

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2015

Maple Ridge

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WildSafeBC Maple Ridge Year End Report2015

Executive Summary

The 2015 season was another relatively quiet one for human-wildlife conflict in Maple Ridge. In 2014, we had 288 bear calls from January 1 to October 31. This year during that same time frame we had 311 bear calls. The main concern this year for WildSafeBC was to what affect the new compost regulations would have on human-bear conflict. The data shows it has had a minimal affect.

This year only 2 bears were destroyed in the spring. The two bears were juvenile bears that would follow elementary students in the Albion area. WildSafeBC targeted that area with an information sheet about bear attractants and the Wildlife Act fines. Because of the information sheet, early garbage set out dropped considerably and so did the calls. Last year the Albion area had 19 calls, this year there were 3. We also conducted workshops with the SPCA and had displays and presentations throughout the community. Though there have been improvements each year of the program, there's still a lot more to do to get Maple Ridge to Bear Smart status which is our goal for 2016.

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, we did get more inquiries about cougars and coyotes. WildSafeBC's expanded species resources were well received by the public this season.



Typically, bears look for secluded areas to go through garbage.

WildSafeBC Maple Ridge Year End Report 2015

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Highlights from the 2015 Season	3
Presentations	4
Door-to-Door Education	5
Displays.....	6
Maple Ridge Bear Conflict Working Group	7
Media	7
Challenges of the 2015 Season	8
Goals for 2016.....	8
Acknowledgements.....	9



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WildSafeBC Maple Ridge Year End Report 2015

Highlights from the 2015 Season

WildSafeBC worked with community leaders and the City on continuing the education of residents about attractants before most of the bears emerged from hibernation. With the help of the WildSafeBC Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) map, we targeted neighbourhoods that had high human-wildlife conflicts in the past.

Bear Calls - Maple Ridge						
	May	June	July	August	September	October
2014	44	48	35	33	30	24
2015	99	39	11	33	55	29

Other Wildlife Calls - Maple Ridge						
	May	June	July	August	September	October
2014	7	13	7	6	10	8
2015	11	4	3	10	2	6

WildSafeBC Maple Ridge Year End Report2015

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
- Yennadon Elementary
- Alouette Preschool
- Various scout and guide troops
- Communities in Bloom competition (won First place Nationally)



WildSafeBC coordinator, Daniel Mikolay and Conservation officer, Robin Sano talk to local scout troop about Bear safety.

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 conducted 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. We also joined various neighbourhood Facebook pages



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Displays

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



WildSafeBC Community Coordinator Daniel Mikolay visited many community events throughout the summer of 2015.

Maple Ridge Bear Conflict Working Group

While the bears are hibernating this winter, a group of volunteers and wildlife stakeholders 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.



WildSafeBC working with the City of Maple Ridge, Conservation, and Encorp to install more bear resistant garbage and recycling containers throughout the City.

Media

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

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

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Challenges of the 2015 Season

With a warm spring and an extended drought, the berry crop arrived early this year and was not as plentiful as in years past. This meant the focus needed to be on reducing the early set out of unsecured garbage cans.

WildSafeBC continued 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.

Goals for 2016

Looking forward to the 2016 season, WildSafeBC hopes to continue to collaborate with community partners to make concrete solutions available for local wildlife attractant issues.

- Be the first city in the Lower Mainland to obtain Bear Smart status.
- 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.

WildSafeBC Maple Ridge Year End Report**2015**

Acknowledgements

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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; 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!