

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2017

Kimberley – Cranbrook

Prepared by: Danica Roussy, WildSafeBC Community Coordinator



Executive Summary

The Kimberley-Cranbrook area experienced less human-wildlife conflict than in the previous three years (Figure 1). Wildlife encounters this year decreased in both Kimberley and Cranbrook areas (Figure 2 and Figure 3). Part of this decrease is attributed the extreme weather conditions; an extremely hot summer in 2017 compared to the 2016 season.

There were many highlights during the 2017 season. WildSafeBC's BC Goes Wild Weekend and the partnership created with EK Parks will be very valuable in up-coming years for increased awareness of wildlife attractants – helping to manage wildlife attractants in campgrounds when WildSafeBC Coordinators are not readily available.

Education programming in schools continued to be the focus of the WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook program in 2017. 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.

WildSafeBC WARP Data 2017

A total of 189 wildlife reports were made this year in Kimberley to WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) website. Cranbrook, reported 270 wildlife encounters onto the WARP website this year alone. As shown in Appendices 1 and 2, deer reports are responsible for 62% reports and black bear responsible for 23% of wildlife reports with the remaining wildlife making up 15%.

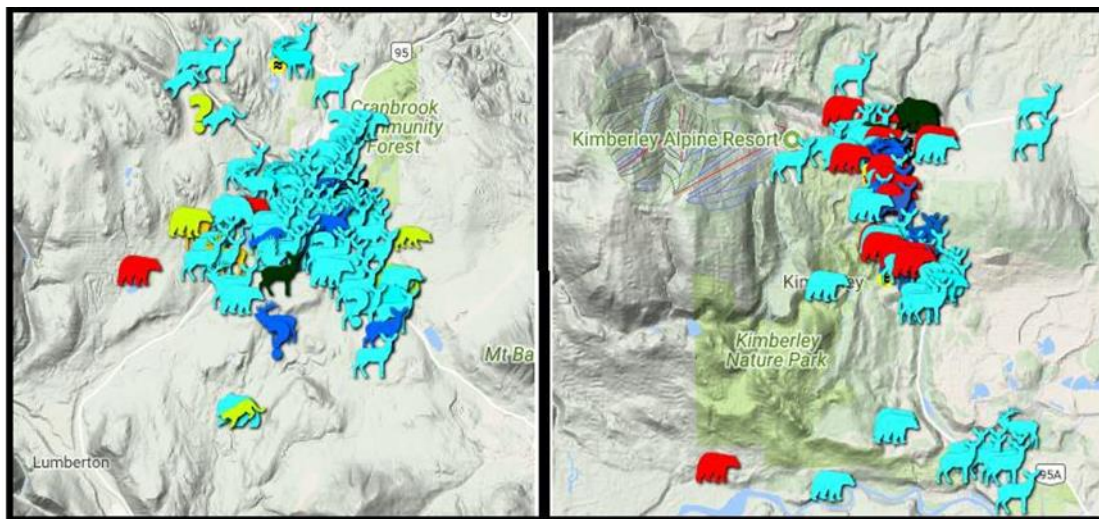


Figure 1. WARP map with all reported wildlife encounters from Jan. 1st – Oct. 17th, 2017 in Cranbrook (left) and Kimberley (right)

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 on October 16 2017, from www.wildsafebc.com/warp.

Trends

Figure 3 and Appendices 3 and 4 demonstrate the wildlife encounters in Kimberley and Cranbrook in 2017. As shown, wildlife encounters in both areas begin to spike upwards in the beginning of April as the wildlife is beginning to become more abundant as the snow melts. The highest peak of the season for wildlife encounters this year was in the June 2017 for both Kimberley and Cranbrook. There was a sharp drop off in wildlife encounters in Kimberley come August whereas Cranbrook saw trends that remained quite high until September. As illustrated on the graph below, Kimberley is experiencing more wildlife encounters than Cranbrook during the late fall of 2017.

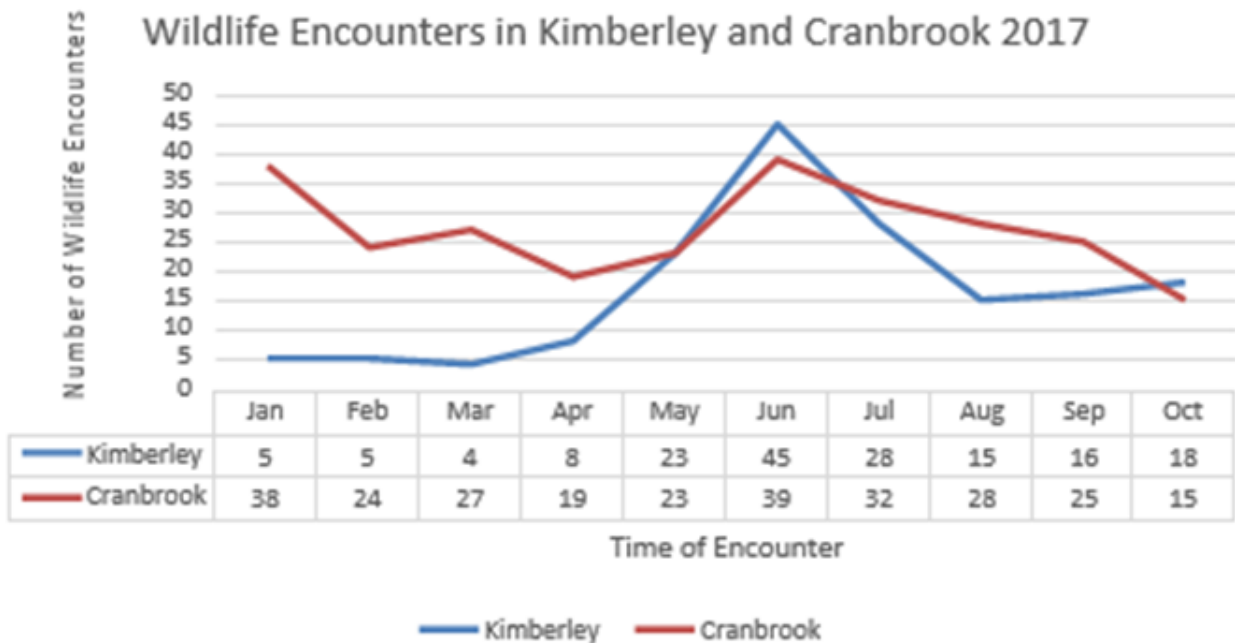


Figure 2. Wildlife encounters in Kimberley and Cranbrook 2017

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Highlights from the 2017 Season

New Partnerships

WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook was fortunate this year to partner with the XTunaxa Nation. Bradley Alexander teamed up with WCC Danica Roussy for multiple events this summer. Another amazing partnership this season was developed between EK Parks' Interpreter and the WCC at Moyie Provincial Park. Events were put on that incorporated EK Parks campgrounds and included events such as information booths, bear-spray demonstrations, hikes and "Bare Camping" presentations. One highlight from this partnership was Canada Day, 2017. EK Parks, Bradley Alexander and the WCC teamed up and put on a weekend full of wildlife awareness events. Below is an image of the Canada Parade at Moyie Provincial Park, Moyie BC. Other events Bradley Alexander attended this season include:

- Sam Steele Days
- Fort Steele Days
- National Aboriginal Day at the Kootenay Trout Hatchery
- EK Park Events



Figure 3. Photo of Bradley Alexander participating in a Canada Day Craft event

Junior Ranger Program

The 2017 season was the third 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 (JR) the knowledge to confidently spread WildSafeBC's messaging. Figure 4 is an image of the grade 3/4 class at TM Roberts Elementary School after experiencing the JR Program.



Figure 4. WCC delivery the JR program at TM Roberts Elementary School

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

- Kootenay Orchards Elementary
- TM Roberts Secondary School
- Scouts
- EK Parks Jerry's Rangers
- BC SPCA Summer Day Camp
- McKim Elementary School
- Gordon Terrace Elementary
- Marysville Elementary School
- Girl Guides
- Cub Scouts

School Program

By the end of the 2017 seasons, 43 educational presentations were delivered to over 1,900 participants. Figure 6 is an image of the WCC presenting to the outdoor education class at Parkland Middle School in June 2017. The list below represents schools within School District 5 and School District 6 that participated in WildSafeBC's educational presentations.

School District 5 & 6 Participants:

- Kootenay Orchards Elementary, SD5
- Parkland Middle School, SD5
- Mount Baker, SD5
- Gordon Terrace Elementary, SD5
- TM Roberts Elementary, SD5
- Amy Woodland, SD5
- Selkirk High School, SD6
- Marysville Elementary, SD6
- Lindsay Park Elementary, SD6



Figure 5. WCC presenting a Wildlife Awareness presentation to Parkland Middle School class

Display Booths and Events

By the end of the 2017 season educational presentations were delivered to over 460 participants. Figure 7 is an image of an early year's event at Community Connections in Cranbrook where a child is learning bear basics. By the end of the 2017 season 15 outreach events and displays were delivered to over 1,300 participants, including:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Kimberley Early Learning Center | • Kimberley Nature Park Society |
| • StrongStart | • Nordic Trails |
| • Community Connections | • EK Parks |
| • Colleague of the Rockies | • Kimberley and Cranbrook Farmers Market |
| • Kimberley Kaleidoscope Festival | • Kimberley Community Fall Fair |
| • Apple Capture Gleaning Project | • Oktoberfest Kimberley |



Figure 6. Community Connections and Bellies to Babies, participating in a wildlife safety presentation

BC Goes Wild Weekend 2017

WildSafeBC's BC Goes Wild Weekend was full of awareness activities including three contests: BC Goes Wild count contest, photo challenge and colouring contests, as well as a nature walk. WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook partnered up with The Cranbrook's Boy and Girls Club for a wildlife talk, Staying Safe in Bear Country video and a short bear-spray demonstration. Wildsight Kimberley-Cranbrook office allows WildSafeBC to partner with their gleaning group for an Apple Pick and Press Weekend that included a wildlife information booth. The booth set up for display was a great addition to the gleaning event as 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.

Apple gleaning was a huge part of the weekend and ended up having an amazing turnout with about 100 participants all weekend! This year, WildSafeBC partnered with Wildsight's apple gleaning project: Apple Capture. Apple Capture involves a local group of volunteers that pick and press apples for those who sign up onto a tree board. This season, two apples pick and press events were hosted. The first on BC Goes Wild Weekend as the apples ripened early this year and another on Oktoberfest Weekend to get the remaining trees that were not yet tackled this season.



Figure 7. BC Goes Wild Weekend Events

Garbage Tagging

Garbage tagging occurred in Kimberley and Marysville for the 2017 season. Garbage, along with residential fruit trees continue to be the top attractants in the area. The WCC conducted 20 garbage inspections throughout the 2017 season. A garbage tagging blitz occurred the week prior to BC Goes Wild Weekend. The WCC worked with bylaw enforcement and Conservation Officers to successfully increase attractant management within the community.

Door-to-Door

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 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 an image of an area in a trailer park within Kimberley City limits that constantly has garbage left out overnight. Bear in area signs and door-to-door visits are conducted in order to educate community members how to ensure their property and neighbourhood manage and secure their attractants from wildlife.



Figure 8. Creek Side Trailer Park in Kimberley BC with unsecured garbage and a “Bear in Area” sign

Social Media

The WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook Facebook page has become more popular over the last two years. Figure 10 is a screenshot of the insight page which allows you to analyze how many reaches, likes, posts and comments your page has received. Between May 1st, 2017 and October 30th, 2017, the Kimberley-Cranbrook WCC posted of Facebook 70 times.

As of October 18th, 2017, 194 people have liked The WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook Facebook page. Social media has been an excellent tool for communicating to the public upcoming events, WARP data updates, Wildlife Attractant Management tips, wildlife sightings and much more!

Other social media sources used during the 2017 season were local papers such as the Kimberley Bulletin and E-Know. A total of six articles were published in print media. Radio was used to reach members of the public as well. The WCC delivered a total of 24 radio announcements regarding WARP data, up-coming events, how to stay safe in bear country and camping safety. Social media took off this year with a slow start in respect to the elections. This did pose challenges however as managing bear attractant tips and safety protocols were released a little later in the season and therefore the messaging may not have reached its full potential. Social media was a very important and effective tool in reaching members of the public. A total of 948789 people were connected with this season, for more information please review appendix 5.

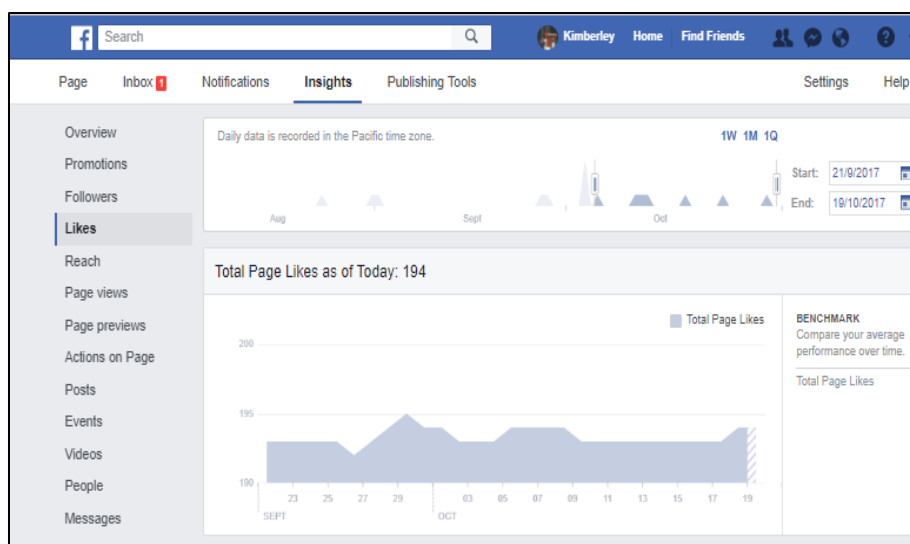


Figure 9. Screenshot of the WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook's Facebook insight page

Challenges for the 2017 Season

Fruit Trees

Fruit trees were a constant challenge as the fruit trees began to ripen early this year. They continue to attract wildlife into the towns of Kimberley and Cranbrook. Kimberley is a transient city with lots of rental units and vacation homes. It is difficult to manage fruit trees on these properties because the property owners are not always there. Fortunately, the local apple gleaning group, Apple Capture, tackled some trees on vacant land or on people's property that rely on these services.

Unsecured Garbage Bins

Unsecured garbage bins are a big challenge in areas with lower income housing, houses without garage infrastructure and areas without communal dumpsters to managed local attractants. It is also a problem around Kimberley Alpine Resort as the tourists coming in and out do not pay close attention to the bylaws set in place to manage attractants.

This year, the City of Kimberley invested \$480,000 into an automated side loading garbage truck, along with over 3,050 bins for Kimberley homes. Mike Fox, Director of Operations with the City of Kimberley, states "The workers will benefit with fewer injuries, less exiting the vehicles and in the winters, less slipping, falling or having to lift the garbage's.

Though this may cause challenges during the winter months due to the weight and material, this is a step in the right direction as it will provide all Kimberley residences with a secure garbage bin that they may not have had."

Aggressive Deer

Aggressive deer continue to be a problem in Kimberley and Cranbrook. The urban deer become more aggressive during rutting season and this year seemed to have been a highly active season for bucks. Challenges arising in Kimberley this year include bucks ramming into parked vehicles to prepare for rutting season, removing velvet from antlers, as well as protective does with fawns near school yards. Safety protocols were discussed through social media, door-to-door visits and presentations to schools. A buddy system was put in place for walking home, in particular around the Kimberley Independent School as both bear and deer frequent the area. The Kimberley cull of deer has been a huge focus on the radio recently and seems to be a touchy subject. There appears to be an even split on the opinion of culling aggressive deer out of the city.

In Cranbrook, there were multiple incidences regarding both aggression and conflict between does protecting their fawns from dogs and their owners walking down the sidewalk. There was an incident this July where a lady and her dog were attacked by a doe, in downtown Cranbrook, because it was protecting her fawn alongside a fence with some tall grass. These are truly urban deer and they do not leave city limits.

Goals for 2018

In addition to serving Kimberley and Cranbrook, the WCC efforts were distributed between RDEK Electoral Areas C and E. Within each area, only a handful of communities could receive the program due to funding priorities, and coordination time. Goals for the 2018 season include:

1. Secure additional funding in efforts to deliver the program in all communities in RDEK Electoral Areas A, C and E.
2. Encouraging the City of Kimberley as well as the City of Cranbrook staff to enforce local bylaws, as well as improve/update them to include consideration of wildlife attractant management practices and to make the appropriate amendments in the bylaws to allow enforcement.
3. Complete Bear Hazard Assessments in Kimberley and Cranbrook and then use the document for developing the Human-Bear Conflict Management Plan (CMP).
4. Work with land and property owners to better implement attractant management strategies by introducing the WildSafeBC Certification program and working with them to properly determine the overall cost of the process, the mitigation opportunities, the benefits the participating business will receive from becoming certified, etc.

Recommendations

1. Additional funding for the WCC to increase coordination time in efforts to expand programming to all communities in Electoral Area E & C.
 - a. An increase in funding would allow for continuous and consistent messaging on wildlife awareness and wildlife attractant management strategies and to work with many interested educational programs that do not run during the summer months.
 - b. Additional funding would allow the WCC to work with stakeholders within the community on upcoming initiatives such as the WildSafeBC Certification Program that will be launched in 2018.

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC is grateful for the consistent support throughout the 2017 season!

WildSafeBC appreciatively acknowledges its 2017 funders:

- The Ministry of Environment
- The Columbia Basin Trust
- The Regional District of East Kootenay – District C
- The City of Kimberley
- The City of Cranbrook
- The BC Conservation Foundation

Special thanks to the Conservation Officer Services for the participation in promoting WildSafeBC awareness. Irreplaceable partnerships like this are vital for the effectiveness and consistency in message delivery of how to keep wildlife wild and communities safe. A big thank you goes out to the operations, communications and planning staff of Kimberley and Cranbrook, who have been pro-active in collaborating with WildSafeBC to find lasting solutions to human-wildlife conflict.

The WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook's educational programming would not be the same without such supportive educators in School District and School District 6 and their amazing audiences, as well as the Outdoor Naturalist Clubs.

This being said, thank you to all community participants, together, WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook is possible! It is amazing to see community members becoming more and more proactive, taking action in order to properly manage their attractants to minimize the potential for wildlife conflict is much appreciated.

Last but not least, thank you to the staff at the BC Conservation Foundation including, but not limited to, Frank Ritcey, Corinne Hutchinson, Trina Radford and Shelley Nohels.

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WildSafeBC Kimberley Cranbrook Facebook Insights. October 19 2017. Facebook.

https://www.facebook.com/WildSafeBCKimberleyCranbrook/insights/?referrer=page_insights_tab_button

Photo Credits

Cover page. Photo taken by Kacee Kennedy

Figure 3. Photo taken by Chery Kelly

Figure 4. Photo taken by Danica Roussy

Figure 5. Photo taken by Scott Holt

Figure 6. Photo taken by Pat Chisholm

Figure 7. Photo taken by Danica Roussy

Figure 8. Photo taken by Danica Roussy



Appendix 1

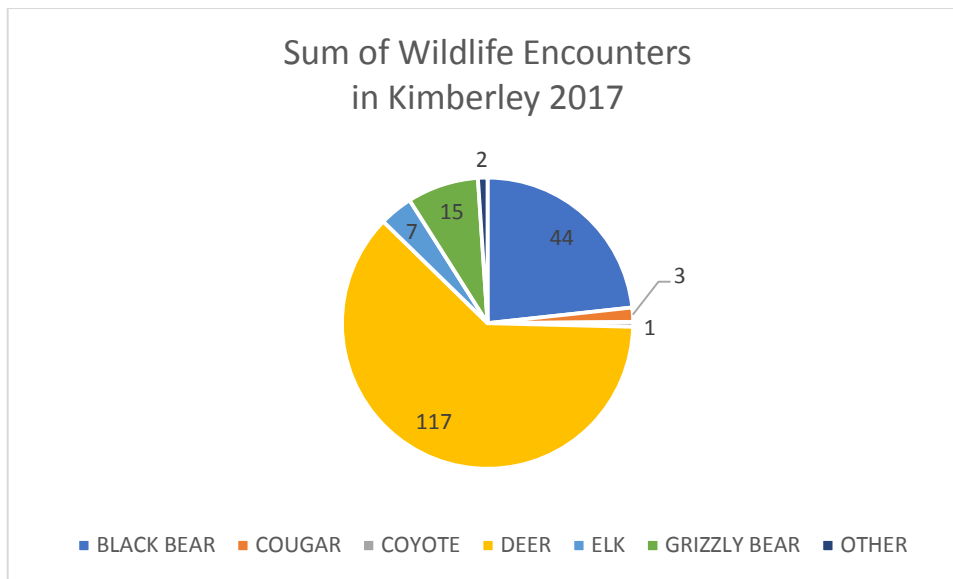
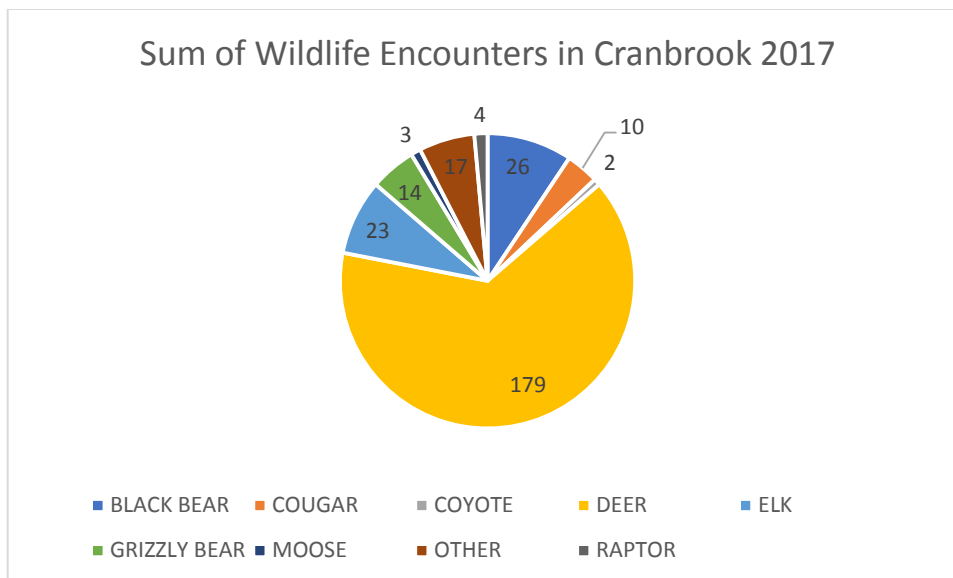


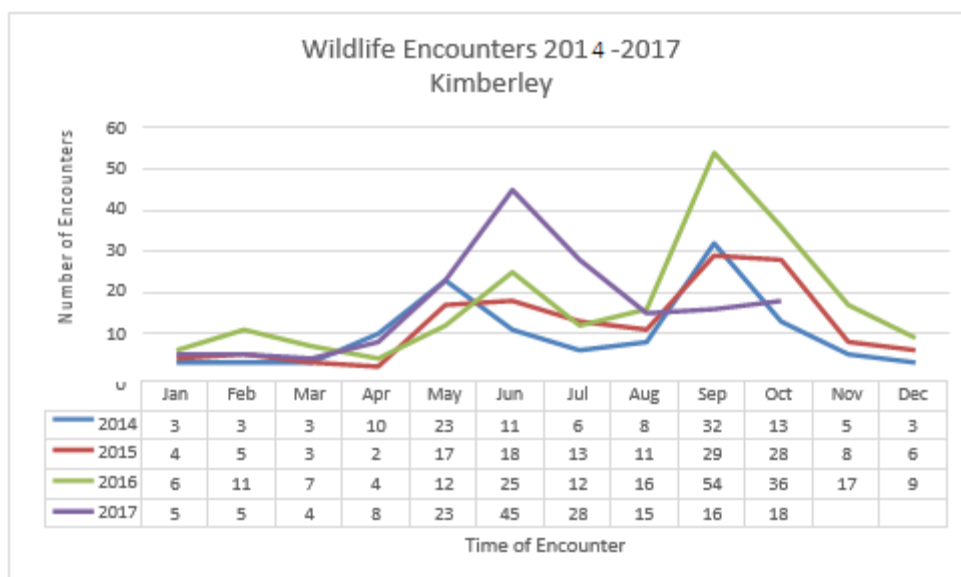
Figure 2 According to www.wildsafebc.com/WARP there were 189 reported wildlife encounters in Kimberley during 2017. Data retrieved on October 10th, 2017.

Appendix 2



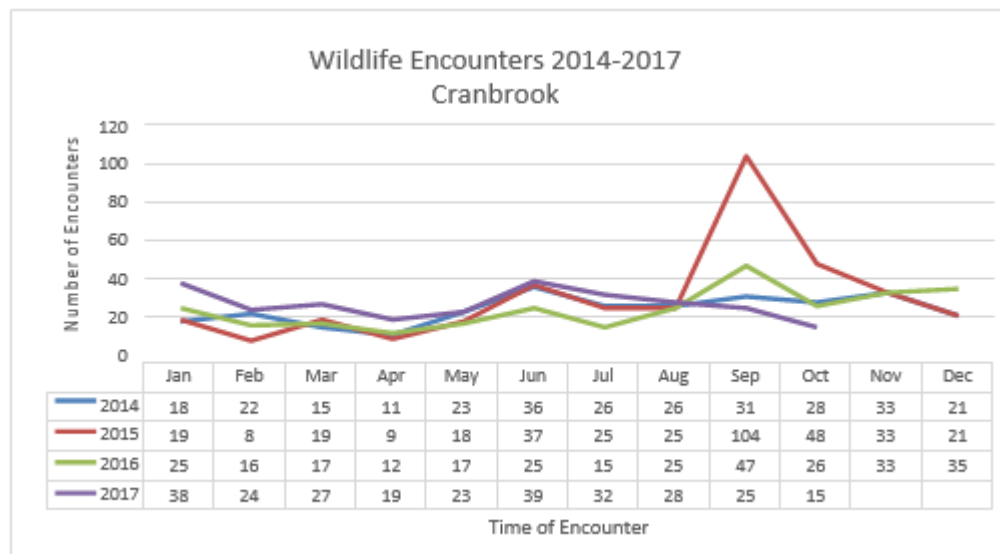
According to www.wildsafebc.com/WARP there were 189 reported wildlife encounters in Kimberley during 2017. Data retrieved on October 10th, 2017.

Appendix 3



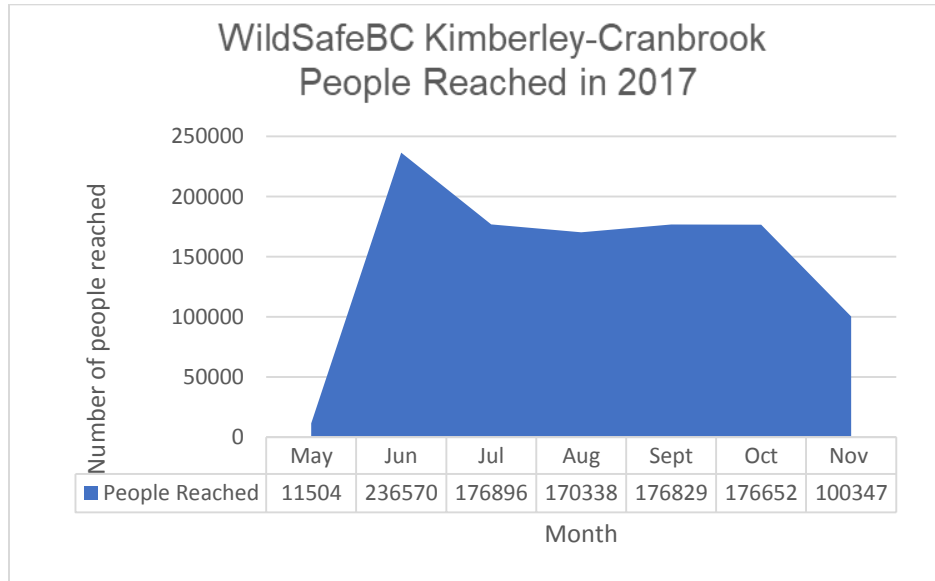
The graph above shows the reported wildlife encounters in Kimberley from 2014-2017. The 2017 season peak for wildlife encounters occurred during the month of June – a total of 45 reported wildlife in Kimberley. The peak season in 2016 was in August for a total of 54 wildlife encounters. This graph is illustrating the decrease in wildlife encounters compared to previous years. Data retrieved on October 16, 2017, from www.wildsafebc.com/warp.

Appendix 4



The graph above shows the reported wildlife encounters in Cranbrook from 2014 - 2017. The 2017 season peak was during the month of June for a total of 39 encounters, compared to the 47 wildlife encounters during last season's "peak" in August 2016. This graph is also illustrating a decrease in wildlife encounters as well. Data retrieved from www.wildsafebc.com/warp.

Appendix 5



The graph above shows the amount of people reached per month during the 2017. Notice the spike in June – the Community Coordinator held off on media releases until the 2017 Provincial Elections was completed. Once election news died down, the WSBC’s media blitz began - introducing the 2017 program, concerns and up-coming events such as Camping during the long weekend - public of safety outdoors using the bare-camping brochure or radio announcements delivering the same message. The total number of contacts in 2017 was 1,049,136 .