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# TUXEDO PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT

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## ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

One of the many beauties of Tuxedo Park is that it is surrounded by mountains, lakes and forests. With that comes the likelihood of encountering many different animals. Sightings of bears, deer, fox, raccoons, bobcats, coyotes, skunks and snakes are most often harmless but not rare. By following these safety tips, you and your loved ones can help protect yourself from these encounters.

### Bears

#### Factors Leading to Human-Bear Conflicts

The simple answer is food! Bears are more likely to seek out human food sources in the spring and the summer. During these times, natural food sources may be scarce, particularly during periods of drought.

**The leading cause of bear complaints in New York is bears getting into residential garbage and birdfeeders.**

In New York State, people and black bears often find themselves living nearby one another. Bears can obtain all of the nourishment they need from the forest, but they are intelligent and opportunistic animals. They will find and consume the easiest food they can access.

Bears must often cross roads and pass through developed areas to find the varied habitat types that produce their seasonal food sources. They often find human foods readily accessible along the way if homeowners do not take necessary precautions. Not every bear that passes through a developed area is a 'problem bear'. However, available human food sources can quickly turn them into one.

#### Keeping Humans and Bears Safe

Frequently, humans unknowingly create potential food sources for bears. This may attract them into close proximity to residential areas and subsequently result in human-bear conflicts. Most conflict scenarios in New York can be resolved or minimized by removing or adequately securing whatever served to attract the bear.

Conflicts are often associated with activities not intended to attract bears, such as:

- feeding birds

- improperly storing garbage
- leaving messy grills and pet food outdoors

Bears are opportunistic feeders and will remember where they find easy food, then return to that location frequently. Intentional feeding of bears or repeated access to human foods without negative consequence can lead bears to become habituated (lose their fear of humans) and to become food-conditioned (actively seek out human foods). Habituated and food-conditioned bears may become bolder in their efforts, the longer they are successfully able to access human foods. They will eventually become involved in human-bear conflicts. Food-conditioned bears are significantly more likely to be hit by cars or shot illegally by people who mistakenly perceive a threat to their own safety.

Report a bear problem. Contact your regional DEC wildlife office to report black bear-related damage. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html>

## Never Feed Black Bears

Intentional feeding of black bears is illegal and creates human-bear conflicts. Incidental, indirect feeding of black bears also is unlawful after a written warning has been issued by the DEC. For details, read the [Black Bear Feeding Regulations](#)

## Reducing Bear Attractants at Home

Good housekeeping is a requirement wherever black bears are found. Simple sanitation measures can be the key to avoid attracting bears. Take responsibility for your safety and encourage your neighbors to do the same!

- **Remove bird feeders by April 1.** New York's black bears begin emerging from their winter dens in mid to late March. Bird feed such as suet and seeds are a very strong attraction for bears, even if they can't reach them. Read more about [bears and bird feeders](#).
- **Garbage is extremely attractive to bears! It should always be kept in sealed garbage cans inside a sturdy building like a garage or shed.** Anything with an odor can attract a bear. Note: Burning garbage is illegal and may increase its attractiveness to bears.

Bear resistant trash cans are used all over the country to eliminate human-bear conflicts.

- If you frequently find bears foraging in your garbage cans, despite proper storage, consider using a bear-resistant trash container. Bear-resistant containers (30 gals) can be purchased at:  
**Pequannock Feed & Pet Supply**  
**85 Marshall Hill Road**  
**West Milford, New Jersey**  
**973-728-5151**
- **Mask garbage odors** with ammonia-soaked rags.
- **If you have curbside garbage pickup-** take out trash just before your scheduled pickup. Do not put garbage at the curb the night before.
- Do not place meat or bones in compost piles.

- **Remove the grease can from grills after every use.** Turn the grill on "High" for several minutes after you are done cooking to burn residual odors off the grill.
- **Do not place food outside to attract wildlife.** Any food items used to attract birds, squirrels, or other wildlife will also attract bears.
- **Do not feed pets outside.** Leftover food or even an empty dish can attract a bear.
- **Do not operate refrigerators or freezers outside or on porches.** Bears can smell what is inside.
- **Electric Fencing** is an effective tool for keeping bears out of apiaries, chicken coops, compost, and gardens.

DEC's [Black Bear Response Manual \(PDF\)](#) outlines the response to various scenarios in which bears interact with people.

**Remember: Bears are attracted by scents and many things smell like potential bear food. Remove the food attractant and you'll remove the bear.**

## **More about Reducing Human-Bear Conflicts:**

- [Bear Resistant Canisters](#) - What are bear resistant canisters? How and why are they used?
- [Black Bear Encounters](#) - What to do if you encounter a black bear.
- [Bears and Bird Feeders](#) - Reduce bear attractants by taking down your bird feeder.

# **Rabid Animals**

## **Signs of Rabid Animal**

Animals that have rabies tend to show behavior atypical of their species. They can act aggressively and show signs of "neurological impairment" ranging from "vocalization, circling and paralysis," health services says on its website. Rabid animals also will appear "drunk" and have difficulty walking. But not all animals display signs of rabies, so it is recommended that people avoid contact with wild animals and strays. Many times, typically nocturnal animals infected with rabies will be seen during the day but that alone does not mean the animal is rabid.

## **What to do if you encounter an animal that shows signs of rabies?**

One of the best things a person can do when they suspect an animal is rabid is to call the Police Department. Approaching the animal could result in a scratch or bite that could spread the disease. Vaccinate pets against rabies and avoid petting or touching wild animals, strays or pets that are not yours.

Pets that are not vaccinated and bit by a rabid animal must be put down or quarantined for six months. If a pet has been bitten by a suspected rabid animal, the vet should be called immediately. Pets that are already vaccinated still need to be taken to the vet to be vaccinated again.

For people bitten or scratched by a rabid animal, the bite or scratch must be immediately cleaned with warm and soapy water. A doctor should be seen right away and any animal bites need to be reported to the local health department.

The animal should be contained, if possible, to prevent it from biting another person and so it can be tested for rabies.

## **Resources for Animal Encounters, Bats and Rabies Information**

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/89522.html>

### **Rabies:**

[https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/rabies/fact\\_sheet.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/rabies/fact_sheet.htm)

<https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/education/index.html>

### **Bats:**

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/rabies/docs/bigbatbook.pdf>

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/batsofny.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/batsofny.pdf)

# Snake Encounters

There are two (2) species of venomous snakes in New York State. The Timber Rattlesnake and the Copperhead. There are many other species of snakes in our area that are not venomous. The Garter Snake, Black Rat Snake, Northern Water Snake, Milk Snake and the Hognose Snake are the most common snakes in our area. Some species of snakes are often confused with venomous snakes which is why it is recommended that you avoid all snakes.

## **What do I do if you encounter a snake?**

If you have an encounter with a snake, give it the right-of-way. Do not attempt to kill the snake, just move out of the snake's way. If you encounter a snake in the housing area or in your yard, **call the police desk at 351-4741** and follow our instructions.

## **Mitigating the Hazards of a snake**

Here are some tips to help mitigate the hazard of incurring a venomous snake bite.

- Use the buddy system when walking or running on trails near wooded areas.
- Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots, thick socks and long loose pants, especially when venturing off of heavily used trails.
- Tap ahead of you with a walking stick before entering an area where you can't see your feet. Snakes will try to avoid you if given enough warning.
- When possible, step on logs and rocks, never over them as you may surprise a sheltering snake.
- Avoid walking through dense brush or blackberry thickets.
- Be careful when stepping over a doorstep. Snakes like to crawl along the edge of buildings where they are protected on one side.
- Avoid wandering around in the dark. If you are out at night, always use a flashlight, because most snakes are active on warm nights.
- Never try to pick up a snake, even if it is dead. A snake's reflexes can still cause the snake to strike up to an hour after it has died.
- If you have an encounter with a snake, give it the right-of-way. Do not attempt to kill the snake, just move out of the snake's way.

## **Resources for Snakes and Snake Encounters:**

[https://www.army.mil/article/235084/the\\_dos\\_and\\_donts\\_of\\_snake\\_safety](https://www.army.mil/article/235084/the_dos_and_donts_of_snake_safety)

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/snakes.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/snakes.pdf)

<https://www.land.com/lifestyle/recreation/snake-survival-tips/>