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LOOK, E1



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LOOK, E1

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The Daily Reflector



SUNDAY, August 3, 2014

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Scholarship stretch: Athletes struggle financially

BY NATHAN SUMMERS
The Daily Reflector

From their jet black Nike uniforms to their high-tech helmets and intricately tattooed upper limbs, Justin Hardy and Shane Carden are the embodiment of the

modern college football player. They are the undisputed leading men of this year's East Carolina football team. The chiseled frames of Hardy, the team's record-setting wide receiver, and Carden, the Pirates' star quarterback, do not appear to want for anything in terms

of nutrition. But they are two in a sea of thousands of collegiate players across the country who know all too well how easy it is for a so-called pampered athlete to face financial trouble or even hunger. "I feel like it could be more,"

Hardy, a non-scholarship walk-on when he first joined the team, said of the scholarship provisions given to Division I athletes. "At the beginning

See ATHLETES, A6



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Shane Carden, ECU quarterback, said it is hard when "you're low on money and you want to put the best nutrients in your body."

WILL STRICKLIN/THE DAILY REFLECTOR



A yearling black bear's paw print marks a dirt road running through Hofmann Forest. A yearling bear is seen near the road, right.



Black bears make scratches like these to mark territory.

PHOTOS BY AILEEN DEVLIN THE DAILY REFLECTOR

Black bears rebound in state

Hunting laws change to deal with population

BY ABBIE BENNETT
The Daily Reflector

From cuddly plush toy to roaring predator, bears have a reputation that both frightens and fascinates. But the reality lies somewhere between the two extremes, officials said.

There are three species of bears native to North America — the polar bear, the brown (grizzly bear) and the black bear. The only species found in North Carolina — or in the eastern United States — is the black bear.

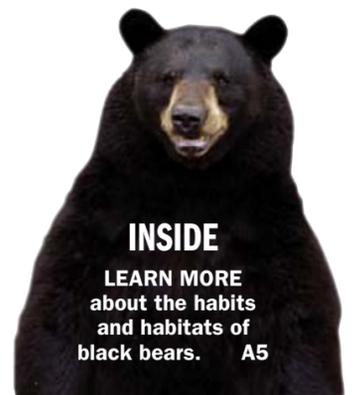
As the weather turns warmer, more people are encountering black bears. Summer, particularly July and August, is when bears are on the move, according to wildlife officials. Mature males seek females during this breeding period and mother bears drive off juvenile males who must seek their own territory. A family of black bears already made an appearance in Pitt County recently: A mother and cubs explored a residential area off of Corey Road near Boyd Lee

See BEAR, A5



A mother black bear and her two cubs explore a tree at a home off of Corey Road near Boyd Lee Park.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO ABBOTT HUNSUCKER



INSIDE
LEARN MORE about the habits and habitats of black bears. A5



POLL: Have you hunted black bears? Vote online at reflector.com.

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Weather

Today: 80, gray
Tonight: 68, humid
Forecast on A2



Andrea Garcia, Belvoir

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BEARS

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Park.

So far this year, Greenville Animal Control has received three calls about bears. The department typically gets about 5-7 calls per year for bears within the city limits, officials said.

But years ago, those sightings would have been rarer in eastern North Carolina and throughout the state.

Years of hunting and deforestation pushed bears near extinction in some areas, and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission took action.

In 1981, the wildlife commission created its first Black Bear Management Program. Since then, the state's bear population has grown dramatically. An update of the plan was completed in 2012.

Now that the population in North Carolina is increasing at a rate toward overpopulation, officials are considering altering hunting laws to help begin a healthy stabilization. Jonathan Shaw, district wildlife biologist with the North Carolina Wildlife Commission, said there are many options for those changes, including extending the hunting season or the number of bears each hunter can kill.

This hunting season (Nov. 10-15 and Dec. 15-27) will be the first time hunters are allowed to shoot bears with the aid of bait, Shaw said. If this change is enough to stabilize the population, no more changes may be needed. Any changes will be gradual, he said. Ideally, the wildlife commission would like a few years of data to evaluate each change.

Hunters now are allowed to kill one bear per season, excluding cubs and mothers with cubs. This year also marks the beginning of the Bear Management E-stamp program, a mandatory \$10 fee for bear hunters.

Hunters were responsible for initiating regulations to protect and manage bears in the state, officials said, and continue to be important partners by providing data to the wildlife commission and population control.

History

Before Europeans colonized the New World, black bears lived in all forested regions of North America and were abundant in the area that would one day become North Carolina, according to information from the wildlife commission. But like mountain lions and gray wolves, black bears often were killed by early settlers with the intention of protecting their families, crops and livestock.

By the early 1900s, black bears were found only in the most remote mountains and coastal swamps of the state,



AILEEN DEVLIN/THE DAILY REFLECTOR

District Wildlife Biologist Jonathan Shaw shows where beans are planted along the road for the bears to feed in Hofmann Forest in Richlands.

fleeing the more heavily populated Piedmont region, the commission said.

Deforestation from development, over-hunting and diseases contributed to the black bear decline. But the black bear has made a remarkable comeback in population and in range in the last 30 to 40 years.

As of the late 2000s, according to the wildlife commission, about 11,000 bears made their homes in North Carolina, occupying about 50 percent of the state's total land area. From a coastal bear population of a little more than 2,000 bears in 1980, the eastern North Carolina bear population steadily has grown to about 10,000 in about 2008.

According to the commission, black bears once were relegated to the far eastern counties like Hyde, Carteret and Dare. Thanks to conservation efforts, the bears have expanded into Pitt and other counties like Edgecombe, Wilson, Wayne, Greene and Lenoir in the 1990s and 2000s. The now-booming population has begun to reach into the more developed center of the state as numbers increase.

In 1971, the wildlife commission established 28 bear sanctuaries totaling more than 800,000 acres. North Carolina was among the first to establish such a system. Now there are about 490,000 acres of designated bear sanctuaries throughout the state and about 1.4 million acres of land that serves as de facto sanctuaries, primarily land owned by state and federal entities.

The commission said bear hunting is a tradition dating back to early Native Americans who depended on bears for meat, fat to make clothing. Today, about 70 percent of hunters use

hounds to pursue bears, including the plott hound, the state dog of North Carolina and a famous bear-hunting breed.

Houndsman Ryan Williams, a 25-year-old Greenville firefighter and avid hunter, uses plott hounds along with other breeds. Williams and his fellow hunters typically aim to bag "trophy bears" which in eastern North Carolina means 500 pounds or larger, he said.

Those are few and far between even with a larger population, since competition for food and limited territory keeps bears from growing larger, he said.

Opportunists

The black bear is a shy, non-aggressive animal that avoids humans in most cases. Occasionally they wander into residential areas in search of food and feed on crops where available. There never has been an unprovoked bear attack on a human in North Carolina, Shaw said, but bears can become aggressive if threatened or if cubs are near.

Shaw said he gets complaints from local farmers about bears damaging crops, since, depending on the time of year, bears in eastern North Carolina are fond of munching on corn, wheat, soybeans and other crops. Shaw said he never had a complaint related to a bear threatening livestock.

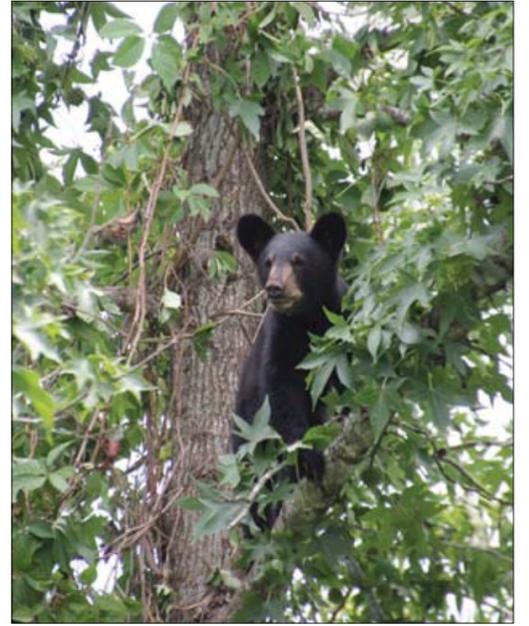
Many bear hunting opportunities come from farmers or landowners who have a problem with bears on their properties. And the problem has grown with the population, Williams said. In 2009, about a quarter of corn producers and about a fifth of all peanut producers in the state reported bear damage to crops, according to offi-

SANCTUARIES

Designated bear sanctuaries in eastern North Carolina (about 170,311 acres):

- Bachelor Bay, Bertie, Martin and Washington counties
- Dare Bombing Range, Dare County
- Columbus County
- Green Swamp, Brunswick County
- Gull Rock, Hyde County
- Gum Swamp, Pamlico and Beaufort counties
- North River, Camden and Currituck counties
- Pungo River, Hyde County
- Suggs Mill Pond, Bladen County

At a glance: Black bears



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/ABBOTT HUNSUCKER

A black bear cub explores a tree at a home off of Corey Road near Boyd Lee Park.

■ In North Carolina, the bear is usually black with a brown muzzle and sometimes a white patch on its chest. In other areas of North America, black bears can be brown, or a more rare blue or white.

■ Females can be about 5-6 feet long and about 2-3 feet tall on all fours and weigh about 100-200 pounds. Males are considerably larger, reaching 7-8 feet long and 200-700 pounds. The record is a male in Craven County that weighed 880 pounds.

■ Males black bears are boars and females are sows. Bears can live up to 20 years or more, but average about 4-5 years in the wild.

■ Black bears have five toes on each foot and each toe has a sharp curved claw enabling the bear to feed on insects and grubs in decaying logs.

■ Black bears mostly rely on their sense of smell and hearing due to somewhat poor eyesight, but are adept at climbing, running, swimming and digging. They have been clocked at speeds of 35 miles per hour.

■ Bears prefer large expanses of uninhabited woodland or swamp-land with dense cover. In eastern North Carolina, that includes lowland hardwoods, swamps and pocosins.

■ Bears build dens in cavities of large trees, hollow logs, caves, rock outcroppings, cavities in the ground or in a thicket. Usually black bears construct nests of leaves, sticks and grass within the den, often resembling giant bird nests.

■ Bears put on additional weight in the autumn and, in North Carolina, begin entering their dens for their dormant period as early as the end of November or as late as the beginning of January not to emerge again until about March or early April, depending on weather and food availability.

— North Carolina Wildlife Commission

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