



Be a friend to BEARS



Albuquerque's foothill neighborhoods are in bear country, but the number of bears in the mountain ranges surrounding our city is dwindling. If we want bears to survive and thrive in our mountains, they need our help.

The black bear is New Mexico's state animal (and the only bear that calls New Mexico home), yet bears don't enjoy any special protections. Black bears are a hunted species, and the state issues hundreds of kill permits each year.

Several thousand black bears remain in wooded areas across New Mexico. That's not a large number, given that bears reproduce slowly.

All are naturally shy and docile animals. They feed

mostly on plants, and sometimes small rodents and carrion.

Close encounters with bears are rare. Black bears are wary of people, and will usually try to avoid us if they can. Their normal response to any perceived danger is to run away.

Black bears are active from mid-April through mid-November. During that time, you can do your part to prevent problems with bears.

Bear Safety Tips: If you encounter a bear, back away!

- Never approach a bear (and don't let your dog approach).
- If you see a bear when hiking, maintain a safe distance and alter your route to avoid the bear. Never block a bear's travel route.
- Make noise; don't surprise a bear.
- If a bear is close, face the bear (without making eye contact) and back away slowly. Talk calmly to identify yourself as a human. Group together and pick up small children and pets.
- Do not run.
- If a bear approaches you, scare them away by making yourself as large and imposing as possible by stretching your arms overhead and making loud noises.
- Look for cubs and stay away from them. Do not come between a mother and her cubs.
- If attacked, fight back aggressively.
- Carry and know how to use bear spray when hiking in bear country.
- Don't attract a bear by leaving food or trash on the trail.

ACTION TIPS

Be a friend to bears! Here's what you can do.

TIP #1

Prevent bears from feeding on your garbage

Signs of bear activity in your neighborhood include overturned trash cans. You can prevent further bear visits by bear-proofing your garbage.

- Keep your garbage stored in a sturdy shed or closed garage, hidden from view.
- If you build a garbage enclosure, use strong materials that can't be pried apart or tipped over.
- Use a tight-fitting latch, ideally two, to keep a shed door firmly closed.
- Use a wildlife-proof trash can that includes protection against bears, with locked and reinforced lids. They are available at hardware and home improvement stores.
- Make your conventional trash can bear-resistant by locking the lid. Bolt hasp and eyebolts to the container and reinforce them with mending plates to prevent the plastic from ripping.
- Contain your garbage until the morning of pickup. Don't put trash cans out the night before.

TIP #2

Remove food sources from your yard

Make your yard uninteresting to bears, especially if you live close to the mountains and have seen signs of bear activity.

- Keep barbecue grills clean or stored inside.
- Don't feed pets outside.
- Hang birdseed feeders and hummingbird feeders from wires 10' off the ground and 10' away from anything a bear can climb (or bring feeders inside at night).
- Feed suet only in the winter when bears are in hibernation.
- Plant fruit trees away from your house, pick fruit as it ripens, and remove fallen fruit.
- Keep compost away from the house and avoid adding melon rinds or other fragrant fruit, except in winter.
- Protect beehives and chicken coops with electric fencing and place them at a distance from your house.
- Don't leave anything edible in your car overnight if it is parked outside.

TIP #3

If you see a bear...

- You don't have to report bear sightings; bears are at home here too. Report a bear only if the bear appears aggressive or tries to enter a house. Call the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish at (505) 222-4700.
- If you see a bear nearby, or if a bear is in a nearby tree, walk away or go inside your house, and take your pets with you. Give the bear time to leave.
- If a bear comes close to your home, yell at them and make noise from the safety of your doorway. Teach bears that they are not welcome around your home.

NEED HELP?



For more information on coexisting with our Albuquerque wildlife, visit cabq.gov/coexistwithwildlife