



Did you know...

-  In 1999, a typical year, 5 million people in Québec took part in nature-related activities and spent 395 million days, or 79 days per person, in the outdoors. In Québec, only four deaths caused by black bears have been reported over the last 25 years.
-  You have a much greater chance of being bitten by a dog, hit by a car, or struck by lightning than being attacked by a bear.

Need information?

-  www.mrnf.gouv.qc.ca
-  General Information: 1 866 248-6936
For Québec City area: (418) 627-8600
-  Regional and local wildlife protection offices
-  In the event of an emergency, call S.O.S. Braconnage (poaching) at 1 800 463-2191

Ressources naturelles
et Faune

Québec 



Staying safe around black bears

It's a matter of
ACTING RESPONSIBLY

Who am I?

I share my TERRITORY

I am one of about 800,000 black bears that inhabit North America's forests. I am found most commonly in Québec, a territory that I share with 60,000 other black bears. We are the only bear species living in this province, although polar bears occasionally venture into the Far North.

I have a highly developed sense of SMELL and a voracious APPETITE

I have one goal in life—to find food to build up a reserve of fat for the winter. When food becomes scarce or when human food sources are within easy reach, I will venture into campgrounds, cornfields, or orchards, and can be attracted by bird feeders and even trash cans and dumps.

I need RESPECT

Your presence frightens me. When I hear or smell you, I usually head deeper into the forest. I don't like being taken by surprise and—even less—being approached! I need my space, I need safety for my cubs, and I especially need food. On rare occasions and for no apparent reason, one of my kind can become aggressive and even dangerous to you.

Québec 

Take precautions

NEVER FEED BEARS

STORE ALL FOOD AND TRASH OUT OF THE REACH OF BEARS

MINIMIZE ODORS ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD AND TRASH

You can STAY safe around black bears

Bears must not come to believe that food is easy to obtain from human sources. If this happens, they will lose their fear of humans and soon become dangerous.

By complying with the above precautions, you're enhancing your own safety and that of your fellow outdoor enthusiasts.

React the right way

Black bears all have very different personalities. Every encounter with this animal is unique. Always keep in mind that bears are wild animals and can behave in unpredictable ways. Never approach a bear—especially young cubs! Remember that black bears will sometimes stand up on their hind legs. Generally, they do this to better identify an odor or source of noise.



Pictures:
Rolland Lemieux
Pierre Bernier
Fred Klus



If you encounter a black bear..

1. Stay calm and assess the situation.
2. Don't shout or make sudden movements. Talk to it in a soft voice.
3. Always leave it an avenue of escape. Never trap it in a corner. Leave it enough space to turn around and run away.
4. Don't run away unless you are within close reach of a safe place. By running, you may encourage the bear to follow you and see you as its prey. Remember, bears are excellent runners and swimmers.
5. Avoid looking it directly in the eyes as it can perceive this as threatening.
6. Back up slowly, keeping it in your sight all the while.
7. If it advances, toss objects in front of you to distract it.
8. Climbing a tree can be a solution as most adult bears will not spontaneously climb, except to find food in the fall.
9. It is not recommended to play dead with a black bear. Rather, stay attentive and be ready to face it in the event it attacks.
10. If it attacks, defend yourself with whatever is close at hand (rocks, sticks, branches, an axe, etc.). Raise your voice, shout, and gesticulate. The goal is to impress it into retreating.

Serving the needs of wildlife and citizens

Black bears are an important resource in Québec's forests. The Ministère des Ressources naturelles, de la Faune et des Parcs is responsible for their protection and status and for ensuring the safety of citizens.



Effective MEASURES

In addition to increasing quotas and extending hunting and trapping seasons in areas with problem bears, the Department also takes other measures to enhance your safety. These include scare tactics to encourage bears to return to their habitats on their own, and capture and relocation.



Keep bears out of your neighbourhood.

You may not even know you are doing it. You could be attracting bears onto your property and into your community. Garbage is the main reason why bears are drawn into communities. Bird and pet food, greasy barbecues and ripe or decaying fruit, berries and vegetables are other invitations to bears to forage for food in your yard. This is not good for you, for your neighbours or for bears.

BEARS CAN
BE DANGEROUS



In an immediate emergency, call your local police or 911. To report bear problems call:

1 866 514-2327

(1 866 514-BEAR)

TTY 705 945-7641

For more information, visit our website:

ontario.ca/bearwise

Problems with bears are usually created by people. By following these tips every spring, summer and fall, you can avoid attracting bears to your property:

Garbage:

- Eliminate odours. Put garbage in containers that have tight fitting lids, and only put it out on the morning of garbage day, not the night before
- Whenever possible, store garbage in bear-resistant containers, or indoors (house, shed, garage). Do not store garbage in plywood boxes, old freezers or vehicles
- Put meat scraps in the freezer until garbage day
- If you do not have curbside pick up, take your garbage to the dump often
- Frequently wash garbage cans and recycle containers and lids with a strong smelling disinfectant

Bird/Pet food:

- Fill bird feeders only through the winter months
- Do not leave pet food outdoors. Feed pets indoors, not outside or in screened in areas or porches

Fruits/Vegetables/Compost:

- Avoid landscaping with trees, shrubs or plants that produce food known to attract bears (some examples include crab apple trees, mountain ash, beech and oak)
- Do not put meat, fish or sweet food (including fruit) in your composter
- Remove vegetables and fallen fruit from the ground
- Pick all ripe fruit from trees and bushes

Smells:

- Be aware that cooking odours can attract bears
- Remove grease and food residue from barbecue grills, including the grease cup underneath, after each use

Learn about bears, their needs and behaviour. Share your knowledge with others. Encourage your neighbours and your community to practice Bear Wise habits. It takes everyone working together to keep bears away.

For more information about bears, see our Fact Sheets "Bears travel far for food" and "Bears are part of our natural heritage".

There's more ...
see over!





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.

BEARS CAN
BE DANGEROUS



In an immediate emergency,
call your local police or 911.
To report bear problems call:

1 866 514-2327

(1 866 514-BEAR)

TTY 705 945-7641

For more information, visit our
website:

ontario.ca/bearwise

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 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 1-866-514-2327
- If a bear is damaging your property, breaking into your home or threatening your personal safety or that of others, call 911 or your local police
- 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: 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.

To learn more about bear encounters, see our Fact Sheets
“Be safe in bear country” and “What to do if you encounter a bear”.

There's more ...
see over!

