



BEAR AWARE, CRESTONE

Keeping our community and our wildlife safe

Black bears are an important part of living in the San Luis Valley. Seeing a bear can be exciting, but it is also a reminder that we all have a role in keeping both our community and our wildlife safe.

The good news is that most bear conflicts are preventable.

When bears repeatedly find food around homes and businesses, they quickly learn that people are an easy source of meals. Once a bear becomes food-conditioned, it can lose its natural fear of humans. At that point, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) may have no choice but to relocate the bear or, in severe cases, euthanize it.

The best way to protect bears is to never reward them with food in the first place.

🐾 Six Simple Ways to Help Keep Bears Wild

- 🐾 **Secure your garbage and recycling.** Store trash indoors or in a bear-resistant container until the morning of collection whenever possible.
- 🐾 **Never intentionally feed bears.** Food left outdoors, including pet food, bird seed, livestock feed, and unsecured garbage, can attract bears.
- 🐾 **Remove bird feeders when bears are active.** Bird seed is a high-calorie food source that bears quickly learn to seek out.
- 🐾 **Clean outdoor cooking equipment.** Thoroughly clean grills, smokers, and outdoor kitchens after every use.
- 🐾 **Keep neighbors informed.** If bears are active in your neighborhood, let others know so everyone can remove attractants.
- 🐾 **Report concerning bear activity to CPW.** Reporting sightings and conflicts helps wildlife managers track bear activity and respond appropriately.

🐾 A Community Effort

Every unsecured trash can, dumpster, bird feeder, or pet food bowl can attract bears into neighborhoods. Even one food source can encourage a bear to return repeatedly, affecting an entire neighborhood.

Please help by:

- ◆ Waiting until the morning of collection to place trash curbside whenever possible.
- ◆ Keeping commercial dumpsters closed and latched.

- ◆ If you operate a short-term rental, educating your guests on proper garbage storage and bear safety during their stay. Working together as a community is the most effective way to keep bears wild and reduce conflicts.

🐾 Looking Ahead

The Town is exploring opportunities to reduce human-bear conflicts through education and improved bear-resistant infrastructure. Colorado Parks and Wildlife offers grant funding that may help communities invest in bear-resistant dumpsters, residential bear-proofing initiatives, and other long-term solutions that protect both residents and wildlife.

🐾 If You Encounter a Bear

Most bears simply want to move through the area and avoid people.

- ◆ Give the bear plenty of space.
- ◆ Never approach a bear or attempt to take close photographs.
- ◆ Keep pets under control.
- ◆ Report bears that are repeatedly accessing trash, entering neighborhoods, or displaying unusually bold behavior to Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

🐾 Learn More

For additional information, bear safety tips, and reporting resources, visit:

- ◆ **BearWise, Keep Bears Out:** <https://bearwise.org/keep-bears-out/>
- ◆ **BearWise Community Resources:** <https://bearwise.org/community-resources/>
- ◆ **BearWise Educational Materials:** <https://bearwise.org/bearwise-store/Fact-Sheets-Checklists-Posters-c50913670>
- ◆ **Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Living with Bears:** <https://cpw.state.co.us/living-bears>
- ◆ **Report a Bear Sighting:** <https://cpw.state.co.us/report-sighting>
- ◆ **Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Grants:** <https://cpw.state.co.us/human-bear-conflict-reduction-grants>

A fed bear is often a dead bear.

By securing attractants today, we are protecting our neighbors, our property, and the bears that call this area home.