

BEAR FAST FACTS

- 🐻 A black bear's diet consists of plants, insects, and occasionally meat. Prevent bears from lingering in your yard by securing garbage, pet food, birdseed and livestock.
- 🐻 Bears will typically run away from dogs if they can, but if a dog gets too close or if cubs are present they may feel forced to defend themselves. Prevent injuries by leashing pets.
- 🐻 When bears are afraid they most often will run away or climb a tree to get away. If your pet has treed a bear, it is best for you and your pet to leave the area under the tree alone. The bear will climb down and leave the area when it feels safe again.

COYOTE FAST FACTS

- 🐺 In Florida, coyotes weigh an average of 30 lbs and eat a wide variety of foods including insects, plants and small mammals. Coyotes may consider small pets to be food. Protect small pets by keeping them inside, closely attended, or on a leash.
- 🐺 Leaving pet food outside attracts coyotes, not only to eat the food but also to prey on visiting pets and wildlife. Feed pets inside whenever possible. If feeding outside, supervise pets and clean up uneaten food or empty food bowls.
- 🐺 Coyotes den and give birth in the spring. If you are out walking and a coyote follows you or your large dog from a distance, it could mean there is a den nearby. A coyote parent may attempt to "escort" perceived threats away from their den. Avoid walking dogs near known den sites until the behavior dissipates, usually in a few weeks.



Protect your pets with an electric fencing enclosure. Check often to ensure that the fence is functioning properly.

Photo: John Bailey

For more resources on living with wildlife and preventing conflicts:

myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/wildlife/

A Service Of



The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

myfwc.com

If you are experiencing conflicts with bears or coyotes, call your local FWC Regional Office:

Lakeland: 863-648-3200
Panama City: 850-265-3676
Lake City: 386-758-0525
Ocala: 352-732-1225
West Palm: 561-625-5122

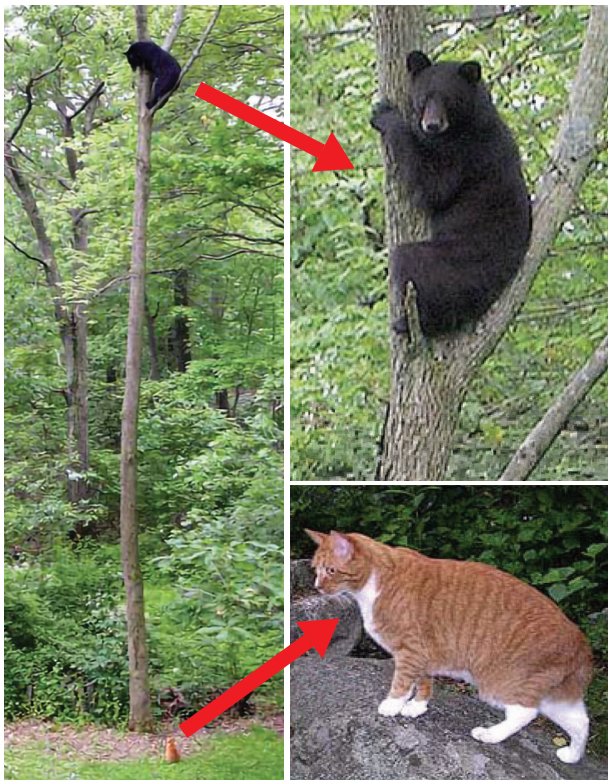
In an emergency or to report illegal activity, call the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922.

The FWC receives financial assistance from the Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DOI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility or need more information, contact: FWC, Office of Human Resources, 620 S Meridian St., Tallahassee, FL 32399, 850-488-6411, or: Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Civil Rights, Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



PROTECT YOUR PETS
from **BLACK BEARS,**
& COYOTES
& OTHER WILDLIFE





In the event of a pet treeing a bear, call your pet inside to a safe and secure area, allowing the bear time to retreat. (Photo credits: Suzanne Giovanetti AP, FWC, Photo: Eric Sonstroem)

WHY IS WILDLIFE IN MY YARD?

Wildlife like bears and coyotes are attracted to neighborhoods by unsecured garbage, pet food, and bird seed. To prevent wildlife from lingering or having conflicts with pets:

- ▶ Remove and secure trash with either a caddy or bear-resistant trash can.
- ▶ Minimize the time pet food and bird seed are outside. Avoid leaving pet food or dishes outside overnight.
- ▶ Store pet food or livestock feed inside a secure structure, such as a lockable shed or barn.
- ▶ Harvest ripe produce and clear away fallen fruit from your yard and garden.
- ▶ Install electric fencing to prevent access to beehives and other attractive foods.

HOW DO I KEEP PETS SAFE IN MY YARD?

Free-roaming pets and backyard livestock are vulnerable without your watchful presence. To keep them safer:

- ▶ Be aware of the time of day. Wildlife can be active at any time, but they typically are most active at night and during dawn and dusk.
- ▶ Make noise and flash outdoor lights to startle wildlife out of the yard before taking pets outside at night.
- ▶ Check that tethered pets can move a safe distance away from their food bowl. Tethered pets should be closely monitored.
- ▶ Ensure outdoor pens are high enough. Bears, coyotes, and bobcats can easily jump or climb a six-foot fence. Use entirely roofed pens where possible.
- ▶ Use skirting that extends outward underground to prevent digging into pens.
- ▶ Keep areas around pens and enclosures well-mowed to reduce cover for wildlife.



Sturdy wooden hutches are the most reliable form of protection for outdoor small animal enclosures, such as rabbits and guinea pigs. Securely attach a side of the cage to a permanent structure to prevent the hutch from falling over. Secure doors with locks, keep top covered and secured. In bear country, add an electric fence for adequate protection. (Photo: Petco)



Pets are best protected on a short, fixed leash to maximize visibility and control.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN WALKING PETS?

Encountering wildlife is always a possibility when walking your pet. To minimize the risk of a negative interaction:

- ▶ Use a short non-retractable leash (<6ft), which allows better control in the event of an encounter with wildlife.
- ▶ Avoid walking pets near thick undergrowth or a body of water.
- ▶ Bring a noisemaker or bear spray. Making noise will alert wildlife to your presence and allow time for it to move away from you and your pet.
- ▶ If contact occurs between your pet and wildlife, do not try to physically separate them. Retreat to a safe place and if possible use bear spray, a water hose, or loud noises to try to break up the contact. Contact your local health department and follow their direction to ensure the health of you and your pet.