

Wildlife Safety Tip – Bear Awareness

The Northern Lancaster County Regional Police has received reports of a black bears roaming in northeastern Clay Township. The bears were observed in a wooded area near Klinefeltersville Road. One of the animals was later trapped and removed from the area in a relocation effort. The following information was extracted from the PA Game Commission Website at:

<http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt>

What to do if you meet a bear - Bear attacks are extremely rare, especially considering how often people encounter them. In most cases, a bear will detect you first and leave the area long before you'll ever see it. However, if you do meet a bear before it's had time to leave, here are some suggestions. But remember, every bear encounter is different.

- Stay calm— If you see a bear and it hasn't seen you, leave the area calmly. While moving away, talk to help the bear discover your presence.
- Get back— If you have a close encounter, back away slowly while facing the bear. Avoid direct eye contact, which a bear may perceive as a threat. Give the bear plenty of room to escape. Wild bears rarely attack people unless they feel threatened or provoked. If you're on a trail, step off on the downhill side and slowly leave the area. Don't climb or run from it. But be alert, there could be other cubs. Never climb a tree to escape, because sows chase their cubs up trees when they detect danger. If you climb a tree, a sow may interpret that as an attempt to get her cubs. Stay on the ground and don't make any sudden movements. Running may prompt the bear to give chase; nobody can outrun a bear.
- Pay attention— Bears will use all of their senses to figure out what you are. If they recognize you as a person, some may stand upright or move closer in their efforts to detect odors in the air currents. Don't consider this a sign of aggression. Once a bear identifies you, it will usually leave. However, if the bear stays, it may pop its jaws as a warning sign that it's uncomfortable. That's a sign for you to leave. Back away and slowly leave the area. If the jaw popping warning is ignored, some bears have been known to bluff charge to within a few feet. If this occurs, wave your arms wildly and shout at the bear.
- Fight back— Again, black bear attacks are extremely rare. However, they have occurred. If a bear attacks, fight back. Bears have been driven away when people have fought back with rocks, sticks, binoculars and even their bare hands.