



WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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News Release

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HUNTERS URGED TO CARRY BEAR SPRAY AND USE CAUTION WHEN HUNTING IN GRIZZLY BEAR COUNTRY

CODY- The Wyoming Game and Fish Department urges hunters and other backcountry users to carry bear spray for their own safety, and to help reduce the number of grizzly bears killed by hunters in self defense this fall.

“With the most recent conservative estimate of 601 grizzlies in the Yellowstone Ecosystem, we anticipate that there will be hunter-bear encounters and that some bears will be killed as a result,” said Dennie Hammer, Cody Information and Education Specialist for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Hammer has worked for over 20 years to reduce the number of hunter related grizzly bear deaths. “As hunters, we do exactly the opposite of what we would have most recreationists do to avoid bear encounters—you might say that hunters are pre-disposed to conflicts,” Hammer said.

Hunters typically move quietly, camouflage their bodies, mask their human scent, are active at dawn and dusk, and use a variety of calls to mimic bear prey. “All of these behaviors make hunters successful, but at the same time, there is an inherent risk of attracting bears or bumping into one,” Hammer said.

To improve the odds of minimizing conflicts, Hammer suggests the following;

- Carry a bear deterrent and know how to use it. Many aggressive bears have been deterred through the use of bear spray and all hunters should carry it where it can be reached and know how and when to use it.
- Hunters should hunt with a partner and keep relatively close together.

- When using calls, pay close attention to your surroundings, not just the area within which the hunted species is located.
- Continuously watch for bear sign which includes tracks, scats, and diggings and for the bears themselves.
- Retrieve game animals as quickly as possible and watch for approaching bears when field dressing and quartering.
- If game must be left on the ground overnight, separate the carcass from the entrails when field dressing and place the carcass in an area that can be viewed from a distance.
- When retrieving game, make lots of noise; use binoculars to search the area for bears and to determine if the game has been disturbed by bears prior to walking in on the carcass.
- Bears often daybed near food sources.
- If a bear has claimed your carcass, leave the scene and report the incident to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

“Human safety has to be a person's number one concern in any bear encounter,” Hammer said. “Having said that, I encourage all hunters to consider carrying and, when appropriate, using bear spray,” Hammer added. “Firearms have been used successfully in self-defense situations and using one as a deterrent is a personal choice.”

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