

Bears are slowly migrating to South Jersey, especially around their mating season. The mating season runs through June and July, and bears are out looking for fresh territory and a new mate.

If you encounter a black bear, the New Jersey Department of Fish & Wildlife recommends that you follow the following safety tips:

- Avoid direct eye contact, which a bear may perceive as a challenge. Never run from a bear. Instead, slowly back away.
- To scare the bear away, make loud noises by yelling, banging pots and pans, or using an airhorn. Make yourself look as big as possible by waving your arms. If you are with someone else, stand close together with your arms raised above your head.
- The bear may utter a series of huffs, make popping jaw sounds by snapping its jaws and swat the ground. These are warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away, avoid direct eye contact, and do not run.
- If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect scents in the air. It is usually not a threatening behavior.

- Black bears will sometimes “bluff charge” when cornered, threatened, or attempting to steal food. This can be very frightening for humans but do your best to stand your ground, avoid direct eye contact, then slowly back away and *do not run*.
- If the bear does not leave, move to a secure area.
- Immediately notify the DEP’s 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 1-877-WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337)
- Families living in areas with high black bear populations such as Mahwah, Oakland, Ringwood, or Wayne should have a “Bear Plan” for children with whistles, air horns, and an escape route.
- If a bear enters your home, provide it with an escape route by propping all doors open.
- If a black bear does attack, fight back.
- Never feed or approach a bear.
- Try to remain calm.
- Make the bear aware of your presence by speaking in an assertive voice, singing, clapping your hands, or making other noises.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, and Division of Parks and Forestry provides helpful information about black bears and living or visiting “Bear Country” in New Jersey. [CLICK FOR CONVENIENT 2 PAGE FACT SHEET](#) It provides advice and safety tips for hiking, fishing, and camping in Bear Country and helpful tips on avoiding bears and staying safe if you live in Bear Country.

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