



## **FWC responds to bear incident in Santa Rosa County**

January 31, 2017 – Update

Media Contact: Karen Parker (386) 872-0831, [Karen.Parker@MyFWC.com](mailto:Karen.Parker@MyFWC.com)

In response to the recent bear attack, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently captured four bears in a residential area in Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa County. The FWC is currently working to relocate three of the bears. Because one of the bears, an adult female, is believed to have been responsible for seriously injuring a man and his dog, the FWC had to humanely euthanize this animal to protect public safety. The three other bears, 12-month old yearlings, each weighing around 100 pounds, will be relocated.

On January 28, the female attacked a dog and then the dog's owner when he tried to intervene. The man sustained an injury to his face which required multiple stitches. The dog received multiple injuries but is expected to survive.

The 100-pound yearlings were much heavier than typical yearling Florida bears living in the woods. Bears grow larger and produce more cubs when they have regular access to human-provided foods, which increases the number of bears living in neighborhoods and causing human-bear conflicts. The FWC will continue to work with area residents to secure bear attractants.

"Putting down bears is a decision that is not taken lightly," said FWC Bear Management Program coordinator Dave Telesco. "We will continue to work with area residents to ensure that they have the information needed to properly secure attractants to keep themselves safe."

For more information, visit [MyFWC.com/Bear](http://MyFWC.com/Bear).



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**For immediate release: Jan. 29, 2017**

Media contacts: Karen Parker, (386) 872-0831

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is responding to the scene where last night a bear injured a man and his dog in Gulf Breeze, Santa Rosa County. A man let his dog out into the front yard, where it encountered a bear. The dog was injured, and when the man approached, a bear swatted him. Fortunately, the man sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was treated and released from Gulf Breeze Hospital last night. Injuries to the dog were also not life threatening.

FWC law enforcement officers and biologists are investigating the incident, collecting evidence, and have initiated trapping efforts in the area. Public safety is paramount to the FWC and staff will remain in the area to speak with residents and continue trapping efforts.

Florida has a robust and growing bear population. Residents in this area should be aware of their surroundings and always supervise pets and children while outdoors. Securing garbage and removing other attractants is the best way to deter bears from coming on your property. The FWC relies on residents to report any threatening bear behavior by calling their local FWC office, or if after regular business hours, calling the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

For more information on Florida black bears, visit [MyFWC.com/Bear](http://MyFWC.com/Bear). To learn more about how to protect your pets from incidents with bears and deterring bears from coming on your property, click on "Living with Bears."