

Be Bear Wise As Warm Weather Arrives

Ontario, OPP Remind People to Be Safe as Bears Come out of Hibernation

NEWS

March 31, 2016

Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are reminding people to take simple precautions this spring to prevent attracting black bears as they come out of hibernation.

The potential for human-bear conflict increases when there is little natural food available for bears. If this happens, black bears will search for other food sources, such as garbage and bird feed, which can draw bears to populated areas.

Follow these instructions to minimize the chances of attracting bears:

- Store garbage in waste containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Put out garbage only on the morning of pickup.
- Put away bird feeders. Seed, suet and nectar attract bears.
- Pick fruits and berries as they ripen. Don't let them rot on the ground.
- Clean outdoor barbecue grills after each use, including the grease trap underneath. Bears will be drawn by smells from great distances, including grease and food residue on grills.
- Keep dogs on leash; sometimes bears will follow off-leash dogs back to you.

If a bear is posing an immediate threat to public safety by exhibiting threatening or aggressive behaviour, call 911 or your local police. The police may request support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to respond to emergency situations, on a case-by-case basis.

For non-emergencies, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry operates the toll-free, 24/7 Bear Reporting Line (1-866-514-2327) and the [Bear Wise website](#) to provide the public with information and advice.

QUOTES

“The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry operates the toll-free, 24/7 Bear reporting line that can provide information on how to keep bears away from homes, businesses and schoolyards. I encourage everyone to take the steps necessary to keep your families and property safe.”

— Bill Mauro, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

“A few simple precautions can help everyone to avoid coming into conflict with bears this spring. If a bear presents an immediate threat to public safety in OPP jurisdiction, the OPP will respond with the assistance of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, but we would rather see everyone stay safe by following the Bear Wise program.”

— Vince Hawkes, Commissioner, Ontario Provincial Police

QUICK FACT

- Bears will remember their last source of food and return there when hungry, sometimes travelling over 100 kilometres.
- Since 2004, Ontario's [Bear Wise](#) program has been educating people about bears, how to avoid attracting bears and how to prevent human-bear conflicts.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and OPP have agreed on the roles and responsibilities for both organizations to help the public understand [which organization to contact when they encounter a bear](#).

LEARN MORE

ontario.ca/bearwise

Media Calls only: Emily Kirk, Minister's Office,
416-314-2206
Media Desk, Communications Services Branch,
416-314-2106
Sgt. Peter Leon, Ontario Provincial Police,
705-329-6878

ontario.ca/natural-resources-news
Disponible en français