

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2018

## Kimberley - Cranbrook

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## Executive Summary

The WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook program was busy in 2018 and made progress on numerous fronts. Over 39 presentations were given to 31 different groups for a total of 932 participants. The Junior Ranger Program was in high demand and expanded with an online team version and an extended in-class offering. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) attended over 16 events and organized a successful BC Goes Wild Weekend. Social media became an important avenue for messaging and effective posts grew page-likes from 197 in January to 825 in October). Traditional media relationships were strengthened and a total of 61 interviews/articles were generated. Other activities such “bear in area” signs, garbage tagging and door-to-door campaigns were effective and generated new opportunities for messaging. This included requests for bear spray demonstrations.

Some key highlights from 2018 included participating in Indigenous Peoples Day at Idlewild Lake in Cranbrook and fostering partnerships with the XTunaza Nation. As well, the Urban Deer Committee and WildSafeBC Kimberley-Cranbrook collaborated on a number of events. The WCC teamed up with members of the committee throughout the year to educate the community about deer safety. Several notable events included Turtle Day and the Community Day Celebration & Floating Island Launch at Idlewild.

There were several challenges this season including the introduction of a new solid waste collection system in Kimberley, a large number of unmanaged fruit trees, human-habituated and aggressive deer and the ongoing issue of winter feeding of urban deer. However, with the support of the communities and the Urban Deer Committee, there are opportunities for 2019 to make important strides in these areas. Pursuing Bear Smart Community status will result in “bear smart” bylaws that will also benefit other species. Goals for 2019 include presenting a Bear Hazard Assessment and Management Plan to City of Kimberley.

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## Highlights from the 2018 Season

### Wildlife Activity

The Kimberley-Cranbrook area had another active year with more human-wildlife conflicts being reported to the Conservation Officer Service’s 24/7 RAPP line. These reports are uploaded daily to WildSafeBC’s Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP). Public use of this service has increased and this has been a huge benefit for promoting the need for education and safe use and deployment of bear spray. From January 1<sup>st</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 there were 238 wildlife reports in Cranbrook and 153 in Kimberley (fig. 1). In both communities, wildlife activity spiked in early spring, dropped down in July and spiked back up in September. More deer conflicts were reported in Cranbrook in May and June while black bears accounted for the spikes in the fall. Increased bear conflicts in the fall are typical for many parts of BC and are driven by their need for high calories prior to hibernation and the availability of unmanaged attractants. As the bears go into their dens, the conflict numbers tend to taper off.

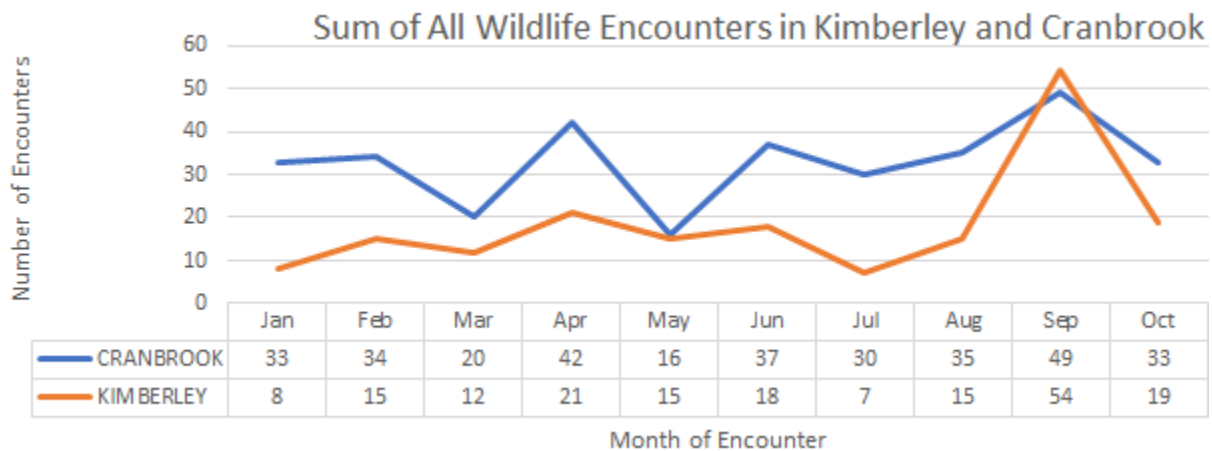


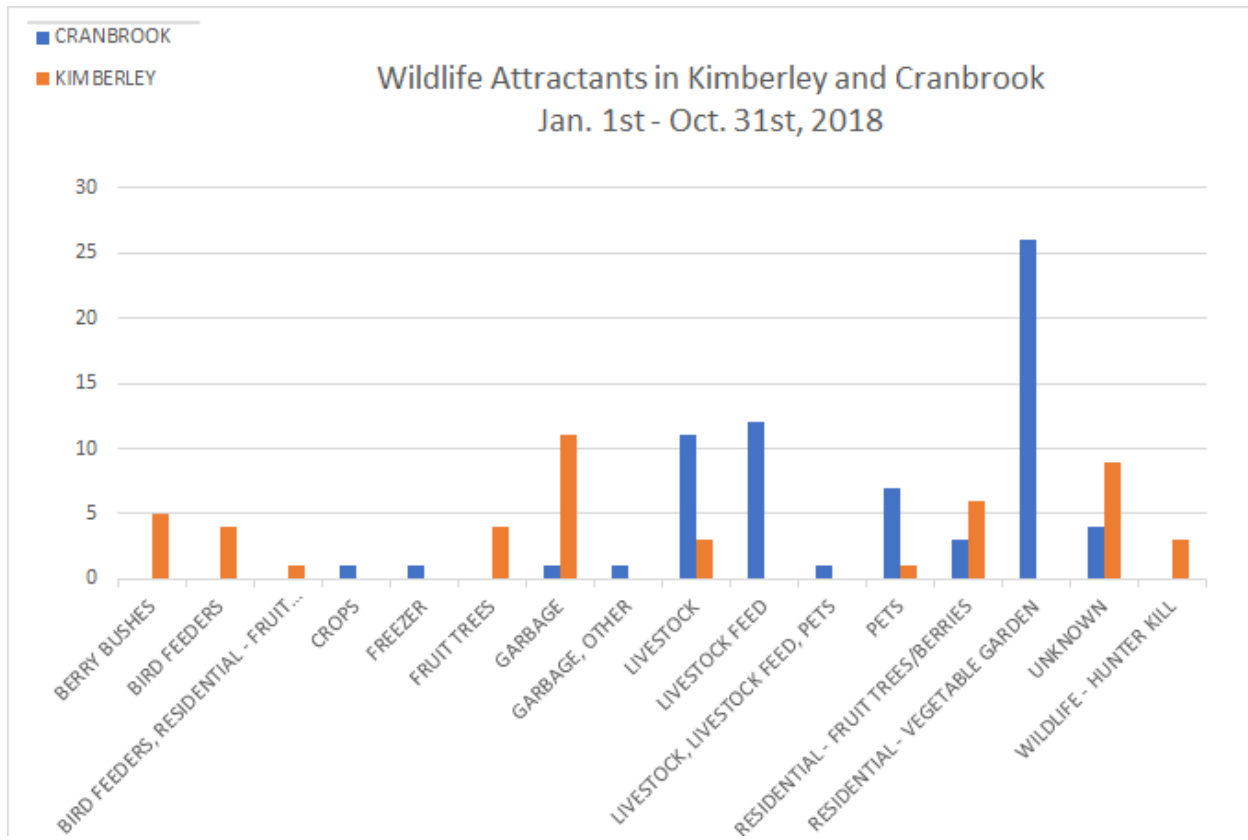
Figure 1. Line graph illustrating number of WARP reports per month in Kimberley and Cranbrook in 2018.

The most reported species were deer, black bear, grizzly bear and, cougar (Table 1). In Cranbrook, deer were responsible for 146/238 (61%) reports to WARP whereas they only accounted for 76/153 (49%) of the WARP reports in Kimberley. More detailed reports are available in the Appendix.

Table 1. Wildlife Encounters of Note in Kimberley and Cranbrook from January 1 to October 15, 2018.

Wildlife	Cranbrook	Kimberley
BLACK BEAR	27	48
COUGAR	6	3
DEER	146	76
GRIZZLY BEAR	7	9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>136</b>

There are many natural and human-made attractants around each community. Most BC communities list garbage as the primary source of wildlife conflict. Kimberley follows this trend however the top attractant reported in Cranbrook was livestock and feed (fig. 2).



**Figure 2. Top attractant in Kimberley and Cranbrook (excluding unknown attractants). Kimberley has garbage as the number one attractant, followed by berry bushes and fruit trees. Cranbrook's top attractant was vegetable gardens, followed by livestock and feed.**

## Presentations to Schools and Community Groups

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) for the communities of Kimberley and Cranbrook gave a total of 39 presentations to 31 different groups with a total of 932 participants. These groups included:

- East Kootenay Outdoors Club
- Cranbrook Community Forest Society
- Kimberley Nature Park Society
- The Nordic Club
- EK Parks – Moyie Provincial Park (three times)
- Scouts
- Girl Guides
- WildWoods
- Prime Time

- Boys and Girls Club
- Cranbrook Summer Playground Program
- BC SPCA (twice)
- Nordic Club
- International Students Program at the College of the Rockies
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy – Settlement Program
- College of the Rockies – Student Housing
- Tech4
- Aqamnik School (K-6)
- Lindsay Park Elementary
- Marysville Elementary
- Kimberley Independent School
- McKim Middle School
- TM Roberts Elementary
- St. Mary's Elementary School
- Steeples Elementary
- Gordon Terrace
- Amy Woodland Elementary
- Kootenay Orchards Elementary
- Parkland Middle School
- Mount Baker Secondary School
- Selkirk Secondary School

The Junior Ranger Program (JRP) continues to be a great success and the demand for presentations is always increasing. New for 2018 was the ability for teachers to register a team online and do the monthly activities. This was met with positive feedback. Also, the extended JRP was introduced to the area which provides an opportunity for a follow up visits and more hands on activities. These include games such as track identification activity sheets and outdoor wildlife habitat games (fig. 3).



Figure 3. Lindsay Park grade 3 students participating in the wildlife track identification activity in the extended Junior Ranger Program.

## Door-to-Door Education and Garbage Tagging

The WCC receives many different human-wildlife conflict calls that are seasonal in nature and requires door-to-door campaigns to have different focuses. This season, the WCC received calls about black and grizzly bears, deer, cougars, moose, elk and skunks. The nature of attractants and locations varied.

The WCC did follow up door-to-door visits after garbage tagging took place. Education focused on preventing wildlife human habituation and food conditioning. Topics included: bears and bird feeders do not mix, please do not feed the deer, grizzly bears and livestock, “keep wildlife wild and communities safe”.

There was a major challenge this year with the shift in the new solid waste collection system and some people went as far as to abandon the bin supplied by the City of Kimberley (fig.4).





Figure 4. Warning education sticker placed on unsecured garbage in Kimberley.

## Public Displays and Events

There were a few big events that were a huge success due to the efforts of networking and social media. Angus Glass, from the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program, invited WildSafeBC again to Turtle Day. Turtle Day 2018 was a wonderful experience as there were a few local elementary classes who attended the event as well. Another successful event was the Community Day Celebration & Floating Island Launch at Idlewild put on by the Columbia Outdoor School & Blue Lake Camp.

WildSafeBC Kimberley – Cranbrook was fortunate to attend Indigenous Peoples Day at Idlewild Lake in Cranbrook (fig. 5). The celebration included Métis jigging, Ktunaxa legends and more.



Figure 5. Indigenous Peoples Day 2018 at Idlewild Lake in Cranbrook.

The BC Goes Wild Weekend (BCGWW) is one of the community's favourite events. Even though the weather was poor, the number of participants, feedback and continued interest in WildSafeBC activities was outstanding for only being its third annual event (fig. 6).



Figure 6. The last activity of BC Goes Wild Weekend was a nature walk, bear spray demo and presentation on wildlife encounter tips at Sylvan Lake.

Promotion was done weeks leading up to the event using social media and hosting or participating in a number of events. These included three bear spray demos, two nature walks, a farmers' market, and garbage tagging. The BCGWW photo contest and list of planned activities sparked an interest in how community members can become further involved with WildSafeBC and take action to keep wildlife wild and communities safe. The development of WARP Poster for community outdoor clubs' nature signs was one of the opportunities that came out of this weekend. Members of the Cranbrook Community Forest Society braved the rain to attend a bear spray demo at Sylvan Lake, Cranbrook. The 16 other public displays and events included:

- Farmer's Market
- Turtle Day
- Community Day – Launch of Island
- Indigenous Peoples Day
- Learn how to Fish – Freshwater Fisheries
- Clear Sky Resort
- Tri-Village First Annual Kids Festival
- Kaleidoscope Festival
- First Saturdays
- Same Steele Days
- Fall Fair 2018
- Bike Tour Event
- Father's Day Fishing at Idlewild, Cranbrook
- Mother's Day Nature Walk
- Boys & Girls Club First Annual Super Hero Dash (fig. 7)



Figure 7. The WCC at the Boys and Girls Club first annual Super Hero Dash! (Photo credit: Cheryl Kelly).

## Social Media and Press

The WCC used social media and press releases to distribute WildSafeBC messaging and wildlife information. Weekly updates were made either through radio stations such as The Drive, B104 & Summit and/or newspapers such as The Kimberley Bulletin, E-Know, & the Cranbrook

Townsman. The WCC connected with radio and newsprint media 61 times over the season. Of these, 25 were initiated by the media outlets.

The WildSafeBC Kimberley – Cranbrook’s Facebook page saw significant growth this season due to numerous awareness campaigns. The year began with a modest 197 likes and grew to 825 as of the writing of this report. Posts that included a screenshot of wildlife activity on WARP drew the most engagement. Statistics from September 16<sup>th</sup> to October 13<sup>th</sup> included: 23,710 people reached, 1,033 video views, 11,334 post engagements and 190 new page followers.

## Bear in Area Signs

Bear in Area signs have been a huge success and are believed to be very important near active trail heads, especially near high tourist activity areas (fig.8). They also lead to four requests from the public on bear spray demonstrations. The Kimberley-Cranbrook program has 10 signs which are circulated ever week or two in high bear activity areas. Feedback has been very positive.



Figure 8. Photo of Bear in Area sign and local WCC giving a bear spray demo to a few students from Mount Baker outdoor education class in Cranbrook (inset).

## Partnerships

Once again, WildSafeBC Kimberley – Cranbrook was fortunate to partner with the Xtunaxa Nation. Bradley Alexander returned as this year’s volunteer. The Nation attended Indigenous Peoples Day, at Idlewild Lake in Cranbrook.

Another great partnership this year was with the Urban Deer Committee. Patty Kolesnichenko, an environmental educator and member of the Urban Deer Committee, teamed up with the

WCC to educate children about deer biology, behavior, attractant management and safety (fig.9). Topics covered fawning season, bucks and rutting season, and the importance of “keeping wildlife wild and communities safe” by not feeding deer. All schools in Kimberley were reached via presentation and hands on learning such as question and answers, games and activity sheets specific to deer safety.



**Figure 9. Patty Kolesnichenko and the WCC teamed up to talk about deers at Lindsay Park Elementary School.**

Continued partnerships from last year include the East Kootenay Outdoors Club, Cranbrook Community Forest Society, Kimberley Nature Park Society, Wildsight Apple Capture gleaning program, EK Parks, the Conservation Officer Service, the City of Cranbrook and Kimberley bylaw and operations departments. WildSafeBC also attended a couple of inaugural events such as the Tri-Village Kids First Annual Kids Festival in Wasa. Events like these are the perfect opportunity to create further networking opportunities.

## Fruit Tree Outreach and Education

WildSafeBC and the Wildsight Kimberley and Cranbrook branch worked together again this year to promote their annual gleaning group and the events they were hosting. Wildsight’s gleaning group, Apple Capture, lead events in both Kimberley and Cranbrook in the fall. The event in Kimberley was held over a weekend and included a day of community volunteers gleaning

apples from Wildsight's online tree board followed by a day of pressing apples at the community garden (fig.10).



**Figure 10. The WCC and Wildsight's Apple Capture Program team up to glean. Photo above is WildSight Manager Andrea Chapman and Apple Capture Coordinator James Christie-Fougere working pressing apples.**

Cranbrook's Pick and Press event was done on the same day, as there were fewer trees registered and many of the trees were already harvested as they ripened a little bit earlier in Cranbrook this year than in Kimberley. Wildsight's Tree Board allows community members who are unable to harvest their fruit to register their name and address so that the public can pick their tree. The product from the tree is donated to a food security initiative around town. This is a great way to promote the management of domestic fruit to cottage owners. However, this is a temporary solution to a long-term issue. The ideal solution is to remove apple and other mast-producing trees that are not maintained in a homeowner's absence. A non-mast producing tree incentive would help accelerate this best practice.

## Challenges for the 2018 Season

### Garbage

Unsecured garbage continues to be an issue especially in Kimberley and Cranbrook (fig. 11). The implementation of the new solid waste collection system in Kimberley was challenging for a number of community members. The new collection truck is too large to enter some alleys which resulted in the change of collection routes. Homeowners that had invested in sheds, garages and other bear resistant structures behind their residence were obliged to bring their

garbage to the front of the residence. Complaints included the size of the bin being too small for family units or too heavy for the elderly to manoeuvre, especially in winter. This resulted in frustration and behaviours that lead to unsecured garbage becoming more accessible to wildlife.



**Figure 11. Garbage left by a school dumpster (left) and a garbage bin placed out the night before and accessed by wildlife (right).**

In light of these community complaints, the City of Kimberley hired a new manager of operations, roads & solid waste to address these concerns. The benefits of the new system are now being recognized and improvements in compliance are anticipated.

## **Feeding Urban Deer**

While many community members do a good job managing their attractants there remain some who insist on feeding deer year-round. This attracts deer into both communities where they become human habituated. They female deer feel secure enough to raise their fawns in the communities and will aggressively protect them from people, “dogs,” and any other perceived threat. Calls to the COS regarding aggressive deer are difficult to manage as there are so many deer it is difficult to identify the ones in conflict. Many community members have made great strides in removing access to attractants but the deer have now become well-established in the community. It is essential that winter feeding of urban deer discontinue in order to reduce human-deer conflicts.

This year, the Urban Deer Committee is seeking someone to work over the winter on education with regards to winter deer feeding. This has been a major concern for CO Denney Chretien and members of city council such as Councillor Kent Goodwin and Mayor Don McCormick.

## **Fruit Trees**

Fruit trees are an ongoing problem in Kimberley and Cranbrook as they are generally not appreciated as a significant source of human-wildlife conflict. Some homeowners are not aware of their impact or they are absentee homeowners. Unmanaged fruit trees draw wildlife into the

community and lead to food conditioning and human habituation. Unlike garbage, fruit trees are a reliable and consistent source of high calorie food – year after year.

## Goals and Opportunities for 2019

1. Secure additional funding in order to deliver the program throughout the winter months in RDEK Electoral Areas A, C & E.
2. Present Bear Hazard Assessment in the spring of 2019 to the new City of Kimberley Council.
3. Continue to work towards finishing Management Plan for Kimberley.
4. Continue to work on Management Plan for Cranbrook.
5. Encourage the City of Kimberley and Cranbrook to implement bylaws that prohibit the mismanagement of wildlife attractants.
6. Present Management Plan to Council by the fall of 2019.
7. Support the community's efforts in becoming a Bear Smart Community certified by the Provincial Government.

## Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC is grateful for the consistent support of its sponsors: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, the Columbia Basin Trust, the Regional District of East Kootenay, the City of Cranbrook and the City of Kimberley.

As always, the WCC would like to give a big thank you to the Conservation Officer Service and their staff, in particular Denny Chretien, Jeffrey Scott and Matthew Corbet for the great communication and participation in promoting WildSafeBC awareness. These partnerships are vital for the effectiveness and consistency of our messaging and our goal to “keep wildlife wild and communities safe”. A big thank you goes out to the operations, communications and planning staff of the City of Cranbrook and the City of Kimberley who have been proactive in collaborating with WildSafeBC to find lasting solutions to human-wildlife conflict.

The support from School District 5 and 6 staff was incredible this year and the WCC could not be more grateful for the ever-increasing participation in the educational wildlife presentations, the Junior Ranger Program and use of WARP.

Thank you to the media outlets for sharing WildSafeBC's message and wildlife information and tips, using WARP to report wildlife encounters of note, and for sharing BC Goes Wild Weekend's events and photo contests.

Thank you to the community members and visitors to the area that participated in our events and support our messaging. It is such an incredible opportunity to watch community members become more invested in keeping wildlife wild and their communities safe! Thank you for being proactive and taking responsibility in managing attractants in order to minimize the potential for wildlife conflict.



## APPENDIX

Table 2. Types of Wildlife Encounters in Kimberley and Cranbrook from January 1 to October 15, 2018.

Type of Wildlife	Cranbrook	Kimberley
BLACK BEAR	27	48
BOBCAT	2	0
COUGAR	6	3
COYOTE	0	2
DEER	146	76
ELK	26	2
FOX	3	0
GRIZZLY BEAR	7	9
MOOSE	0	2
OTHER	10	5
RACCOON	1	0
RAPTOR	5	0
SKUNK	3	5
WILD SHEEP	0	1
WOLF	1	0
WOLVERINE	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>153</b>

Table 3. Types of Attractants in Kimberley and Cranbrook from January 1 to October 15, 2018.

TYPE OF ATTRACTANT	CRANBROOK	KIMBERLEY
BERRY BUSHES		5
BIRD FEEDERS		4
BIRD FEEDERS, RESIDENTIAL – FRUIT TREES/BERRIES		1
CROPS	1	
FREEZER	1	
FRUIT TREES		4
GARBAGE	1	11
GARBAGE, OTHER	1	
LIVESTOCK	11	3

LIVESTOCK FEED	12	
LIVESTOCK, LIVESTOCK FEED, PETS	1	
PETS	7	1
RESIDENTIAL - FRUIT TREES/BERRIES	3	6
RESIDENTIAL - VEGETABLE GARDEN	26	
UNKNOWN	4	9
WILDLIFE - HUNTER KILL		3
Grand Total	68	47

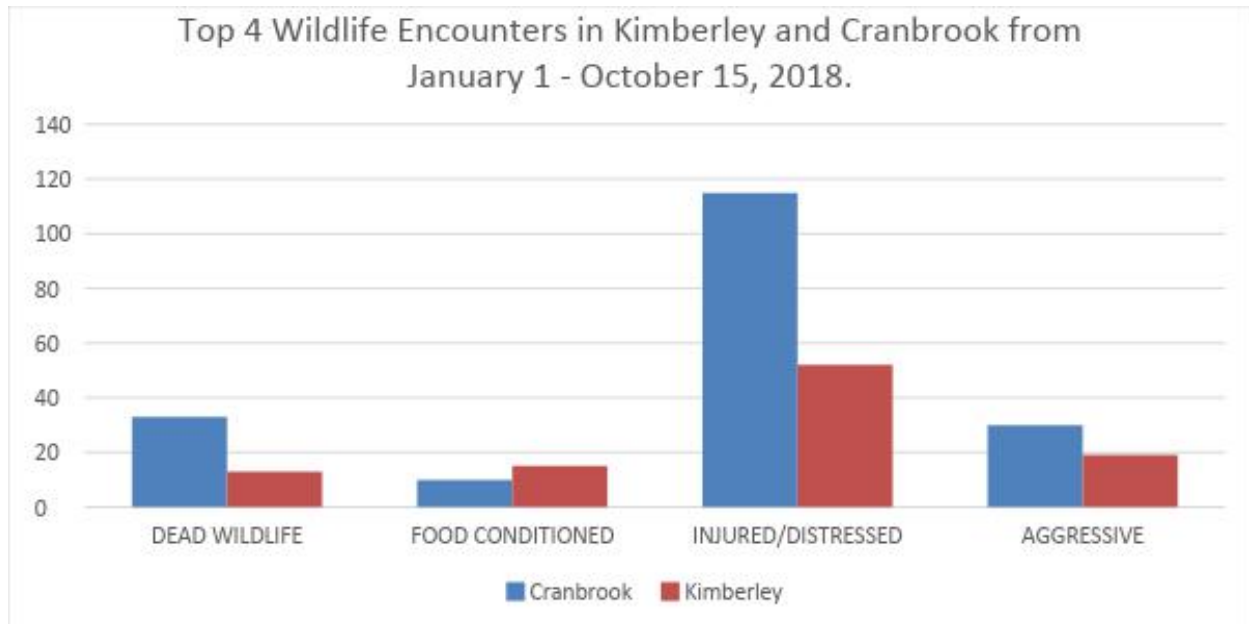


Figure 12. Bar Graph Illustrating the different types of Wildlife Encounters in Kimberley and Cranbrook in 2018. Top encounter type is injured and distressed and mainly came from deer reports.