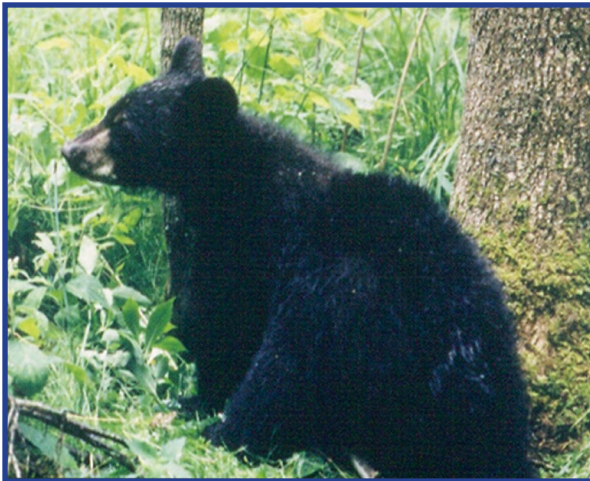


What you need to know about black bears and how we can all survive together in Vermont!

According to the VT. Fish and Wildlife Department, bears that are fed or lured to our homes tend to have their life expectancy cut in half!

Bear encounters can be reported at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.



What to do if you find a bear in your yard...

- Try to scare the bear away
- Yell or clap your hands
- In your car? Blow the horn

Remember, the point is to safely get the bear out of your yard.

- ◆ DO NOT approach it - stay a safe distance away.
- ◆ DO NOT encourage the bear by feeding the bear.
- ◆ DO NOT take the bears picture or call the neighbors to view the bear. NO contact is best.

*A PDF of this brochure can be downloaded from the following site:
<http://www.hartford-vt.org/content/conservation/>*

Please feel free to share with friends!

**HARTFORD
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**



Living with Black Bears



Bear Facts

The black bear (*Ursus americanus*) is the smallest of the three bear species found in North America. It is currently the only bear found in Vermont.

Adult female black bears in Vermont average between 120 and 180 pounds. It is uncommon for a female to exceed 200 pounds. In contrast, male black bears are generally larger, weighing 300 to 400 pounds.

The haircoat is generally black but some bears have a white “Y” shaped spot on their chest. They have long, thick fur which generally makes them seem larger than they actually are.

Bears have an excellent sense of smell and keen hearing.

Black bears reach maturity at 3 years of age and then can start a breeding cycle. Females can produce cubs every other year, if they are healthy and have enough body fat to sustain cubs during gestation.

Breeding occurs in June and July. Cubs are born in late January or early February while the mother is denning (hibernating). Females can produce one to five cubs; the average is two. When born, cubs are about the size of a chipmunk! Cubs remain with their mothers until approximately 16 months of age. Young males must then move on to their own territory while young females tend to stay in their mother’s territory.

What do bears eat?

- Bears scavenge extensively starting in early spring when food sources are scarce. Finding food is difficult until early summer when berries and roots (jack-in-the-pulpit) become available.
 - Bears are omnivorous, meaning they eat meat as well as plants, nuts, and berries. Bears will eat young deer or moose should they happen upon them, although they do not actively seek them.
 - Bears will eat chickens if they find your coop.
 - Bears love to pick through your garbage.
 - Bird feeders are a snack bar for bears.
 - Pet dishes are also great at luring bear into your yard. Don’t feed your pets outside.
- Late summer will find bear eating corn, cherries, oats, acorns, beech nuts, honey from hives, and anything else they can find. Bears do their most concentrated eating during late summer and fall, as they prepare for winter.



Bears are normally a shy animal and will stay to themselves. If you start feeding them (not necessarily on purpose, but just because the bird feeders are still out, the garbage is outside, or you left food on the barbecue grill), bears will go for the easy meal. Then they will get pushy and actively seek more and more. You will then have bears that can cause danger to you, your pets, your livestock and your property. Ultimately, that bear will end up being destroyed - a fate that no one should wish on them.

Protect chicken coops and bee hives with electric fencing!

How do you prevent needless bear deaths?

- **Remove bird feeders (April 1 to December 1, bird feeders should not be out).**
- **Keep barbecue grills clean and inside if you can.**
- **Don’t put your garbage out the night before pick up. Have it picked up or disposed of more often so it’s not available to bears.**
- **Feed your pets inside.**
- **When camping, store food in your vehicle (bears can climb trees, so hanging it in a tree is not necessarily keeping food safe).**
- **Livestock feed in an open barn should be stored in air tight containers.**

Remember...

**A fed bear is a
dead bear!**

VT Fish and Wildlife Dept.