BEAR AWARE PLAYBOOK



HIKING



RIDING+ RUNNING



HUNTING



FISHING



CAMPING



GARDENING +BACKYARD



RANCHING +FARMING

MONTANA IS BEAR COUNTRY

BLACK BEAR

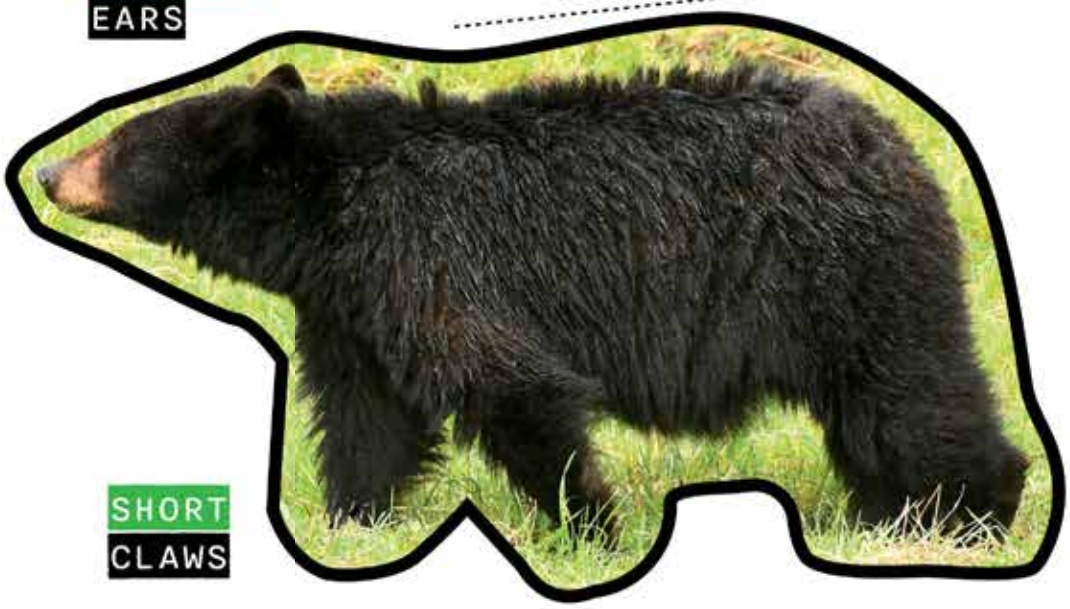




STRAIGHT FACE PROFILE

TALL POINTED EARS

RUMP HIGHER THAN SHOULDERS



SHORT CLAWS

- shorter claws 1.5”
- toes more separated

GRIZZLY BEAR





DISHED FACE PROFILE

SHORT ROUNDED EARS

SHOULDER HUMP

RUMP LOWER THAN SHOULDERS



LONG CLAWS

- longer claws 2”-4”
- toes closer together

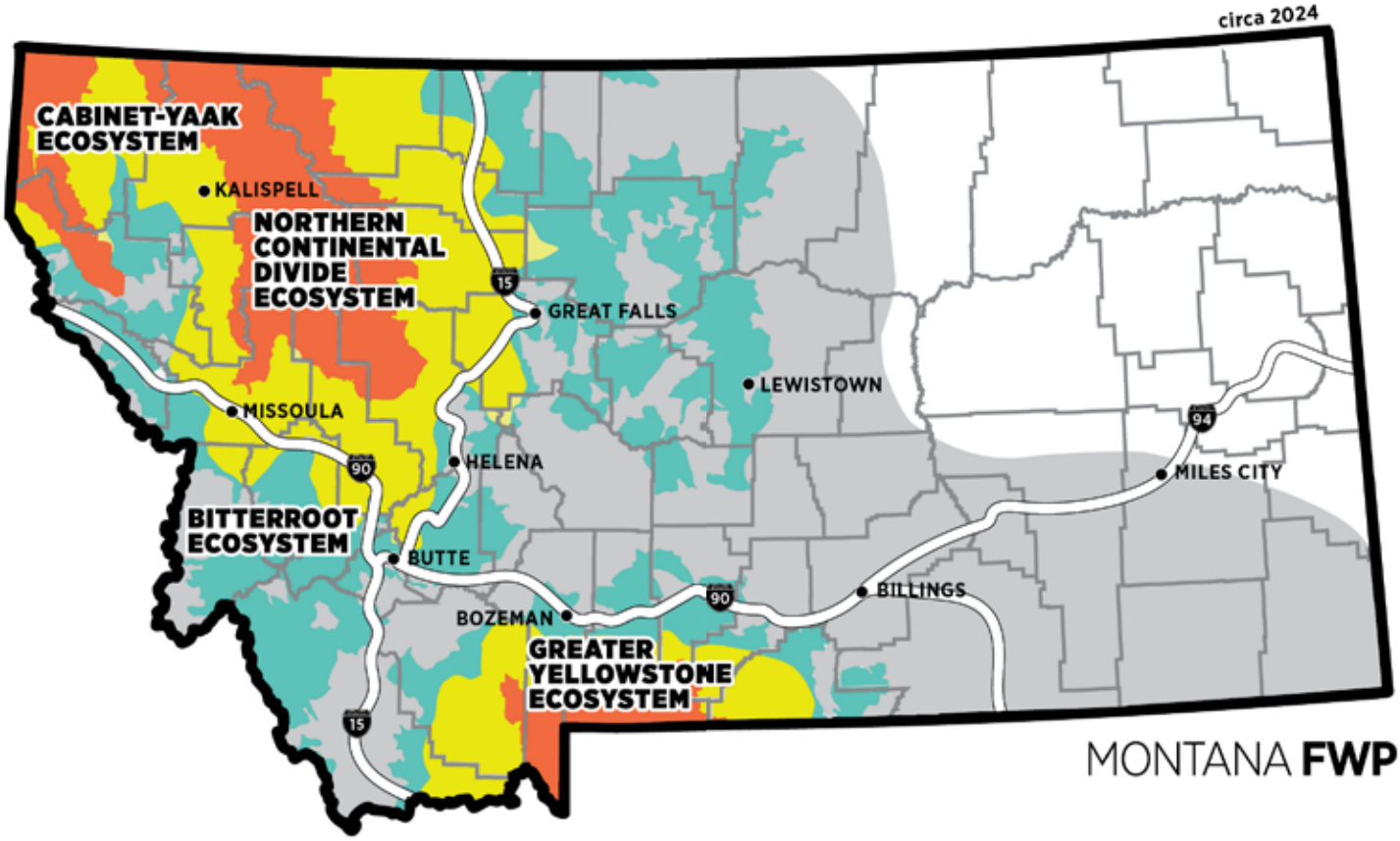
BEARS IN MONTANA

EXTENT OF GRIZZLY SIGHTINGS

ESTIMATED GRIZZLY RANGE

GRIZZLY RECOVERY ZONES

BE BEAR AWARE



Fifty years ago, few grizzly bears lived outside of the recovery zones, but conservation measures have allowed the populations to grow and expand. It is advisable to be prepared to encounter bears throughout western Montana, especially in mountainous areas and along wooded rivers and streams.





HIKING

FWP

VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE WHILE HIKING



CARRY BEAR SPRAY in an accessible place and know how to use it.

STAY ALERT AND LOOK FOR BEAR ACTIVITY, especially where visibility or hearing is limited (woods, bushy areas, streams).

TRAVEL IN A GROUP and keep members together (especially kids).

MAKE NOISE whenever possible to avoid surprising a bear, especially where visibility or hearing is limited.

AVOID traveling at night, dawn, or dusk.

AVOID carcass sites and scavenger concentrations.







VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE WHEN RIDING OR RUNNING

RIDING+RUNNING

FWP



SLOW DOWN AND LOOK AHEAD, especially in areas of dense vegetation, berry patches, and around blind corners.



ANYONE TRAVELING QUICKLY can be at high risk of surprising a bear.

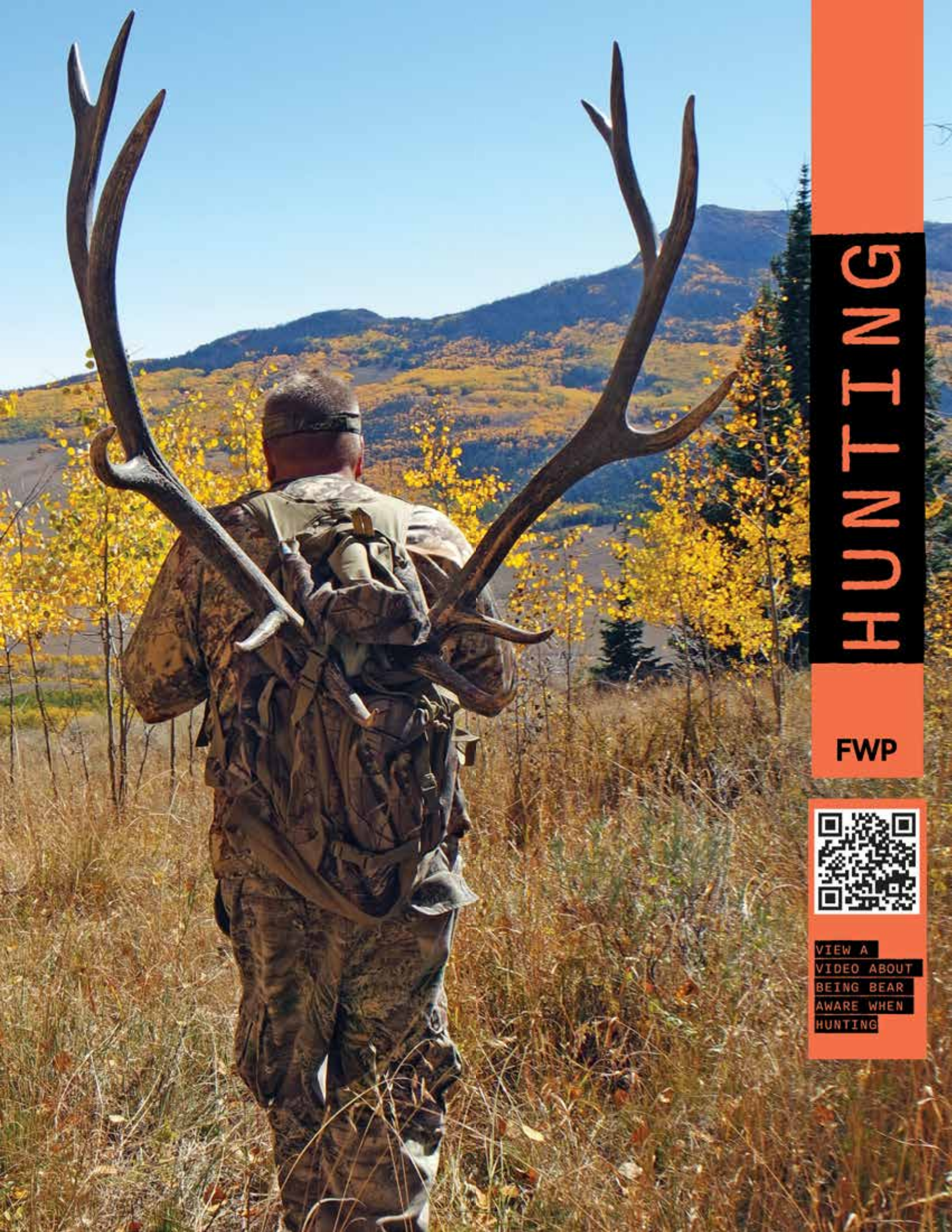


MAKE NOISE! Let bears hear you, especially where visibility is limited.

RIDE OR RUN IN DAYLIGHT AND IN GROUPS.







HUNTING

FWP

VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE WHEN HUNTING



PACK MEAT OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

IF A BEAR HAS CLAIMED YOUR ANIMAL, do not attempt to haze or frighten the bear away. Report any lost game to FWP.



AVOID CUTTING UP A CARCASS AT DUSK OR NIGHT. If you kill an animal at dusk, be prepared to cut up the carcass in the dark by carrying strong headlamps. Be extra vigilant and watch for bears.

PROPERLY HANG MEAT until you can retrieve your downed game. If you must leave your animal, return to the site carefully. Hang meat from a "bear pole" 10' from the ground and 4' from the sides. Leave it in an area that is easily observable from a distance.

DRAG GUT PILES INTO OPEN AREAS. Move any part of the animal at least 200 yards from any roads or trails as soon as possible.

BIRD HUNTERS should be extra careful while walking in and along areas of brush, especially along waterways. Grizzly bears use thick cover for day beds. Walk with the wind, carry bear spray, and keep a close eye on hunting dogs. If there is abundant fresh sign of grizzly bears in the area, consider bird hunting somewhere else.





FISHING

FWP

VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE WHEN FISHING





MAKE LOTS OF NOISE.

The sound of the creek can disguise your movements. Make lots of noise when moving from spot to spot.

DO NOT CLEAN FISH IN CAMP. Pop the air bladder and dispose of the fish entrails in the stream or lake. Do not clean fish on picnic tables or leave guts on the shore.

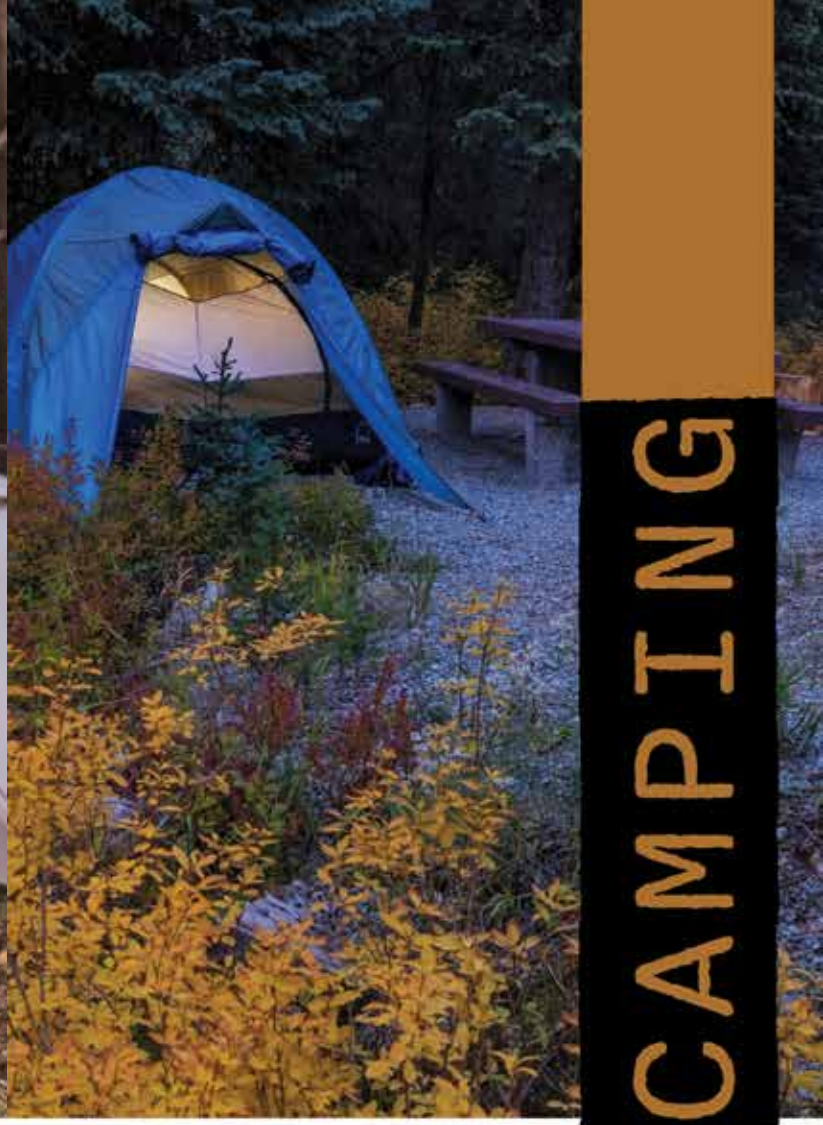


CARRY YOUR SELF-DEFENSE SOMEWHERE EASY TO REACH, like a hip belt or chest harness; do not just throw it in your backpack.



KEEP YOUR BELONGINGS, LIKE A BACKPACK, WITH YOU ALWAYS. Do not set it down and move to another spot.





CAMPING

FWP

VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE WHEN CAR, BIKE OR TENT CAMPING







FOOD STORAGE OPTIONS:

- Bear boxes
- Hard-sided vehicles (car, truck, RV). Avoid leaving attractants in vehicles for extended periods of time (backcountry trips). Make sure windows are up and doors locked.
- IGBC-certified bear-resistant containers
- Temporary electric fencing
- Hang food from a “bear pole” 10′ from the ground and 4′ from the sides.

KEEP FOOD AND ANYTHING WITH A SCENT OUT OF TENTS.

DISPOSE OF GARBAGE IN BEAR RESISTANT BINS;

otherwise, take it with you and dispose of it properly elsewhere. Do not bury or burn garbage.

Follow local land management agency food storage orders and properly store unattended food and anything else with a scent.









VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE IN YOUR BACKYARD

GARDENING+BACKYARD

FWP



GARBAGE

- Store garbage in an IGBC-certified bear-resistant bin in a secure location.
- Always keep garbage and recycling in a secured building.
- Put garbage and recycling out only on collection day.

CHICKENS + SMALL LIVESTOCK

- Keep protected in a hard-sided structure at night.
- Follow guidelines within the electic fence PDF.



PET FOOD, BIRD FEEDERS, AND BIRD SEED, OR BBQS.

If feeding pets outside, feed only during the day and clean up spilled or uneaten food.

- Avoid feeding birds during active bear season. Consider using bird houses, bird baths, and native vegetation instead.
- Clean BBQs thoroughly after use.



FRUIT-BEARING TREES AND BUSHES, GARDENS, AND COMPOST PILES

- Pick fruit immediately once it is ripe.
- Store all picked fruits and vegetables inside a secure building.
- Consider installing an electric fence around fruit trees and gardens.



VIEW A VIDEO ABOUT BEING BEAR AWARE WHEN RANCHING OR FARMING

RANCHING+FARMING

This handout highlights a variety of grizzly bear conflict reduction techniques—while not every option fits everyone's operation, your local bear specialist can help you choose the best approach for your needs.

FWP

MANAGEMENT OF GRAIN, FEED, AND ATTRACTANTS

- Clean up grain spills promptly and dispose of old grain through sanitation services or burning away from populated areas.
- Avoid leaving out pet food or livestock feed.
- Securely store chemicals like pesticides and herbicides.
- Use hard-sided buildings with locked doors and deterrents such as protruding screws or unwelcome mats.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

- Dispose of carcasses and afterbirth using sanitation services or in an electrified boneyard.
- Small and young livestock can be protected with electrified night pens.
- Keep vulnerable livestock away from dense brush to reduce risk from bears.
- Place creep feeders and mineral blocks in open areas for better visibility.
- Consider shifting calving seasons to times when bears are less active.
- Employ range-riders and guard dogs to help protect livestock.

CARCASS MANAGEMENT

- Dispose of carcasses in an electrified boneyard or away from inhabited areas.
- Use electric fencing around bone piles until they can be removed.

AVOIDING NEGATIVE ENCOUNTERS WITH GRIZZLY BEARS

- Maintain shelterbelts to prevent overgrowth and bear bedding areas.
- Do not allow bears to linger in your yard, as this may lead to habituation.
- Inform neighbors if a bear is observed nearby.





JOIN US FOR A BEAR AWARE EVENT!

Find details on annual bear aware events here:



5 IMPORTANT TIPS WHEN USING BEAR SPRAY



REPORT CONFLICTS AND ENCOUNTERS TO A LOCAL FWP BEAR SPECIALIST:

A bear sighting isn't necessary to report unless it shows aggressive behavior toward people, livestock, or pets, or damages property.

IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL 9-1-1


MONTANA
FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
Learn all about bears in Montana
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE NEAREST MONTANA FWP OFFICE:
HEADQUARTERS Helena 406.444.2535
REGION 1 Kalispell 406.752.5501
REGION 2 Missoula 406.542.5500
REGION 3 Bozeman 406.577.7900
REGION 4 Great Falls 406.454.5840
REGION 5 Billings 406.247.2940
REGION 6 Glasgow 406.228.3700
REGION 7 Miles City 406.234.0900
THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.