

WildSafeBC Year End Report 2016

Kimberley-Cranbrook & Area

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Photo: Leigh Cormier, 2016



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CRANBROOK



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British Columbia Conservation Foundation

Regional District of
East Kootenay



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Executive Summary

The Kimberley-Cranbrook area experienced more human-wildlife conflict than in the previous two years (Figure 1). Wildlife encounters this year increased in Kimberley and Marysville area but decreased in Cranbrook (Figure 2 & 3). Part of this decrease is attributed to a much cooler, wetter summer in 2016 compared to the hot, dry weather in 2015. Kimberley's increase in wildlife encounters can be attributed to an increase of food-conditioned wildlife.

There were many highlights of the 2016 season; WildSafeBC's BC Goes Wild Weekend and the Outdoor Play Day with the International Students attending the College of the Rockies to name a couple. Education programming in schools continued to be the focus of the WildlifeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook program in 2016. The students who participated in the Junior Ranger Program learned about bears, ungulates and predators. Educational presentations were made at schools as well as with other special interest groups. WildSafeBC also attended many community events, attended hikes and hosted presentations about the www.wildsafebc.com/warp website with community clubs of all ages.

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) also conducted garbage inspections and follow up canvassing. As well the WCC conducted door-to-door canvassing in each community to educate the public about keeping wildlife wild and communities safe, garbage tagging, and providing tips for effective attractant management. The WCC also kept busy posting on different types of media to keep residents updated on recent events and wildlife news.

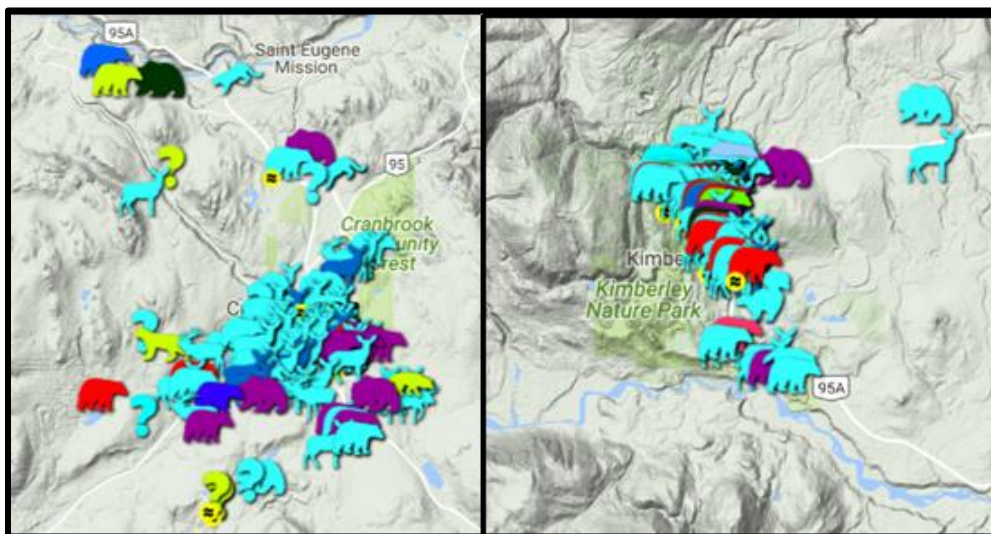


Figure 1 Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) map with all reported wildlife encounters from Jan. 1st – Oct. 26th 2016 in Cranbrook (right) and Kimberley (left). Colours represent different attractants wildlife are drawn to, i.e. pink – BBQ, red – garbage, purple – residential fruit trees, green – bird feeders, light blue – pet food, yellow – livestock. Data retrieved from www.wildsafebc.com/warp.

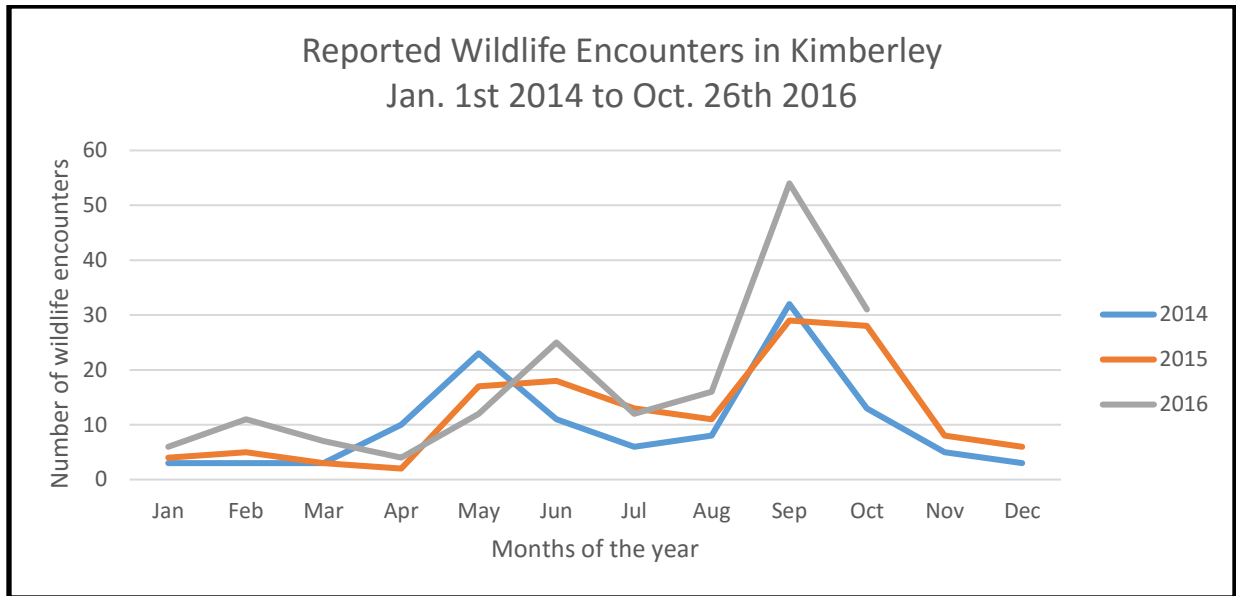


Figure 2 The graph above shows the reported wildlife encounters in Kimberley in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The 2016 season peak occurred during the month of August – a total of 54 reported wildlife in Kimberley. Data retrieved from www.wildsafebc.com/warp.

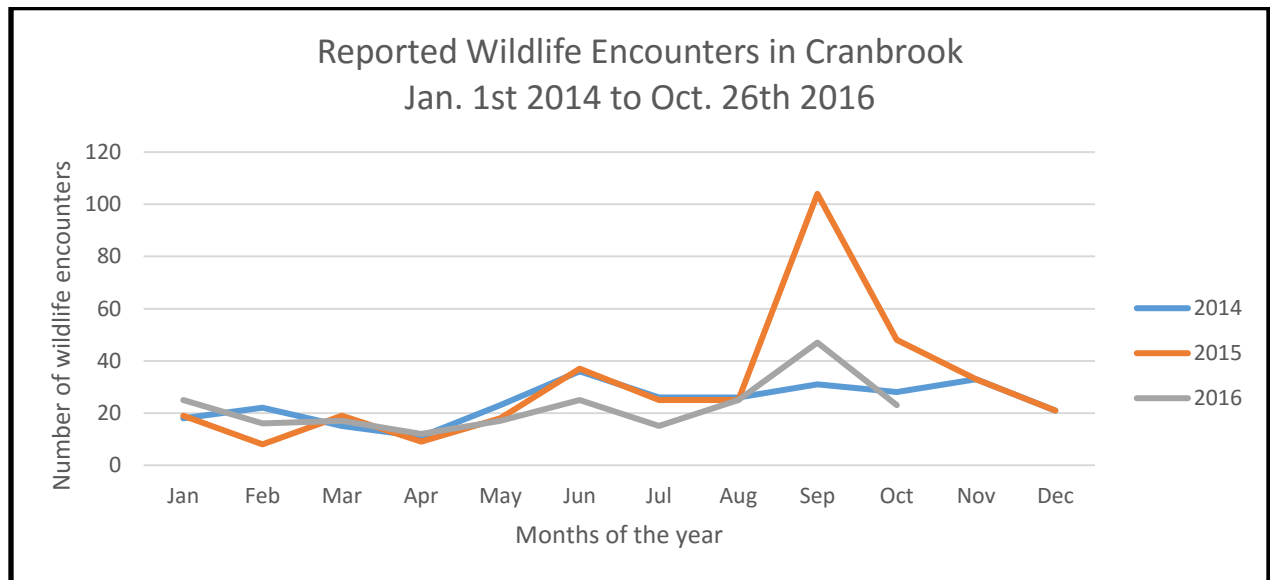


Figure 3 The graph above shows the reported wildlife encounters in Cranbrook in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The 2016 season peak was during the month of August – a total of 47 reported wildlife in Cranbrook. Cranbrook’s reported wildlife shows a decrease from the 104 wildlife reported to the www.wildsafebc.com/WARP website in August 2015. Data retrieved from www.wildsafebc.com/warp.

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Highlights of the Season

Junior Ranger Program

The 2016 season was the second year for WildSafeBC's Junior Ranger Program. In Kimberley-Cranbrook, the program is designed to introduce the concept of human-wildlife conflict and encourage kids to take an active role in reducing conflict by identifying attractants in their backyards and community. The program is very interactive which allows children to participate in games and activities related to wildlife, complete a bear-safe home checklist, and gives the junior rangers the knowledge to confidently spread WildSafeBC's message about keeping communities safe and wildlife wild. Figure 4 is an image of the BC SPCA Summer Camp - after experiencing the Junior Ranger Program.



*Figure 4 WCC and BC SPCA Summer Day Campers after experiencing the Junior Ranger Program.
Photo taken by Sarah Jacklin.*

The Junior Ranger Program was presented to the following participants in School Districts 5 & 6:

- A'qamnik Elementary
- BC SPCA Summer Day Camps
- TM Roberts Secondary School
- Kimberley Independent School
- Kootenay Christian Academy
- Highlands Elementary School
- McKim Elementary School
- Lindsay Park Elementary School
- Marysville Elementary School
- Girl Guides

Educational and Early Childhood Presentations

By the end of the 2016 season 35 educational presentations were delivered to over 1,100 participants (ages ranged from newborn to 18 years). Figure 5 is an image of the WCC presenting to the outdoor education class at Parkland Middle School. The list below represents all schools that participated in WildSafeBC's educational presentations:

- A'qamnik Elementary – Bear Awareness Presentation
- Kimberley Independent School - Bear Awareness Presentation
- McKim Elementary School - Wildlife Awareness Presentation
- Parkland Middle School – Ungulates and Predator Presentation
- Mount Baker High School – Bear Awareness Presentation
- Kimberley Independent School -Ungulates and Predators
- Kimberley Independent Preschool – Bear Basics
- Selkirk High School – Outdoor Awareness + Bear Spray Demo
- Marysville Elementary – Ungulates and Predators
- Parkland Middle School – Bear Awareness Presentation



Figure 5 WCC presenting a Wildlife Awareness Presentation in the Spring of 2016 to Parkland Middle School Grade 9 Outdoor Education Class. Photo taken by Scott Holt.

Special Interest Groups

By the end of the 2016 season eight educational presentations were delivered to over 180 participants aged 18 +. Figure 6 is an image of an identification activity put together for the International Students attending the College of the Rockies International Exchange Program 2016. The special interest groups listed below are also participants of WildSafeBC's educational presentations during the 2016 season.

- StrongStart Wildlife Awareness Presentation
- International Students from College of the Rockies A – Presentation on Animal Safety
- Kimberley Nature Park Society – Getaway Nature Hike, Berry Talk-Walk & Sunflower Hill Hike
- Rails to Trails Biker Club – WARP Talk and Bea

- International Students from College of the Rockies B– Outdoor Play Day and Wildlife Awareness spray demo
- Lions Way Lady Hikers – WARP Talk and Bear Spray Demo
- Bellies to Babies + Baby Goose -Wildlife Awareness



Figure 6 International Students from the College of the Rockies, Cranbrook, BC, participating in a Wildlife Identification Activity.

Events and Displays

Figure 7 is of the anxious future junior rangers about to enter the Kootenay Trout Hatchery a festival. The event was very successful as wildlife safety precautions during hiking, camping , and summer recreating was discussed. By the end of the 2016 season 16 outreach events and displays were delivered to over 800 participants, including:

- Tim Horton’s Summer Camp Fundraiser/BBQ
- Kimberley & Cranbrook’s Farmer’s Market
- Kootenay Trout Hatchery
- Kimberley’s First Saturday’s
- Kimberley Community Fall Fair
- BC Goes Wild Nature Walk – Kootenay Orienteering Club



Figure 7 WCC and 3 future Junior Rangers at the Kootenay Trout Hatchery 2016. Photo taken by Callum Williams.

BC Goes Wild Weekend



Figure 8 WildSafeBC BC Goes Wild Weekend Nature Walk 2016, photo taken by Brett Lisk.

WildSafeBC's BC Goes Wild Weekend was full of awareness activities including 3 contests: BC Goes Wild Count Contest, Photo Challenge and Colouring Contests as well as a Nature Walk. WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook partnered up with the East Kootenay Orienteering Club for the Nature Walk. WildSafeBC had a booth set up for display, the WCC gave a brief presentation of how to assess your surroundings in nature as well as what to do when encountering a non-defensive bear vs. a defensive bear. Figure 8 is a photo taken of the WCC and some participants getting ready to start the one hour Nature Walk on the Ponderosa Trail in the Kimberley Nature Park.

Garbage Tagging

Garbage tagging occurred in Kimberley and Marysville for the 2016 season. Garbage, along with residential fruit trees continue to be the top attractants in the area. The 2016 season saw an increase in human-wildlife conflicts related to human attractants. In Cranbrook, the decrease in reported wildlife encounters compared to 2015 can be attributed to the improvements made to manage attractants by the City of Cranbrook and its community members.

The WCC conducted 22 garbage inspections throughout the 2016 season. A garbage tagging blitz occurred the week following the BC Goes Wild Weekend. Bylaw enforcement officers, Conservation officers and the WCC all worked in collaboration to successfully increase attractant management within the community.

Door-to-Door Education

WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook receives many different phone calls from concerned community members reporting attractant management issues/concerns. In response to these calls, the WCC will



Figure 9 WCC conducting Door to Door Education in the McKim Area in Kimberley during the 2016 season. Photo taken by Callum Williams.

conduct door-to-door visits to encourage responsible attractant management. Door-to-door education was conducted in Kimberley, Cranbrook and in District C. Figure 9 is a picture of the WCC conducting door-to-door education to a newly established resident of Kimberley.

Media

WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook continued to work with Cranbrook's The DriveFM radio news team, the B104 Radio news team as well as Summit to deliver short media blurbs, on current events/issues, reaching over 50,000 people. Topics were: Welcome WildSafeBC Back for 2016, Bear Attractant Management Tips and Rutting Season. The WCC works very hard at keeping

up to date information on social media i.e. Facebook.

Challenges

2016 was the third season of operation for the WildSafeBC program in Kimberley, Cranbrook and the first season in the RDEK – District C. In both Kimberley and Cranbrook, garbage is still the number one attractant drawing wildlife into city limits, residential fruit trees and pet food follow close behind.

In Kimberley, there seemed to be a high number of bear-residential fruit tree related calls to the COS in September 2016, with lower bear-garbage related calls. In October 2016, there was a shift in wildlife-conflict calls; bear-garbage related calls tripled where as bear-residential fruit tree related calls dropped. The WCC plans to increase both commercial and residential awareness.

An April start in the 2017 season would be very effective for the WCC to be responsive to issues regarding early signs of food-conditioned wildlife as well as allowing preparation for a busy spring season for school presentations.

The WCC and COS believe that a mail insert brochure informing residents about each city's Solid-Waste Bylaws, No Feeding Bylaws and the Wildlife Act will also be beneficial in education a larger audience.

The City of Cranbrook and the WCC plan to work hard in collaboration during the upcoming season around exploring the idea of introducing an incentive for residents to replace fruit trees with non-bearing trees.

Media releases will continue and our plan is to increase these as well; there will be an awareness campaign launched early in the 2017 season ensuring residents are aware of the bylaws, important events such as the BC Goes Wild Weekend, etc.

A WildSafeBC supporter sticker to be provided to businesses that join the shift towards becoming a bear smart would be helpful when approaching businesses.

The Cities of Kimberley and Cranbrook as well as the RDEK – District C are the program’s current local sponsors, and the program is currently delivered within their limits. Over the course of 2016, several calls came from more rural communities, stretching as far as Wasa, reporting aggressive or injured wildlife as well as requesting program information. Further sponsorship from RDEK District C would support a more comprehensive WildSafeBC program in the area and would allow the WCC to respond accordingly requests are information on how to reduce human-wildlife conflict as well being able to educate livestock owners on electric fencing. Sponsorship from the RDEK Area E would allow support to reach out to these communities.

Presentations for early years continues to be a challenge. BC has encouraged teachers within School District 5 and 6 to incorporate more forest play into their daily/weekly schedules. Presentations made up for the early years such a bear basics, animals with hooves and predators should be added into the WildSafeBC structured educational programming.

Finally, the 2016 WildSafeBC season ran from the middle of May until the middle of November even though wildlife species such as coyotes, cougars, moose, elk and deer are still active in the winter months. An extended contract that allows for some “off-season” hours would allow the WCC to support community members when they need it. Requests for winter wildlife presentations began in late June 2016.

Goals for 2017

The 2017 season is just around the corner! WildSafeBC is looking forward to further developing the existing partnerships as well as working together to find new solutions to reduce human-wildlife conflict by educating the public wildlife attractant management in and around city limits. The list below provides a description of WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook goals for 2017.

- Secure further support from RDEK District C to deliver programming to rural areas surrounding Kimberley, Cranbrook and area.
- Sponsorship from RDEK Area E.
- Awareness Campaign
- Exploring fruit tree replacement incentives with the City of Cranbrook and Kimberley
- Continue to develop educational programming for primary classes (K-3)
- Connect with Bylaw Enforcement Officers and Conservation Officers further on reconstructing/amending bylaws
- Collaborate with existing community groups to increase local capacity for volunteers
- Collaborate with existing community groups that build upon existing partnerships and involves residents in finding solutions to local wildlife

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC is grateful for the enormous amount of support throughout the 2016 season. WildSafeBC acknowledges the funding support of sponsors, The Ministry of Environment, The Colombia Basin Trust, The Regional District of East Kootenay – District C, the City of Kimberley , the City of Cranbrook, and the BC Conservation Foundation,. Thank you to the operations, communications and planning staff at both Cities, who have been pro-active in collaborating with WildSafeBC to find lasting solutions to human-wildlife conflict.

Special Thanks to the Conservation Officer Services staff Jeff Scott, Ray Gilewicz and Denny Chretien support staff Jennifer Hunt.

Thank you to the staff at the BC Conservation Foundation including, but not limited to, Frank Ritcey, Jen Bellhouse, Trina Radford and Shelley Nohels.

The WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook’s educational programming would not be the same without such an amazing audience and supportive educators.

Thank you to all community participants, together, WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook is possible!

