



FWC: Bears become more active in fall

News Release

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Media contact: Sarah Lessard, 850-617-9383; Diane Hirth, 850-410-5291

With the arrival of autumn, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is reminding residents of Florida what they can do to help prevent conflicts with black bears.

During this time of year, bear appetites increase as they begin to prepare for the upcoming winter. To be ready for the leaner winter months, bears require around 20,000 calories a day and will eat anything that's convenient. Accessing unsecured garbage often provides more calories in a shorter amount of time than what a bear can get from foraging in the woods. This attracts bears into areas where people live and work, which can lead to potentially dangerous situations.

"As bears become more active in the fall, they take the path of least resistance to find food," said Dave Telesco, who leads the FWC's Bear Management Program. "This draws them into neighborhoods and areas with convenient food sources, which can be dangerous for people. While the FWC continues to work with local communities to reduce human-bear conflicts, it is important for Floridians to understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe."

The search for food often leads bears across busy roads. A new video in the "[Living with Florida Black Bears](#)" [📺](#) series advises motorists to use caution while driving through areas where bears may be present. Bears are most active around dusk and dawn, and therefore most vehicle-bear collisions happen during these times of day. To reduce the risk of hitting a bear, motorists should stay alert and drive cautiously around heavily wooded areas, roads with curves and areas marked with bear warning signs. Other tips can be seen in the "Vehicle Collisions with Bears" video at MyFWC.com/Bear under the "Brochures & Other Materials" section.

While spending time outdoors, residents should be aware of their surroundings to avoid potential conflicts with bears. To keep bears away from your home and neighborhood, follow these simple steps:

- Secure household garbage in a sturdy shed, garage or a [bear-resistant container](#).
- Put household garbage out on morning of pickup rather than the night before.
- Secure commercial garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters.
- Protect gardens, beehives, compost and livestock with electric fencing.
- Encourage your homeowners association or local government to institute [ordinances](#) on keeping foods that attract wildlife secure.
- Feed pets indoors or bring in dishes after feeding outdoors.

- Clean grills and store them in a secure place.
- Remove wildlife feeders or make them [bear-resistant](#).
- Pick ripe fruit from trees and remove fallen fruit from the ground.

In Florida, it is illegal to intentionally feed bears or leave out food or garbage that will attract bears and cause human-bear conflicts.

If you see or suspect that someone is feeding or attracting bears, call the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922).

To learn how to become [BearWise](#), visit [MyFWC.com/Bear](#) and click on "Live BearWise" on the left side of the page.

More information about [living in bear country](#) is available at [MyFWC.com/Bear](#).