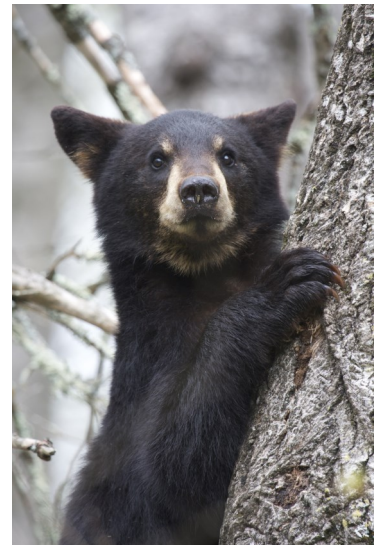




Be BearSmart

Spring has sprung and this means Alberta's bears are out and hungry! During hibernation, bears lose 10-30% or more of their body weight. When they emerge from their dens, bears will eat carrion, insects, deer fawns and moose calves, or search out plant material such as grasses and sedges. You can typically find bears foraging on sunny, south-facing slopes, at the edges of streams or in open wetland meadows this time of year. Sometimes bears will come around your property, worksite or camping area especially if food such as garbage, compost, grains, calves, pet food or deadstock, is available. Therefore, it's VERY IMPORTANT to take extra precaution in bear country during the spring. Some helpful tips include:

- Bears are more active at dusk and dawn. Make noise and carry bear spray when out at these times.
- Look for signs that a bear has been in the area, including tracks, scat, scratched logs and trees or upturned earth. If you see these signs, be calm and cautious and leave the area IMMEDIATELY.
- Keep your children close at all times.
- Keep your dog on leash. Dogs can trigger unwanted and negative encounters with bears.
- Use electric fencing to help protect bee colonies, calving grounds or other farm site areas.
- Clean up spilled grains or other crops where possible, and keep your BBQs clean – bears will smell food residues.
- Pack out all garbage from camp or worksites in airtight containers, and properly dispose of it.
- Be mindful of curves and blind spots on trails that block visibility.
- Keep your work or campsite clean. Store food and cook meals at least 100 metres away from your main living area.
- In some parts of Alberta, black bear baiting is allowed as part of the spring black bear hunt. If camping outside of designated campsites, watch for signs indicating that bear bait is in the area. Call your local Fish and Wildlife office at 310-0000 for more information.



Remember, most bear encounters can be prevented. It's up to us to decide how we will keep ourselves safe, and keep wild bears from becoming habituated, problem bears.

For more information on bears and Alberta BearSmart, visit: <http://aep.alberta.ca/recreation-public-use/alberta-bear-smart/default.aspx>