

THE AMERICAN BLACK BEAR IN MAINE

Maine is home to the largest population of black bears in the eastern US. Our bears are most active between April 1 and November 1.

When natural foods are scarce, especially in the spring or dry summers, bears will venture into backyards and fields in search of easily accessible food such as bird feeders, garbage, grills, and pet foods.

While hundreds of conflicts between bears and people are reported each year in Maine, many can be prevented by simply removing or securing common bear attractants.

Removing these food sources will also limit other backyard visitors (raccoons, skunks, etc.).

BLACK BEAR ENCOUNTER TOP TIPS

Bear encounters and attacks are rare, but follow these simple steps to avoid and safely escape encounters that do occur:

- Hike/walk in groups and stay together
- Don't approach a bear
- Back away from a bear
- Carry bear pepper spray
- Carry a walking stick for defense

If a bear becomes aggressive

- Intimidate by waving your arms
- Yelling loudly while backing away
- Fight back or use bear pepper spray



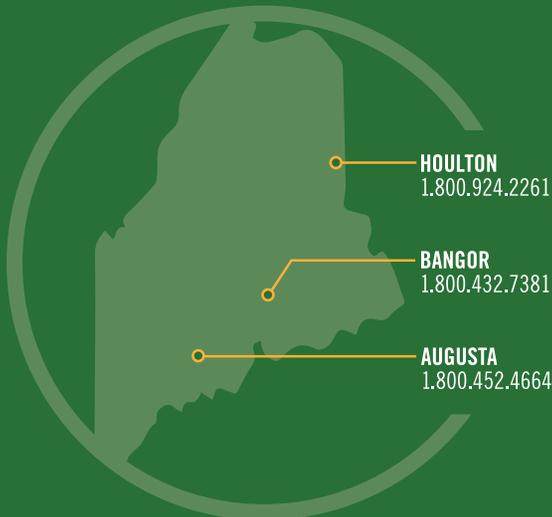
AVOIDING BLACK BEAR ENCOUNTERS

IN THE WOODS,
YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD,
OR BACKYARD

REPORT AGGRESSIVE BEARS IMMEDIATELY BY CALLING 911

If you have an issue with a bear and need assistance, contact the Warden Service dispatch center closest to you.

You can avoid a bear encounter in your neighborhood by removing bear attractants like trash and bird feeders.



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Developed by the Northeast Black Bear Technical Committee comprised of state and provincial black bear biologists from the northeastern US and Canada.





AVOIDING BEARS WHEN CAMPING, HIKEING, OR WALKING

Bear attacks are very uncommon and bears rarely become aggressive when encountered. However, it's best to avoid bears by following these simple steps, and to know what to do if an encounter happens.

While hiking or walking



- Be aware of your surroundings
- Hike in groups and stay together
- Keep kids within sight
- Keep dogs on a leash or leave them home
- Make noise in thick cover
- **Carry bear pepper spray**
- Carry a walking stick for defense

While camping



- Do not store food in your tent
- Cook 100 yards from your tent
- Clean cooking area thoroughly
- Don't sleep in clothes you cooked in
- Store food, trash, lotions, toothpaste, and deodorant in:
 - vehicle with windows closed
 - a bear-proof container
 - or suspended in a tree 100 yards from sleeping area



For more information on black bears in Maine, please visit us online at mefishwildlife.com/livingwithwildlife



IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR



In the woods

- Do not approach the bear
- Quietly back away and leave the area



In a building, dumpster, or around the corner

- Give the bear a clear escape route (do not corner it)
- Leave any doors open as you **back away** from the bear
- Do not lock the bear in a room



In your backyard

- From a safe distance, make loud noises, shout, or bang pots and pans together (to scare the bear)
- When the bear leaves, remove potential attractants such as garbage, birdseed, or pet food
- Ask neighbors to remove attractants



IF A BEAR BECOMES AGGRESSIVE AND...



Approaches you or makes noise

- Make yourself look bigger by raising your arms
- Repeat "Hey, bear" while backing away



Follows you

- Stay together
- Do not run, but continue to back away

Continues to follow you

- Stand your ground, stay together
- Intimidate by making yourself look bigger and making noise (wave arms, shout, clap, bang stick)
- Prepare to fight or use bear pepper spray



Charges you

- Stand your ground
- Remain calm
- If you have bear pepper spray, dispense in circular motion



Makes contact with you

- **Fight back** with anything at hand (knife, sticks, rocks, binoculars, backpack, walking stick) or by kicking