



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Black bear observed in Jo Daviess and Carroll counties; residents encouraged to remove food sources to avoid encounters

Bear sightings in Illinois are rare but not unprecedented

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is reminding residents of Jo Daviess and Carroll counties that a black bear has been observed by multiple landowners over the past several weeks in the vicinity of Mississippi Palisades State Park and, in recent days, frequenting private residences south and east of Galena.

Seeing a bear may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and their presence should not necessarily be perceived as a threat to human safety. Nevertheless, it's important to remember bears are wild animals and should be treated as such.

IDNR encourages residents throughout Jo Daviess and Carroll counties to avoid direct encounters with this bear and to check their property for food sources that may attract it to their residences. Through learned behavior, bears often investigate anything that may yield a food reward, such as bird feeders, barbeque grills, garbage cans, and dog food. Once a bear finds a food source, it will likely return, so prevention is key.

Human conflicts with bears can be prevented by following these [Bear Wise basics](#) and by using the [BearWise checklist](#):

- Never feed or approach bears.
- Secure food, garbage, and recycling.
- Remove bird feeders where bears are active.
- Avoid leaving pet food outdoors.
- Thoroughly clean and store grills and smokers after each use.
- Alert neighbors to bear activity.

People who encounter this bear should give it sufficient space while backing away slowly and quietly. If encounters with this animal persist after cleaning up food sources, contact Chris Jacques, IDNR's large carnivore program manager, at chris.jacques@illinois.gov or an [IDNR district wildlife biologist](#) for advice.

For more information on how to live responsibly with bears visit IDNR's [Wildlife Illinois](#) website.

Go online to [report a bear sighting to IDNR](#).

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