



# BEEKEEPERS: PROTECT YOUR HIVES FROM BLACK BEARS

MASSWILDLIFE

**Preventing bear problems requires financial investment from beekeepers.** Bears interested in nutrient-rich bee larvae have been known to knock down or completely destroy hives. Properly maintained electric fencing is the best protection against bears. Protect your investment in your hives, whether large or small, with electric fencing. With some upfront investment, and common sense, bear incidents can be prevented.



## PROPERLY MAINTAINED ELECTRIC FENCING PROTECTS HIVES

- All beekeepers should consider electric fencing, regardless of the size of your operation.
- Keep weeds, vines, and all vegetation from growing on wires and shorting out the fence.
- Keep the power on at all times.
- Regularly check and maintain chargers or batteries.
- Ensure your fence is putting out a minimum of 6,000 volts.
- Teach bears to avoid electric fences by placing bacon strips, foil strips with peanut butter, or honey on the hot wires to deliver a shock to the bear's nose. A bear will remember the shock and associate the fence with pain.
- An Electric Fencing Guide is available on [mass.gov/bears](http://mass.gov/bears).

## FENCE PLACEMENT

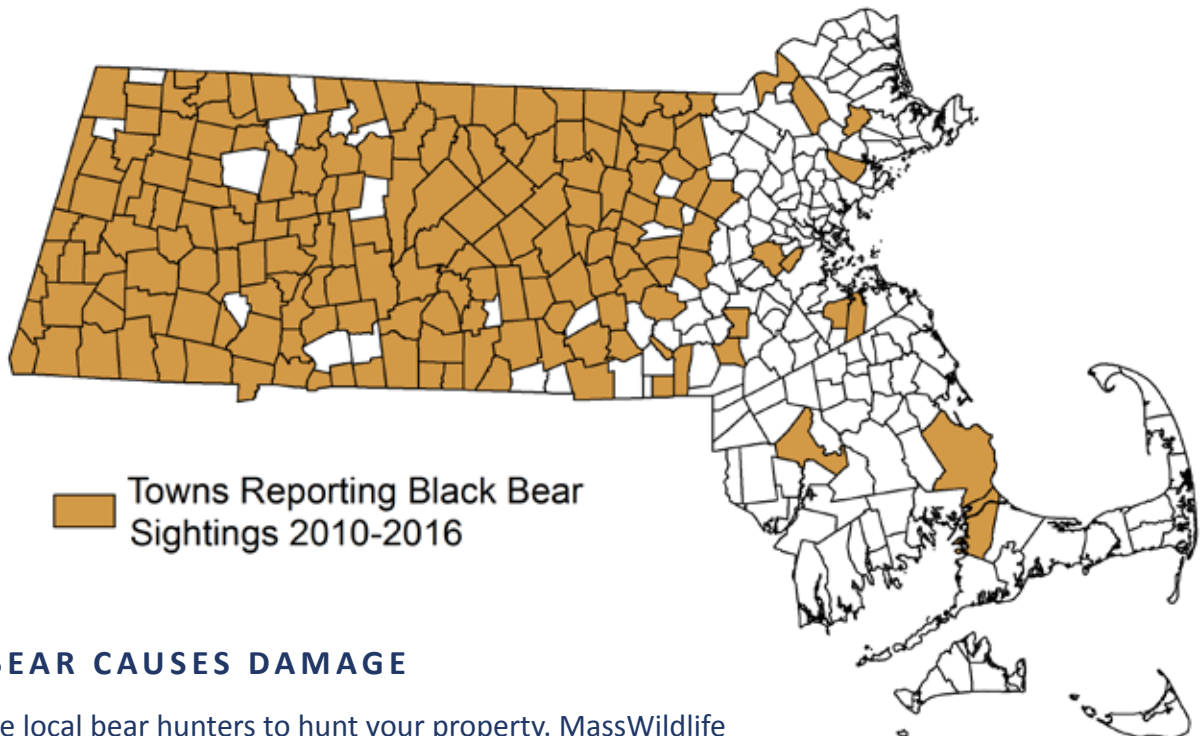
- Place fences in open areas away from trees. Bears can climb trees to gain access to adjacent hives.
- Avoid brushy or overgrown areas that will provide cover for bears approaching hives.
- Do not place supplemental food nearby as a distraction. This will attract bears, not distract them!

Photos courtesy of MassWildlife/Bill Byrne

[MASS.GOV/BEARS](http://MASS.GOV/BEARS)

# BEARS MAY LIVE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Common in central and western Massachusetts, Black Bears are expanding their range east to the Route 495 corridor. The bear population is estimated at over 4,500 animals statewide. Bears spend time in areas where they can come into contact with people when food sources like bird seed, garbage, compost, livestock, and beehives are abundant and easy to access. Bears will revisit the same areas time and again if food is readily available. Bears that are attracted to human-associated food sources can lose their fear of people (habituation). Habituated bears can become a public safety threat and may need to be euthanized. Avoid conflicts with bears by removing or securing food sources.



## IF A BEAR CAUSES DAMAGE

- Invite local bear hunters to hunt your property. MassWildlife or a local sportsman's club can help you find one.
- Under certain circumstances, bears caught in the act of causing property damage may be destroyed under MA General Laws, Chapter 131, Section 37.
- Contact MassWildlife for advice:

Central Wildlife District, West Boylston: (508) 835-3607  
Connecticut Valley Wildlife District, Belchertown: (413) 323-7632  
Northeast Wildlife District, Ayer: (978) 772-2145  
Southeast Wildlife District, Bourne: (508) 759-3406  
Western Wildlife District, Dalton: (413) 684-1646  
Field Headquarters, Westborough: (508) 389-6300

**Contact the Massachusetts Environmental Police outside normal business hours and on weekends at 1-800-632-8075.**