

There has been a bear sited on the Doherty Park Nature Trail. Let's remember that when in the park, we humans, are visitors in the home of many kinds of wildlife. Here are some tips to keep safe gathered from a variety of websites which are sited should you want more information.



From the [NYS Department of Environmental Conservation](#):

Black Bear

The black bear is New York's second largest land mammal; only the moose is larger... Black bears are omnivorous, eating grasses, berries, fruit, nuts, seeds, insects, grubs, and carrion, as well as human sources of food like corn, honey, bird seed, trash, and pet food when available...Once thought to inhabit only large forests, over the past two decades, black bears have been expanding their range throughout New York and can now be found in a variety of habitats including developed areas...One of the more common encounters occurs when bears obtain food from human sources.

Feeding of Black Bears is Prohibited in New York

DEC has adopted a rule prohibiting the deliberate and intentional feeding of black bears. The incidental, indirect feeding of black bears also is unlawful ...

Facts About Bear Behavior

Bears are Curious - They spend a great deal of time exploring for food, and this can bring them close to humans.

Bears are Intelligent - Bears learn from experience. If an activity results in food, they will repeat that activity. If an encounter with a human is negative, they learn to avoid humans. Also if an encounter with a human doesn't result in a reward (food), they will not have any reason to have contact with humans.

Feeding Bears Creates "Bad" Bears - When bears learn to obtain food from humans, they can become bold and aggressive.

Never deliberately feed bears and avoid unintentionally feeding bears. If you avoid attracting and rewarding bears, you, your property (and our parks) and the bears will all benefit.

Problems with Black Bears

Typically these negative encounters fall into one of the following categories:

- Bears raiding bird feeders at residences and second homes;
- Bears raiding garbage at residences, second homes and restaurants;

From [Cooperative Extension, Washington State University](#)

When encountering a black bear while hiking, the circumstances have changed. You have invaded the bear's territory and active deterrence should only be a last resort. Here are a few ways to keep safe while hiking...:

- Hike in groups ...
- Make noise – bear bells, clapping, singing, and general chit-chat will notify the bear of your presence allowing them ample opportunity to run away
- Carry deterrent – bear spray is very effective in close range situations

If you do happen to come into close contact with a black bear, here are a few suggestions to keep the situation from getting out of hand:

- Avoid direct eye contact – this is a challenge to the bear
- Stay calm, and identify yourself as human by waving arms and talking to the bear – don't run (bears can out run you!)
- If you can, slowly walk back in the direction you came from. Never take your eyes off the bear and don't turn your back.
- If you cannot walk away, and the bear is not fleeing, try to scare the bear by yelling and clapping your hands. Throwing objects may also be useful.

If the bear charges use your deterrent (bear spray-see next section). If you have no deterrent and the bear attacks, fight back. Use what ever you can (hands feet, sharp objects) and direct them at the bears face. As a last resort, rollover on your stomach protecting your face with your hands and play dead.

From [The Center for Wildlife Information](#):

Bear Spray plays an important part in reducing attacks during human encounters with bears. It is an effective deterrent of North American bears, but it can be adversely affected by wind, rain, temperature, and even how close the bear is when it charges.

When purchasing bear spray it is important to remember that pepper sprays (personal defense sprays) are not the same as bear spray. ...

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates bear sprays pursuant to an Act of Congress. Look for the EPA registration and establishment numbers, usually found at the bottom of the front label; only bear sprays will have this information. Also, bear spray labels will clearly refer to bears, and state it is a bear deterrent, bear repellent, or for stopping charging or attacking bears.