Susan Gouveia

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2014 4:10 PM
To: Canning, Sean; Susan Gouveia; Wilpert, Frank
Subject: FW: NJDEP Press Release - Tips to Reduce Encounters with Black Bears
Attachments: Black Bears-- P35.pdf

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From: Randazzo, Cindy [mailto:Cindy.Randazzo@dep.state.nj.us]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2014 4:05 PM
To: Randazzo, Cindy
Cc: Rogers, Joseph
Subject: NJDEP Press Release - Tips to Reduce Encounters with Black Bears

Dear Municipal Official:

Please see the attached NJDEP Press Release concerning reducing encounters with Black Bears>

If you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Cindy W. Randazzo
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NEWS

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
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Bob Martin, Commissioner

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2014

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DEP OFFERS TIPS TO REDUCE CONFLICTS AND ENCOUNTERS WITH BLACK BEARS DURING ACTIVE SPRING PERIOD

SEVERITY OF WINTER HAS BEARS MORE ACTIVELY SEARCHING FOR FOOD

(14/P35) TRENTON - Black bears have emerged from winter dens and are entering a very active period of the year throughout New Jersey in search of food and mates, which makes encounters with humans more likely, according to Department of Environmental Protection biologists. New Jersey residents, especially families living in "bear country'' in Northwest Jersey, are urged to take a few basic precautions this spring to reduce the risk of potential encounters.

"Black bear sightings and incidents continue to gradually decline, as we reduce the number of bears and people better understand how to coexist with bears,'' said Dave Chanda, director of the State Division of Fish and Wildlife. "However, state residents can further reduce the risk of interactions with bears this spring by taking a few simple and commonsense steps. Most important, do not feed bears, intentionally or unintentionally.''

"Bears that learn to associate food with people, and their homes and living areas, can become nuisance bears that forage in neighborhoods looking for easy sources of food. The result can be sometimes troubling bear-human encounters,'' added Chanda.

It is illegal to intentionally feed black bears in New Jersey and punishable by a fine of up to $1,000. But a more common problem is unintentional bear feeding by homeowners who unknowingly make household trash, pet foods and other food sources easily available for bears to find and eat.

By taking a few easy steps, you can dramatically reduce the potential of bear encounters, said Chanda. Secure your trash and eliminate obvious sources of food, such as pet food on decks, easy-to-reach bird feeders, or food residues left in barbecue grills.

"This past winter was long and difficult for residents of New Jersey and our wildlife,'' said DEP Senior Wildlife Biologist Kelcey Burguess. "Due to the severity of the winter and lack of mast in the forests last fall, black bears are now more desperately seeking food. Naturally occurring food sources, normally available at this time of year, remain scarce this spring, forcing bears into more developed areas in search of food.''

Burguess advised that livestock, including chickens, sheep goats, llamas, horses and cows, as well as beehives, should be protected with properly installed electric fences.

Bears have been sighted in all 21 New Jersey counties, and bear-human encounters have occurred a bit more frequently in recent years in places outside of traditional bear country.

DEP wildlife experts stress that a black bear passing through a residential area should not be considered a problem, as long as it is behaving normally and not posing a threat. They offer the following tips to minimize conflicts with bears this spring:

- Use certified bear-resistant garbage containers if possible. Otherwise, store all garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids and place them along the inside walls of your garage, or in the basement, a sturdy shed or other secure area.

- Wash garbage containers frequently with a disinfectant solution to remove odors. Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.

- Avoid feeding birds when bears are active. If you choose to feed birds, do so during daylight hours only and bring feeders indoors at night. Suspend birdfeeders from a free-hanging wire, making sure they are at least 10 feet off the ground. Clean up spilled seeds and shells daily.

- Immediately remove all uneaten food and food bowls used by pets fed outdoors.

- Clean outdoor grills and utensils to remove food and grease residue. Store grills securely.

- Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.

- Remove fruit or nuts that fall from trees in your yard.

- Properly installed electric fencing is an effective way of protecting crops, beehives and livestock.

- If you encounter a bear remain calm and do not run. Make sure the bear has an escape route. Avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak with a low, assertive voice.

Report bear damage, nuisance behavior or aggressive bears to the Wildlife Control Unit of the DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife at (908) 735-8793. During evenings and weekends, residents should call their local police department or the DEP Hotline at (877) WARN-DEP.

To learn more about New Jersey's black bears and ways to avoid problems with them, visit http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/bearfacts_education.htm and http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/bearfacts_avoid.htm

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