

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2017

## Maple Ridge

Prepared by: Daniel Mikolay, WildSafeBC Community Coordinator



## Executive Summary

The 2017 WildSafeBC (WSBC) season was an active year for reported wildlife calls in Maple Ridge. In 2016, we had 355 bear calls from April 1 to October 15. This year during that same time frame we had 629 bear calls. Most importantly, the increase in calls did not translate into an increase in bears being destroyed which is a common misconception.

The goals for 2017 were:

- To expand the wildlife attractant education to include more local businesses.
- To be a leader in regional wildlife attractant management programs to share ideas and plans with other communities on ways to reduce human-wildlife conflict
- To continue to eliminate early curbside garbage bin placement in high human-wildlife conflict areas through education and by working with the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and bylaws.

Calls of cougar sightings were down this year compared to last year. Last year's spike could be contributed to video footage of cougars in urban areas. Due to a rising concern regarding cougars in urban areas, WSBC worked closely with the COS to include cougar awareness into their workshops with messaging focussed on reducing wildlife attractants in neighbourhoods.

WSBC Maple Ridge participated in the second annual BC Goes Wild weekend with events taking place across the third weekend in September.



*This juvenile is too young for preschool*

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Highlights from the 2017 Season .....	3
Local Businesses .....	4
Presentations .....	4
Public Displays.....	5
Door-to-Door Canvassing .....	5
Northeast Sector Bear Network Committee.....	6
Media.....	7
Challenges of the 2017 Season .....	7
Goals for 2018 .....	8
Acknowledgements.....	8

## Table of Figures

Figure 1. CO Robin Sano and beekeeper Mr. Yeganehrad discuss electric fencing .....	4
Figure 2. WSBC public booth displays .....	5
Figure 3. Garbage tag used during door-to-door canvassing.....	6
Figure 4. Wildlife attractants such as bird seed also attract pest species .....	6
Figure 5. WCC Dan Mikolay on Breakfast TV.....	7

## Highlights from the 2017 Season

Calls reporting wildlife sightings, particularly black bear, were up significantly this year compared to 2016 during the months of May, June and July (Table 1). There are many potential reasons for the increase in black bear sightings and calls, including the prolonged winter and late onset of spring that occurred in 2017 with a delayed growing season for native vegetation and food sources. Another possible contributing factor to an increase in wildlife reporting, are that residents of the Maple Ridge community are becoming more aware of methods of reporting such as the RAPP (Report All Poachers and Polluters) line and the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP).

**Table 1. Comparison of black bear and wildlife reports per month 2016 and 2017**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Black bear</b>	<b>Other wildlife</b>
May 2017	137	7
<b>May 2016</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10</b>
June 2017	173	20
<b>June 2016</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>
July 2017	102	15
<b>July 2016</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>
August 2017	43	6
<b>August 2016</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>14</b>
September 2017	78	10
<b>September 2016</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>12</b>
October 2015	29	6
<b>October 2017</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>

## Local Businesses

In coordination with the COS, WildSafeBC worked with local beekeeper, Hossien Yeganehrad in developing ways of protecting his commercial bee hives from predation, particularly black bears. Mr. Yeganehrad installed electric fencing around his hives. The installation was so successful he was able to recoup his cost within two months. Mr. Yeganehrad sponsored an electric fence workshop and donated an electric fence kit to the WildSafeBC program for future workshops.



Figure 1. CO Robin Sano and beekeeper Mr. Yeganehrad discuss electric fencing

## Presentations

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) conducted presentations throughout the Maple Ridge community. Below is a list of locations and events where presentations were delivered during 2017:

- SPCA Summer Camp
- Earth Day
- Canada Day
- Maple Ridge Literacy Day
- Rivers Day
- Worms and Wee Ones
- Maple Ridge Home Show
- Country Festival
- Girl Guides/Boy Scouts
- Return of the Salmon
- Numerous Schools and Preschools
- Alouette River Management Society Summer Camp

## Public Displays

WildSafeBC attended numerous community events with the educational display during the 2017 season. These events were great places to learn from residents of their wildlife concerns and to provide education on ways to reduce human-wildlife conflict. This year WildSafeBC worked with Kanada Education and Environment Partnership Society (KEEPS) and Metro Parks to create an informative display on the interaction of bears, cougars and salmon. WildSafeBC Maple Ridge participated in the second annual BC Goes Wild Weekend by hosting public displays across the weekend of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of September.

WildsafeBC attended a two day Country Festival at Pitt Meadows which provided an opportunity to deliver WildSafeBC messaging to the Mitt Meadows community regarding bear attractants and promoting the use of bear resistant bins.



Figure 2. WSBC public booth displays

## Door-to-Door Canvassing

This year the WCC noticed a dramatic decrease in the number of residence placing garbage out prior to their scheduled collection times in previously high conflict areas, particularly in the lower Albion area. This improvement in attractant management allowed the WCC time to expand the reach of door-to-door canvassing into new areas of the Maple Ridge community.

The WCC introduced print materials to the 2017 season door-to-door canvassing which included a one page information sheet providing information about garbage, bird feeders, pet food, and relevant sections of the *Wildlife Act* regarding wildlife attractant management. This information proved highly effective in promoting attractant management and reducing wildlife sightings in problematic neighbourhoods.



Figure 3. Garbage tag used during door-to-door canvassing

## Northeast Sector Bear Network Committee

In the spring, the City of Maple Ridge hosted a meeting for the Northeast Sector Bear Network Committee. The function of this committee is to work together on ways to reduce the amount of bear conflicts in the lower mainland. The lower mainland has the highest number of reported sightings in all of BC.



Figure 4. Wildlife attractants such as bird seed also attract pest species

Photo courtesy of Cheryl Zandbergen

## 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 to monitor wildlife issues occurring in surrounding neighbourhoods.

At the end of the school year, there were news stories about a coyote attacking children within the lower mainland. Daniel Mikolay, the WCC for Maple Ridge appeared on Breakfast TV to educate the audience on how to reduce conflict by removing attractants and also what to do if you encounter a coyote.

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



Figure 5. WCC Dan Mikolay on Breakfast TV

## Challenges of the 2017 Season

The prolonged winter posed a problem for wildlife obtaining natural food sources during the months of spring. An increase in bear sightings within urban areas continued into the summer months and did not decrease until the end of July.

Despite the decreasing trend in the number of early curbside garbage bin placement in historically high incident areas, there was a significant increase in bear sightings during the months of May, June and July. Messaging regarding human-wildlife conflict in higher than average bear activity areas is made increasingly difficult when factors such as weather variation influence wildlife activity.



## Goals for 2018

The WCC is looking forward to the 2018 season, and hopes to continue to collaborate with community partners to make concrete solutions available for local wildlife attractant issues. The goals for 2018 include:

- Partner with other environmental groups to develop a local gleaning team to help residents remove unwanted fruit.
- Continue to take steps to become a Bear Smart community.
- Work with bylaws to expand fines for wildlife attractants other than curbside garbage bin placement.

## 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, and the British Columbia Conservation Foundation. Our community partners have provided invaluable support and guidance.

Thank you to: the Conservation Officer Service, including COS Todd Hunter, COS Robin Sano, and COS Sharlene Syer, Ridge Meadows Recycling Society Kim Day, Leanne Koehn, Alison Thompson; City of Maple Ridge Parks and Leisure, Valoree Richmond, David Bogue; BCCF Staff (WSBC Provincial Coordinator Frank Ritcey, Corinne Hutchinson); 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!



*Photo courtesy of Leanne Koehn*