



**AKWESASNE  
MOHAWK  
POLICE**

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## **BEAR SIGHTING**

The Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service have received information of a confirmed bear sighting in the area. The bear may be swimming from island to island. Cottagers in the area should take precautions.

### **What to do if you see or encounter a bear on your property.**

Black bears live mostly in forested areas where they are best able to find food, winter den sites and refuge. With human activity, development and population increasing in what we often call “bear country” or “cottage country,” so too are the possibilities for people to see or encounter bears. Knowing what to do if you see a bear on your property is being Bear Wise.

Every encounter with a black bear is unique. The following information is what experts recommend you do. There is no guarantee that what works in one instance will work in another.

#### **Black Bear safety basics:**

- Never approach the bear to get a better look.
- Do not attempt to feed a bear.
- Anticipate and avoid encounters.
- Know what to do if you encounter a bear.
- Learn about bears and their behaviour.
- When outdoors, supervise children and never leave pets unattended.

#### **If you spot a black bear:**

- Stay calm. Often the bear is simply passing through.
- Do not run away. Walk towards a building or vehicle and get inside.

- If you have children and pets, bring them inside too.
- Once indoors, observe the bear. Did it move on or did it stay on your property? If the bear stayed, what was it doing or eating?
- Encourage the bear to leave. Bang pots and pans, or blow an air horn or whistle. The more stressful a bear's encounter with you, the less likely it is to come back.
- If the bear got into food (like garbage or bird food), or if the bear tried to get food, you will need to remove or control the item that attracted the bear.
- Once the bear leaves, remove the attractant and assess your property for other possible attractants like garbage; dirty barbecue; bird or pet food or fruit or berries from your trees or bushes.
- It is possible for a bear to return even though you removed the attractant. Bears do return to places where they have found food. Once the bear does not get food, it will move on.
- If you have done everything you can to remove attractants, and the bear persists, call [613-575-2340](tel:613-575-2340). [Akwesasne Conservation Department is temporarily halted as a result of COVID19.](#)
- If a bear is damaging your property, breaking into your home or threatening your personal safety or that of others, call 911 or Akwesasne Mohawk Police at 613-575-2000 emergency line.
- Alert your neighbours about bear activity, and work together to keep your neighbourhood free from items that attract bears.
- Work with your municipality to solve problems before they happen.
- If a bear is in a tree, leave it alone. Remove people and dogs from the area. The bear will usually come down and leave when it feels safe.

Note: Although not recommended unless absolutely required, if you have shot a bear in defense of your property, you are required by law to immediately report it to your local Ministry of Natural Resources office either in person or by telephone. This requirement applies whether you intend to keep the bear or not. Failure to do so is a violation of the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

## Before you leave the cottage

Garbage is the number one reason bears are drawn onto properties, followed closely by bird seed, suet and nectar. Whether you are closing the cottage for the season, or just between stays, you can take a few simple precautions to avoid problems with bears and other animals too.

### Before you go:

- Remove your garbage. Take it home or drop it off at an approved waste disposal site on your way out.
- Use a strong disinfectant to eliminate all odours from garbage and recycling containers and lids.
- Never discard cooking grease outside. Instead, place it in a container with a lid, transfer it to a plastic bag and include it with other properly stored garbage.
- Take your barbecue with you when you leave the cottage, or store it in a secure shed. Make sure it is clean.
- Do not leave any food or food scraps outdoors for pets or other wildlife.
- When packing up, remember to remove all the food from the inside of your cottage. A box of pudding or fruit flavoured dessert mix is all it takes to attract a bear.
- Do not leave scented products outside. Even non-food items like suntan lotion, insect repellent, soap and candles attract bears.
- Close and lock all windows and doors.
- If you are away for an extended period of time, have someone you trust check in and look for signs of a bear visitor or break in.

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## Don't invite black bears to the cottage

Most human-bear conflicts occur when bears are attracted by smells and rewarded with an easy meal. When bears pick up a scent with their keen noses, they will investigate it even at your cottage. If bears are rewarded with feasts of bird food, garbage or pet food, they will return as long as the food source is available. It takes all cottagers working together to eliminate these attractants and to stop bear problems. Here are some tips to help avoid these unwanted visitors.

## **What cottagers can do:**

- Never leave garbage behind. If you must leave before garbage day, or if you do not have curbside collection, take your garbage with you when you go. Take it to an approved waste disposal site.
- Fill bird feeders only through the winter months.
- Never purposely feed bears (or other wildlife) or try to approach them.
- Put garbage in containers that have tight fitting lids, and only put it out on garbage day, not the night before.
- Store garbage in a bear-resistant container, secure shed or garage. Do not store garbage in plywood boxes, old freezers or vehicles.
- Do not stockpile garbage. Take it to an approved waste disposal site regularly.
- Keep meat scraps in the freezer until garbage day.
- Remove grease and food residue from barbecue grills, including the grease trap, after each use.
- Do not put meat, fish or sweet food (including fruit) in your composter.
- Pick all ripe fruit off trees, and remove vegetables and fallen fruit from the ground.
- You are responsible for your own personal safety. Take precautions when you are outdoors.

The Akwesasne Mohawk Police Marine Unit will be attending cottages and informing residents of the bear sighting in our area. Please follow these recommendations to avoid unnecessary contact with bears or other wildlife.