

# The North Shore is Bear Country



Photo: Tony Joyce



## Best Practices for biking in bear habitat

Black bears are the only bear species living in the North Shore's dense, vast forests.

Black bears are naturally wary of humans and expel a lot of energy attempting to avoid us. Their instinct is to hide in trees from threats. As intelligent animals, they are adapting to increased human activity in their environment. Bears may become more tolerant of our presence and this should not be mistaken for boldness or aggression.

Biking is a high impact, high speed, quiet activity that increases your chances of a surprise encounter with a bear. When recreating in wildlife habitat, we have a responsibility to reduce our impact and learn how to respond in an encounter.

Following these best practices will help to reduce risk for people and bears.



## Avoidance Strategies



- If you see a bear in the distance and it does not notice you, quietly turn around and take an alternate route
- Respect all warnings, including bear-in-area notices and trail closures
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings. Stay on the trail
- Avoid wearing headphones
- Use your voice to alert wildlife that humans are close by. Use a loud, firm voice and call out often. Be louder on narrow, low visibility trails or when biking by rivers and creeks
- Travel in groups; avoid biking alone
- Tell someone your trip plan
- Go slower on blind corners and low visibility trails
- Learn to recognize and be alert for natural bear foods, bear tracks and bear scat. Avoid or leave areas with an abundance of fresh bear sign or natural bear foods
- Never leave food unattended
- Avoid biking between dusk and dawn when wildlife is most active

Off-leash dogs pressure bears to defend themselves and are the cause of many negative encounters between people and bears. We advise keeping your dog at home to reduce risk and impact on wildlife.



If you encounter a bear, dismount, put your bike between you and the bear. Speak calmly to the bear as you slowly back away. Show you are not a threat. Give the bear an exit. If a black bear is curious, they may approach you. Do not run or pedal away as this could trigger a chase. Stand your ground and use a loud, firm voice. Raise your arms or bike. Be prepared to use your bear spray. Leave your phone alone; never approach bears for photographs!



Photo: Norm Lee



Bear spray is just as important as a helmet. Always carry bear spray and know how to use it. Bear spray is your best defense in a surprise encounter. Wear it on a chest or hip holster for immediate access as you may be separated from your pack or bike.

Report bear sightings  
northshorebears.com 604 317 4911

