

## Six BearWise Basics

- **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!
- **Secure food, garbage and recycling.** Food and food odors attract bears so don't reward them with easily available food or garbage.

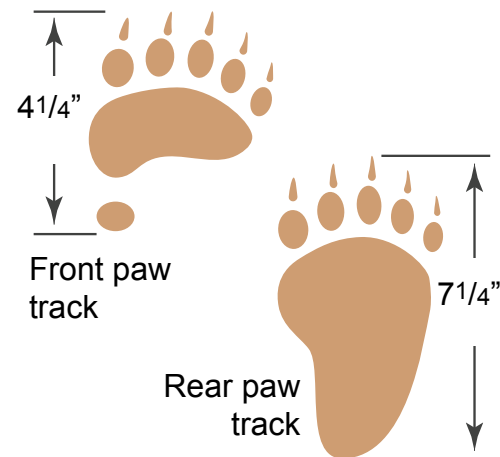


- **Remove bird feeders when bears are active.** Birdseed and other grains have a high caloric content, making them very attractive to bears. The best way to avoid conflicts with bears is to remove feeders.
- **Never leave pet food outside.** Feed outdoor pets portion sizes that will be completely eaten during each meal and then remove leftover food and food bowl. Securely store these foods so nothing is available to bears.
- **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.
- **Let neighbors know.** Share with your friends and neighbors news 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?

For more information, visit [BearWise.org](http://BearWise.org)

## The Bear Facts

- Never feed a bear. It is illegal to create a nuisance by feeding bears.
- Unsecured garbage is the primary cause of most human-bear conflicts.
- Bears generally will avoid humans unless they become conditioned to eating human food or garbage.
- In most locales vegetative material comprises 80-90% of black bear diets.
- Black bears occur in all mountainous areas of New Mexico, from Chama in the north to the Guadalupe and Peloncillo Mountains in the south.
- New Mexico is home to a unique subspecies of black bear, the aptly named New Mexico black bear (*Ursus americanus amblyceps*), which also occupies portions of Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and Texas. Colors can be black, brown or cinnamon, but all are considered black bears.
- Grizzly bears no longer occur in New Mexico.
- Adult black bears weigh between 125 and 600 pounds. They are strong enough to rip doors off cars.
- Cubs weigh 10 to 16 ounces at birth and are born while the mother is in the den during the winter.
- Black bears can run up to 35 miles per hour, climb trees and swim well.



## You Can Contact Us

Your safety and the welfare of bear populations are important to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. The information in this brochure is provided to further these goals, but should you have additional questions about black bears, please visit contact your nearest New Mexico Department of Game and Fish office or visit online: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us).

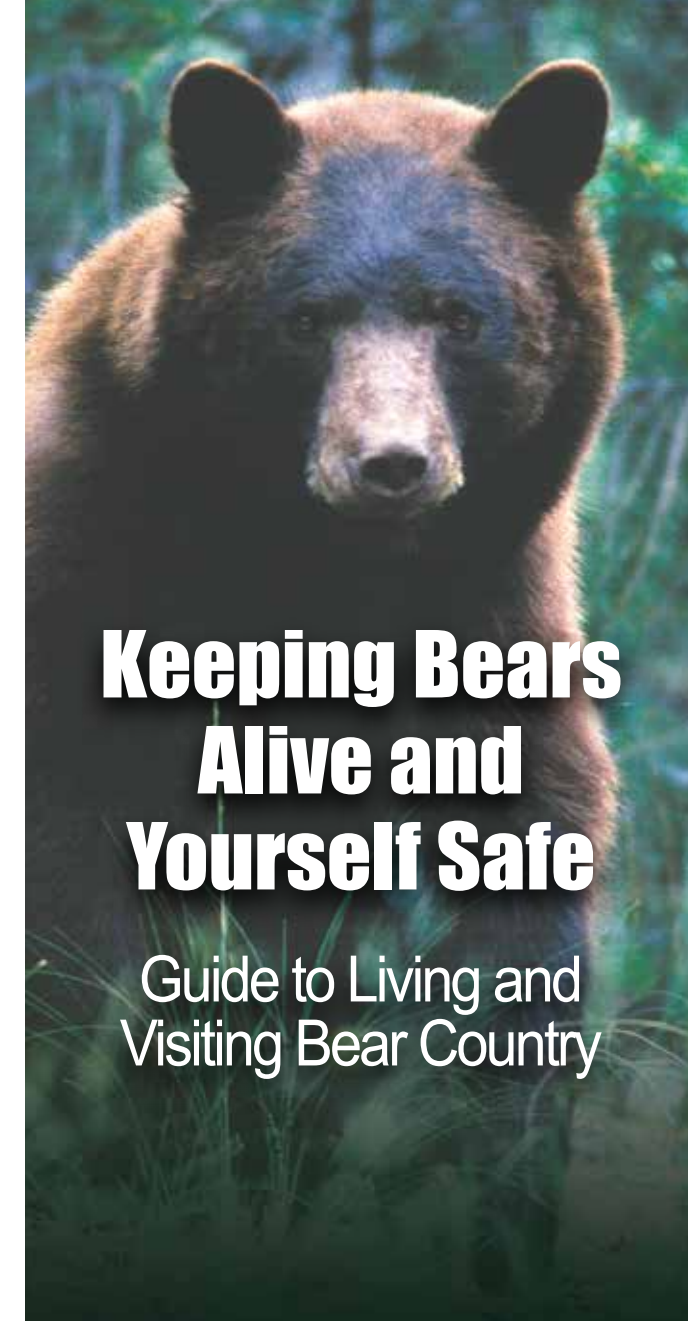
Santa Fe . . . . . (505) 476-8000  
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Operation Game Thief (OGT): 1-800-432-4263



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
 Conserving New Mexico's Wildlife for Future Generations



# Keeping Bears Alive and Yourself Safe

## Guide to Living and Visiting Bear Country

## See a Bear, Back Away

Every once in a while, people have face-to-face encounters with black bears. Do not panic. Chances are the bear is just as wary of you as you are of it. If you do encounter a bear, follow these rules to be safe.

- Do not run! - If you see a bear, stay calm.
- Stand upright - Slowly wave your arms.
- Back away - Slowly back away from the bear.
- Look for cubs - Do not come between a mother and her cubs.
- Fight back - If attacked, fight back aggressively.



## Homeowners, Secure Your Property

By making the following recommendations a part of your daily life when in bear country, you can keep bears alive and yourself safe.

- **Garbage:** Store it in closed, sturdy cans kept inside a secure garage. Do not put out garbage the night before a scheduled pickup.
- **Pet food:** Feed pets indoors. Store food in secure metal cans inside a sturdy shed or garage. Make sure the garage door is closed at night.
- **Bird feeders:** Set out only enough bird seed to last throughout the day. Hummingbird feeders must be brought inside at night. Hang bird feeders from trees, not on the porch or from the house rafters.
- **Fruit trees:** Plant fruit trees away from your house. Fruit should be picked as it ripens. Spoiled fruit that falls to the ground should be removed, because it will attract bears.
- **Woodpiles:** Keep woodpiles away from the house. It attracts rodents, which bears eat.
- **Compost piles:** Keep piles away from the house. Do not add melon rinds or other fragrant fruits.
- **Beehives and chicken pens:** Livestock and beehives should be kept away from your house. Protect them with electric fencing.
- **Barbecues:** Clean after each use, and store in a closed sturdy shed or garage.

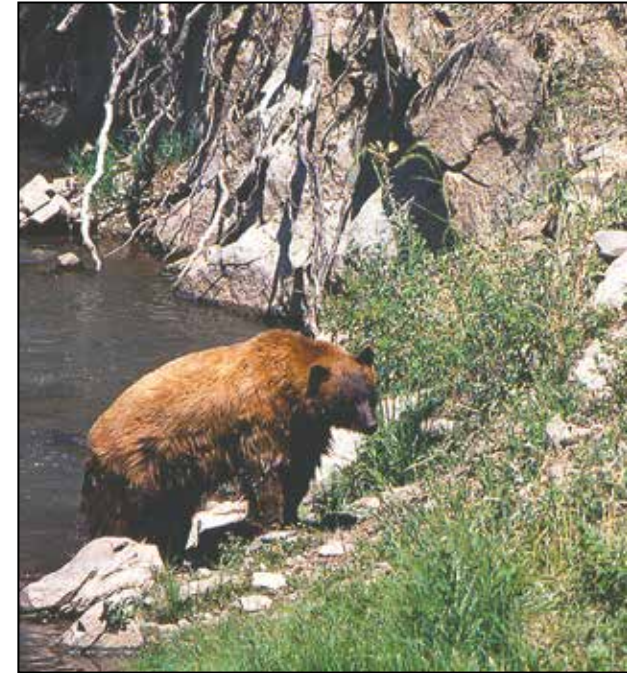
## Campers, Use Extra Precautions

A bear's nose can get you into trouble. Follow these tips to keep your camp clean and safe.

- **Keep a clean camp.** Do not leave food items or garbage out when not in use.
- **Coolers are just lunch boxes to bears.** Keep them in hard sided trailers, campers or vehicles with the windows rolled up and doors locked.
- **Fragrant items attract bears.** Toothpaste, insect repellents, soap, candy bars and other fragrant items can attract bears and should be securely stored away from sleeping areas.
- **Cooking odors attract bears.** If possible, cooking areas should be at least 100 yards from sleeping areas.
- **Change your clothes.** After cooking and before going to sleep, change clothes.
- **Hang it up.** Suspend human food, pet food and garbage from a tree at least 10 feet off the ground and four feet from trunks or branches.
- **Strain your dishwasher.** Strain food particles from dishwasher and pack them out with garbage.



- **Pack it out!** Never bury or burn garbage. The next group of campers may encounter bears attracted by trash that you left behind. If available use bear resistant trash receptacles.
- **Leash 'em.** Keep pets on a leash.



## Hikers, Watch Your Step

When hiking in bear country, be especially alert.

- **Hike in groups**
- **Make noise.** A surprised bear can become a dangerous bear.
- **Know where they are.** Keep your children and pets close at hand.
- **Don't trash it.** Don't leave trash on the trail. **Pack it in, Pack it out!**