

The 10 Commandments of Camping in Black Bear Country

To fully enjoy your camping or outdoor experience in bear country, the following "10 Commandments of Camping" must be observed to avoid problems with bears.

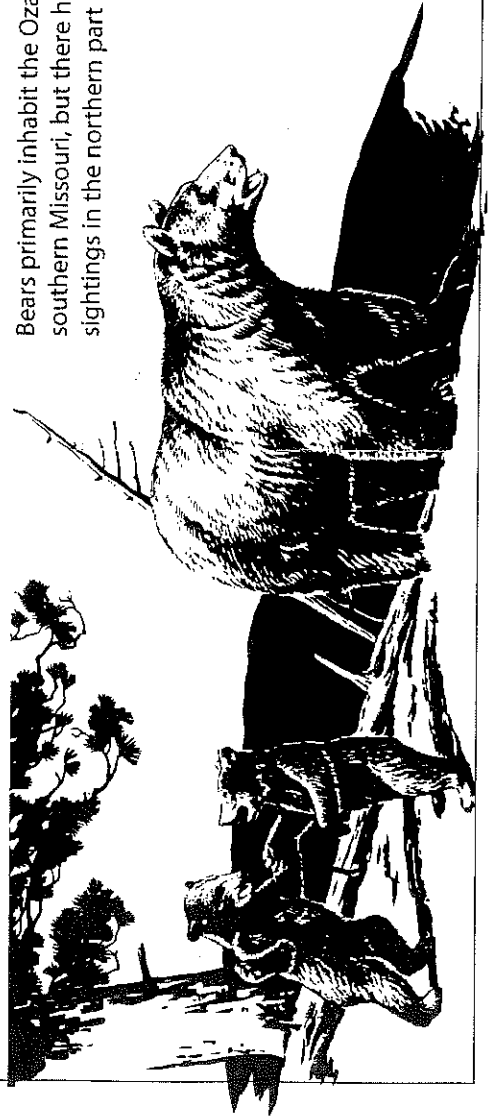
1. Keep a clean camp. Food and all items that come in contact with food carry odors that bears find attractive.
2. Thoroughly clean all utensils immediately after use. Never deposit food residues such as cooking grease in campfires.
3. Place garbage where bears cannot smell or gain access to it, either in bear-proof containers or dumpsters. DON'T burn or bury garbage. Bears will dig it up.
4. Do not eat or cook in your tent. Avoid storing food or attractants in tents, sleeping bags or backpacks. Suspend such items from trees when backpacking.
5. Treat nonfood items such as gum, soap, toothpaste, or deodorant as food. They are attractive to a bear's acute sense of smell.
6. Immediately store food articles (including pet food, livestock feed, and garbage) in airtight containers after every use. Coolers are not airtight, and bears often associate them with food. Secure coolers in a locked trunk or truck cab concealed from view.

7. Plan your meals. Generate as little food garbage as possible.
8. Never attempt to feed a bear or any other wild animal.
9. Never approach wildlife, especially black bears. They can be dangerous.
10. Keep your dog on a leash. Clean up leftover food and scraps after your dog has finished eating.

Hiking/Fishing in Bear Country

- Normal trail noise should alert bears to your presence and prompt bears to leave before you ever see them. Bears usually run and hide from people.
- Use caution in areas such as berry patches where bears are likely to venture.
- Never approach a bear. Observe it only from a distance. Make it aware of your presence by clapping, talking, singing, or making other sounds.
- If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly and speak in a calm, assertive, and assuring voice.

Bears primarily inhabit the Ozark region of southern Missouri, but there have been sightings in the northern part of the state.



If a Bear Comes into Camp

- Remain calm. Make the bear aware of your presence.
- Do not feed the bear! The bear will leave more easily if they have not obtained food.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.
- Yell, bang pots and pans, throw rocks, wave your arms, or use an air horn to scare the bear away.
- If the bear utters a series of huffs, snaps or pops its jaws, and/or swats the ground, you are too close. Slowly back away.
- If the bear will not leave, move to a car or building, if available. Notify authorities immediately if you encounter an aggressive or nonyielding bear.
- If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer, it may be trying to get a better view or detect smells in the air.
- Black bears will sometimes bluff a charge when cornered, threatened, or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, and then slowly back away.

A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear

Bears learn quickly. Black bears that associate food with people may become aggressive and dangerous. This may lead to personal injury, property damage, and the need to euthanize nuisance bears.

Report Incidents

Report all bear damage and nuisance incidents to your camp office immediately. To learn more about Missouri's black bears, visit the Missouri Department of Conservation's website at mdc.mo.gov.

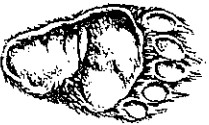
Black Bear Facts

- Black bears primarily inhabit the Ozark region of southern Missouri, but there have been sightings in northern Missouri. Prime habitat consists of mixed hardwood forests.
- Black bears have been increasing in number and expanding their range in Missouri since the inception of Arkansas' restoration program.
- Bears are highly adaptable, living and feeding among human development. Home ranges in good habitat include up to 60 square miles for males and 10 square miles for females.
- Bears can live more than 20 years.
- Bears learn quickly and have an excellent sense of smell and hearing.
- Black bears are omnivorous, eating plant and animal matter. They are opportunistic feeders and will supplement their diet with food derived from humans.
- Approximately 90 percent of a black bear's diet consists of plant material, including grasses, forbs, tubers and bulbs, berries and nuts. Acorns are the most important food in Missouri in the fall.
- Animal matter—approximately 10 percent of the bear's diet—includes ants and other insects (adults, larvae, and eggs), small mammals, bird eggs, honey, road-killed deer, and other carrion.
- In Missouri, adult female black bears weigh between 110 and 150 pounds, while adult males typically weigh between 200 and 250 pounds.

Right
front
foot



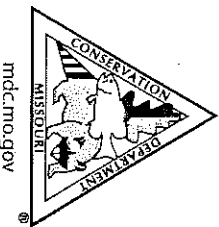
Right
hind
foot



- Breeding season in Missouri usually runs from late June to early July, and males travel extensively in search of females.
- Cubs are born in late January or February—sometimes while the mother is still asleep. A litter usually has two or three cubs, but can have up to six.
- Cubs stay with the mother through the summer and usually den with her the next winter.
- Black bears den for the winter, but some have become winter-active in the last few years, meaning they are in and out of hibernation, often seeking a quick snack. Den sites include rock cavities, brush piles, open nests, and hollow trees.
- Black bears can run up to 35 miles per hour and are strong swimmers.
- Bears are excellent climbers. Both adults and cubs will climb trees for food and to escape disturbances.

If a Bear Seems Aggressive

Black bears almost never attack people. If you follow the precautions listed in this brochure, you probably will not have any trouble with bears. However, in the unlikely event that a black bear does attack, fight the bear aggressively with anything close at hand—rocks, sticks, or even your fists. Black bears are usually intimidated by an aggressive counterattack.



mdc.mo.gov

CAMPING IN

Black Bear COUNTRY



Never Feed Bears

Black bears are large, powerful wild animals and should be treated with respect. Be alert in areas where bears are active. **DO NOT** approach bears in the wild.



Missouri Department of Conservation

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