

## Bear Presentation Take Aways

The bear information session held at the Perth Library on Sept 17, 2017 was very well attended with over forty people present. Trevor Horvatin, wildlife technician with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, made an excellent presentation. There were many questions and people commented that they enjoyed the presentation and learned a lot. The key take away points are:

- 1 . Bear attacks are extremely unlikely to happen. You're more likely to die of a bee sting or a lightning strike.
2. Bears need to eat about 20,000 calories per day in order to survive winter hibernation. They are therefore active about 20 hours per day and they are concentrating on finding food. They are omnivores, eating mostly berries, insects and nuts.
3. Being familiar with bear behaviour is important. Bears will often display defensive behaviour, which can be misinterpreted as aggressive behaviour. Bears displaying defensive behaviour will avoid eye contact, shake their head from side to side and may even perform a short one or two step bluff charge. They want you to back off, so it is best to do so calmly and quietly.
4. In the event of a close encounter with a black bear, it is best to stand your ground. Make loud noises to drive the bear off. People out hiking may want to carry a good whistle and/or bear spray. Do not climb a tree or run away. If, in the extremely unlikely event that you are attacked, do not play dead. Fight back.
5. Juvenile bears in particular can become habituated to people by the availability of food sources. If bears find food, such as garbage, bird feeders, food meant for dogs or other animals, they will keep coming back. Therefore, eliminating attractants is the most important thing we as a community can do. All of us should not feed birds or other animals during the spring and summer months especially. We should keep our garbage locked up until it's time to dispose of it. We should not compost and if we do, we should not put in meats or fruits. We all need to aware that bears will go about their business mostly unseen and will not be at risk of becoming problem bears. Bee keepers should surround their hives with electric fencing. When out walking your dog, it is recommended that he or she be on a leash.

| Summary prepared by Cathy Kari