



News Release

For Immediate Release: April 17, 2026

Contact: Cynthia Wardlow, Regional Supervisor; cynthia.wardlow@alaska.gov
907-267-2529

Fish & Game Investigates Bear Attack Involving Two Soldiers on JBER

(Anchorage) – Employees of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) responded to the location of a reported bear attack Thursday, April 16, in Anchorage on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER). Two soldiers sustained injuries in the attack during a land navigation training event on JBER. They reported having bear spray with them to responding personnel. No bears were encountered at the site by first responders or ADF&G staff during the subsequent investigation.

The attack occurred in a remote area of JBER, with limited access, on the west side of the Glenn Highway. JBER has closed the area near the attack for all recreational activity. Based on the scene investigation and information from other responding agencies, this appears to be a defensive attack by a bear recently emerged from a den.

“We hope both individuals have a full and quick recovery, and our thoughts are with them during this time. ADF&G will continue investigating the circumstances that led to the attack and try to learn everything we can about what happened to increase public safety around wildlife in Alaska.” said Regional Supervisor Cyndi Wardlow. “In this case, having bear spray with them in the field may have saved their lives.”

Initial reports identified the involved animal as a brown bear; however, samples collected during the initial investigation will be processed with the goal of positively identifying species and gender of the animal involved. DNA analysis of collected samples will be performed by the ADF&G Gene Conservation Lab in Anchorage, and samples from the attack will be analyzed to determine if they match any materials collected in other research or management activities.

Bears across Alaska are becoming active with spring weather and encounters are more likely. Carrying deterrents and being prepared to use them is an essential part of working and recreating across Alaska. Because of the remote location of this attack, it is unlikely there is an elevated risk to public safety. A bear that is considered a public safety threat or involved in a fatal attack may be killed by the department. At this time, the location of the bear involved in Thursday's attack is unknown.

The Department of Fish & Game asks that anyone who sees a brown bear in Anchorage, or any wild animal behaving aggressively or unusually, report it immediately using the online reporting tool at:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=reportwildlifeencounter.main> or by calling 9-1-1 for emergencies.

###