

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2014

Maple Ridge

Prepared by: Daniel Mikolay, WildSafeBC Community Coordinator



Photo: Steve Ryan



BRITISH COLUMBIA
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION



Executive Summary

The 2014 season was another relatively quiet one for human-wildlife conflict in Maple Ridge. In 2013, we had 359 bear calls from January 1 to October 31. This year during that same time frame we had 288 bear calls. This year only 3 bears were destroyed. Two of them were garbage conditioned bears that did not hibernate over the winter. The strategy we undertook was to target high wildlife/human conflict areas. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WSBCCC) and a team of volunteers approached over 5000 houses in high conflict neighbourhoods with information about ways to reduce attractants. In addition to the door-to-door campaign, WildsafeBC conducted workshops with SPCA and had displays and presentations throughout the community. Though there has been improvement each year of the program, there's still a lot more to do to get Maple Ridge to Bear Smart status.

With our expanded scope, WildSafeBC was able to provide Maple Ridge residents with information on many different wildlife species. While black bears remain the species most commonly discussed, questions regarding cougars, coyotes, wolves, raccoons and skunks continue to rise and WildSafeBC's expanded species resources were well received by the public this season.



Figure 1 Garbage, Bird feeders, pet food and BBQ led to the capture of this yearling. Conservation relocated the young cub, but within in days, the cub was back and continuing getting into garbage.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....2

Highlights from the 2014
Season.....4

Presentations.....5

Garbage Tagging and Door to Door Education... ..6

 Displays.....6

 Wildlife Attractant

Maple Ridge Bear Conflict Working Group.....7

 Media.....7

Challenges of the 2014 Season.....8

Goals for the 2015
Season.....8

Acknowledgements.....9



Highlights from the 2014 Season

WildSafeBC worked with community leaders to get an early start on continuing the education of residents about attractants before most of the bears emerged from hibernation. With the help of the WildsafeBC WARP map, we were able to target neighbourhoods a month before the bears started arriving. The bear call chart below shows how the proactive approach greatly reduced the number of early calls of bear encounters.

month	bear calls	other wildlife
May 2013	70	4
May 2014	44	7
June 2013	123	10
June 2014	48	13
July 2013	54	7
July 2014	35	7
August 2013	25	5
August 2014	33	6
September 2013	23	6
September 2014	30	10
October 2013	24	4
October 2014	24	8

Presentations

WildsafeBC Maple Ridge conducted presentations throughout the community. We also worked with Welcome Wagon in providing education material for over 500 new residents in our area that might not be aware of all the wildlife in our community. Below are some of the presentations we conducted throughout the year.

- SPCA (x3)
- Albion Elementary
- Kanaka Creek Elementary
- Fairview Elementary
- Alouette Preschool
- Various scout and guide troops

** Given the late start to the 2014 School Year, WildSafeBC School Presentations were delayed. The WSBCCC plans on giving at least a dozen classroom presentations before the end of November which will be outlined in a later addendum.





Figure 2 Garbage is the number one attractant for bears. The pictures above show two examples of bears opening garbage bags looking for food.

Garbage Tagging and Door-to-Door Education

This year the WildsafeBC Community Coordinator educated Maple Ridge residents about wildlife attractants around the home using a different yet effective way.

In years past, we would tag garbage cans with bright yellow stickers reminding residents that garbage is a wildlife attractant and should only be set out the morning of garbage pick up. We also did door to door education for areas that needed more in depth awareness. Both ways proved to be effective in getting across the importance of keeping wildlife wild and communities safe.

This year as part of the education process with our residents, we added a one page sheet that not only informs the resident about attractants such as garbage, bird feeders and pet food, but also explains the Wildlife Act and possible fines. This proved to be highly effective in reducing wildlife interaction in problematic neighbourhoods.

Displays

WildsafeBC was out in the community with educational displays at local events. These events were great places to learn from residents of their wildlife concerns and to educate them on ways to reduce wildlife conflict.



Figure 3 WildSafeBC Community Coordinator Daniel Mikolay visited Farmers Market and Community Festivals throughout the summer, 2014.

Maple Ridge Bear Conflict Working Group

While the bears are hibernating this Winter, a group of volunteers and wildlife stake holders including the City of Maple Ridge, Conservation, By-Laws, and RCMP will continue their support of keeping wildlife wild and communities safe by working together to create an action plan for our community leading to our goal of Bear Smart status.

Media

The WildSafeBC Maple Ridge Facebook page was updated weekly throughout the season providing a platform for community discussion around local wildlife activity and preventing conflicts.

Local media outlets helped spread WildSafeBC's messaging through publishing press releases in local papers, and sharing information through social media. The WSBCCC is always amazed by the reach of this media coverage and appreciates the support.



Figure 4 Garbage, Bird feeders, pet food and BBQ are not the only attractants for wildlife. This buck got his antlers caught on some rope. He was sedated by Conservation and had the rope removed.

Challenges of the 2014 Season

Early set out of unsecured garbage cans continues to be the challenge of the 2014 season. Fortunately, the berry crop was excellent this year which was contributing factor in the reduction of bears destroyed in our area. With the help of community leaders, our goal is to eliminate all early garbage set outs in Maple Ridge.

WildsafeBC – Maple Ridge continues to work with local garbage haulers to educate residents about the effects of garbage attractants on wildlife and to look for cost effective ways for residents to obtain bear resistant garbage cans.

Time constraints continue to limit the effectiveness of the WildSafeBC program. The program typically runs from May 1 to November 30 despite the fact that wildlife species such as coyotes, cougars and deer are active year-round. An extended contract that allowed for some 'off-season' hours would ensure timely advice and information for residents struggling with wildlife issues in the winter months.

Goals for 2015

Looking forward to the 2015 season, WildSafeBC hopes to continue to collaborate with community partners to make concrete solutions available for local wildlife attractant issues.

- Bring residential bear resistant bins to Maple Ridge with the help of government, residents, and private haulers.
- Create a WildsafeBC scout/guide badge along with a lesson plan for ways to obtain the badge with the help of the local WildsafeBC Community Coordinator.
- Eliminate early garbage set out in high wildlife/human conflict areas through education and by working with Conservation and Bylaws.

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC Maple Ridge is grateful for the generous support the program receives from its sponsors, partners and volunteers. Thanks to our sponsors: City of Maple Ridge, Ridge Meadows Recycling Society, British Columbia Conservation Foundation. Our community partners have provided invaluable support and guidance. Thank you to: the Conservation Officer Service, including COS Cody Ambrose, and COS Robin Sano, Ridge Meadows Recycling Society Kim Day, Leanne Koehn, Alison Thompson, and summer students – Ash Milton and Gina Seki; City of Maple Ridge Parks and Leisure, Geoff Mallory; BCCF Staff (WSBC Provincial Coordinator Frank Ritcey, Barb Waters, Jen Bellhouse, Roseanna Niedziejko and Tami Kendall); and the fantastic WSBC Community Coordinators across the province.

Finally, thank you to all those residents who made an effort this season to remove wildlife attractants from their properties. Let's keep wildlife wild and our communities safe!