



Mike Carraway/N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

# COEXIST WITH **BLACK BEARS**

The largest wild mammal in North Carolina, the black bear awes and fascinates residents with its glossy coat, powerful limbs and barrel-shaped body. The animal also contributes to the state's heritage. Residents have hunted the animal since colonial times, when they relied on its meat for food and its hide for clothes. Today, with the state's increasing human population, interactions with bears are rising across North Carolina. While sighting a bear from a distance can be entertaining and educational, you can take some simple steps to avoid interactions that might become dangerous.



Chris Bainbridge/flickr.com

## ***Black Bear Quick Facts:***

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**If I call the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, will someone trap and relocate a bear?**

No—that would simply move the problem, rather than solve it, and there are no remote places to move bears where they won't come into contact with people. The long-term solution is to modify your habits to prevent problems or resolve an existing conflict.

**Do grizzly bears live in North Carolina?**

No. North Carolina has black bears, which are 5-6 feet long and 2-3 feet tall when on all fours. Females usually weigh between 100 and 300 pounds; males can weigh between 200 and 500 pounds. A grizzly bear is larger, more aggressive and lives in the western United States.

**What should I do if I see a bear?**

Try to stay calm. Bears are usually wary of people unless humans feed or provoke them. Never feed, approach, surround or corner the bear. If it changes its natural behavior because of your presence, you are too close. Back away slowly and once you are a safe distance away from the bear, make lots of noise to frighten the bear away.

**Where in North Carolina do bears live?**

The vast majority of bears live in the mountain and coastal regions of the state. However, black bears occasionally wander into the Piedmont region. While they live in the woods, bears occasionally wander into residential areas or towns in search of food. If left alone and not fed, these wandering bears will eventually leave the area.

**Will a black bear attack me?**

Probably not. Black bears tend to be shy and non-aggressive toward humans. There has not been an unprovoked bear attack in North Carolina. However, if frequently fed, bears may become dependent on human foods, which may lead to increased interaction with people. Frequent human-bear contact can cause bears to become more bold and visible around humans.

Learn more about black bears in North Carolina. Visit [ncwildlife.org/bear](http://ncwildlife.org/bear)

## Live Responsibly with Black Bears. Be BearWise

### Follow the six BEARWISE Basics:

#### 1. NEVER FEED OR APPROACH BEARS

Feeding bears (intentionally or unintentionally) trains them to approach homes and people for more food. Bears will defend themselves if a person gets too close, so don't risk your safety and theirs!

#### 2. SECURE FOOD, GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

Food and food odors attract bears so don't reward them with easily available food or garbage.

#### 3. REMOVE BIRD FEEDERS WHEN BEARS ARE ACTIVE

Birdseed and other grains have a high calorie content making them very attractive to bears. The best way to avoid conflicts with bears is to remove feeders.

#### 4. NEVER LEAVE PET FOOD OUT

Feed outdoor pets portion sizes that will be completely eaten during each meal and remove leftover food and food bowl. Securely store these foods so nothing is available to bears.

#### 5. CLEAN AND STORE GRILLS

After you use an outdoor grill, clean it thoroughly and make sure that all grease and fat is removed. Store cleaned grills and smokers in a secure area that keeps bears out.

#### 6. LET NEIGHBORS KNOW

Share news with your friends and neighbors about recent bear activity and how to avoid bear conflicts. Bears have adapted to living near people; are you willing to adapt to living near bears?



[bearwise.org](http://bearwise.org)

## If you think you have a problem with a black bear:

- **Implement the 6 BearWise Basics**, as these will help resolve conflicts and prevent future conflicts. There are solutions and tips at [bearwise.org](http://bearwise.org)
- **Consider using a bear-resistant trash container.** More information: [bearwise.org/six-bearwise-basics/food-garbage/](http://bearwise.org/six-bearwise-basics/food-garbage/)
- **From a safe distance, frighten the bear.** Shouting, clapping, blasting a car horn or banging pots and pans together may scare off a bear temporarily.
- **Install electric fencing.** It protects beehives, dumpsters, gardens, compost piles, or other potential food sources. More information: [bearwise.org/bear-safety-tips/livestock-crops/](http://bearwise.org/bear-safety-tips/livestock-crops/)
- Black bears can be hunted during the regulated hunting season. However, check to see if local ordinances restrict the discharge of firearms and visit [ncwildlife.org/hunting](http://ncwildlife.org/hunting) for hunting season dates, license requirements, and other restrictions.
- If a black bear has caused property damage, contact the Wildlife Resources Commission at 866-318-2401. The agency may issue you a depredation permit after conducting a site visit, which would allow you to shoot the bear causing damage.