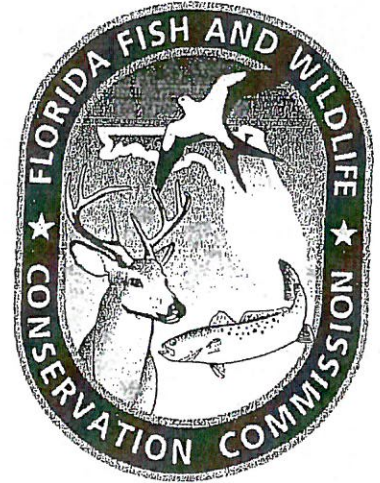


Please Don't Feed Bears

Feeding bears, either by direct handouts or by leaving attractants such as garbage and pet food unsecured, is **against the law** and **causes bear conflicts**. It's bad for bears and bad for people.



What attracts bears?

- Food and food smells (barbecue grills, compost piles)
- Garbage left outside and unsecure
- Pet foods or wildlife feed left outside and unsecure

Remember: Any food source that attracts dogs, cats or raccoons will attract bears.

Did you know?

- Bears can smell food from more than a mile away and if they are rewarded with an easy meal, they learn quickly to return to the area.
- Curious bears that are not rewarded with an easy meal such as garbage or pet foods will look for food away from houses.
- Bears that become used to getting human foods may damage property or become a threat to public safety. These bears often must be killed. To help avoid these problems, please don't provide food for bears.
- Feeding bears is against Florida law – F.A.C. 68A-4.001(3). "Intentionally placing food or garbage, allowing the placement of food or garbage, or offering food or garbage in such a manner that it attracts black bears, foxes or raccoons and in a manner that is likely to create or creates a public nuisance is prohibited."
- If convicted of feeding bears, you could face up to 60 days in jail, up to \$500 in fines or both.

What can you do to prevent bear problems?

- Store trash in a secure area until morning of pickup
- Bring pet food inside, store securely
- Protect gardens, compost and livestock with electric fencing
- Clean grills and store them in a secure area
- Remove wildlife feeders if there is a bear in the area

If you experience bear conflicts, please contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission regional office nearest you:

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Panama City | 850-265-3676 | Lakeland | 863-648-3200 |
| Lake City | 386-758-0525 | West Palm Beach | 561-625-5122 |
| Ocala | 352-732-1225 | | |

For more information go to MyFWC.com/bear.

YOU LIVE IN BEAR COUNTRY



Black bears are an important part of Florida's natural heritage. Keeping bears wild and away from human use areas is a responsibility we all must share. FWC is dedicated to reducing conflicts between people and bears in your community.

Black bears are naturally shy, timid animals that try to avoid people. However, as human development expands, it becomes increasingly difficult for bears to avoid people.

Why are bears in your neighborhood?

Bears are lured into neighborhoods when they find an easily accessible food source. Bears that become used to getting human foods may damage property or become a threat to public safety. Common items that attract bears into neighborhoods include:

- Garbage
- Food smells from barbecue grills, coolers, and outdoor freezers/refrigerators
- Animal feed (e.g., pet food, corn, grain, seed, bird seed, livestock feed)
- Gardens, compost piles, small or medium livestock (e.g., chickens, goats, pigs, rabbits)




Feeding bears, either by direct handouts or by leaving attractants such as garbage and pet food unsecured, causes bear conflicts and is against the law.

Florida Administrative Code 68A-4.001(3): "Intentionally placing food or garbage, allowing the placement of food or garbage, or offering food or garbage in such a manner that it attracts black bears, foxes or raccoons and in a manner that is likely to create or creates a public nuisance is prohibited."

If you see a bear in your community...

Remain calm and stay away from the bear. The mere presence of a black bear does not represent a problem. The bear is most likely just passing through and will not linger or return if it does not find a reward such as food. A bear may climb a tree to look for food or if it gets scared. Clear the area of people and pets and allow the bear to come down when it feels safe (usually after dark). The bear found its way into the area and it can find its way out.

If you encounter a bear at close range...

-  DO NOT play dead or run from the bear
-  Back away slowly with arms raised
-  Avoid direct eye contact
-  Speak in a calm and assertive voice

If you experience bear problems, please contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 352-732-1225 or visit MyFWC.com/Bear.