

INTERAGENCY NEWS RELEASE



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Secure Food, Trash and Other Attractants

Keep Tahoe Bears Wild!

LAKE TAHOE, Calif./Nev. – In the summer months, both bears and humans are active in the Lake Tahoe Basin, which means there is a lot to think about when living, visiting, or recreating in the area this time of year.

Food on barbecues and picnic tables brings curious bears into neighborhoods and campgrounds to investigate, making it very important to remember proper food storage at all times. Any attractant left out is accessible to a bear and could result in a food reward, which brings the bear back for future visits and makes that bear think it is okay to approach humans for food. Never leave any food unattended, and if a bear approaches, yell at the bear to try to get it to leave before it is rewarded. If you are unable to make the bear leave, there are resources who can respond and help. On U.S. Forest Service property, an employee of the campground may be able to assist you in moving the bear along and securing attractants. Likewise on state park property, park rangers can assist. If you are in a residential area, call 911 for a trained sheriff to come and move the bear away from the property.

If you have used a barbecue, grease and food bits left on the grill could be a snack to a hungry bear. After you have finished cooking your own food, keep the grill fired up on high for about 10 minutes to burn off any leftovers to make it unattractive to a bear passing by. Make sure you clean up all food and place garbage in a secure wildlife-resistant container or bear box. Do not place food or garbage in your vehicle.

It is not natural or healthy for bears to forage on human food or garbage. This can cause injury to claws, teeth, and digestive systems. Whether intentional or not, it is illegal to feed bears, so do your part to follow the law and not provide access to human food or garbage.

Visitors to home rentals: If the bear locker is full, take your garbage home with you. Please don't leave it next to the locker, bears will get the food reward before the garbage is picked up.

Businesses: Always keep your dumpsters locked, even during the day when employees may be accessing it frequently.

Campers: Bears will approach at all times of the day. Never leave your food or garbage outside of the bear box, except while attended and in use, and follow all campground rules regarding food storage.

Beachgoers: If you bring food to the beach, it must be attended to, and garbage must be thrown away properly. If all bear-resistant garbage containers are full, take your garbage with you so it is not available to bears.

The warm days and cool nights in the Tahoe Basin make us all want to open our windows to let fresh air in. However, as we let fresh air in, we let food smells out. Black bears in the Tahoe Basin know what food may be just inside the screen on your window or door. It is very important to make sure you close all windows when you are either away from a house or asleep at night. Bears know when humans are active or present and will take advantage of those quiet times to enter through a window or door to access a kitchen for easy food. Likewise, it is wise to lock your doors. Some bears know how to open doors and locking them is the only way to keep them from entering a home.

Living and recreating in the Lake Tahoe Basin's bear country is a year-round responsibility. Please do your part to help us keep our bears wild.

Here are more tips you can follow to help us keep Tahoe's bears wild:

- Never feed wildlife.
- Store all garbage in and properly close bear-resistant garbage containers, preferably bear boxes. Inquire with local refuse companies about new bear box incentives and payment programs. Visit southtahoerefuse.com/Bear-Aware.html and/or ndow.org/Nevada_Wildlife/Bear_Logic/ for more information.
- Never leave groceries, animal feed, garbage, or anything scented in vehicles, campsites, or tents.
- Be sure to always lock vehicles and close the windows. Keep in mind eating in the car leaves lingering food odors that attract bears.
- Keep barbecue grills clean and stored in a garage or shed when not in use.
- Keep doors and windows closed and locked when the home is unoccupied.
- Vegetable gardens, compost piles, orchards, and chickens may attract bears. Use electric fences where allowed to keep bears out. Refrain from hanging bird feeders.
- When camping, always store food (including pet food), drinks, toiletries, coolers, cleaned grills, cleaned dishes, cleaning products, and all other scented items in the bear-resistant containers (storage lockers/bear boxes) provided at campsites. Bear-resistant coolers that come equipped with padlock devices should always be locked to meet bear resistant requirements.
- Always place garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters in campgrounds or in bear-resistant containers at campsites (storage lockers/bear boxes), and close and lock after each use.
- Store food in bear-resistant hard-sided food storage canisters while recreating in the backcountry.
- Give wildlife space, especially when they have young with them.

To report human-bear conflicts:

In California, contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at 916-358-2917 or report online using the Wildlife Incident Reporting (WIR) system at apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir.

Non-emergency wildlife interactions in California State Parks can be reported to its public dispatch at (916) 358-1300.

In Nevada, contact Nevada Department of Wildlife at 775-688-BEAR (2327).

If the issue is an immediate threat, call the local sheriff's department or 911.

For more information on peacefully coexisting with bears, visit TahoeBears.org.

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Don't:



Do:

