

## **Black Bears**

Black bears are the largest wild mammal in North Carolina. Today with the state's increasing human population, interactions with black bears are rising across North Carolina. A black bear's strongest sense is smell. They can pick up a scent from over a mile away!

**What kind of damage is caused by black bears?** Food and food odors attract bears, so they frequently get into trash containers, birdfeeders, pet food and livestock enclosures.

**Can a WCA write a depredation permit?** No, wildlife damage control agents are not authorized to write depredation permits for big game species. Depredation permits for black bears can only be issued by [district biologists](#). The individual incurring the property damage can have a WCA listed as a second party on the depredation permit.

**Can bears be relocated?** No, black bears cannot be relocated.

**What can I do with a sick or injured black bear?** If you receive a report of a severely injured or dead black bear, please contact the NC Wildlife Helpline at 866-318-2401 (Mon.-Fri. 8 am-5 pm) or the Wildlife Enforcement Division at 800-622-7132 (outside of business hours). If a bear has a non-life-threatening injury, advise individual to leave the bear alone and let nature take its course.

**Are there safety concerns?** Yes. Bears are instinctively wary of people but can become habituated to humans when they find food sources around houses. Bears may try and stand their ground if they are in the process of eating and sows can defensively protect cubs. Never feed, approach, surround or corner a bear.

### **Non-lethal Options:**

- Education
  - See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife document](#) for general ways to prevent damage from wildlife.
  - [Bearwise.org](#) was created by the southeastern 15 states' wildlife agencies specifically to help the public prevent conflicts with black bears.
- Exclusion
  - Electric fencing can be used to exclude bears and prevent structural damage to livestock enclosures and apiaries (bee hives). See image below for an example of electric fencing.
  - [Bear-resistant trash containers](#) can be purchased to prevent bears from having access to garbage.

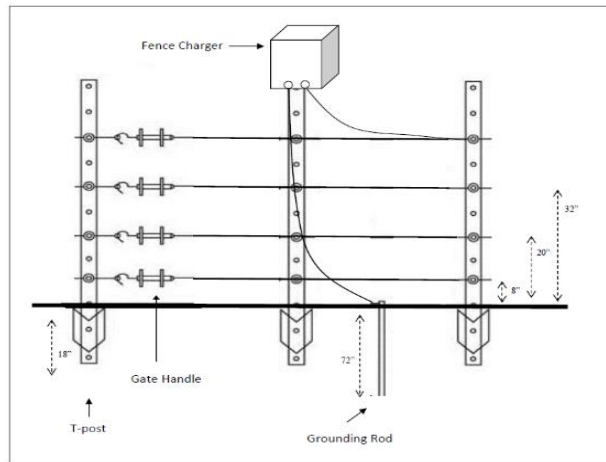


Figure 1. Diagram of a 3 strand electric fence system, modified design from MAAREC Publication 4.10 March 2004.

### Lethal Options:

- Depredation permits can only be issued through district biologists.
  - The individual incurring the property damage can have a WCA listed as a second party on the depredation permit
- Bears can be taken during the established hunting season with a valid hunting license and big game harvest report card. A landowner is not required to purchase a license to hunt on his/her own property.