

Black Bear Safety Tips: What to Do If You See a Black Bear

Black bear mating season occurs during the summer, usually in late June or early July. Seeing a bear in the wild can be very enjoyable. Only 10% of our population has seen a bear in the wild, and the vast majority of those individuals reside in western Maryland.

Bears are not aggressive, but it is important to give them their space. If you encounter a bear, remain calm. Don't panic. Do not provide any forms of food including trash, bird seed, dog/cat food, etc. Black bears are much more likely to flee than to be aggressive and are even more likely to be gone, before you even know they are there.

Here are a few helpful tips to stay safe during the summer and year around.

➤ **Stay Alert & Stay Together**

Pay attention to your surroundings and stay together. Walk, hike, jog, or cycle with others when possible. Keep kids within sight and close by. Leave earbuds at home and make noise periodically so bears can avoid you.

➤ **Leave No Trash or Food Scraps**

Double bag your food when hiking and pack out all food and trash. Don't burn food scraps or trash in your fire ring or grill. Leaving scraps, wrappers, or even "harmless" items like apple cores teaches bears to associate trails and campsites with food.

➤ **Keep Dogs Leashed**

Letting dogs chase or bark at bears is asking for trouble; don't force a bear to defend itself. Keep your dogs leashed at all times or leave them at home.

➤ **Know What To Do If You See a Black Bear**

If you see a bear before it notices you, don't approach. Stand still, enjoy, then quietly move away. If a bear sees you, back away slowly. Never run; running may trigger a chase response. If a bear approaches, hold your ground, wave your arms and yell "Hey Bear" until it leaves. Stay with your group. If it keeps approaching, use bear spray. If a black bear makes contact with you, do NOT play dead; fight back aggressively.

➤ **Carry Bear Spray & Know How To Use It**

Bear spray is proven to be the easiest and most effective way to deter a bear that threatens you. It doesn't work like bug repellent, so never spray your tent, campsite or belongings.

For more information on Black bear safety, please visit

https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/pages/hunt_trap/bblivingwith.aspx