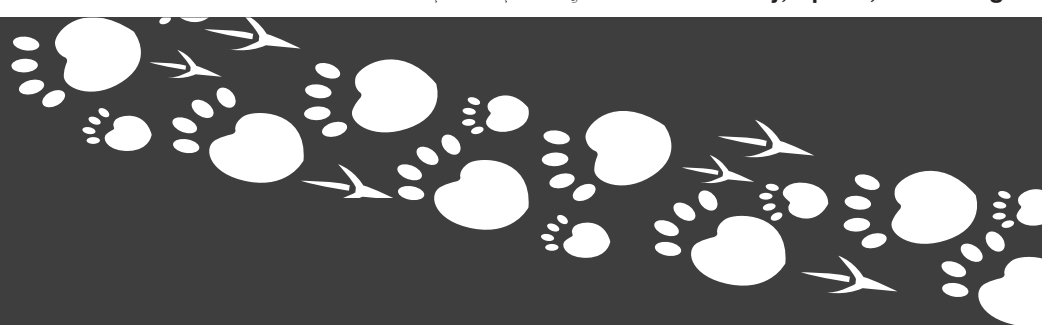


OUTDOORS



Spring may bring black bear sightings in Georgia

Sightings of Georgia's native black bears typically begin to pick up in the spring. These sightings are normal, and are to be expected across our state, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division.

Where have the bears been? Hibernating! Many Georgia black bears, especially females with young cubs, have spent the last several months, from about Thanksgiving to now, in a state of dormancy (biologists refer to this as "torpor"). During this annual phase of a bear's life cycle, normal processes like eating, drinking, and other natural functions are on "sleep mode" while they endure the cold temperatures and winter weather conditions. When hibernating, bears experience a reduced heart rate, respiration rate, and body temperature, and they survive by burning fat reserves built up throughout late summer and autumn.

"As you can imagine, bears are hungry and ready to find food when they leave those dens. This search for food can sometimes put them a little too close to people," says Adam Hammond, state bear biologist with the Wildlife Resources Division. "What can we

do to help if bears get too close? Become 'BearWise.' When we become 'BearWise' and learn to live responsibly with bears, it helps protect and keep bears wild, and allows us to better manage our neighborhoods and businesses."

What is BearWise? It is an education program developed by bear biologists from each of the 15 state wildlife agencies that make up the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA). The program, anchored by the website www.bearwise.org, offers citizens specific, detailed, and high-quality information, starting with the Six BearWise Basics:

- Never feed or approach bears. Feeding bears (intentionally or unintentionally) trains them to approach homes and people for more food. Bears will defend themselves if a person gets too close, so don't risk your safety and theirs!
- Secure food, garbage, and recycling. Food and food odors attract bears so don't reward them with easily available food or garbage.
- Remove bird feeders when bears are active. Birdseed and other grains have a high calorie content making them very

attractive to bears. The best way to avoid conflicts with bears is to remove feeders.

- Never leave pet food out. Feed outdoor pets portion sizes that will be completely eaten during each meal and then remove leftover food and food bowl. Securely store these foods so nothing is available to bears.

- Clean and store grills. After you use an outdoor grill, clean it thoroughly and make sure that all grease and fat is removed. Store cleaned grills and smokers in a secure area that keeps bears out.

- Let neighbors know. Share news with your friends and neighbors about recent bear activity and how to avoid bear conflicts. Bears have adapted to living near people; are you willing to adapt to living near bears?

"Let's be proactive and ensure there is nothing around our home or business that will attract bears and serve as a 'free lunch,'" says Hammond. "Providing bears a meal might initially seem harmless, but bears that continue to have access to human-provided foods often become dependent upon people for food, sometimes leading to destructive and potentially harmful behavior, which can eventually lead

to their own demise. We want to avoid this cycle."

The black bear is a symbol of Georgia's natural diversity, the only bear found in the state and a conservation success story. Though now considered the most common bear in North America, the species was nearly eradicated from Georgia in the 1930s due to unregulated market hunting, illegal harvest - including the killing of bears as "vermin," and large-scale habitat loss. Sound wildlife management practices have restored Georgia's black bears to a thriving population estimated at 4,100 bears statewide.

Black bears may legally be taken during the hunting season, which occurs each fall in Georgia in certain areas (<https://georgiawildlife.com/hunting/hunter-resources>). However, the taking of bears during any other time of the year, or the taking of bears illegally during the hunting season is called poaching. Prevent poaching of bears (by email, phone or in person) by reporting any illegal activity. Visit <http://gadnrle.org/ranger-hotline> for more information.

For more information on how to live responsibly with bears, visit www.bearwise.org.



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Ted Will named Executive Director of Resources

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) announced the appointment of Ted Will to Assistant Director. Will is a longtime employee of the division, most recently serving as chief of the game management section, and having served previously as assistant chief of both fisheries and game management.

"I am confident in Ted's ability to fulfill his new role and foster advancement in Georgia's

Wildlife Conservation." said Wildlife Resources Division Director, Rusty Garrison. "I look forward to working closely with him as Assistant Director."

As Assistant Director, Will's responsibilities will include serving as the principal wildlife and fisheries resource management advisor to the Director, supervising the development and implementation of the agency's strategic plan, coordinating legislative initiatives, and supervising

all administrative and personnel functions for the Division's workforce.

Will holds a master's in wildlife ecology from Mississippi State University, though he is a Georgia Bulldog at heart, having earned his bachelor's degree in forest resources from the University of Georgia. Will is an avid hunter and angler, and currently resides in Bogart with his wife and two children.

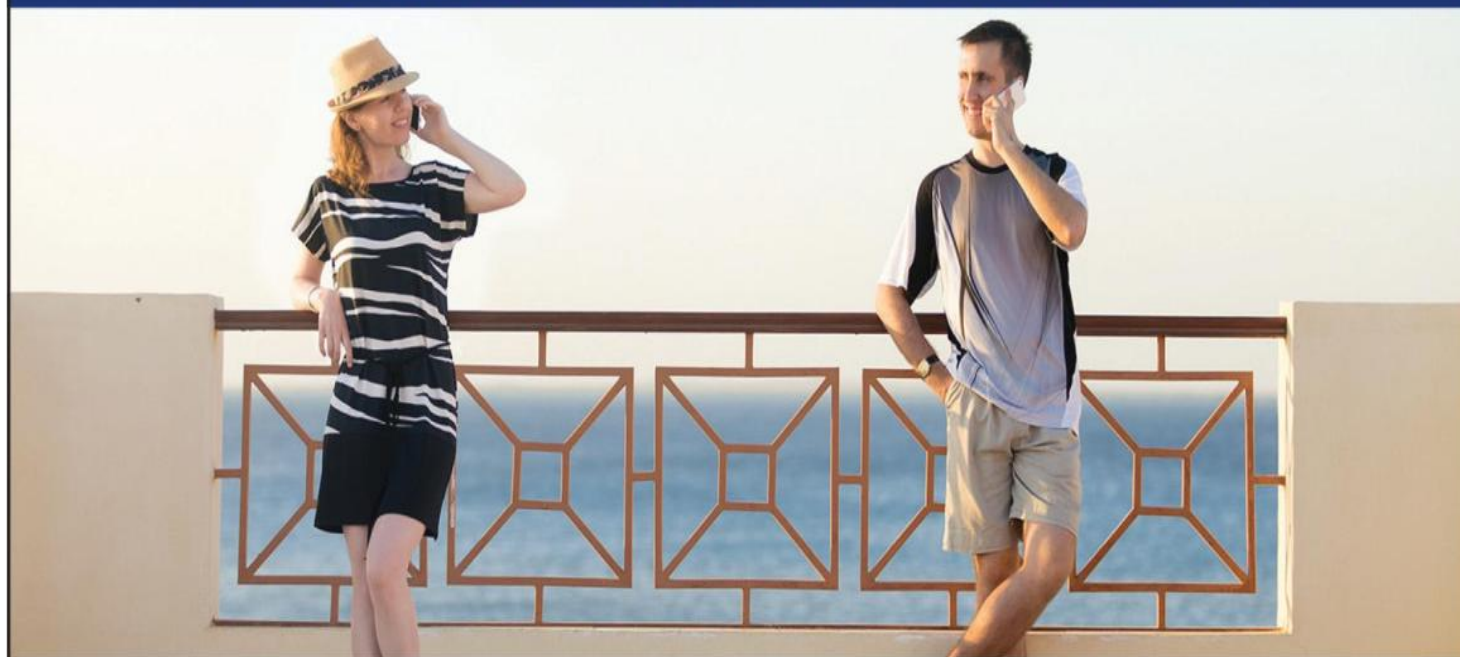
For more information about the Georgia Wildlife



Ted Will

Resources Division, visit www.georgiawildlife.com.

CORONAVIRUS HELPFUL TIPS FROM THE CDC



stay away

Put distance between yourself and other people (minimum of 6 feet). This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

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