



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Food-Conditioned Black Bear Euthanized for Safety Concerns

Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott announced that park biologists euthanized a male black bear on Friday afternoon, June 22, out of concern for public safety. About 2 p.m. Friday, the three to four-year-old bear pushed against windows at Jenny Lake Lodge and peered into the building before scaling a six-foot fence to get near the kitchen door behind the lodge. The 150-pound bear exhibited little or no concern for nearby people and aggressively bluff charged park rangers who responded to the location after receiving a call about the bear's unusual activities. In addition, this bear obtained a food reward at a backcountry campsite on Leigh Lake early Friday morning, and on more than one occasion followed people at close range while they were hiking trails around Leigh Lake. Habituation to people and bold behavior—combined with repeated food rewards—prompted park officials to make the decision to remove this bear from the population and eliminate potential threats to visitors.

Since early spring, the male black bear has been frequenting the trails around Bearpaw, Trapper, and Leigh lakes. He was caught in a trap on June 5, 2007, and a radio-collar placed on him to track his movements; before that time, he was unmarked and uncollared. Previous to Friday's incident, the bear tore up an unoccupied tent and scratched on a tent while people were sleeping inside. He also investigated a backcountry patrol cabin on Leigh Lake and boldly walked around the porch, showing little interest or unease about park staff who were inside the cabin.

Superintendent Scott said, "We never take the decision to euthanize a bear lightly. It is unfortunate and frustrating that food rewards and habituation to people have caused this bear to become food-conditioned and aggressive. Bears generally pose a safety concern only after they start to associate people and their activities with easily obtained food. It is imperative that all visitors and local residents heed the 'bear aware' information posted throughout the park, and take personal responsibility for securing food and other attractants at all times while traveling or camping in bear country."

Park officials remind all visitors that bears—both black and grizzly—are active day and night throughout the park: not only in the backcountry areas but also in high-use locations such as the lodges and campgrounds. For the safety of other visitors and the health of bears, it is extremely important to properly store food in a vehicle or food-storage boxes provided at campsites, and always dispose of garbage in bear-resistant cans or dumpsters. Never leave food or backpacks unattended, even for a minute. Once a bear acquires human food, it loses its fear of people and may become bold or aggressive.

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