



FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE



BEARS SEEN IN LAKE TANSI, what you need to know.

Recently, there have been several sightings of black bears in and around Cumberland County. More specifically, there have been at least two sightings of bears in Lake Tansi.

While bears are beautiful creatures, they are not animals that are safe for humans to interact with. Contact with bears should be avoided for both the safety of the bear as well as humans.

Following you will find an article from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency web site. It contains information that everyone should be aware of when it comes to keeping bears safe and protecting property and human life.

Coexisting With Bears

What is human-bear conflict?

Examples of human-bear conflicts include:

- A bear that has attacked or is stalking a human
- A bear that is unafraid of humans or has caused property damage
- A bear that has entered a vehicle, dwelling, or inhabited building
- A bear that is habituated to non-natural foods
- A bear that does not leave an area when humans are present

YOUR Responsibility for Black Bears!

Black bears are one of Tennessee's state treasures and no other animal exemplifies the wilderness experience like them.

They have been called a charismatic mega-fauna and for good reason – everyone from non-hunters, to hunters, to wildlife watchers - we all love bears in our own special ways. For these reasons, it is everyone's responsibility to keep them wild and keep them alive.

The age-old adages: GARBAGE KILLS BEARS and A FED BEAR IS A DEAD BEAR could not be truer. Nationwide bear management experience has clearly shown that bears attracted to human food sources, or that are deliberately fed by humans, have a relatively short life.

The survival rate of bears receiving food from people is likely a fraction of that of wild bears that do not have repeated contact with humans. The deliberate and accidental feeding of bears is socially irresponsible and causes animals to become conditioned and habituated to people.

Bears that habituate to human presence eventually become a threat to human safety. The end result is that such bears are often killed by intolerant and/or fearful landowners or have to be destroyed by the TWRA.

The primary corrective action to this management dilemma is to simply restrict the access bears have to human foods. However, state and federal agencies have confronted significant challenges in bringing about even moderate changes to human behavior to achieve greater safety for humans and bears.

Tennessee residents and visitors can support bears by taking steps to ensure that wild bears remain "wild" by carefully managing sources of human food or garbage that might attract bears.

The wise stewardship of the habitat we share with bears is the joint responsibility of both wildlife managers and the public and will be essential for a viable future for our state treasure, the black bears of Tennessee. Encountering Black Bears

To learn about what to do when encountering a bear while Hiking and Camping visit, bearwise.org.

THINGS TO KNOW:

- While black bears are usually tolerant of humans, they should always be treated as wild animals, whether in residential or back country areas.
- Black bears are rarely aggressive towards people and typically go out of their way to avoid contact, however as human development continues and bear numbers increase, occasional interactions will be unavoidable.
- Black bears are extremely powerful animals whose behaviors can be unpredictable.
- Black bears are very curious animals and this should not be confused with aggression.
- Startled bears will often confront intruders by turning sideways to appear larger, make woofing and teeth clacking sounds, salivate, lay their ears back and slap the ground with their paws. These are warnings for you to leave the area.
- Bears will often stand on their hind legs to get a better view or a better sense of hearing and smell.

Following these simple guidelines will minimize many unnecessary and potentially dangerous encounters.

- Never feed or approach bears!
- If a bear approaches you in the wild, it is probably trying to assess your presence.
- If you see a black bear from a distance, alter your route of travel, return the way you came, or wait until it leaves the area.
- Make your presence known by yelling and shouting at the bear in an attempt to scare it away.
- If approached by a bear, stand your ground, raise your arms to appear larger, yell and throw rocks or sticks until it leaves the area.
- When camping in bear country, keep all food stored in a vehicle and away from tents.
- Never run from a black bear! This will often trigger its natural instinct to chase.
- If a black bear attacks, fight back aggressively and do not play dead! Use pepper spray, sticks, rocks, or anything you can find to defend yourself. If cornered or threatened, bears may slap the ground, "pop" their jaws, or "huff" as a warning. If you see these behaviors, you are too close! Slowly back away while facing the bear at all times.

Notify the TWRA immediately if you witness aggressive behavior by black bears!

Anthony Brown, Chief of Police