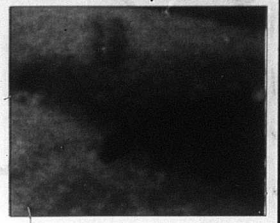
Black Bear is sighted



Citizens of Nicholas County, beware! Don't feed the bears.... Or the mountain lions... Or Bigfoot.

A variety of non-traditional Nicholas County wildlife has been spotted in the region with citizens filing multiple reports with local wildlife officers. Officers have confirmed many of the sightings as genuine.

According to veteran Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Sgt. Herbert Booth, citizens have reported seeing black bears at Myers Station, mountain lions (cougars) in Barterville, Elk along US 68, otters across rural Nicholas County and Hinkston Creek, and peregrine falcons in Carlisle.

There has even been a sighting of Bigfoot in neighboring Bath County.

"Wildlife officer Randy Johnson responded to a Bath County call of someone who allegedly saw Bigfoot in Bath County," Booth said.

Johnson recently began a tour of duty with the military and was unavailable for comment on the Bigfoot report. Booth said that although the individual who reported the Bigfoot sighting was convinced they had seen the creature in their back yard.

Booth said he has never personally seen any evidence of Bigfoot in northeastern Kentucky, but has seen about every other kind of wildlife.

"I haven't seen any of the black bears recently reported in Nicholas County, but we know that there have been several black bears documented in Fleming, Lewis and Rowan counties," he said.

"Young male black bears can travel very far distances. They will commonly come around rural houses where dog and cat food are abundant outside.

"They will also dig through the trash. If someone is experiencing problems with bears I urge them to make their pet food inaccessible and contact us immediately. It's very possible to have a cougar in Nicholas County at any given time. I know we've had at least one in Mt. Sterling in the recent past."

A Myers Station man who recently photographed a black bear on his farm said the bear was "about as big as a full grown St. Bernard dog."

Booth discussed recent elk sightings that have been reported near US 68.

"We haven't got real good documentation of that yet although we have received several reported sightings," he said.

"One sighting turned out to be a Sika deer. They look like an elk but are much smaller although their antlers are very similar. They are indigenous to Asia but we had one taken during a youth hunt in Robertson County in the recent past. The most recent elk sightings could be a Sika deer, or the sightings could be of an actual elk."

Booth said there were several documented sightings of Kentucky Wildcat's (bobcats) in Nicholas County.

"We have several documented sightings and occurrences of bobcats along the Licking River," he said.

"We know that one man was injured by a bobcat in Nicholas County when he was clawed by a bobcat when he tried to help his cat during a fierce fighting with one."

Both said birds of prey were visiting Nicholas County with greater frequency.

"We have several documented bald eagle sightings and we believe a peregrine falcon is actually living in Carlisle."

Booth said aquatic mammals, such as beaver and otter, are making a strong comeback in Nicholas County.

"We've had beaver for a few years now and there are otter in the city lake," he said.

Booth asks all citizens to report any strange animal sightings they might witness and to exercise caution when one is sighted.

Could the Bath County Bigfoot sighting have been a tall black bear? Or could it have been the real thing.

"I'm not going to worry too much about Bigfoot, myself," Booth said with a chuckle.

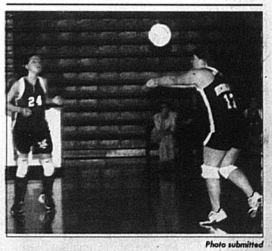


Photo submitted

A solid return

Ashley Bromagen, right, returns a serve, while Megan Howard stands ready to assist.

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