

## CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDE FOR CALLS REGARDING BLACK BEARS

The following information is a guide to assist in responding to or directing calls for service related to black bears in Virginia.

### Emergency

- If it is a public safety emergency, refer the caller to 911.
  - Public safety emergency includes human-bear contact, bear in human-occupied building/residence, or other bear encounter where imminent danger is perceived.

### Non-Emergency

- If it is a non-emergency call for advice/assistance from the public, refer the caller to the **Wildlife Conflict Helpline: 1-855-571-9003**; hours of operation are 8 am – 4:30 pm.
  - The Conflict Helpline will advise the caller with the appropriate steps and or regulations that apply to the issue.
- You can also provide the caller with the following resources:
  - DWR web page for more information:  
<https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/bear/>
  - BearWise web page:  
<https://bearwise.org/>

### SPECIFIC REPORTED CONDITIONS

#### INJURED BEAR

- If injury is determined non-life threatening, remind the caller that wild animals encounter numerous obstacles in their daily lives and are remarkably resilient. Minor to moderate injuries, wounds, or suspected problems are often overcome with no intervention. On occasion, the injuries are too severe and the animal is humanely dispatched to stop the animal from continuing to suffer. Capturing and treating or fixing injuries in a wild animal can be very traumatic on the animal (i.e. being captured, held in captivity, etc.) and are often not feasible due to limited space and resources for large animals at permitted wildlife rehabilitation centers or hospitals.
- Advise caller:
  - To leave the animal alone.
  - Never attempt to approach, capture, handle, or feed the animal.
  - If able to do so from a safe distance, take pictures of the animal and the injured area.



- Document the extent and effect of the injury on the bear.
  - Is the bear able to walk?
  - Is the bear able to climb?
  - Is the bear able to forage/feed?
- If it is Monday – Friday (8am-4:30pm) and the animal has been observed for more than 12 consecutive hours, call the Wildlife Conflict Helpline to report the injured bear (1-855-571-9003).
  - The Wildlife Conflict Helpline will contact DWR for further response.
- For a seriously injured bear contact DWR Dispatch or your local DWR contact.
  - Serious injuries would include: significant neurological impairment, severe bleeding, emaciation, open fractures, partial or complete paralysis resulting in inability to stand, significant lameness, or impaired ability to ambulate.

### **BEAR CUBS**

- Remind the caller that mother bears will often leave the cub at a specific location (typically the base of a tree, or a sheltered location) to go forage. Female bears may go up to two miles away from the location where they left the cub.
- Advise caller:
  - To leave the cub(s) alone.
  - Do not attempt to approach, feed, pick up, or handle the cubs.
  - Remove pets and other animals from the area.
  - Leave the area and keep other people, dogs and other pets away from the area.
  - Often the mother bear will return.
  - Call the Wildlife Conflict Helpline 1-855-571-9003, if the cub is observed:
    - Jan – Mar, for more than 12 consecutive hours in the same location,
    - April, for more than 24 consecutive hours in the same location,
    - May, for more than 48 consecutive hours in the same location,
    - June, for more than 96, consecutive hours in the same location
    - Request caller to take photos and send to the Wildlife Conflict Helpline.
  - The Wildlife Conflict Helpline will contact DWR for further response.



Quick Guide for Cubs of the Year		
Time	Length of Observation	Notes
Jan-Mar	12 consecutive hours Same location	Monitor, do not feed, keep people and pets away
April	24 consecutive hours Same location	Monitor, do not feed, keep people and pets away
May	48 consecutive hours Same location	Monitor, do not feed, keep people and pets away
June or later	96 consecutive hours Same location	Monitor, do not feed, keep people and pets away

### **UNDERWEIGHT YEARLINGS**

- Remind the caller that yearlings naturally disperse from their mothers during spring and summer and during that time it is common for the yearlings to be thin as they are learning to fend for themselves.
- Advise caller:
  - To leave the animal alone.
  - Do not attempt to approach, feed, pick up, or handle the bear.
  - Remove pets from the area.
  - Remove all food attractants from the area.
- If it is Monday – Friday (8 am-4:30 pm) and the animal is observed for more than 48 consecutive hours in the same location, call the Wildlife Conflict Helpline to report the underweight yearling (1-855-571-9003).
  - The Wildlife Conflict Helpline will contact DWR for further response.
  - Inform the caller that photographs are helpful. If they have photographs or can take photos, please share those with the Wildlife Conflict Helpline.

## **SUSPECT MANGE BEAR**

- Refer the caller to the Wildlife Conflict Helpline to report a bear suspected to be infected with mange 1-855-571-9003.
  - Inform the caller that photographs are helpful. If they have photographs or can take photos, please have them do so and share with the Wildlife Conflict Helpline. Wildlife Conflict Helpline staff will contact DWR for further response.
- Advise caller to remove or secure any attractants/food resources on their property to minimize the congregation of animals and potential disease transmission.
- Advise callers not to attempt to feed or treat mange-affected bears.

## **Human Safety when Dealing with a Potential Mange-Affected Bear**

- Never feed any wild animal per Virginia Law: 4VAC 15-40-281, 4VAC 15-4-282.
- Never attempt to approach or handle any wild animal.
- Mange is transmissible to humans and pets.
- Items that may have had contact with a mange-affected bear should be either discarded, washed and scrubbed with a disinfectant, machine washed and dried, or placed in a freezer overnight.
- When mange-affected wildlife, especially bears, are found in an area frequented by humans or domestic pets (yard, barn, garage, etc.), any areas where the animal spent a significant amount of time should be sprayed with Raid® Ant & Roach Killer 26 (active ingredients are Imiprothrin and Cypermethrin), a product containing at least 25% DEET, or covered with diatomaceous earth. Make certain to follow the instructions on the label for use and be aware that some products may be toxic to other animals.
  - Diatomaceous earth can be purchased at local farm supply stores.
  - If using diatomaceous earth (DE), wear gloves and a mask to avoid inhalation. Apply in an even, thin layer using a shaker can or a dusting applicator. A 4.4 pound container of DE should cover about 1,800 square feet. To coat a surface more evenly, mix ¼ cup DE with 1 gallon of water and distribute evenly. If rain is predicted in the near future the product will wash away and reapplication will be required.



## INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION ON MANGE AND BLACK BEARS

### **Mange is transmissible to humans, dogs, and livestock**

- A. Wear gloves if touching infested bear carcass or items that may have come into contact with the bear.
  - i. Hands and arms should be washed thoroughly with soap.
  - ii. Human infestations with mange typically last 10-14 days and usually resolve on their own.
  - iii. Symptoms include intense itching and irritation and the development of small red bumps or papules on the forearm, lower chest, abdomen, thighs, and any areas directly exposed to the mites.
  - iv. The disease may run a prolonged course in young children or in individuals with compromised immune systems.
  - v. Contact your medical professional or veterinarian if you or your pets have been in contact with a mange infested black bear and have a subsequent suspected mange infestation.
  - vi. Contaminated clothing should be washed and machine-dried with heat or placed in a freezer overnight to kill mites.

### **Feeding or attracting animals to food sites helps to spread mange**

- A. Discontinue any feeding of birds, outside cats or other pets, etc. if mange bears have been reported in the area.
- B. Congregating animals at a feeding station will increase the spread of the disease from infested to healthy individuals because mites are able to survive for up to 13 days in the absence of a mammalian host (mite survival is temperature dependent).

### **Mite survival in the environment or on the carcass**

- A. Mites can survive up to 13 days at 40°F and 6 – 8 days at 64 – 86°F
  - a. Mites may become inactive at temperatures less than 32° (carcasses should be buried, disposed of in a landfill, or incinerated).
- B. When bears are removed from an area frequented by humans or domestic pets (yard, barn, garage, etc.), any areas where the bear spent a significant amount of time before or after death should be sprayed with Raid®, a product containing at least 25% DEET, or covered with diatomaceous earth.
- C. If the bear was reported to seek shelter in a shed, garage, etc., items that may have had contact with the bear should be discarded, washed and scrubbed with a disinfectant, machine washed and dried, or placed in a freezer overnight.

### Site Disinfection

- A. When bears are removed from an area frequented by humans or domestic pets (yard, barn, garage, etc.), any areas where the bear spent a significant amount of time before or after death should be sprayed with Raid® Ant & Roach Killer 26 (active ingredients are Imiprothrin and Cypermethrin) , a product containing at least 25% DEET, or covered with diatomaceous earth.
  - a. If using diatomaceous earth (DE), wear gloves and a mask to avoid inhalation. Apply in an even, thin layer using a shaker can or a dusting applicator. A 4.4 pound container of DE should cover about 1,800 square feet. To coat a surface more evenly, mix ¼ cup DE with 1 gallon of water and distribute evenly. If rain is predicted in the near future the product will wash away and reapplication will be required.

DWR Mange brochure: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Black-Bear-Mange-Brochure.pdf>