

## Food Storage Order

It is illegal to feed bears or to intentionally leave food out in an attempt to attract them.

Bears are in a constant search for food, therefore they are often drawn to the scents of our food. Human foods are unhealthy for bears; and they quickly become dependent on an easy food source. As they become more comfortable eating human food, they become at ease with humans, thus leading to bear-human conflicts which endanger bears and people.

**You may not possess, store or leave any food, refuse or any bear attractant unless it is:**

- › Properly stored in a bear-resistant container
- › Suspended at least 10 feet clear of the ground and 4 feet horizontally from any other pole or tree adjacent to the supporting tree
- › Stored in a closed motor vehicle with a hard top
- › You may not bury or burn any food or bear attractant - use bear-resistant receptacles or take it with you.

**Bears are attracted to:**

- › food
- › beverages
- › cooking grease
- › toothpaste
- › toiletries
- › soap
- › game meat
- › carcass part
- › pet food
- › bird seed
- › livestock feed
- › garbage

## Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway Mission Statement

"Our mission is to enhance, encourage, and promote the preservation and protection of the outstanding natural, ecological, cultural and historical resources of the Black Bear Scenic Byway for its residents, inhabitants, visitors and future generations."



For questions or to report problems related to the Florida Black Bear, please contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission office:

**FWC Northeast Region | 1239 S.W. 10th St.  
Ocala, Florida 34471-0323 | 352.732.1225**

**On nights/weekends, call Wildlife Alert:  
888.404.3922**

For questions on the food storage order or the Ocala National Forest, please contact:

**Lake George Ranger District: 352.625.2520  
or Seminole Ranger District: 352.669.3153**



# Welcome to Bear Country



## Respecting & Coexisting with Bears on the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway

*Ursus americanus floridanus*







## Black Bear Facts

- › There are between 2,500 and 3,000 Florida Black Bears located throughout the state from the Everglades to the Panhandle
- › The average adult black bear weighs between 150 and 400 pounds
- › The Florida Black Bears diet typically consists of 80% plants, 15% insects, and 5% animals



- › In Florida, black bears are considered a threatened species
- › Florida Black Bears can pick up a scent from over a mile away
- › Male Florida Black Bears do not always hibernate, but female Florida Black Bears hibernate to prepare for giving birth
- › The typical Florida Black Bear litter includes 2 to 3 cubs
- › Bears are primarily nocturnal, but some can be active during the day
- › Bears typically stay within a certain "home range" throughout their lives. A male black bear's range is 50 to 120 square miles and a female black bear's range is 10 to 25 square miles.

## Tips for Sharing the Forest Peacefully with Black Bears

- › A bear will usually hear you and move away before you are even aware of it - they are not looking for confrontation
- › Bears are shy animals - if they stand on their hind legs it is simply to gain a better view
- › Never offer a bear any food, and cook before sunset to avoid attracting them
- › Change out of clothes you cooked in and wash hands to avoid the smell of food before going to sleep
- › If bears feel threatened they will snap their jaws, swat at the ground, or bluff charge to scare you away
- › If you encounter a bear, do not run away or make any sudden movements, this will only frighten the bear
- › Back away from a bear slowly, avoid direct eye contact, and do not try to play dead
- › Do not try to escape by climbing a tree
- › If a bear attacks, fight back with bare hands, rocks, backpacks, or water bottles

## Vehicle collisions are responsible for 90% of known Florida Black Bear deaths.

Because bears are most active around dusk and dawn, most vehicle-bear collisions occur during these hours. The most frequent location for vehicle-bear collisions is within the Ocala National Forest.

### To avoid collisions with wildlife:

- › Obey all posted speed limits
- › Be alert and drive slower during dusk and dawn hours
- › Drive carefully and watch for wildlife in heavily wooded areas, in areas with low lighting or visibility, and in areas marked with warning signs



**A Florida Black Bear killed by a vehicle collision on State Road 40. Your awareness can help to prevent these tragic deaths.**