



## Interagency Media Release



### **Bear Wise Jackson Hole:**

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### **For Immediate Release**

March 23, 2023

## **First grizzly bear sighting of 2023 in the Jackson Hole area** ***We need your continued help to avoid human-bear conflicts***

**JACKSON, WY** — Early in the evening on March 22, the first grizzly bear of 2023 was observed in Grand Teton National Park. As bears become active this spring, Bear Wise Jackson Hole reminds residents and visitors to secure attractants of any kind and be bear aware.

Adult male grizzly bears typically emerge from hibernation in March, while females with young typically appear between April and early May. The first grizzly bear sighting of 2022 in the Jackson Hole area occurred on March 13 in Grand Teton National Park. When bears emerge from their dens, they search for any available foods and often scavenge animals that died during the winter.

Seeing a bear in its natural habitat is an awe-inspiring experience. However, living and recreating in bear country requires awareness and actions on our part to keep bears and people safe. As the grizzly bear population expands within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, bears continue to disperse across their historical range but also into more populated areas. All of Teton County is now in occupied grizzly bear habitat.

Properly storing all attractants to ensure that a bear does not obtain a food reward is crucial to keeping bears wild. Once a bear becomes conditioned to human foods, risks to the bear and humans increase and management options become limited. Whether you have lived in Teton County for decades or are visiting the area for a day, please do your part to help protect bears.

### **If you are a resident:**

- For those who may be leaving the valley for spring break, please look around your homes and yards for any unsecured attractants and secure them before you leave.
- Store all garbage in bear-resistant containers or in a secure building.

- Secure livestock feed, chicken coops, pet food, compost, and beehives. Electric fences are effective for securing many of these attractants.
- Hang birdfeeders in a way that makes them inaccessible to bears.
- Help your neighbors create a bear-wise community to protect bears (and all wildlife).

**If you are visiting a national park or national forest:**

- Never leave your food unattended unless it is properly secured.
- Keep a clean camp and adhere to all food storage orders. Store all attractants, including coolers, cooking gear, toiletries, and pet food, inside a bear box or a hard-sided vehicle with the windows rolled up.
- Do not eat or cook in your tent, and never keep food or other scented items in your tent.
- Properly store garbage until you can deposit it into a bear-resistant dumpster.
- If you see a bear, please give it space, and always stay at least 100 yards away. If you choose to watch or photograph the bear, use a spotting scope, binoculars, or telephoto lens. Park in designated areas and never block travel lanes. Follow the directions of staff in places where bears are sighted.
- Please respect all wildlife closure areas.

**If you are exploring the backcountry:**

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Make noise, especially in areas with limited visibility or when sound is muffled (e.g., near streams or when it is windy).
- Carry bear spray, know how to use it, and keep it readily accessible.
- Hike in groups of three or more people.
- Do not run. Back away slowly if you encounter a bear.

As interagency partners, Bear Wise Jackson Hole, Teton County, the Town of Jackson, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue our collective efforts to proactively prevent conflicts between bears and people in the Jackson Hole area. Together, as a community, we made tremendous progress last year. Let's keep up the great work. By securing attractants and taking appropriate precautions while living in or visiting bear country, we can keep bears wild and people safe.

Bear Wise Jackson Hole was established in 2006 as a local chapter of the Wyoming Bear Wise Community Program and is a partnership between Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Grand Teton National Park, Bridger-Teton National Forest, and Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation working collaboratively with the Town of Jackson, Teton County, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Our objective is to minimize the accessibility of unnatural attractants to bears and educate residents and visitors about bears and conflict prevention.

**Visit the following links to learn more:**

- [Bear Wise Jackson Hole](#)
- [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- [Teton County](#)
- [Town of Jackson](#)
- [Wyoming Game and Fish Department](#)