



**Lincoln County
Sheriff's Office**
Sheriff Adam D. Shanks

225 W. Olive Street
Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-4277

TIP OF THE WEEK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 13, 2026

Contact: Sheriff Adam Shanks
541-265-0652
lcsheriff@co.lincoln.or.us

ENCOUNTERING BEARS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Recently, there have been an increase in the number of bear encounters in our communities. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) urges Oregonians to respect wildlife and do their part to ensure that wildlife, including black bears, and people coexist. A bear's strongest sense is smell. This means everything from trash cans to grill drippings can bring them to your property.

Bears also have a great memory when it comes to food. They remember where they have found food before, including trash. Female bears will also pass this knowledge down to their young. Intentionally or accidentally feeding bears can negatively affect multiple generations of bears.

Feeding bears (intentionally or accidentally) will not only bring unwanted visitors to your community, but can also be harmful. Wildlife have specialized diets that coincide with seasonal changes. Food provided by humans can negatively impact their health, lead to conflict and safety issues with people, and in some cases, have fatal consequences for the animals. For the sake of Oregon's wildlife and their health, do not feed them.

Living responsibly with black bears is possible and it's up to everyone to do their part to keep people safe and bears wild. Follow these tips:

- **Never feed or approach bears.** Feeding bears, intentionally or unintentionally, will cause them to associate people with food. *It is also against the law in Oregon (ORS 496.730).*
- **Secure food, garbage and recycling.** Please ensure that your trash and dumpsters are secure from bears by using commercially available garbage cans, metal bars over dumpsters, fully enclosed trash storage, or by storing garbage inside. Take trash out immediately before pick-up, not the night before. Wash

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garbage cans with bleach to reduce their smell. Food waste is one of the strongest attractants for black bears and allowing bears access could qualify as illegal feeding if appropriate steps are not taken to prevent the issue.

- **Remove bird feeders in bear habitat when bears are active.** Birds have plenty of naturally available food sources during all seasons which is why some species migrate in winter. Bears can be food rewarded from bird seed and suet in feeders leading to habituation and food conditioning, destroyed birdfeeders, and public safety issues.
- **Never leave pet food outdoors.** This practice can easily attract bears and other wildlife, putting your pets and wildlife at risk.
- **Clean and store grills** after each use.
- **Alert neighbors and ODFW to unusual bear activity** (continued sightings during daylight hours, lack of wariness around people or pets, etc.).

Share these tips with your neighbors, friends and family. A community effort is vital to preventing problems with bears and situations like the one in Cottage Grove. One person who feeds or attracts bears, intentionally or not, can pose a risk to everyone in the neighborhood.

Find out more about living responsibly with black bears at <https://myodfw.com/articles/help-keep-bears-wild>."

For more information and tips visit our website at www.lincolncountysheriff.net and like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.

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