



For Immediate Release

Help Prevent Bear Issues This Summer: Clean Up Your Act Now

April 27, 2021 – It is an official sign of springtime in Alaska: Bears are starting to stir. It's also the cue for Alaskans to ramp up their "bear etiquette" by cleaning up food attractants around homes and neighborhoods.

"I would suggest people start their spring cleaning now," said Anchorage Area Wildlife Biologist Dave Battle.

That means bringing in bird feeders and cleaning up spilled seed, removing and securing trash, and making sure bear deterrents, such as electric fences surrounding poultry or other small livestock, are operational and turned on.

"If we keep bears out of human-provided food sources now, keep them from developing bad habits early on, we can prevent a lot of problems later on for people and bears alike," Battle said.

Because it's early in the season, natural foods are scarce in many parts of the state. This can make human-provided attractants particularly inviting to waking bears. Feeding bears, even unintentionally, is illegal and can result in fines.

To prevent bear problems this summer, biologists suggest the following:

- **Garbage** - Store trash inside buildings or in bear-resistant containers; keep secured until the day of scheduled pickup. Encourage neighbors to do the same.
- **Electric fences** – Properly constructed electric fences designed to exclude bears can keep bears out of gardens, compost, and away from buildings, chicken coops, and domestic animals. For more information, contact your local department office or online at www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=livingwithbears.bearfences.
- **Barbecues** - Clean barbecue grills, especially grease traps, after each use.
- **Pets** - Feed pets indoors or clean up excess and spilled food between meals. Store pet food, livestock food, and birdseed indoors or in bear-resistant containers.
- **Bird Feeders** – Take feeders down April through October, store securely and remove spilled seed.

- **Freezers** - Keep freezers locked in a secure building or otherwise inaccessible to bears.
- **Gardens** - Plant gardens in the open, away from cover and game trails. Only compost raw vegetable matter and turn over compost frequently.

In addition to taking preventative measures, people should report incidents of bears frequenting neighborhoods or other populated areas, getting into trash, or showing aggression. Contact the nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game office during regular business hours or report online at <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=reportwildlifeencounter.main>. If the situation involves an immediate public safety concern, call 911.

“So many situations go unreported, or we hear rumors days later via social media,” said Battle. “We want to know any time brown bears are seen in town or populated areas, and people should let us know whenever they see black or brown bears in trash or feeding on human provided food.”

To learn more about coexisting with bears, call or visit your local department office or online at www.alaskabears.alaska.gov.

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