

Q. Can bears be found in Northwest Bergen County municipalities?

A. Yes, black bears have been observed in all of New Jersey's 21 counties. Below, please find helpful information concerning bears, how to prevent attracting bears to your property, and what to do if you observe a bear.

- Generally, bears tend to be wary of humans. It is important not to tempt bears to linger in residential areas by leaving out food or garbage. Bears are usually most active between April 1 and December 1.
- Black bears learn very quickly. Bears that are fed intentionally or unintentionally by carelessly leaving out food or garbage will associate food with people. These bears can become a nuisance or aggressive and may have to be removed or destroyed.
- You can help to prevent problems with black bears by following some simple tips.

How to Avoid Attracting Bears to Your Property

- Use bear-resistant garbage containers if you live in an area frequented by black bears.
- Store all garbage in containers inside a garage or shed.
- Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.
- Clean outdoor grills and utensils thoroughly after each use and store grills securely. Grease and food residue attract bears.
- Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.
- Avoid feeding birds if you live in an area frequented by black bears. Birdseed attracts bears. If you choose to feed birds, do so during daylight hours only between December 1 and April 1, when bears are least active. Suspend feeder from a free-hanging wire, making sure the bottom is at least 10 feet off the ground. Bring feeder indoors at night. Clean up spilled seeds and shells.
- **Do not feed bears. It's illegal in New Jersey, and it's dangerous.**

If A Bear Comes Into Your Yard

- Remain calm. Make bear sure the bear sees you.
- Back away from the bear, ensuring to take children and pets with you. Go into your home and close the door.

- Make sure the bear has an escape route as you remove yourself from the bear.
- If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm and assuring voice. Do not turn your back on the bear and attempt to run away.
- Note that the bear may utter a series of huffs, snap its jaws and swat the ground. These are all warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away.
- If you do have a bear in your yard, do not let your dog out thinking the dog will chase the bear away. More than likely your dog will attack the bear, which will result in the dog being seriously or fatally injured.
- Most bears will continue moving if there is no food for them to eat.
- If a bear does not leave your property, or you encounter an aggressive bear, call the police at 911.

Report black bear damage or nuisance behavior to the Wyckoff Police at 201-891-2121.

For more information on New Jersey black bears, visit www.njfishandwildlife.com