

New River Valley Beekeepers Association

October Meeting 10/10/24

10 October 2024 / 6:37 PM / MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ATTENDEES

33 in-person, 8 online

BUSINESS

- Treasure report: see email from Jim sent previous to meeting
- Membership is good through end of December, but you can pay for the next year starting in October thru the rest of the year
- Audit committee is set up: Bob, Emery, Hans
- Looking for a nominating committee for a new president
- Next months speaker is scheduled: James Wilson, talk about 2 new invasives
- Next meeting we may do a training on how to use the oxalic vaporizer
- Fred wrote and read a lovely poem about being a new beekeeper
- Bob is stepping down from the apiary management committee
- Raffle time!

LIVING WITH BLACK BEARS PROGRAM dwr.virginia.gov

Kathleen Black PhD, District Biologist kathleen.black@dwr.virginia.gov

- **Bears in Virginia: Natural History, population trends, and conflict management**
- **Wildlife Districts**
 - **Biological surveys and monitoring**
 - **Human-wildlife conflicts**
 - **Habitat management**

- Outreach
- Natural History
 - Black bear, *Ursus americanus*
 - **Average size:** males 200-250lbs, Females 100-250lbs, 3' tall on all fours, 5-7' tall standing. Ears are small when they're young
 - **Large, non-retractable claws:** climbing, digging, marking territory
 - **Variable colorations:** black, brown, tan, blond
 - **Senses:** color vision comparable to humans, incredible sense of smell, excellent hearing
 - **Behavior:** mostly solitary, crepuscular (out at dawn/dusk), intelligent and inquisitive, naturally wary of humans, very food driven
 - **Ideal habitat:** Mast producing trees (acorn, hickory, walnut, berries), stream/river corridors, variety of successional stages (lots of diverse flora), good den sites
 - **Diet:** Varies seasonally with food availability, opportunistic 75% vegetation 25% animal matter (small animals/insects)
 - **Fall Hyperphagia:** pre-denning "food frenzy", seek low effort, high energy foods (acorns), may gain up to 2 pounds per day
 - **Winter denning:** enter dens starting in October (trees, snags, hollows in the west), state of torpor, don't wake them
 - **Reproduction:** sows have cubs every other year, starting at age 2.5+, breed in late June-August, Delayed egg implantation, litter of 1-4 cubs born in dens in mid-late January, cubs stay with mother for ~16 months

- **Population trends**

- 1950 bears stayed to the north and midwest of the state of VA, 2001 introduced to the rest of the state, 2024 bears are mostly all over the state
- Beginning of 20th century bears were hunted to very low numbers, 2001-2009 reintroduced and increased amount, 2024 stabilizing population
- We live in a relatively high density bear area
- **Population management through hunting:** extend/shorten seasons, expand/restrict weapons, increase/decrease annual harvest limit

- **Human-Bear Conflicts**

- **Conflict Management Approach:**

- **Educate and outreach** Bearwise.org. Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (.gov)
- **Technical assistance** (guidance/recommendations for specific situations): Help identify and secure attractants, wildlife conflict helpline, site visits, equipment loans, planning and set up help, cost share program, commercial agricultural damage control permits
- **Aversive conditioning:** change bear behavior using noise, visual, and physical deterrents (prickly doormat, electric fence, horns, paint guns, bear spray, shotgun w/rubber slugs)
- **Removal and humane dispatch** Used as a last resort in rare cases where non-lethal options fail, highly habituated bears that present a direct threat to human safety
- **Why don't we relocate "problem" bears?** Does Nnt solve the underlying issue, If attractants remain unsecured, they will

continue to attract other bears, most relocated bears return to the original location or die trying to. Bears will persist if there's still something to attract them.

- **Tips for protecting beehives:** Bears will find your hives, sooner or later
 - **Secure ALL potential attractants** any and all types of food pet or human, trash, cigarettes, compost, grills, candles
 - **Secure hives using electric deterrents**
 - **Exclusionary Electric Fencing** traditional electric setup
 - **Fencing DUES AND DON'Ts**
 - **DO:** use a minimum 1 joule charger, test fence for adequate power/grounding, place bottom strand no more than 4" from ground, place charger inside fence or outside if protected on a sturdy post, fence should be at least 30" from attractant, install wires on outside of posts
 - **DON'T:** Install bottom wire too high, place charger outside fence or on slender pole, place fence against attractant, install wires on interior of posts, place fence near trees/poles
 - **Hanger Hive Guard:** electrified chicken wire fence that goes right on hive
 - **Commercial agricultural kill permits:** Allow lethal removal of bears causing commercial crop or livestock damage, usually issued outside of hunting seasons, local conservation police officers review applications and conduct site visits
 - **HELPLINE: Wildlife conflict helpline 855-571-9003**
 - Weekdays from 8-4
 - Report any sick or injured animals

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE DOING WITH YOU HIVES?

- Mouse guards
- Dry sugar on top (camp feed), stop feeding wet feed by end of October
- Any insulation you might use

- Use oxalic acid during the broodless time