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Black bear euthanized after attack near Lake Tahoe, California, officials say

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A California black bear with a "long history of human conflict" was euthanized earlier this week after breaking into a trailer and swiping at a camper near Lake Tahoe, state wildlife officials said.

The female camper was awakened at around 4:30 a.m. PT on June 22 when the light-colored female bear broke into her trailer at Emerald Bay State Park, located in southwest Lake Tahoe, according to the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) (CDFW). The camper attempted to scare off the bear by banging pots and pans and screaming at the bear.

"Undeterred, the bear forced its way into the trailer and swiped at the camper, leaving her with cuts and bruises on her arms and hand and requiring an escorted trip to the hospital," state wildlife officials said in a statement.

Later that morning, the bear ripped open the door of a camper-van with teenagers sleeping inside and then was reported harassing other campers at the same campground, according to state wildlife officials. The bear was deemed a public safety risk following the camper attack and was targeted for immediate removal.

The bear was tracked in the vicinity of the campground where the attack occurred on June 23 and euthanized by a California State Parks ranger, state wildlife officials said. DNA testing confirmed it was the same bear responsible for the camper attack.

"As v   f
California's fish and wildlife species, euthanasia is a measure of last resort," Morgan Kilgour, regional manager for CDFW's North Central Region, said in a statement. "Our foremost responsibility, however, remains the protection of human life and the safety of the Tahoe region."

Here's how to avoid danger. [Black bears are wandering into human places more.](#)

'Conflict behavior persisted' despite attempts to haze out the bear



The CDFW and California State Parks described the bear as a "danger to public safety" in the south Lake Tahoe area, noting that it had a history of breaking into homes and vehicles. Since the spring, the bear had been the subject of multiple 911 emergency calls and was tied to "unrelenting conflict activity," state wildlife officials said.

DNA evidence linked the bear to multiple other incidents and confrontations, including an incident on June 10 when it entered an occupied vehicle at a campground with a child fastened to a safety seat, according to state wildlife officials.

The CDFW and California State Parks said wildlife officers had been trying to trap the bear since June 17.

"The bear had been unresponsive to multiple attempts to haze it out of human-occupied areas," according to state wildlife officials. "The bear had been aggressively hazed by four different agencies, including CDFW, State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service on at least seven different occasions, yet the conflict behavior persisted."

State wildlife officials added that the bear's two cubs were captured and delivered to a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Northern California with the hope they can be rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

"A m  BETA |  od sources, breaks into homes and vehicles teaches this behavior to her cubs and perpetuates another generation of human-bear conflict," Kilgour said. "Removing these cubs from this conflict activity early in their lives gives them a chance that they can return to the wild and live as wild bears should."

Animal attacks reported in 2024: [This piece of advice could save your life.](#)

Black bear attack comes amid rise in human-bear interactions

As bears wander into populated areas in search of food and new territory, states across the country have reported an increase in human-black bear incidents.

State wildlife agencies logged more than 46,000 recorded human-black bear interactions in 2022, with at least 18 states reporting an increase, according to a survey of data conducted by the [International Association for Bear Research and Management](#). At the same time, the nation's black bear population, of around 470,000, is growing in at least 24 states, according to the survey, as black bears in more than half of U.S. states are expanding their range.

Joe Clark, a research ecologist at the U.S. Geological Survey's Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, [previously told USA TODAY](#) that the growing frequency of human-black bear interactions could be tied to the country's large human population.

"There are more bears than there have been before. And secondly, there are more humans living in bear range than ever before," Clark said.

Although state wildlife agencies and experts have noted that black bear attacks remain extremely rare, interactions in recent years have drawn national attention.

In May, Florida officials reported the [first fatal black bear attack](#) in the state's recorded history. Officials said an [89-year-old man and his dog](#) were found dead following the attack near Jerome, a small unincorporated community 30 miles east of Naples.



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In October 2024, a black bear attacked and [injured a 74-year-old man](#) after entering his home in Colorado with three of her cubs. And in June 2024, California wildlife officials confirmed that a woman who was found dead inside her home in 2023 was the [state's first documented](#) fatal black bear attack on a human.

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