



**Spring weather is coming, and with it some very hungry bears**  
*Keep Tahoe Bears Wild!*

*LAKE TAHOE, Calif./Nev., April 1, 2025* – The snow is already melting in the Lake Tahoe region and the end of winter gives way to a busy spring for wildlife in the area. Bears that have been in winter dens are emerging, and they are hungry!

In the fall, black bears went through hyperphagia (pronounced hi-per-fay-jee-uh), which is an increase in feeding activity (consuming about 25,000 calories a day) driven by their need to bulk up before winter. Over the course of the season, bear bodies utilize those fat stores during hibernation when food is scarce. Come spring, their body mass will have naturally decreased and, as a result, bears will be on the lookout for easy food sources to help rebuild those fat reserves. Bears will instinctively move to elevations where they can find fresh grasses and other plants. This search can bring them into neighborhoods.

As bears make their way through the area, please be vigilant about cleaning up and securing bear attractants. The Tahoe Interagency Bear Team (TIBT) emphasizes that properly disposing of and securing garbage is one of the most important things you can do to help keep Tahoe bears wild. Always remove food and trash from vehicles, keep windows closed and ensure doors are locked. Bears can open unlocked car doors and even enter through sunroofs to reach the smallest attractants like a stick of gum. Also lock doors and windows on buildings to prevent bear break-ins. The national BearWise program offers [Six At-Home BearWise Basics](#) you can take to live responsibly in bear country.

### **Individual Actions Can Impact an Entire Ecosystem**

Bears play an important role in Lake Tahoe's ecosystem. Allowing bears access to human food and garbage is detrimental to natural processes in the region. Bears help spread berry seeds through their scat, transport pollen, clean up animals that died during the winter, eat insects, and provide other essential functions of nature.

When bears find human food and garbage, bird seed, pet food, coolers or other sources of unnatural food, the Tahoe Basin loses the benefits bears offer through natural processes. Unnatural food sources can impact their overall health by damaging and rotting their teeth and their ability to stay wild. In fact, bears will unknowingly eat indigestible items from human trash like foil, paper products, plastics and metal that can damage their internal systems and even lead to death. If these items do make it through their digestive system, they leave it behind in their scat rather than the native seeds and healthy fertilizer needed to grow the next generation of plant life.

## Call the Experts

Spring is also the time of year that residents or visitors may see a bear they believe looks unhealthy, sick or orphaned. Bear health concerns should be reported to TIBT's wildlife professionals at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW). These agencies have the training, expertise, and veterinary resources to assess the bear's condition and transport it for care, if necessary. Healthy bears mean a healthy Lake Tahoe ecosystem, but it takes everyone's cooperation to contribute to the success of both.

For great tips about living responsibly with bears, visit [tahoebears.org](http://tahoebears.org) and [bearwise.org](http://bearwise.org).

The bottom line is that Lake Tahoe is bear country. It's up to everyone, including those living in, visiting, or recreating in the Tahoe Basin to practice good stewardship habits by always securing food, trash, and other scented items. Good habits will help ensure Tahoe bears remain healthy and wild.

To report human-bear conflicts:

- In California, contact the CDFW at 916-358-2917 or report online using the Wildlife Incident Reporting (WIR) system at [apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir](http://apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir).
- Non-emergency wildlife interactions in California State Parks can be reported to their public dispatch at 916-358-1300.
- In Nevada, contact the NDOW at 775-688-BEAR (2327).
- If the issue is an immediate threat, call the local sheriff's department or 911.

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*Media contacts: California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, [Peter Tira](mailto:peter.tira@cdfw.ca.gov) 916-215-3858; Nevada Dept. of Wildlife, [Ashley Zeme](mailto:ashley.zeme@ndow.nv.gov) 775-600-5669; USDA Forest Service, [Lisa Herron](mailto:lisa.herron@usda.gov) 530-721-3898*

### ***About the Tahoe Interagency Bear Team (TIBT)***

*The Tahoe Interagency Bear Team (TIBT) is a collaborative group of agencies and organizations trained and dedicated to reducing human-bear conflicts in the Tahoe Basin. The TIBT works together to promote bear safety through education, outreach, and the implementation of effective bear management practices. TIBT's efforts ensure that both bears and people can coexist peacefully in this beautiful region. Learn more about living in and visiting bear country at [TahoeBears.org](http://TahoeBears.org).*