

Wildlife Factsheet

BLACK BEARS

Although black bears were once common in Indiana, there hasn't been a resident population since before the Civil War. And until 2015, there hadn't been a confirmed report of a black bear in Indiana since 1871.

Black bears are native to Indiana and are listed as a species of special concern. They are protected under Indiana Code 312-9.3-18.8. This code prohibits the taking of a black bear except under certain conditions and by a permit issued only by the Indiana DNR.

DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE

- Remove bird feeders and feed when bears are active.
- Clean and store grills indoors after use.
- Place garbage cans inside a garage or shed.
- Pick ripe fruits and vegetables as soon as possible.
- Do not intentionally feed bears. Bears that become accustomed to finding food near your home may become problem bears.
- Do not leave pet food outside overnight or for more than a few hours.
- Do not add meat or sweets to compost pile.

IF YOU SEE A BEAR

- Do not approach it or try to feed it.
- Quietly back away and leave the area. Do not run.
- Do not intentionally follow a bear to take photos or video.
- Never attempt to feed or attract bears.
- If the bear approaches, do not climb a tree.
- If the bear approaches, advertise your presence by shouting and waiving your arms.

REPORT A SIGHTING

- Report bear sightings at wildlife.IN.gov/8497.htm
- Photo and video evidence of scat, tracks or the animal, if available, will be verified by DNR biologists

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Bears are rarely aggressive toward humans. Problems arise when bears associate humans with food.
- Black bears have recently been entering Indiana from neighboring states, a clear sign that bear populations in those states are increasing and Indiana habitat is attractive to bears.



Photo courtesy of USFWS

BLACK BEAR FACTS

- ▶ **DIET:** Black bears are omnivores. They eat grass, seeds, berries, insects, rodents and carrion.
- ▶ **HABITAT:** The size of black bear home ranges are influenced by the quality of habitat they find. In order to satisfy a huge appetite and store fat for winter, bears need healthy habitats in which to forage. Primary habitat includes hardwood forests and wetlands where fruits, nuts, grasses and small mammals are common.
- ▶ **ACTIVITY:** Black bears are most active at dawn and dusk. Black bears are generally very timid and not aggressive toward people. Young males can travel up to 20 miles a day into new areas before retreating to their primary range.
- ▶ **APPEARANCE:** Black bears are stocky with short legs. They have a tan muzzle with a thick black coat. Color variations of brown, cinnamon and blonde are more common in western states. Adult males weigh 150-400 pounds while adult females weigh 100-250 pounds.



Photo courtesy of USFWS

To learn more, visit wildlife.IN.gov/8500.htm

DNR Indiana Department of Natural Resources