

# Bear Management

As Connecticut's bear population continues to increase, more bears, particularly young bears, will be seen near residential areas. The DEP's response will depend on the specifics of each bear situation. The mere presence of a bear does not necessitate its removal. In most cases, if left alone, the bear will make its way to a more natural habitat. Removing food attractants, such as bird feeders, reduces the chance that bears will go near homes. The DEP seldom relocates bears. An exception may be made to remove a bear in an urban location when there is little likelihood that it can leave safely on its own and when the bear is in a position where it can be safely immobilized. DEP Tranquilizing Teams, consisting of Environmental Conservation Police officers and wildlife biologists, are trained and equipped to immobilize wildlife. Bears cannot be relocated to another state because no other state allows it. Bears that have persistent, serious, negative behavior, such as killing protected livestock or entering buildings, may have to be destroyed.



As bears become more regular residents of Connecticut towns, it is important that people learn to adapt to the presence of bears and take measures to avoid damage and problems. If people do not take precautions, problem behavior by bears can increase, possibly leading to bears being removed or destroyed.

## Living with Bears

Much of Connecticut's landscape is now forested and is suitable for black bears. The rapid increase in the bear population between the 1980s and early 2000s is expected to continue. As the bear population expands, interactions between humans and bears will increase. People should learn what to do if they see a bear and how to avoid unnecessary conflicts by keeping food away from bears.

If you see a bear:

- \* Observe it from a distance.
- \* Advertise your presence by shouting and waving your arms or walk slowly away.
- \* Never attempt to feed or attract bears.
- \* Report bear sightings <<http://www.depdata.ct.gov/wildlife/sighting/bearrpt.htm>> to the Wildlife Division, at [860- 424-3011](tel:860-424-3011).

## Bears Near Your Home

In wilderness settings bears usually avoid people. But food attractants near homes can cause them to grow habituated to humans and disturbances, such as dogs and other noises. Bears are attracted by bird feeders, garbage, outdoor pet food, compost piles, fruit trees, and berry-producing shrubs.

To avoid attracting bears:

- \* Remove bird feeders from late March through November. If a bear visits a bird feeder in winter, remove the feeder.
- \* Wait until the morning of collection before bringing out trash. Add a few capfuls of ammonia to trash bags and garbage cans to mask food odors. Keep trash bags in a container with a tight lid and store in a garage or shed.
- \* Do not leave pet food outside overnight. Store livestock food in airtight containers.
- \* Do not put meats or sweet-smelling fruit rinds in compost piles. Lime can be sprinkled on the compost pile to reduce the smell and discourage bears.
- \* Thoroughly clean grills after use or store in a garage or shed.
- \* Never intentionally feed bears. Bears that associate food with people may become aggressive and dangerous. This may lead to personal injury, property damage, and the need to destroy problem animals.
- \* Encourage your neighbors to take similar precautions.

If you see a bear on your property you can either leave the bear alone and wait for it to leave or make loud noises from a safe distance to attempt to scare the bear away. After the bear leaves the property, remove anything that may have attracted it to the area.