

Staying in Bear Country

When you're staying somewhere bears are part of the landscape, taking a few simple precautions can help ensure all your wildlife memories are happy ones, and you don't create problems that could cost a bear its life.



Don't Feed the Bears In many areas it's illegal to feed bears or other wildlife, whether you meant to feed them or not, and doing so can get you fined, or even charged with a crime. Leaving trash where bears can get at it, putting out leftovers or trying to attract a bear with food so you can watch it or take a photo isn't just illegal, it's downright dangerous for both people and bears. Most instances of people being scratched or bitten involve food. Bears involved in these types of incidents are usually killed.

Discourage Break-Ins Don't leave anything that looks or smells like food in your vehicle overnight. That includes things like food wrappers, sunscreen, hand lotion and scented air fresheners—they all smell like dinner to a bear.

Dispose of Trash Responsibly Use bear-resistant containers when available, and be sure to close and latch. Don't leave trash outside overnight or store food or beverages on your deck or in your car.



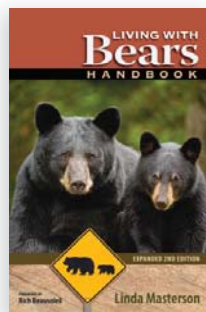
If you see a black bear...

- ◆ Never approach a bear.
- ◆ If the bear hasn't seen you, back away and leave the area.
- ◆ If the bear reacts to your presence, stand still, talk softly, slowly wave your arms and then back away.
- ◆ If a bear approaches you, stand your ground; never run. Don't climb a tree.
- ◆ Black bear attacks are very rare; if you are attacked, fight back.

Read chapters 20 – 23 in *Living with Bears Handbook* for expert advice on preventing and handling all types of encounters with both black and grizzly bears.

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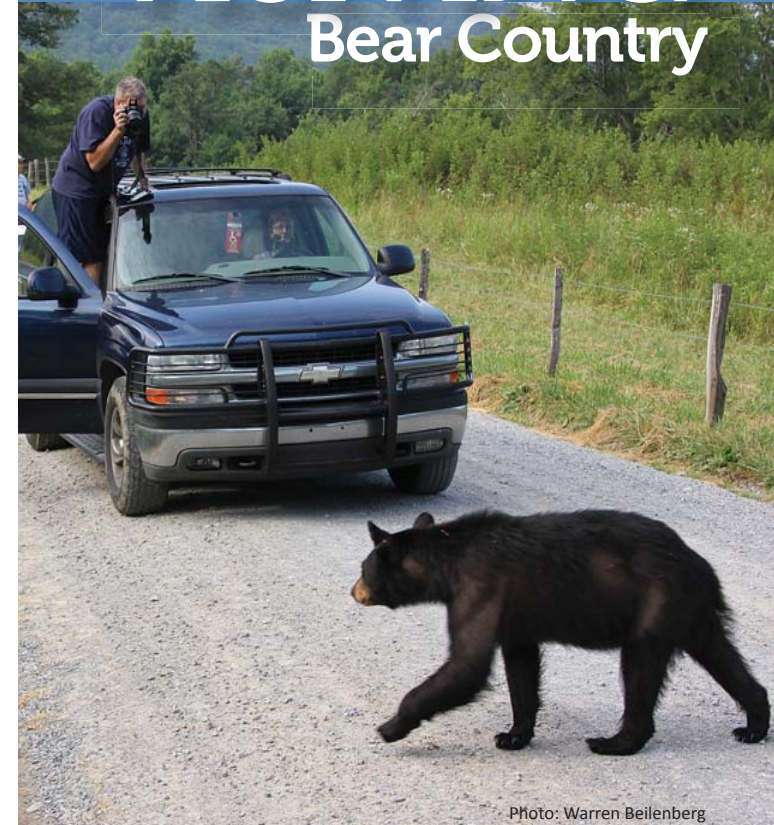
Find a wealth of helpful info in the *Living With Bears Handbook* by Linda Masterson

LivingWithBears.com

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VISITING Bear Country



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

Get the Bear Facts
and Be Bear Prepared
When Vacationing
Where Bears Roam

Seeing a bear can be the highlight of your trip. Learning how to view and photograph bears responsibly can help make sure you go home with great photos and memories without creating a dangerous situation for people or bears.

Photographing Bears

Your car makes a great photo blind. You're invisible and non-threatening. You can roll down the window, but don't get out.

If you're outdoors, observe from a safe distance. Never approach; if your actions cause the bear to react in any way, you're too close. There are many dramatic photos taken from cameras recovered after the photographer pushed just a little too far.

If a bear comes nosing around your cabin or vacation home, clap your hands, shout and do your best to send the bear on its way...instead of reaching for your camera. Teaching bears to hang around people can lead to bears getting into trouble and people getting hurt.

You can often get the best photos in managed areas where bears are relatively used to being photographed.

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[Read chapters 18 – 19 for more details](#)



Photo: Warren Beilenberg

Be Bear Aware on the Road



Photo: Rich Beausoleil

Collisions with wildlife cost billions of dollars, kill millions of animals, and injure and kill people. Nearly five million miles of roads in the U.S. and Canada make it tough for animals to avoid crossing paths with you, so it's up to you to drive wildlife-aware.

- ◆ Be especially alert at dawn and dusk when animals are more active and harder to see.
- ◆ If you hit a bear, don't try to help it; call 911. If cubs are nearby, don't approach them.

Bear Viewing Guidelines

Never approach bears. Creeping closer to get a better photo is a good way to turn a magical chance for observation into an encounter that's scary or downright dangerous for you and the bear. Even bears that are used to people are not tame and should never be approached.

The general recommended safe viewing distance is 100 yards. Bring good binoculars and enjoy.

Early morning and early evening are often the best viewing times.

You're in an area where bears live too. Being bear aware and behaving in bear smart ways will make your visit more enjoyable and safer, for you and the bears.

The Bear Facts

Black bears (*Ursus americanus*) come in a wide range of colors, from black to all shades of brown and cinnamon, and even white or glacier blue.

Bears will avoid people whenever possible.

Bears are naturally curious and will explore anything in their home range that might be a source of food.

Bears are omnivores...they'll eat just about anything, but most of their natural diet is vegetation.

Bears are super-smart, with IQs higher than the smartest dog. If a bear discovers a bag of trash on your porch one night, next time it might come inside looking for more.

Bears are super-strong, and can easily rip up a log or turn over a boulder, or get into a car.



Photo: Delaware North at Yosemite

Bears can outrun an Olympic athlete; never run from a bear, you could trigger a chase response.

Bears are exceptional moms and will work extra-hard to provide for their cubs.

Bears can live into their twenties or even thirties.

Bears spend late summer and fall looking for food around the clock, trying to fatten up before winter.

Bears have a great sense of smell, and are attracted to highly concentrated sources of calories, including garbage, bird seed, pet food and leftover pizza.

[Read chapters 1 – 4 for in-depth information](#)