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Young bear captured in Prospect Park

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2012 LAST UPDATED: THURSDAY MAY 10, 2012, 6:53 PM

BY MATTHEW MCGRATH

STAFF WRITER

THE RECORD



See more photos of the bear

PROSPECT PARK — A wayward young black bear, likely in search of food and new territory, found itself on Thursday in a residential backyard in this densely developed borough -- with the law on his heels.

Police captured the 18-month-old male black bear – an adolescent in human terms – behind a North 9th Street house Thursday morning, authorities said. The young bruin was tranquilized and eventually was removed to be taken to the woods.

"Kids are kids are kids no matter what species they are," said Tracy Leaver, a bear rehabilitator with the nonprofit Woodlands Wildlife Refuge in Hunterdon County.

Every spring mother bears expel their yearling cubs from their dens after hibernation to make room for a new litter, she said. The newly homeless young bears must find food and stomping grounds for the first time in their lives. Sometimes, they end up in unlikely places – such as a busy community like [Prospect Park](#).

"It's like a teenager who has lost both parents and has no home," Leaver said, noting that because of an early spring, this year's newly independent young bears are in a bind.

There's little food for bears this time of year, mostly skunk cabbage and grasses, she said. Berries, nuts



ELIZABETH LARA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The bear climbed a tree when authorities arrived.

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and other food won't be available until later in the summer.

During food shortages, bears are drawn to populated places where they can find garbage cans and pet food left outside, Leaver said.

The appearance of a bear in a neighborhood clearly sets off alarms. Leaver advised people not to panic when they encounter a bear, but to "just let the bear move on."

"Bears are just as distressed by people as people are of them," she said. "It's the oh-my-God factor: Who are you and what are you doing here."

The captured bear had climbed a tree when authorities arrived. State fish and wildlife officers tranquilized and tagged the bear, which weighed 184 pounds. He was taken to the Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area in Rockaway Township, authorities said.

Staff writer Marlene Naanes contributed to this report.

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Paul Xazuda

Ain't it just like the MAN to give a young black brutha a hard time....

[Reply](#) · 1 · May 10 at 11:25am



Virginia Wright · ★ Top Commenter · Paterson, New Jersey

"Police" captured it! I thought the PPPD only captured people for speeding.
@ Jane Prendergast...LOL This Prospect Park is a small town in NJ, next to adjacent to Paterson.

[Reply](#) · May 11 at 7:28am



Jane Prendergast

Did the bear pay his bridge toll on the way into Brooklyn?

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Sintia Tejada · Works at Daycare Teacher

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