

## Black bear shot, killed in Florence neighborhood

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

FLORENCE, Ore. — An Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division trooper shot and killed a male black bear Tuesday morning in a Florence-area neighborhood after responding to a report of the bear breaking down a door and entering a home.

According to the homeowner, the bear broke into his home and approached him inside his garage Monday in addition to attempting to break into his home again yesterday morning.

Upon arrival, the trooper spotted the bear in a tree across the street from the complainant's residence. The trooper armed himself with a shotgun and asked the complainant to go inside his home. As the trooper was standing in the middle of the residential street near his pickup, the bear came down the tree and ran toward the trooper to a distance of about ten feet where it stopped. The bear continued to walk toward the trooper to a distance of approximately three feet, when it was shot.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and OSP are currently looking into options to remove the two other young bears that were with the bear when he broke into the complainant's home yesterday. One of these bears was seen in the same area Tuesday, headed toward the Siuslaw Elementary School playground, which was evacuated at approximately 2:30 p.m. for the safety of the students.

In weeks prior to the shooting, officials had discovered a bear den nearby the school and had been in discussions with the faculty to educate students and teachers on how to avoid bear interactions.

These bears are among a number of animals in the Florence area that have been fed by humans. ODFW and OSP have been working continuously to minimize risks and find solutions for the numerous bear-human conflicts in the Florence area.

“There's a serious feeding problem in Florence that we've been battling for decades,” said Doug Cottam, ODFW District Wildlife Biologist. “We are constantly trying to educate residents about not feeding, petting or encouraging bears on to their property. But until they stop, we will continue to have problems. None of us in the department or OSP want to have to kill any more bears.”

Bears can become habituated to people and they can become conditioned to eating food provided by humans. An overabundance of food can result in more bears than what you would expect in natural conditions and can prevent them from entering their normal winter sleep. Once habituated, they can lose their natural fear of humans and may do things like break-in to cars and homes for food, and then must be trapped and/or killed to protect public safety. While Oregon has never had a documented bear attack on a person, in other states that

have, these attacks tend to come from "habituated" animals.

"This is absolutely terrible that this bear had to be shot, but it learned these behaviors from people feeding it and treating it like a pet. With the school in the area and the dangerous habituation that this animal displayed, the last course of action for the trooper was to shoot the bear. For the sake of the animals as well as local residents, please stop feeding the bears!" implored Cottam.

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