



## **OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

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# **TIP OF THE WEEK**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ENCOUNTERING BEARS IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

Recently, there has been an increase in bear encounters in Oregon communities. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) urges Oregonians to respect nature and do their part to ensure wildlife, including black bears, and people coexist.

A bear's strongest sense is smell. This means everything from trash cans to grill drippings can bring them to your property. Bears also have a great memory when it comes to food, which allows them to remember where they have previously found food sources, including trash. Female bears will pass this knowledge down to their young. Because of this great memory and knowledge sharing, intentionally or accidentally feeding bears can negatively affect multiple generations of bears.

In addition to bringing unwanted visitors, feeding bears (intentionally or accidentally) can be harmful. Wildlife have specialized diets that coincide with seasonal changes. Food provided by humans can negatively impact their health, lead to conflict and safety issues with people, and in some cases, have fatal consequences for animals. For the sake of Oregon's wildlife and their health, do not feed them.

Living responsibly with black bears is possible and it's up to everyone to do their part to keep people safe and bears wild. Below are some tips to help keep your community and local black bears safer.

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- **Never feed or approach bears.** Feeding bears, intentionally or unintentionally, will cause them to associate people with food. It is also against the law in Oregon (ORS 496.730).
- **Secure food, garbage and recycling.** Ensure your trash and dumpsters are secure by using commercially available garbage cans, metal bars over dumpsters, fully enclosed trash storage, or by storing garbage inside. Take trash out immediately before pick-up, not the night before. Wash garbage cans with bleach to reduce their smell. Food waste is one of the strongest attractants for black bears and allowing bears access could qualify as illegal feeding if appropriate steps are not taken to prevent the issue.
- **Remove bird feeders in bear habitat when bears are active.** Birds have plenty of naturally available food sources during all seasons which is why some species migrate in winter. Bears can be food rewarded from bird seed and suet in feeders leading to habituation and food conditioning, destroyed birdfeeders, and public safety concerns.
- **Never leave pet food outdoors.** This practice can easily attract bears and other wildlife, putting both pets and wildlife at risk.
- **Clean and store grills** after each use.
- **Alert neighbors and ODFW to unusual bear activity** such as continued sightings during daylight hours, lack of wariness around people or pets, etc.

A community effort is vital to keep your neighborhood and wildlife safe. One person who feeds or attracts bears, intentionally or not, increases the risk for the entire neighborhood. Find out more about living responsibly with black bears at <https://myodfw.com/articles/help-keep-bears-wild>.

For more information and tips visit our website at [www.lincolncountysheriff.net](http://www.lincolncountysheriff.net) and like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.

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