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National Black Bear Festival

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The Black Bear Festival – A Decade in the Making

The annual award-winning Black Bear Festival is setting the pace

PLYMOUTH, NC –

The wildly successful, award-winning National Black Bear Festival is hosting their 10th Anniversary on Saturday, June 1, 2024 in Plymouth, Bear-olina. The festival was created in 2015 to celebrate the little-known fact that coastal North Carolina has the world's largest black bears and on the Albemarle Peninsula has the highest black bear densities on the planet. Bear Fest has dominated the awards for NC festivals for the 9 years since its inception, winning NC Event of the Year several times. Bear Fest was also recognized as the Best Festival in the Southeastern US in 2022 by the Southeast Festival & Events Assoc.. Among all the other accomplishments, they were able to get a designation for National Black Bear Day that is celebrated on the first Saturday in June each year in conjunction with the Bear Festival. Each year Bear Fest regularly attracts people from over 20 states and several foreign countries.

The event's popularity has a lot to do with the broad appeal of black bears along with a heaping helping of fun and creativity. According to festival founder Tom Harrison, "No matter what age or interests a person has, almost everyone loves bears!" Therefore, the festival's mainstay is wild bear tours conducted on a local wildlife refuge, as well as presentations by the NC Black Bear Biologists, a wildlife photography presentation. There are many other bear-themed activities at the event, including, a black bear theater film, the world's first mechanical bear ride (like a mechanical bull), a bear train ride and launching 300 free parachuting plush bears in the air for the children to catch. They also have an educational 40-yard dash called "Can You Out Run A Bear?" Race. Participant's running/walking speed is registered and they receive a free sticker for whatever animal they out ran – whether that is a snapping turtle, a mouse, 'possum, rabbit, or something faster. But no human can outrun a bear!

New for this year is the debut of a 30-passenger hydrofoil jet boat operated by the Inner Bank Harbor Towns Cruises that will offer 30-minute tours of the Roanoke River Delta, as well as paddlewheel cruises. They will be celebrating their 10th birthday with free birthday cake for the kids. Among the 40+ activities going on at Bear Fest will be a fire artist, rowing races, lazy river tubing, live music all day, hot air balloon rides and helicopter rides. One highlight of the event will be the US Army Golden Knights elite skydiving team doing acrobatic jumps. The Reflections on the Roanoke Fireworks Show ends the day, featuring six fireworks barges anchored in the river. With ½ mile of waterfront, everyone has a front row seat.

This festival is unique because it is more than just fair food and craft vendors, (although there are plenty of those too). It is unique because of its black bear focus and because it is located on the banks of the Roanoke River with many events on the water that other festivals don't offer. The festival is also remarkable because it provides education with a heaping helping of family fun through all their fun activities. For details visit NationalBearFest.com

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About National Black Bear Festival

The award-winning National Black Bear Festival is happening on Saturday, June 1st in Plymouth, NC – “Where traffic ends and the adventure begins!” For more information visit: www.nationalbearfest.com.

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