

**NJ Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fish and Wildlife**

Know the Bear Facts - Black Bears in New Jersey

Bear Safety Tips

Black bears by nature tend to be wary of humans and avoid people. However, if you encounter a black bear in your neighborhood or outdoors while hiking or camping, follow these common-sense safety tips.

- Never feed or approach a bear!
- Remain calm.
- Make the bear aware of your presence by speaking in an assertive voice, singing, clapping your hands, or making other noises.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.
- If a bear enters your home, provide it with an escape route by propping all doors open.
- Avoid direct eye contact, which may be perceived by a bear as a challenge. Never run from a bear. Instead, slowly back away.
- To scare the bear away, make loud noises by yelling, banging pots and pans or using an airhorn. Make yourself look as big as possible by waving your arms. If you are with someone else, stand close together with your arms raised above your head.
- The bear may utter a series of huffs, make popping jaw sounds by snapping its jaws and swat the ground. These are warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away, avoid direct eye contact and do not run.
- If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect scents in the air. It is usually not a threatening behavior.
- Black bears will sometimes “bluff charge” when cornered, threatened or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, avoid direct eye contact, then slowly back away. Do not run.
- If the bear does not leave, move to a secure area.
- Immediately notify the DEP’s 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 1-877-WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337).
- Families who live in areas with high black bear populations should have a “Bear Plan” in place for children, with whistles, air horns and an escape route.
- Black bear attacks are extremely rare. If a black bear does attack, fight back!

