



Sep 25, 2014 | 11:10 am

FATAL BEAR ATTACK



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TexasHuntFish Publisher



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A Rutgers University student killed by bear. Be alert and learn how to deal with predators in the wild.

Recently, a Rutgers University student was out hiking with friends and was mauled and killed by a 300 pound black bear.



Officials said, “A group of five hikers encountered a black bear in the woods that began to follow them, they became frightened and attempted to flee the area. During the confusion, the group became separated as they ran in different directions.” Later four hikers regrouped but could not find their friend. Wildlife officials soon found the bodies of the 5th hiker with the bear still close by. The bear reportedly would not vacate even after officers tried to scare it away – the bear was killed on site. Fall is here, weather is changing and if you are going to be out and about, camping, hiking, hunting or fishing you’d better be aware of your surroundings and the dangerous predators that live there. Here are a few tips for dealing with bears from wildlife experts John and Heidi Rao.

There are 3 reasons Bears attack:

1. You startle the animal - they attack out of a defensive mode;
2. A sow bear protecting her cubs; and
3. The bear perceives you as a food source.

5 Life Saving Tips for Dealing with Bears

1. If you startle a black or brown bear (NOTE: Grizzlies are brown bears) Make a lot of noise. Make yourself appear larger, waving your arms and your backpack above your head, etc. Try to scare the bear away.
2. If an attack begins: if it is a black bear always try to fight it off first. If it is a brown bear or you are not successful fighting off a black bear, you should curl up into a ball and cover the back of your neck, playing dead. If you are wearing a backpack, keep it on so it protects your body. Stay in that position until the attack is over and you are sure the bear is no longer in the area. Any movement before the bear has left may prompt a 2nd attack.
3. If a bear, black or brown, is stalking you or enters your tent where you are sleeping, it perceives you as food. Your only option is to fight as if your life depends on it because it does.
4. If it is possible to climb a tree for protection, it is important to remember black bears are expert tree climbers, and will come after you if they are intent on doing harm. Brown bears are not very good tree climbers, but they can stand up to 12-feet tall. If the attack is from a brown bear, you must climb fast and climb high.
5. It is always wise to carry protection in bear country, either bear spray or a firearm if the local laws permit.

A good source of information can be found in the book "Entering the World of the Predator" and can be obtained through NorthAmericanOutdoors.org.

Contributor Details

John Rao has been a Texas Game Warden for 25 years. Heidi Rao has worked for [Texas Parks and Wildlife](#) for 16 years as the Assistant Hunter Education Coordinator as well as the Texas [Becoming an Outdoors-Woman](#) Program Coordinator. Heidi has also been featured on the NRA website for all of her work getting more women and children involved in the outdoors, hunting and shooting. blog: outdoorwomenadventures.com