities and food storage to 100 feet downwind from tents.

Store food, toiletries and trash in bear-proof canisters.

Do not sleep outside of tent or with any "smellables" in your tent, including empty food wrappers.