

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEE A BEAR

The first thing to do when you see a bear is **REMAIN CALM**. Generally black bears are non-aggressive and are more uncomfortable in your presence than you are with theirs. Most of the time black bears will flee from the area as soon as they are aware of your presence. If you encounter a bear, and it is not aware of your presence, simply back away from the area slowly. If the bear is aware of your presence and it does not leave the area, avoid direct eye contact with the animal, give the bear an easy escape route and again, simply back slowly away from the area. Always **AVOID RUNNING OR CLIMBING TREES** which may provoke a chase. **To report observations of black bears contact your local County Wildlife Officer or regional District Wildlife Headquarters.**



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife
District Three Headquarters
912 Portage Lakes Dr.
Akron, Oh 44319
330-644-2293

Or

1-800-WILDLIFE

BLACK BEARS IN THE BUCKEYE STATE

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH OHIO'S EXPANDING BLACK BEAR POPULATION



BLACK BEAR BASICS

Historically black bears roamed throughout the buckeye state. Unfortunately unregulated hunting and habitat loss rendered bears nearly extinct from Ohio by the early 1900's. Today Ohio is again home to a small but growing population of black bears. Due to the large amount of unoccupied, yet suitable forested habitat in eastern Ohio, the states bear population is expected to increase in abundance and distribution in future years. It is important that we understand a little about the biology and habits of the black bear if we are to coexist with this new Ohio resident.

Most black bears range in size from 100 to 400 lbs, are 5 to 6 feet in length and average 3 feet high at the shoulder. As the name implies black bears are most often black in color but can also be brown or cinnamon. These bears are extremely agile and are able to run up to 35 mph, climb trees with ease and swim long distances. Bears are omnivores; meaning they

will eat a wide variety of foods. Depending on the season, their diet may include grasses, forbs, berries, mast from oak, hickory, and beech trees, carrion, and insect larvae. Bears will also utilize agricultural crops, if available. Black bear are long lived species, being able to survive in the wild for up to 25 years. Black bears typically don't reach sexual maturity until 3.5 to 4 years of age. Black bear cubs are born in the winter den and will spend the first 2 years of their life with the sow (female bear). Dispersing young black bears will often travel great distances in search of new habitat and are most likely to be seen by or interact with humans.

BEAR PROOFING YOUR BACKYARD

Black bears are large animals and can cause significant damage while in search of an easy meal. If your yard is being visited by a black bear there are several things that need to be done to ensure that the animal doesn't become a "problem

bear". A "problem bear" can be defined as an animal that has lost its natural fear of humans and habitually causes property damage while in search of food. In this instance all potential food attractants must be removed from the area. This includes:

- **all bird feeders**
- **trash receptacles**
- **pet foods**
- **grease from grills.**

By following these simple suggestions you can not only avoid damage to your personnel property but you can preserve the integrity of Ohio's wild black bears.

