

Bear Awareness and Caution

Canton's black bear population continues to grow and their presence in our community has become more frequent. Last year there were several incidents where bear entered homes (and cars) in Canton. The Canton Police Department works with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to address these issues, however, residents must be aware of and vigilant about taking steps to avoid these types of encounters.

Most importantly, if a bear is in close proximity to, or gains entry to your house, keep your distance, move farther away from the bear-toward a more secure location, call 911, and make your presence known by yelling or making a loud noise (i.e. air horn). In some cases, bear spray is an effective, non-lethal deterrent designed to stop aggressiveness in bears. For more information on bear spray go to

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/nature/bearspray.htm>

Here are some additional general tips to avoid problems with bears:

1. NEVER feed bears.
2. Take down, clean, and put away birdfeeders by late March. Store the feeders until late fall. Clean up spilled seed from the ground.
3. Store garbage in secure, airtight containers inside a garage or storage area. Double bagging and adding ammonia to cans and bags will reduce odors that attract bears. Periodically clean garbage cans with ammonia to reduce residual odor. Garbage for pickup should be put outside the morning of collection and not the night before.
4. Protect beehives, livestock, and berry bushes from bears with electric fencing.
5. Supervise dogs at all times when outside. Keep dogs on a leash when walking and hiking. A roaming dog might be perceived as a threat to a bear or its cubs.
6. Do not leave pet or bird food outdoors or in easily accessible indoor locations (i.e. screened porch).
7. Keep barbecue grills clean. Store grills inside a garage or shed.
8. Avoid placing meat scraps or sweet foods in compost piles.
9. Secure doors and windows when away from home. (Several of the recent bear entries were made through accessing screened doors or windows).

For more information on this matter, the Canton Police Department encourages citizens to access DEEP's website www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife or call the DEEP Wildlife Division at 860-424-3011 (Mon.-Fri. from 8:30 AM-4:30 PM) or the DEEP's 24-hour dispatch line (860-424-3333) during weekends and non-business hours.

To obtain informational fact sheets and other information about black bears, visit the DEEP's website at www.ct.gov/deep/blackbear or contact the Wildlife Division.