

# Living with Black Bears

## in Newfoundland & Labrador



**We live in harmony** with most wildlife in Newfoundland and Labrador, often without even realizing it. Our forests and barrens are home to many animals. Unless we intentionally seek them out, some people can go a lifetime without being aware of their presence. As long as humans and wildlife respect each others' boundaries, conflicts can be avoided – but we all have to do our part to make sure we don't encourage behaviour that could cause problems for wildlife.

Black bears are always looking for an easy meal. Once they find a source of human food or garbage, they continue to seek it out. When black bears become habituated to humans, their natural fear fades. They take more chances to access food and may become aggressive.

### Are black bears dangerous?

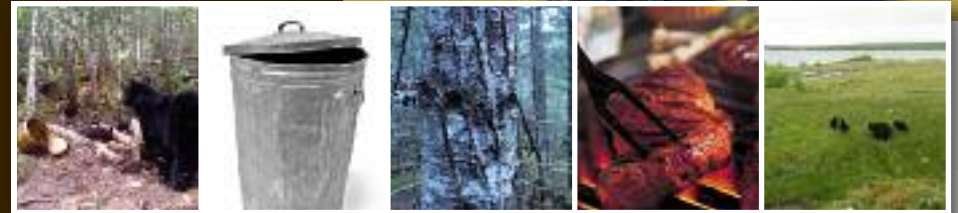
Although black bears are usually timid and attacks are extremely rare, they are wild and can be dangerous. Little can be done to manage habituated bears. These animals often pay with their lives for human mistakes.

### If bears are near your home, cabin or campsite:

- Do not feed them.
- Do not leave food, pet food, bottles, cans or containers outside. Store food, garbage, coolers, camp stoves, pots and pans in your shed, cabin or vehicle.
- Harvest fruit from fruit trees when ripe. Consider planting non-fruit trees.
- Do not compost dairy products or meat.
- Clean barbecue grills after use.
- Bird feeders attract bears. Remove bird feeders from your yard in April and replace in November.
- Store garbage inside a shed or garage until just before pick-up.

### Be alert in the woods:

- Watch for signs of bear activity, such as tracks, scat, evidence of digging, or claw marks on trees.
- Avoid areas bears may frequent, such as berry patches or garbage dumps.
- Make your presence known by making noise as you walk; talk, sing, blow a whistle or call out occasionally.
- Keep dogs leashed. Dogs running loose can lead a bear back to you or provoke an attack.



### If a black bear approaches:

- Stay calm. Give the bear space and an escape route.
- Speak calmly and firmly, avoid eye contact, and back away slowly: never run or try to climb a tree.
- If the bear follows you, drop something (not food) to distract it.
- Be extremely cautious around females with cubs.
- If a bear attacks you, fight back and make a lot of noise. Do not "play dead." Use pepper spray if you have it.

### For information, please contact:

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**Wildlife Division**

