



GAME AND FISH NEWS

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Arizona Game and Fish Department

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Bear activity on the increase statewide

Public should be vigilant, don't feed or provide water for bears



Arizona Game and Fish Department wildlife managers have seen an increase of roaming bear activity statewide in their quest for easy sources of food and water. Officers found this cache of food and water when seeking a habituated bear near Pinetop on Sunday.

PHOENIX— The Arizona Game and Fish Department reminds everyone to be

Bear Aware, following separate incidents where habituated bears became a public safety threat and needed to be humanely euthanized under department policy.

On Monday, AZGFD wildlife managers removed a sub-adult male bear from the north Phoenix neighborhood of Anthem that had previously been relocated from Prescott. On Sunday, officers in the White Mountains were forced to remove a habituated female bear feeding on large piles of food and water left by a local resident.

The same female bear had been captured in Pinetop in June, 2017 and was relocated to a pre-approved release site near the Mogollon Rim, approximately 55 miles away. In May, it returned to Pinetop with two cubs. A day after euthanizing the bear, neighbors told AZGFD about the bear's two cubs, which were safely located, evaluated by a local veterinarian and transferred to Bearizona in Williams.

AZGFD is keeping an eye on other nuisance bears in Show Low, Yarnell, Pinetop, Mesa and along the southern border. The common thread among each of the incidents is bears looking for an easy meal and water in populated areas.

"When a bear becomes habituated to people for food and water, it can become a real threat to public safety," AZGFD Wildlife Manager Shawn Wagner said.

"People feeding wildlife think they're helping wildlife, but they're putting everyone's safety at risk -- whether it's a neighbor out walking their pet or a family out for a jog. When a bear doesn't get the meal it's become accustomed to, it can attack whoever is around."

Under department's human-wildlife conflict policy, wildlife officers consider the bear's behavior, age, sex and whether it's a threat to human safety when determining when to relocate or lethally remove a bear.

The department spends considerable time and resources each year to remove or relocate habituated bears to minimize the risk to people. However, relocating a bear doesn't always solve the problem. Approximately half of all bears relocated will return to where they were captured, no matter how great the distance.

Extended drought conditions also make it more difficult for bears to find natural

food and water sources, increasing the chances that bears will visit neighborhoods. Bears become habituated to human-related food sources and quickly lose their fear of humans. As such, people should remove bird seed, hummingbird feeders, pet food and trash from their homes.

People should never intentionally feed wildlife.

Do your part to keep bears from posing a threat and needing to be removed:

- Keep all trash inside a secured area until collection day. If that's not possible, keep food waste in a bag in the freezer and place those in the trash as close to collection time as possible.
- If you'll be out of town or are a weekend visitor, ask a neighbor to place your trash out on collection day.
- Take bird feeders down at night.
- Keep pet food inside or remove all uneaten food.

For a brochure on living with bears and other wildlife, visit any AZGFD office or visit www.azgfd.com/Wildlife/LivingWith.

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