

BE BEAR AWARE, BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR!

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR SUCCESSFUL COEXISTENCE WITH BROWN BEAR

FROM PROTECTION TO COMPENSATION:  
EVERYTHING YOU NEED IN ONE PLACE.



Large Carnivores in Central  
and South-Eastern Europe  
- connected and coexisting with people



## BROWN BEAR (*Ursus arctos*)

A strictly  
protected species,  
but also a real-life  
neighbor!

The brown bear has shared space with humans in Croatia for centuries. As an apex predator, it plays a crucial role in maintaining the health of the forest ecosystem. A healthy brown bear population is important because bears:

- > disperse seeds of various plants, enriching forest biodiversity
- > prevent the overpopulation of other forest species, keeping the ecosystem in balance
- > have a key role in wildlife tourism
- > have numerous other benefits for healthy ecosystem.

However, the presence of bears in human settlements often triggers fear and leads to human-bear conflicts. Bears are naturally shy animals and generally avoid humans. But there are two main reasons why bears are drawn closer to human settlements:

- > Improperly managed organic waste or food near settlements.
- > Fragmentation and loss of forest habitat caused by the construction of roads and railways.

Coexistence of people and bears is not only possible as it has already been happening for years. But with a better understanding of bear behavior and the use of appropriate tools and practices, this coexistence can become even easier. That's why we've gathered all the most important information and advice in one place, for the benefit of both people and bears.

## HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LIVE WITH BEARS

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

#### Electric Fences

- > A proven method of protection against attacks and a required measure for compensation claims.
- > Primarily used to protect livestock and apiaries.
- > It is crucial that they are properly installed, keep a constant electric charge, and are regularly maintained.

#### Livestock Guarding Dogs

- > A highly effective protection measure, especially when combined with electric fences.
- > Choosing the right breed is essential.
- > Proper training from a young age is particularly important.
- > If you want to provide additional protection for the dogs, you can use protective vests.
- > All important information about the importance of guarding dog and guidelines for choosing the right breed can be found on the WWF Adria website.

### PROPER WASTE DISPOSAL

Do not leave organic waste (food scraps) or garbage near settlements, roads, or hiking trails. Make sure to dispose of waste safely and correctly by:

- > Using well-closed and secured waste containers.
- > Regularly emptying outdoor waste bins.
- > Ideally using bear-proof containers or enclosing them with fencing.
- > Keeping waste bins indoors or in protected spaces until the day waste disposal service collects it.

### PROPER BEHAVIOUR IN THE FOREST

- > Don't surprise a bear.
- > While moving through the forest, make enough noise so the bear can hear you from a distance.
- > If you surprise a bear and get too close, it may feel threatened and respond defensively, especially a mother with cubs.
- > Do not approach or run from a bear.
- > Observe bears only from a distance, especially bear cubs.
- > If a bear approaches: stay calm and slowly retreat along the same path, and avoid eye contact with the bear.
- > A bear standing on its hind legs is not being aggressive because it's simply trying to observe its surroundings.



## BEARS IN VILLAGES AND SETTLEMENTS

All the rules for bear encounters in villages are the same as those for proper behavior in the forest, but the following applies specifically in this situation:

- > Once you are safe, call 112 or the local hunting authority, they will assist you further.

## REPORT THE SITUATION IF...

...a bear regularly visits a settlement which is usually caused by improperly disposed waste.

...a bear attacks livestock or damages property, including apiaries and orchards.

...the bear shows signs of injury, illness, or aggression.

...it involves orphaned cubs or a bear caught in a trap.

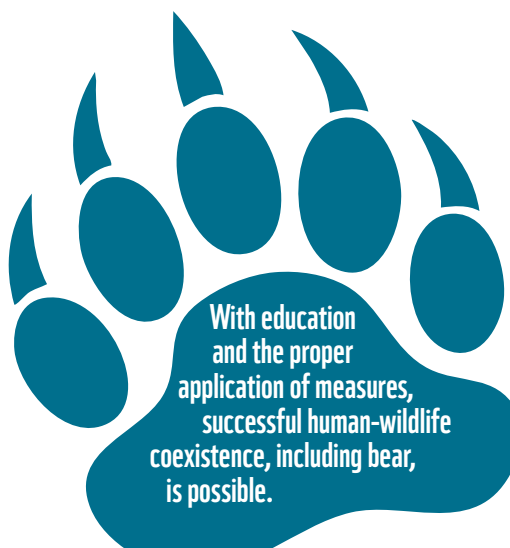


## IF DAMAGE STILL OCCURS

Using preventive measures greatly reduces the risk of damage, but if it still happens, and you follow all the correct steps, you may be eligible for compensation.

- > In the event of damage, first contact the local hunting authority, they will come to the site and assess the situation.
- > If necessary, the hunting authority will call in the Bear intervention team.

You can find all relevant information in the [National Brown Bear Management Plan for the Republic of Croatia](#).



## IMPORTANT NOTES

- > Livestock owners must have electric fences and livestock guarding dogs in order to be eligible for compensation.
- > Document the damage — it's strongly advised to take photos of the damage as evidence for further assessment.
- > In case of damage to apiary, also contact your local bee-keeping association.
- > It is recommended to regularly follow updates and guidelines from the National Brown Bear Management Plan.



## IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- > Ministry of Economy:  
<https://mingo.gov.hr>
- > State Inspectorate – Nature Protection Inspection:  
<https://gov.hr/hr/inspekcija-zastite-prirode/1342?lang=hr>
- > State Hunting Inspectorate:  
<https://dirh.gov.hr/o-drzavnom-inspektoratu-9/ustrojstvo-77/10-sektor-za-nadzor-u-sumarstvu-i-lovstvu/142>
- > Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:  
<https://poljoprivreda.gov.hr>