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Department of
Fish and Game

Division of Wildlife Conservation

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Fish & Game Kills Four Black Bears in Centennial Campground

July 6, 2022 (Anchorage) - Employees of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) killed four black bears in Centennial Campground on the afternoon of July 5, following a report from the Anchorage Police Department. The campground, managed by the Municipality of Anchorage, is located along the edge of the “big woods” of Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER) and Chugach State Park, which represent vast areas of bear habitat. The bears, a sow with two cubs of the year (COY) and a separate single adult bear, were entering tents to access food and other attractants, including personal hygiene items and trash. Bears entering tents or other structures pose a risk to human safety. A bear that is considered a public safety threat, or involved in an attack, may be killed by the Department.

Historically, Centennial Campground has had black bear conflicts, but in recent years has worked with ADF&G to increase their camper compliance and enforce their rules for food storage. Keeping bears away from human food is the most important part of preventing conflicts and reducing confrontations between bears and people. Bears are creatures of habit and will seek out the same wild foods in the same places year after year. Similarly, bears conditioned to eating human food may return to neighborhoods, campgrounds, and dumpsters, until food is no longer available.

“Centennial Campground staff are doing the best they can to manage the campground and minimize attractants, but there are still a lot of tents with food in them”, said Anchorage Area Biologist Dave Battle. “Until that changes, more bears are going to come into the campground and get into tents. That's a safety issue both for the people staying there now, and anyone who stays there after them. Killing any particular bear is a very temporary solution. There are always going to be more bears in that vicinity because of its location, and we can't teach bears not to eat what they can find.”

A person who allows bears to feed on improperly stored food or garbage is putting other people at risk. Leaving out bear attractants such as garbage, birdseed or fish waste can draw bears into neighborhoods or campsites. It is against the law to feed bears and it is also against the law to kill a bear you have attracted by improperly storing human food, animal food, or garbage.

Bear-proof food containers and bear-resistant trash cans are good tools to reduce bear conflicts around your home or campsite. Electric fences can likewise be effective at keeping bears out of campsites, or away from cabins and domestic animals.

The Department asks that anyone who sees a bear accessing garbage or other unsecured attractants in Anchorage, or any wild animal behaving aggressively or unusually, report it immediately using the online reporting tool at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=reportwildlifeencounter.main> or by calling 9-1-1 for emergencies.

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