

Black Bears Live Near You

When bears come into a residential area they are usually looking for food. Bears like to eat many of the same foods we enjoy, so we need to be careful about how we handle food and food waste to minimize the odors that attract bears.

When a bear smells food odors coming from a green cart, garbage container, or even a barbecue, the bear regards this as a convenient source of food and it will return to the site again and again. Not only is this annoying for us, it means the bear will become dependent on people for food and may become invasive and destructive.

- Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) only bear species in Nova Scotia
- Average Size: 45 - 200 Kg (100 - 440 lbs.)
- Diet: Omnivore. Can smell food over 1 km away.
- Young: 1 to 3 cubs, born in January/February. Cubs remain with mother for a full year.
- Average Life Span: 12 Years
- Activity Pattern: Nocturnal; hibernate in winter
- Shuffling walk but are excellent swimmers and can sprint short distances at speeds up to 56 km/h.
- Prefer wooded areas and swamps but will readily approach settled areas for easy access to food sources such as garbage, agricultural crops and bee hives.
- Nova Scotia is a small province with few large wild areas. There's no empty space (habitat) to send a captured bear because other bears live there.
- As bears get older, they select a particular area in which to live which they are reluctant to leave.
- Most problem bears are young animals that are out on their own for the first time.

Black Bears Live Near You - I spotted a bear

I've spotted a black bear on my property. What do I do?

1. [Check the table](#) to see if you have items on your property that could be attracting bears. Take the action listed in the table.
2. Talk to your neighbours about working together to eliminate bear attractants.
3. Call your local Department of Natural Resources and Renewables office www.novascotia.ca/natr/staffdir/offices.asp
After hours call 1-800-565-2224.

As a last resort NR&R may set a live trap, however, a trap isn't always the solution because:

- there is no guarantee that a live trap will catch the bear
- even when a trapped bear is released a distance away, it will often find its way back to the place where it was captured.

When a bear becomes dependent on people for food, NR&R staff may have no other choice than to kill it.

Black Bears Live Near You - What Attracts Bears

Follow this advice as soon as you see a bear, or you hear that a bear has been in the area.

Bear Attractants	How to keep bears away
Green Carts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • store in a shed until pickup day • put out on the morning of green cart pickup, NOT before • clean with a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water after every pickup • freeze these and put them in the green cart just before pickup: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ meat, bones, fat, seafood shells ○ rotting fruit ○ fruit and vegetable waste such as peels, cores, rotting leaves
Garbage Containers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • store in a shed until pickup day • put out on the morning of garbage pickup, NOT before
Garden Compost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stir often to help decomposition • sprinkle lime on smelly compost • leave these out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ meat, bones, fat, seafood shells
Bird Feeders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid using bird feeders in bear season (April - October). Birds will be able to find natural sources of food at this time. • a bird bath will attract birds, but not bears.
Barbecues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • burn off grill at high temperature after every use • clean often • cover when not in use
Pet Food Bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep indoors
Fruit Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pick fruit as soon as it ripens • pick fallen fruit off the ground

Following this advice should solve your bear problem.