

See a Bear - Back Away

Every once in a while, people have face-to-face encounters with black bears. Do not panic. Chances are the bear is just as afraid of you as you are of it.

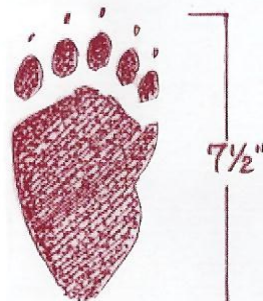
If you do encounter a bear, follow these rules to be safe.

- **Do not run!** - If you see a bear, stay calm.
- **Stand upright** - Slowly wave your arms.
- **Back away** - Slowly back away from the bear.
- **Look for cubs** - Do not come between a mother and her cubs.
- **Fight back** - If attacked, fight back aggressively.



The Bear Facts

- Never feed a bear. It is illegal to create a nuisance by feeding bears.
- Human trash accounted for 70 percent of the bear-human conflicts in one study.
- Bears generally will avoid humans unless they grow accustomed to eating human food or garbage.
- Roughly 85 percent of a black bear's diet is vegetable material.
- Black bears occur in all mountainous areas of New Mexico, from Chama in the north to the Guadalupe and Peloncillo Mountains in the south.
- *Ursus americanus* comes in a variety of colors – cinnamon, black and brown – but all are called “black bears.”
- Grizzly bears no longer occur in New Mexico.
- Adult black bears weigh between 125 and 400 pounds. They are strong enough to rip doors off cars.
- Cubs weigh 10 to 16 ounces at birth and are born while the mother is in the den during the winter.
- Black bears can run up to 35 miles an hour, climb trees and swim well.



Back Paw Track



Front Paw Track

To Bears, Garbage = Food

To a bear, anything that smells like food *is* food. Bears can smell food from over a mile away.



They lick grease off your barbecue grill. They go “dumpster diving” for steak bones, leftover scrambled eggs, burnt brownies, pet food and sour milk cartons.

Trash means trouble for bears and it can mean trouble for homeowners, visitors and campers.

A steady stream of new residents is moving into bear country across the West. People bring their trash with them.

When bears start eating human food, it becomes their food of choice and they teach their cubs about it. If bears find humans are a source of food, they lose their natural fear and can become very aggressive in their search for food.

The Department of Game and Fish will relocate a nuisance bear once or maybe twice, if it's caught foraging in trash cans or near homes. Bears caught a third time, or bears that exhibit aggressive behavior will be destroyed.

No one is happy when a bear has to be killed. **Killing a mother with cubs often means that the cubs will die too.**

