

DNREC reopens wooded areas of Alapocas Run State Park without further sighting of black bear seen earlier in park

WILMINGTON – DNREC’s Division of Parks & Recreation has reopened Alapocas Run State Park in Wilmington, which was closed Dec. 5 due to the sighting of a black bear in the park that has been reportedly moving around northern New Castle County this week. 

After the park’s temporary closure, DNREC’s Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police, with the assistance of Delaware State Police’s aviation unit, conducted aerial searches of the Alapocas Run State Park and surrounding areas using infrared radar technology but did not detect the bear. Fish & Wildlife and State Parks Natural Resources Police officers also placed trail cameras overnight and conducted extensive patrols by foot throughout the park without further sightings.

DNREC Natural Resources Police advise that visitors to Alapocas Run State Park should still keep an eye out for the bear and if it is seen, should call Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police’ 24-hour dispatch line at 800-523-3336.

Should you see a black bear, the Division of Fish & Wildlife advises taking the following precautions:

- **If a bear is seen:**
 - Do not approach, attempt to touch, feed, or shoot at the bear. Back away slowly – give it space. Go inside and wait for the bear to leave. Once inside, please contact Fish & Wildlife Natural

Resources Police at 800-523-3336 to report the sighting.

- Keep in mind, most bears fear people and will retreat when they see you.
- **Eliminate potential food sources that could attract the bear by cleaning or removing anything outdoors that may smell like food. This includes:**
 - Locking garbage in a secure trash container, or keeping it inside until the day of pick-up.
 - Rinsing trash containers with ammonia to eliminate food odors.
 - Temporarily discontinuing the use of backyard compost piles.
 - Storing cooking grills inside or keeping them clean of food residue.
 - Temporarily removing birdfeeders – there are many wild food sources for birds during this time of year.
- **If you have animals, particularly dogs or cats:**
 - Keep their food indoors. If animals are fed outdoors, only feed the animal what it will eat in one sitting to ensure that there is no food remaining.
 - Corral livestock close to buildings and use outdoor lighting at night.
 - If you have electric fencing, make sure it's turned on to protect chicken coops, livestock nursery pens, etc.
 - Promptly dispose of dead farm animals.

Black bear populations within neighboring states of Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have expanded over the past several decades. As a result, it is not unusual for a bear find its way into Delaware.

Media contact: Michael Globetti, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902

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