

A Fed Bear Is A Dead Bear

Once habituated to human sources of food, bears will seek them out, creating conflicts with humans. The bear's behavior will not stop voluntarily, and unless the nuisance behavior can be corrected, bears may be killed for various reasons including property damage or due to collisions with vehicles. In order to avoid these deaths, the food source must be removed.

Prevention is the Key

Bears that visit human occupied areas are usually in search of food. You will be less likely to have encounters with bears if the recommended precautions are taken, so that bears do not associate humans with a source for food. Once they do, they become habituated to humans. Relocating habituated bears relocates the problem, it does not solve it. It is **illegal** in California and strongly discouraged in Nevada to feed bears, and many communities have ordinances penalizing those who feed wild animals.

Encounters

In your yard: Do not run. Be aggressive and assert your dominance by standing tall and making noise that will scare the bear away. Banging pots and pans together and shouting loudly works well. See the section "Bear-proof Your Property" for tips on how to avoid future encounters around your home.

In the woods: This is the bear's territory, respect that and do not run. Make eye contact but don't stare, pick up small children, make yourself appear as large as possible, stay calm and quiet, back away and enjoy the experience from a safe distance.

Anywhere: If the bear attempts to get away, DO NOT block the bear's escape route! Bears will often climb a tree if frightened and usually won't come down if humans or dogs are present.

- Never get between a mom and her cubs.
- Slowly walk away and make a loud noise.
- Though attacks are very rare, if you are attacked, FIGHT BACK AGGRESSIVELY!

For More Information

For additional information on bears in the Lake Tahoe Basin, please contact the following resources in your area:

CA Department of Fish and Game (DFG)

24-hour dispatch (916) 445-0045

Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW)

24-hour dispatch (775) 688-1331

The Bear League (24 hour hotline)

(530) 525-7297

Funding for this brochure provided by CA Department of Fish and Game, Wendy P. McCaw Foundation through the Defenders of Wildlife, and Echo Lakes Environment Fund

TCWB Needs Your Support:

Donations help keep bears alive and wild.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail _____

Please mail checks to:
Tahoe Council for Wild Bears
P.O. Box 393
Homewood, CA 96141

www.tahoewildbears.org

About Tahoe Council for Wild Bears

It is the mission of the *Tahoe Council for Wild Bears* to develop and implement a bear education and conservation program through a collaborative effort that includes residents, property owners, visitors, government agencies, private non-profit organizations and the local business community. Our goal is to create an environment in the Lake Tahoe Basin that promotes the coexistence of humans and bears and reduces bear/human conflicts.

The council has crafted a "three strikes and you pay" model ordinance that will be presented to communities with bear populations for possible adoption. The ordinance would be imposed on those who fail to "bear-proof" garbage containers or who put garbage where bears can get to it. It is important to note that a garbage can enclosure (GCE) costs about \$700 and holds two garbage cans. Fine money collected from violations would be used for community education and to assist low-income families become bear-proof.

Model Bear-Feeding Ordinance

First offense: Offender is provided information about how to correct the problem and given a warning that if cited again, the violator will be required to pay for and install a GCE.

Second offense: Violator pays for installation of an approved GCE and then must use it appropriately.

Third offense: Violator pays a fine equal to the cost of a GCE and then pays to install a GCE.

Tahoe Council for Wild Bears participants:

Animal Protection Institute
Bear League
California Department of Fish and Game
California State Parks
Defenders of Wildlife
Echo Lakes Environment Fund
El Dorado and Alpine Counties Ag Comm.
Humane Society of the United States
Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care
McClintock Metal
Nevada Division of Wildlife
Placer County Agricultural Department
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
U.S. Forest Service

Tahoe Council For Wild Bears



Guidelines For Living in and Visiting Bear Habitat



www.tahoewildbears.org

Black Bear Facts

- The only species of bears in California and Nevada are black bears. However, they do range in color from blonde to black, with cinnamon brown being the most common color in both states.
- There are an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 black bears in California and 200 to 300 in Nevada.
- Black bears will seek to avoid confrontation with humans. If encountered, always leave them an escape route.
- Males are much larger than females and can weigh up to 500 pounds, although average weight is about 300 pounds.
- Black bears can sprint up to 35 mph and they are strong swimmers and great tree climbers.
- A typical wild bear diet consists of berries, plants, nuts, roots, honey, honeycomb, insects, larvae, carrion, and small mammals.
- As winter approaches, bears will forage for food up to 20 hours a day, storing enough fat to sustain them through hibernation. Bears often hibernate in large hollow trees 40 to 60 feet off the ground!
- Bears that are accustomed to people can become too bold and lose their fear of humans. To avoid this behavior, do not let bears become habituated to human sources of food.

Bear-Proof Your Property

Bears are attracted to anything that is edible or that they associate with food. Take precautions by implementing the following ideas:

- Garbage problems can be solved with the purchase and correct use of a bear-proof garbage container. Save money by sharing one with a neighbor! For approved bear-proof containers and where to buy them, visit our website at www.tahoewildbears.org.
- Wait to put trash out until collection day.
- Don't leave trash, groceries, or animal feed in your car.
- Keep garbage cans clean and deodorize them with bleach or ammonia.
- Harvest fruit off trees as soon as it is ripe, and promptly collect fruit that falls.
- Only provide bird feeders outside during November through March and always hang feeders so they are inaccessible to bears.
- Keep barbecue grills clean.
- Feed pets inside.
- Securely block access to potential hibernation sites such as crawl spaces under decks and buildings.
- Don't leave any scented products outside, even non-food items such as suntan lotion, insect repellent, soap or candles.
- Keep doors and windows closed and locked. Scents can lure bears inside.

When Camping

- NEVER leave food (or anything with a scent) or toiletries in your tent, sleeping bag or car.
- Keep sleeping bags, tents and sleeping areas free of food and beverage odors.
- Do not sleep in clothes that smell like food, or that were worn while cooking.
- Store food in bear proof canisters or bear proof lockers if provided. The trunk of your car and coolers are not bear-proof!
- Do not leave out food, stored drinks, or diapers. The smell will attract bears.
- Clean everything after preparing a meal.
- Dispose of garbage properly. If a bear-proof dumpster is not available, store your garbage in bear-proof lockers often provided at campgrounds until it can be disposed of properly.
- When departing an area, empty all goods and refuse from any containers or food storage lockers left behind.



All Photos © Jenny Ross



People have a responsibility to the wildlife whose habitat they are sharing.



Remember:
Never feed a bear.