

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2017

City of Kamloops

Prepared by: Courtney Hawkins WildSafeBC Community Coordinator



Executive Summary

Wildlife conflict in Kamloops started off extremely high in the spring and slowed down in the fall compared to 2016. According to the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line and data from the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) there were approximately 353 black bear, 40 cougar, 19 coyote and 193 deer conflicts from April 2017-October 2017 (Figures 1 & 2). Black bear reports were higher than last year which had 248 sightings from April 2016 – October 2016 (Figure 3). The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) focussed their efforts this year on more door-to-door canvassing and garbage tagging, using local events and presentations to supplement these actions to reach more people about human-wildlife conflicts. The WCC also continued to assist the City of Kamloops with the bear resistant lock pilot project in the community. In addition to these efforts, the WCC used media releases, interviews and social media to help spread messaging across the city.

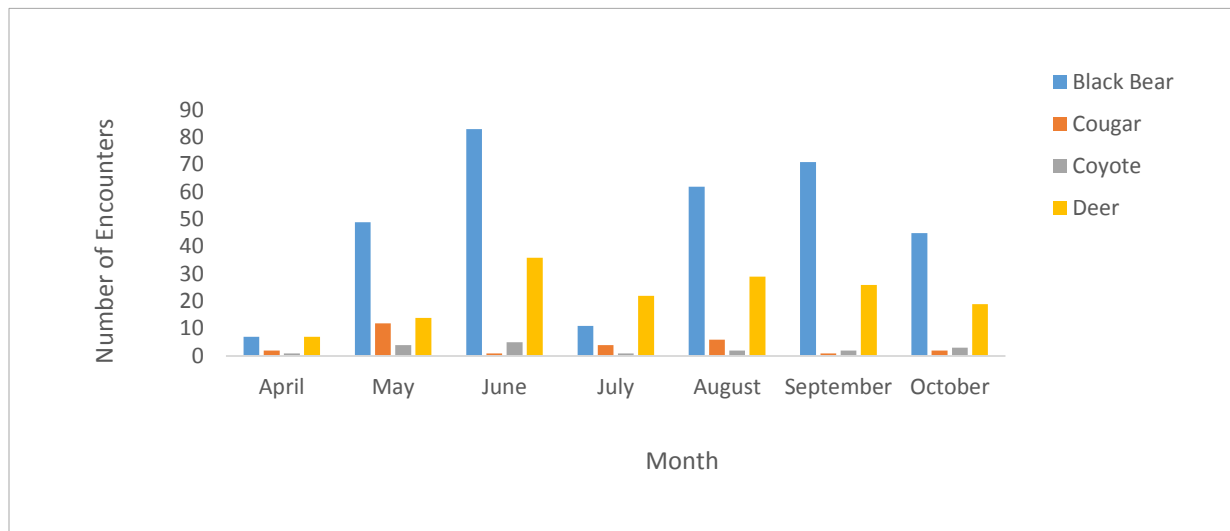


Figure 1. Wildlife encounters reported to RAPP line from April - October 2017

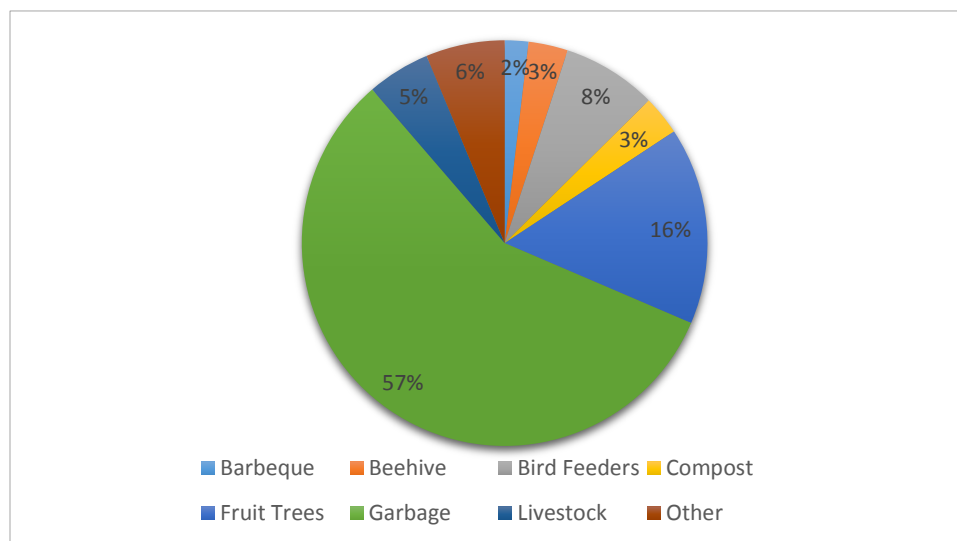


Figure 2. Percent of black bear RAPP line reports relating to attractants from April - October 2017

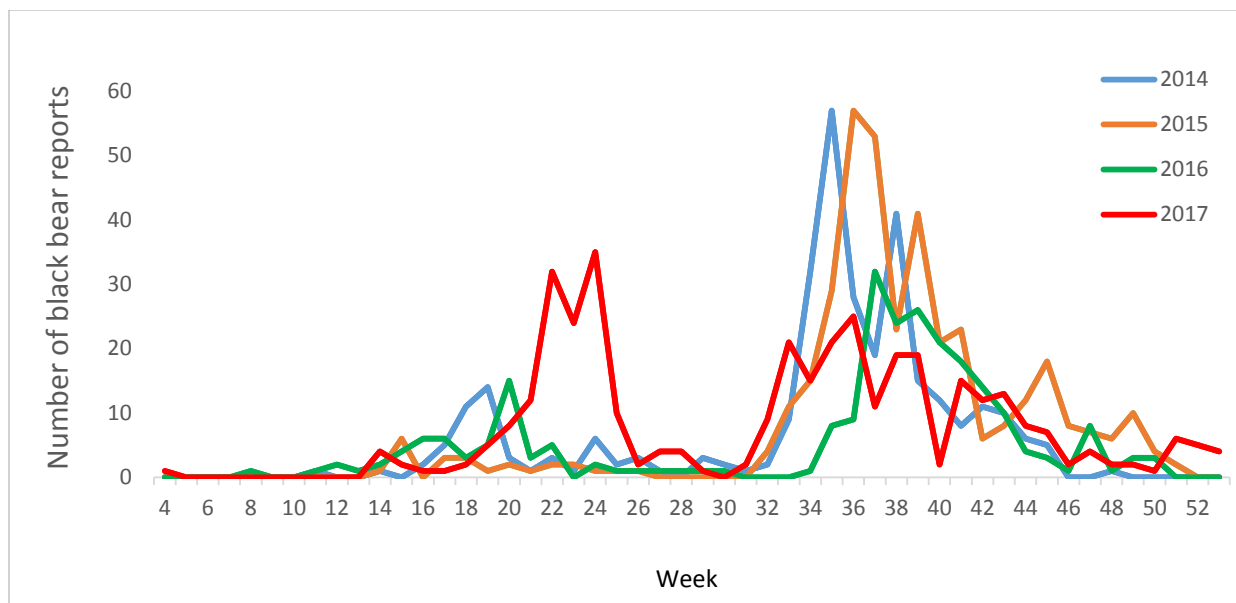


Figure 3. Black bear reports to RAPP line and WARP 2014 - 2017

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Highlights from the 2017 Season	4
Public Events	4
BC Goes Wild Weekend.....	5
Junior Ranger Program	6
Presentations	6
Speaker Series	7
Garbage Tagging	7
Door-to-Door Canvassing.....	8
Bear Management Committee.....	9
Pilot Project Bear Resistant Garbage Locks.....	9
Media Coverage.....	9
Challenges to the 2017 Program.....	10
Goals for 2018	10
Acknowledgements.....	11

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Wildlife encounters reported to RAPP line from April - October 2017	1
Figure 2. Percent of black bear RAPP line reports relating to attractants from April - October 2017.....	1
Figure 3. Black bear reports to RAPP line and WARP 2014 - 2017	2
Figure 4. Kids learning about wildlife and attractants at the Kamloops Farmers Market.	4
Figure 5. WCC showing the beaver lodge for the BCGW nature walk	5
Figure 6. Junior Ranger presentation at Arthur Hatton Elementary	6
Figure 7. WCC giving a presentation for Eureka science camp.....	7
Figure 8. Bear resistant garbage cart lock in use	9
Figure 9. WCC at the Big Little Science Center for the Community Science Celebration	10

Highlights from the 2017 Season

Public Events

The WCC attended many events in 2017. These events allow the WCC to have one-on-one conversations with locals and tourists about human-wildlife conflict, as well as hand out educational materials such as brochures, rulers etc. The Kamloops Farmer's Market and Overlander's Day had the highest attendance.

Events attended in 2017 were as follows:

- BC Bears' Day
- BC Goes Wild
- Boo at the Zoo
- Car Free Day
- Community Science Celebration
- Kamloops Farmer's Market
- Kamloops Artisan Market
- Overlander's Day
- World Rivers Day



Figure 4. Kids learning about wildlife and attractants at the Kamloops Farmers Market.

BC Goes Wild Weekend

The Kamloops WCC participated in the second annual BC Goes Wild weekend. This event was province wide and took place on September 16th and 17th. This year the WCC held a Wildlife Detective Nature Walk in partnership with the Kamloops NatureKids that included a small scavenger hunt at Tranquille Creek on September 16th.

This walk and scavenger hunt allowed children and parents to look and listen closely for evidence of animals including plants, tracks, scat, and animal trails. Although no actual wildlife was seen (other than a few birds and insects), the event was well received and participants enjoyed seeing things they had never noticed before along a familiar trail. Partnering with the Kamloops NatureKids was great, as it guaranteed a small group of participants with an additional few from the general public (total of 16).

In the future, it would be wise to get attendees to RSVP in order for the WCC to prepare accordingly and perhaps confirm a larger group. The WildSafeBC Facebook Page was used to advertise the event and was also shared by the NatureKids Page. Putting up a few posters at high traffic family areas (e.g., BC Wildlife Park, Tournament Capital Center, TNRD Library) would also be a good addition.



Figure 5. WCC showing the beaver lodge for the BCGW nature walk

Junior Ranger Program

The WCC attended several elementary schools this year to deliver the Junior Ranger Program. Every school received the same format including a PowerPoint presentation and time for exploration of skulls, tracks, and other animal props. The WildSafeBC Kamloops program received 250 extra kits donated by Telus this year. All visited students from K – 5 received a Junior Ranger Kit which included a coloring book, pencil, ruler, button, sticker, oath card and membership card. A total of 1252 students were visited and 946 kits were given out to the community. Presentations were best when the WCC could set up in a library or other multi-purpose room for the day and have the classes filter through on a schedule.

The following schools were visited:

- Aberdeen Elementary
- Arthur Hatton Elementary
- Dallas Elementary
- Dufferin Elementary
- Juniper Ridge Elementary
- Kamloops Christian School
- Lloyd George Elementary
- Parkcrest Elementary
- Rayleigh Elementary
- RLC Elementary



Figure 6. Junior Ranger presentation at Arthur Hatton Elementary

Presentations

In addition to the Junior Ranger Program in schools, the WCC gave presentations to many other groups around the city. Presentations were given to Eureka science camp groups at Thompson Rivers University, which was a great fit and should be continued in future years. Immigration Services were also given “Wildlife Safety” presentations which allowed the WCC to supply many immigrants with their first knowledge about the wildlife in Canada and how to be safe in the wild and in the community.

The WCC also delivered the presentations to Beyond the Bell Daycare, Strongstart Pre-school, the Big Little Science Centre, and a Cub Scouts group where attendees were able to learn more about local wildlife, understand how important managing attractants around their home is, and take home fun and informational materials to share with their families.



Figure 7. WCC giving a presentation for Eureka science camp

Speaker Series

The speaker series was continued for its fourth year in partnership with Kamloops Parks. Unfortunately with the extreme fire conditions in BC, Kenna Cartwright Park was closed for most of the summer and the air quality was poor. The talks were held at the new West Highlands Community Centre in Aberdeen, which may have contributed to the low turnout for most of the talks. The WCC led talks on Urban Deer and Predator Awareness and Safety. Overall, positive feedback was received from those who attended, however a change in time as well as location may be needed in order to get higher attendance.

Garbage Tagging

Garbage in several neighborhoods in Kamloops was tagged by the WCC this season. Juniper Ridge/ West had the lowest set out rates (3 tagged out of 600 homes checked), which is a large improvement from previous years. Aberdeen and Sahali did not receive tagging last year, perhaps explaining the high set out rates. For example, Upper Sahali had 30 tagged out of 350 homes checked and Aberdeen had 21 tagged for 400 homes checked. Tagging did not have an effect in some areas of Aberdeen and Upper Sahali and were therefore referred to the bylaw officers to give out fines. Garbage tagging can also be a very dangerous task, due to potential confrontations with residents as well as the proximity to dangerous wildlife. It is important that the WCC always have a volunteer or other staff member assist for these safety reasons and to also make the garbage tagging process more efficient. A total of 163 bins were tagged in the City of Kamloops.

The following neighborhoods received garbage tagging this year:

- Aberdeen (2)
- Barnhartvale (1)
- Dallas (1)
- Juniper Ridge (2)
- Juniper West (3)
- Lower Sahali (1)
- North Shore (1)
- South Kamloops (1)
- Upper Sahali (2)
- Valleyview (2)

Door-to-Door Canvassing

Door-to-Door canvassing covered several high conflict areas in Kamloops this year. Efforts were focused on streets in Aberdeen and Juniper Ridge where conflicts have been high in the past. The WCC was able to have good open communication with the Conservation Officer Service (COS) during most of the season, which allowed door-to-door canvassing to be delivered effectively in areas of need. A total of 246 residents were contacted through door-to-door this year. This number only includes the amount of residents spoken with directly, not those where brochures were left when there was no answer (150+).

The following neighborhoods received door-to-door canvassing this year:

- Aberdeen (4)
- Barnhartvale (1)
- Batchelor Heights (2)
- Juniper Ridge (5)
- Juniper West (2)
- Rose Hill (1)
- Upper Sahali (1)
- Valleyview (2)

Bear Management Committee

The Kamloops Bear Management Committee met once during the WCC's contract. This committee consists of many different representatives of the community such as bylaw enforcement, conservation officers, parks staff, urban agriculture staff, City of Kamloops staff and many other guests. At this meeting, several issues were discussed such as fruit trees around the city, current garbage bylaws, and bear resistant bins/locks. In addition to these discussions, the WCC alongside Environmental Coordinator, Emily Lomas, updated the members on WildSafeBC events and efforts across the city, as well as updated the committee on the continued pilot project for bear resistant garbage locks.

Pilot Project Bear Resistant Garbage Locks

The pilot project for bear resistant garbage locks (adapted from Port Coquitlam) continued in Kamloops this year. Locks were given out by the WCC if requested by residents and were also offered during door-to-door canvassing for residents in high bear conflict areas and with a lack of storage options for garbage e.g. a garage). Each resident was surveyed in mid-November for a final survey on how the locks were working. Locks were also retrieved from owners at this time. Overall, the locks were well received and seemed effective in reducing conflict with bears. However, the locks are restricted to the IPL 240 L bins at this time, which excluded several interested residents.



Figure 8. Bear resistant garbage cart lock in use

Media Coverage

This year the WCC was able to utilize a few different forms of media in order to help spread awareness. The City of Kamloops media team did a press release covering garbage tagging performed by the WCC to educate the community on its purpose. CBC Radio also did an interview with the WCC about high bear activity in local neighborhoods and attractant management tips. In addition to these, the WCC was able to increase the amount of followers and likes on the Kamloops WildSafeBC Facebook page by 103. Informative posts on local wildlife conflicts including garbage tagging and WARP received a large amount of views. The page was also used to advertise for local events the WCC would be attending.

Challenges to the 2017 Program

There were few challenges faced by the WCC this season. Canada Day at Riverside Park was unable to be attended this year due to the sign up date cutting off before the start of the WCC season. Arrangements will need to be made in advance in order for the WCC to participate.

Garbage continues to also be a large problem in Kamloops, especially the lack of storage options for apartment complexes and houses with carports that are completely accessible by wildlife. Many complaints were received this year regarding this issue. The City of Kamloops bylaw also allows residents to have bins unsecured, which poses a challenge when trying to reach people about putting bins out early and storing them properly.

Finding volunteers continues to be a struggle over the summer months for events where the WCC must attend their booth for 6+ hours at a time. The WCC was able to build a strong relationship with the Juniper Ridge Association which assisted in black bear brochure delivery to neighborhoods and obtaining residents interested in the lock project.

The air quality and extreme wild fire conditions affected the amount of outdoor work (e.g., door-to-door canvassing, Farmer's Markets) the WCC was able to do over the summer and also played a role in poor attendance at events, such as the speaker series.

Goals for 2018

The WCC hopes to accomplish the following goals in 2018:

- Increase buy-in for bear resistant garbage locks/carts in Kamloops
- Build a base of consistent volunteers to assist with community event booths
- Improve attendance at the WildSafeBC speaker series
- Continue to develop relationships with conservation and bylaw officers
- Increase the followers of the WildSafeBC Kamloops Facebook page and Instagram account
- Promote greater use and awareness of the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program
- Develop relationships with other community association groups around Kamloops



Figure 9. WCC at the Big Little Science Center for the Community Science Celebration

Acknowledgements

The WCC would like to thank the City of Kamloops, Ministry of Environment, the Thompson Okanagan Telus Community Board, and the BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF) for funding this project. Special thanks to City of Kamloops sponsor Emily Lomas for her support and help throughout the season, as well as to the WildSafeBC Provincial Coordinator Frank Ritcey for all of his guidance and invaluable knowledge.

Thank you to the COS and Bylaw Enforcement for their open communication and assistance with education on current wildlife conflicts. Another thank you to the COS for the use of their materials for community event booths throughout the season. Thanks to Kirsten Wourms and Parks staff for their organization of the Speaker Series this year. Thank you to all my volunteers for helping with garbage tagging and door-to-door canvassing. The WCC would also like to thank media outlets for their stories and broadcasts that helped spread messaging on wildlife conflicts in Kamloops. The WCC would also like to thank the citizens of Kamloops for their continued support and willingness to learn about wildlife in our community.

Lastly, the WCC would like to send a huge thank you to all of the staff members at the Kamloops BCCF office. All of your time, hard work, and assistance in times of need are what made this season so successful.