



# New Mexico WILDLIFE NEWS



Cibola National Forest  
Cibola Supervisors Office: 505-346-3900  
Mountainair Ranger District: 505-847-2990  
Sandia Ranger District: 505-281-3304  
[www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola)

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish  
Public contact: (505) 476-8000  
Media contact: Dan Williams, (505) 476-8004  
[dan.williams@state.nm.us](mailto:dan.williams@state.nm.us)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 10, 2008**

## **CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST ISSUES FOOD STORAGE ORDER TO PROTECT BEARS**

The Cibola National Forest has issued a Forest Supervisor's Order that prohibits leaving food or garbage accessible to bears and other wildlife in the Sandia and Mountainair Ranger Districts of the Cibola National Forest (Order Number 03-0245). This Order is effective immediately and will remain in effect until rescinded or until December 31, 2008, whichever occurs first.

Many of the black bears frequenting and living in and around the Sandia and Mountainair Ranger Districts have become habituated to human food and have become a nuisance and safety concern. An ongoing education program has been aimed at informing the public about proper food storage and disposal of garbage; however, not all Forest visitors have cooperated.

Habituated bears alter their natural food gathering activities, searching for easily available food left unattended by campers, picnickers, and other forest users. Human-bear encounters have become more frequent and more dangerous as bears lose their natural fear of humans. In the Sandia and Manzano Mountains, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish personnel have trapped and relocated many bears. In some cases, habituated bears have been euthanized.

The Forest Supervisor's Order requires visitors to the Mountainair & Sandia Ranger Districts to:

- Make sure food and garbage are unavailable to bears and other wildlife
  - do not leave food unattended on a picnic table, in your campsite, or at your worksite
  - do not leave garbage bags unattended
- Make sure food and garbage are "acceptably stored" both day and night
  - store food in coolers or other containers and put them inside your vehicle (preferably out of sight, bears know what coolers are and have broken into vehicles even with empty coolers left in plain view!)
  - place food in food storage lockers (where available)
  - put garbage in the bear-resistant trash cans
  - take your garbage with you if trash cans are full or unavailable

Food and garbage include human food and beverages, pet food, personal hygiene products such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap, etc., and their empty containers and wrappings.

Potential fines for violation of this Order could be up to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations. (36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b))

Please do your part to make sure that our bears don't have to be relocated or euthanized because of carelessness with food or garbage.

###