

Preventing Conflicts with Bears when Camping and Hiking

- NEVER INTENTIONALLY FEED A BEAR.
- Keep a clean camp - minimize food odors and waste.
- Food and toiletries should NEVER be kept in tents.
- Store food and toiletries in air tight containers in a vehicle trunk or suspend food in burlap, plastic bags, or backpacks from trees - hang 12 feet above ground, 10 feet from trunk, and five feet from nearest branch.
- Always cook at a distance from your campsite and wash utensils shortly after eating.
- Don't sleep in clothes that have cooking odors or blood on them.
- Store waste as you would food - burning or burying waste attracts bears.
- Travel in groups and make noise when hiking.
- Carry bear spray.

Know the Laws

Excellent black bear hunting opportunities exist in Michigan. Hunting is used to maintain populations at acceptable and manageable levels. Details on season dates and locations can be found in the current Michigan Black Bear Digest, found online at Michigan.gov/Bear. Black bears can only be killed by a licensed hunter or when human life is in danger.

Anyone who is experiencing problems with black bears should contact the nearest DNR office and speak with a wildlife biologist or technician for further assistance.

Learn more about Black Bears by visiting
Michigan.gov/Bear

DNR Offices

*Open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
or visit us online at Michigan.gov/DNR*

Baraga

427 US-41 North
Baraga, MI 49908
906-353-6651

Bay City

3580 State Park Drive
Bay City, MI 48706
989-684-9141

Cadillac

8015 Mackinaw Trail
Cadillac, MI 49601
231-775-9727

Crystal Falls

1420 W. US-2
Crystal Falls, MI 49920
906-875-6622

Detroit Metro

1801 Atwater St.
Detroit, MI 48207
313-396-6890

Escanaba

6833 US-2 41 & M-35
Gladstone, MI 49837
906-293-5131

Gaylord

1732 W. M-32
Gaylord, MI 49735
989-732-3541

Lansing

4166 Legacy Parkway
Lansing, MI 48911
517-284-4720

Marquette

1990 US-41 South
Marquette, MI 49855
906-228-6561

Naubinway

PO Box 287
W11569 US 2E.
Naubinway, MI 49762
906-477-6048

Newberry

5100 M-123
Newberry, MI 49868
906-293-5131

Norway

520 W. US-Hwy 2
Norway, MI 49870
906-563-9247

Plainwell

621 N. 10th St.
Plainwell, MI 49080
269-685-6851

Roscommon

I-75 & M-18 South,
8717 N. Roscommon Rd.
Roscommon, MI 48653
989-275-5151

Sault Ste. Marie

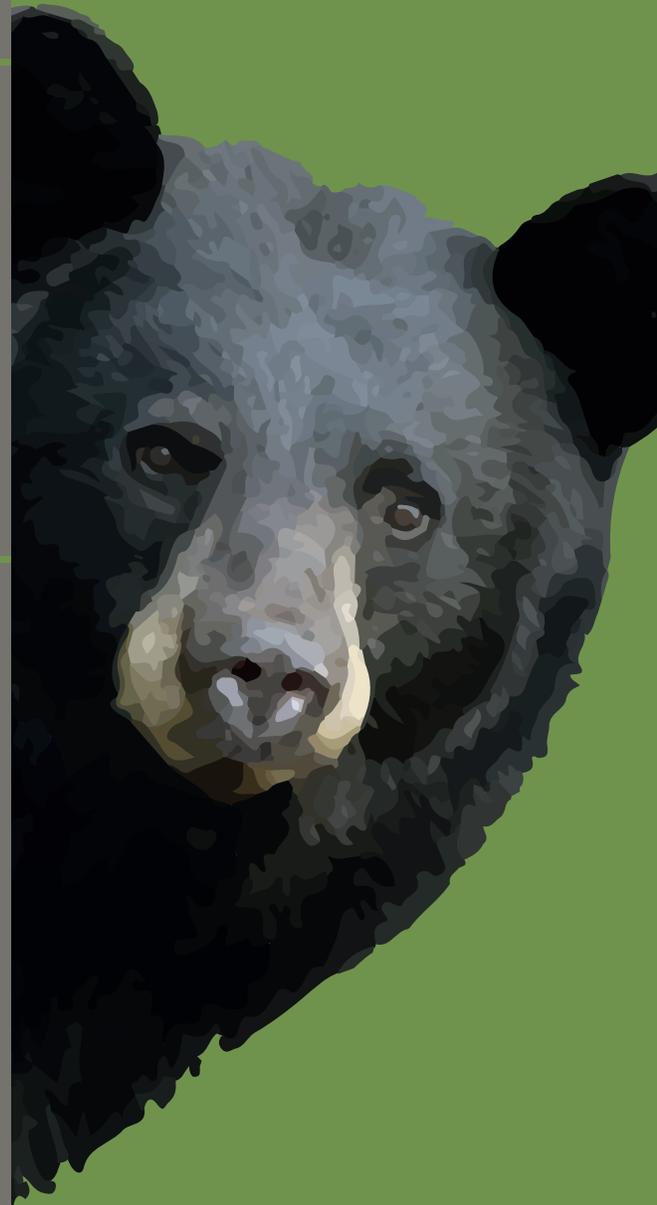
P.O. Box 798
4131 S. M-129 Hwy.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Traverse City

2122 South M-37
Traverse City, MI 49685
231-922-5280

Black B

Michigan Black Bear



Species

Ursus americanus

The black bear is the only species of bear in Michigan.

Life Span

10 years on average in the wild.

Home Range

Male black bears live in an area about

100 square miles or more

in size, while females live in smaller areas about

10 - 20 square miles.

Bears are solitary animals, but a sow and her cubs may be seen together.

Habitat

Prefers large continuous hardwood or conifer forests.

Litter Size

In Michigan, **2-3** cubs on average.

Appearance

Black bears can have various color phases including black (which is most common in Michigan), brown, and cinnamon.

Size

In Michigan, adult female black bears range from

100 - 250 pounds,

and adult males weigh between

150 - 400 pounds.

Adult black bears measure about three feet high when on all fours and are about five feet when standing upright.



Average size comparison.



Black Bears

Black bears are generally fearful of humans and will leave if they are aware of your presence.

If you encounter a bear, be SMART and... ▶

Living with Bears

Black bears have enormous appetites and an excellent sense of smell. They are capable of remembering the locations of food sources from year to year.

Bears will travel great distances to find food. Black bears are omnivorous and opportunistic feeders, eating both plant and animal matter. Bears will eat tender

vegetation, nuts, berries, and insects. Problems occur when bears attempt to feed on human foods, garbage, pet foods, or birdseed.

Black bears are generally fearful of humans and will leave if they are aware of your presence. In the rare circumstance that you encounter a bear that does not turn and leave, first try to scare it off by yelling while leaving a clear, unobstructed escape route for the bear.

If the bear stands its ground, makes threatening sounds, or bluff charges, you are too close. Take slow steps backward while continuing to talk to the bear in a stern tone. In the rare event of an attack, fight back with a backpack, stick, or your bare hands. Black bears have retreated in similar situations. DO NOT run or play dead.

For your safety, NEVER intentionally feed bears! It is critical that they retain their natural fear of humans. Remember, bears, like any wild animal, can act unpredictably and should be treated with respect and enjoyed from a distance.

Whether you welcome the black bear or not, all of us that live and recreate in bear range share the responsibility of avoiding activities that attract bears and create the potential for bear problems.

Stand your ground. DO NOT run or play dead

Make loud noises and back away slowly.

Always provide a clear, unobstructed escape route for the bear.

Rarely do bears attack, if they do, fight back.

Treat bears with respect and observe them from a distance.

Preventing Conflicts with Bears at Home

Never intentionally feed a bear. 

Remove potential food sources, like bird feeders, from your yard. Do not feed the birds in the spring, summer and fall, when bears are most active. 

Keep pet food inside or in a secured area. 

Keep garbage and odor at a minimum by removing trash often and cleaning container with disinfectant. 

Keep garbage in a secured area or in a secured container with a metal, lockable lid until disposal. 

Keep grills and picnic tables clean. 

Apiaries (bee hives), fruit trees, and gardens can be protected from bears by electric fencing. 

