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Should you happen upon a black bear

By SUMMER ALLEN

PROVIDENCE, RI – The recent sightings of black bears in Cranston, North Kingstown, and East Greenwich have worried some residents in these communities. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has provided some tips for co-existing with black bears.

Black bears are usually shy and afraid of people and are generally nocturnal. If you see a bear you can let it pass or scare it from afar with loud noises. If you happen to surprise a bear up close, walk away slowly while facing the bear but avoid eye contact.

Black bears have a keen sense of smell and are smart, so if they find a backyard food source like birdseed, barbeque grease, pet food, a compost pile, or garbage they will probably return. The best way to prevent bears from making your backyard their favorite diner is to take away these food sources.

Bears are scared of dogs, but if you live in an area with sightings it's best to keep your dog leashed so it doesn't chase after the bear. Black bear populations are increasing in neighboring states so sightings in Rhode Island will probably increase.

Sightings can be reported to the DEM Division of Law Enforcement at 222-3070.

Do you have insight or expertise on this topic? Please email us, we'd like to hear from you. news@ripr.org (mailto:news@ripr.org) .

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