

Niceville Stays Bear Aware!

As human and bear populations in Northwest Florida continue to increase, so have human-bear interactions. As bears spend more time in developed areas, they lose their natural wariness of people. Once bears find an easy meal of unsecured garbage, bird seed, or pet food in our neighborhoods, they will keep coming back, and in the process can damage property, kill pets, and injure people.

To keep bears wild and away from your home, follow these tips:

- Remove wildlife and bird feeders or make them [bear-resistant](#).
- Secure household garbage in a sturdy shed, garage or a [bear-resistant container](#).
- Put household garbage out on the morning of pickup rather than the night before.
- Feed pets indoors or bring the dishes in after feeding.
- Secure commercial garbage in [bear-resistant dumpsters](#).
- Protect gardens, bee yards, compost and livestock with [electric fencing](#).
- Encourage your homeowner's association or local government to institute [ordinances](#) to require trash be secured from bears.
- Clean grills and store them in a secure place.
- Pick ripe fruit from trees and remove fallen fruit from the ground.



It is illegal to intentionally feed bears or leave out food or garbage that will attract bears and cause human-bear conflicts. If you see or suspect someone is feeding bears, please call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922). If you have questions, need clarification, or to report a conflict, call the FWC at 850-265-3676. More information and advice is located on our [website](#) and remember, if you see a bear in a developed area make sure to scare the bear while remaining in a safe location and using one of the recommended bear deterrents listed [here](#).