BEARS AND COTTAGERS

As the weather warms up and people start to spend more time outside and around their cottages, so do Black Bears. At this time of year, Black Bears are especially apparent, as the small amount of natural food available in the bush draws them into areas where they can find a meal, and in Spring, the lack of foliage in the woods makes them more visible.

However, with the knowledge that at this time of year, bears are almost entirely motivated by trying to put on weight for the next winter, we can easily eliminate most negative interactions with these animals.

By keeping your property free of attractants such as bird feeders, garbage and compost, dirty BBQ grease traps and so on, bears will not waste time on your property and will move on to the next easy meal. If entire communities work together to avoid attracting bears, almost all potential negative interactions with bears can be eliminated.

If you see a bear on your property, the safest thing to do is go back inside and give it some space. If you feel comfortable, and if it is safe to do so, scaring it off by shouting, banging pots and pans or spraying it with a hose, can all be effective ways to teach bears that your yard is not a comfortable place to be.

If you encounter a bear on a trail, give it plenty of space and you should not have any problems. Try to back away from the area while keeping an eye on the bear. If the bear aproaches you, try to make yourself look larger, make some noise and show the bear that is should not mess with you. Making some noise when you walk, keeping dogs on leash and carrying bear spray can all be effective preventive measures as well. Never turn and run, try to climb a tree or swim away from a bear – the average bear is far better at these activities than even the fastest humans.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.ontario.ca/bearwise>.

To report a bear sighting or for specific advice, you can call MNRF Bearwise hotline at 1-866-514-BEAR (2327). In an emergency situation where there is an immediate public safety risk, call 911.

Trevor Horvatin - Wildlife Technician – MNRF – Kemptville District Office