

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2018

Pacific Rim: Ucluelet and Tofino

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Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy



British Columbia Conservation Foundation



BRITISH COLUMBIA
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION



Parks Canada
Parcs Canada



DISTRICT OF TOFINO



DISTRICT OF
UCLUELET

Executive Summary

The WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program serves the communities of Ucluelet and Tofino and collaborates with the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (PRNPR). While geographically close, wildlife activity is different with an abundance of deer in Ucluelet and high levels of wolf conflicts in Tofino. Off-leash dogs and wolves often come into conflict within the PRNPR as well as on the beaches near Tofino. In September 2018, an off-leash dog was killed by a wolf at Chesterman's Beach – a popular area for visitors and locals alike. Black bears are also present in both communities but levels of conflict vary. In 2018, two food-conditioned bears were destroyed in Ucluelet due to high levels of conflict while conflict in Tofino was lower than average.

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) performed several activities to educate locals and visitors alike on local wildlife and how to reduce conflict. This included door-to-door education campaigns, brochure distribution, business outreach, electric fence technical support and public displays. Provincial WildSafeBC Coordinator, Frank Ritcey, provided a bear spray and electric fencing demonstration at the Tofino Botanical Garden.

A variety of media were engaged and interviews provided especially in response to conflicts with wolves and provided them with information on conflict reduction. Social media remains an effective outreach tool and page likes were increased from 400 to 560 this season. The WCC collaborated with 4 local organizations during WildSafeBC's annual BC Goes Wild Event and contact was made with over 450 people.

The WCC completed a wildlife attractants survey of most businesses and some residences in the District of Tofino in support of a Tofino Wildlife Hazard Assessment and Conflict Management Plan. This facilitated discussions around past human-wildlife conflicts and prevention options for the future. The WCC gave two presentations to the Regional Wildlife Working Group - Iisaak Sin Hay Tiičmis (Respect all Life) - Regional Coexistence Network with over 60 participants.

Due to the limited availability of the WCC, some activities such as garbage tagging and fruit tree outreach did not take place. However, the WCC was effective at engaging volunteers and leveraging existing relationships and knowledge of the area to maximize his outreach to locals and visitors alike.

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Highlights from the 2018 Season

Wildlife Activity

Ucluelet

Wildlife conflict reports to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) RAPP line are available to the public through WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP). This data, going back to 2014, can also be analyzed and informs us as to the species involved and the attractant if present. In 2018, black bears were the most reported species (Figure 1). Reports began in the later part of June (Figure 2) and escalated steadily into July. After two food-conditioned bears were removed by the (COS) in late July, bear reports dropped off significantly. Cougar activity was present in five of the eight months between February and September, 2018 (Figure 2). There were sightings and multiple reports of a cougar making deer kills within the community. Two reports were related to pets. Most activity was in a subdivision on the outer edge of the community but the most recent report was of a cougar killing a deer in a backyard in the center of the community in September. There is a hyper abundant population of deer in Ucluelet for wolves and cougar to hunt. Most deer reports are related to sightings of injured or dead deer.

Wolf activity was low but present in all months from February to August (Figure 2). Most calls were of wolf sightings within the community. There was only one wolf report related to pets in 2018 in Ucluelet. In contrast, in 2017 there was a high level of wolf conflict reports, mostly to do with wolves going after dogs running at large. Subsequently a wolf was destroyed by the COS in Ucluelet and another wolf was destroyed by Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (PRNPR) in a park area near Ucluelet.

Garbage remains the leading attractant that results in human-wildlife conflicts (Figure 3).

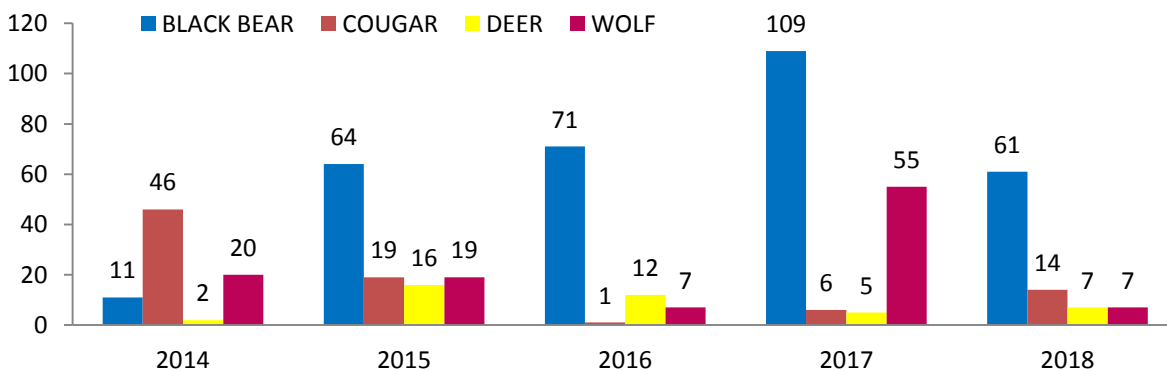


Figure 1. RAPP/WARP for Ucluelet year over year from 2014 to September 22, 2018.

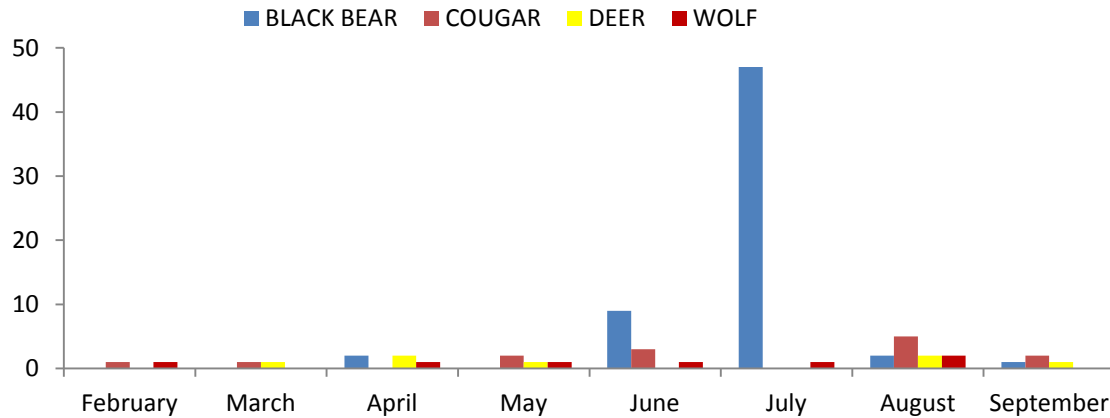


Figure 2. RAPP/WARP by month for Ucluelet from January 1 to September 22, 2018.

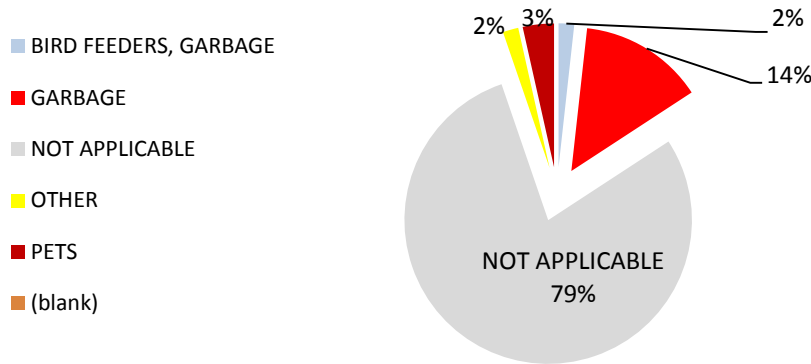


Figure 3. RAPP/WARP attractants for Ucluelet from January 1 to September 22, 2018.

Tofino

Human-wildlife conflicts were generally low for the District of Tofino for black bear, cougar, deer and wolf. There were occasional bear sightings in areas near the community in 2018 but very few inside the village. This was different from 2014, 2015 and particularly 2017 when human-bear conflicts were more common (Figure 4). There were a few cougar sightings within the community but no persistent presence. No human-cougar conflicts were reported. Deer observations are uncommon in the District of Tofino. Locals reported that this has been the case since the late 60's. This is the opposite of the deer situation in Ucluelet.

There was considerable wolf activity in the spring along the Tofino Mudflats but activity dropped off during the summer (Figure 5). There was a dramatic incident on September 1st when a dog running at large around sunrise was fatally attacked by wolves on Chesterman's Beach. Wolf activity was low following the incident up to the time of the writing of this report.

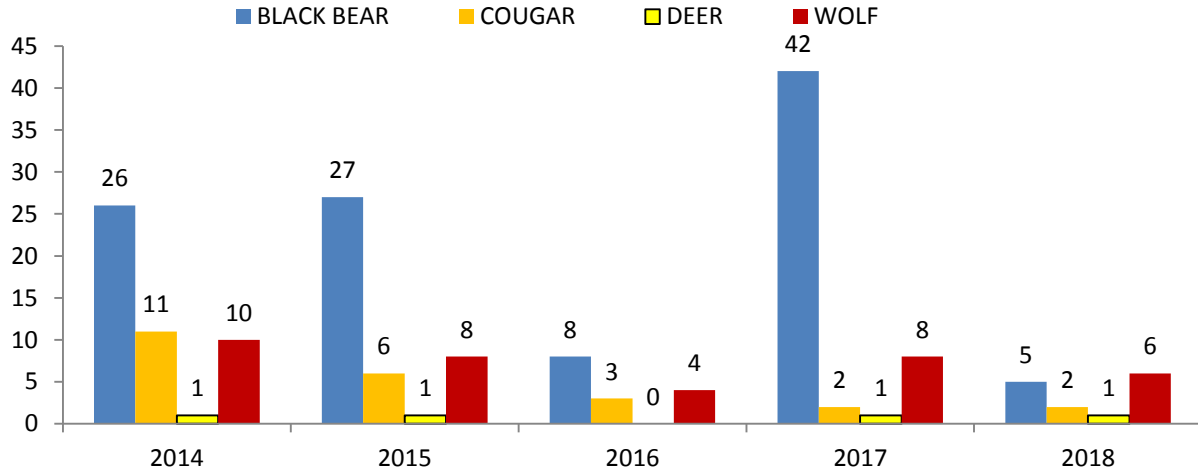


Figure 4. RAPP/WARP for Tofino year over year from 2014 to September 22, 2018.

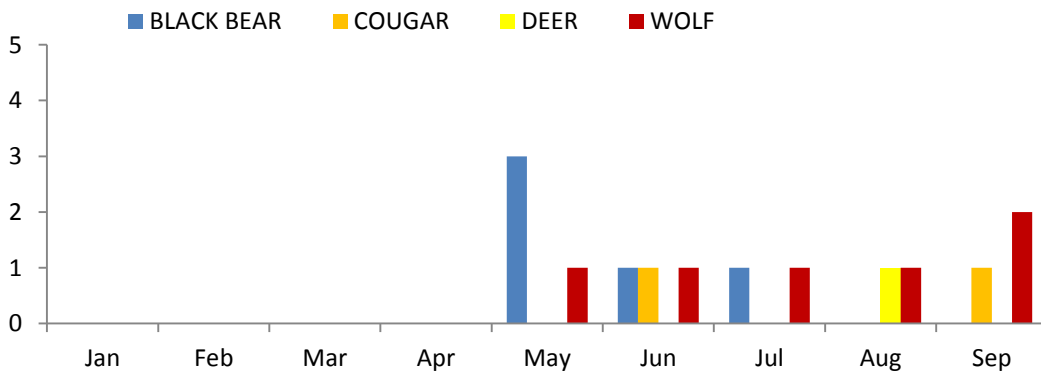


Figure 5. RAPP/WARP by month for Tofino from January 1 to September 22, 2018.

Presentations to Schools and Community Groups

The WSBC Pacific Rim Coordinator for Ucluelet and Tofino gave 2 presentations to the Regional Wildlife Working Group - Iisaak Sin Hay Tiičmis (Respect all Life) - Regional Coexistence Network with over 60 participants including:

- Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino – Mayor and Council representatives
- Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation
- Yuułu?if?ath Government - Ucluelet First Nation
- Toquaht Nation
- District Bylaw and Emergency Response
- Ecotourism – Ocean Outfitters
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community Tourism Organizations
- Pacific Rim National Park Reserve – Resource Conservation
- Provincial Parks Service

- Conservation Officer Service
- Coastal Animal Rescue & Education (CARE) Network
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
- Thornton Creek Enhancement Society
- Ucluelet Parks and Recreation
- Bear Smart BC Consulting
- Tofino Airport Authority
- Interested residents of both communities – not representing organizations

Door-to-Door Education and Outreach

The WCC responded to persistent cougar activity in Ucluelet with door-to-door education in two neighborhoods. Contact was made with most residents in one subdivision where the cougar had been sighted frequently (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Cougar mid-morning in Ucluelet subdivision.

After the fatal dog attack by a wolf at Chesterman's Beach, the WCC assisted Tofino bylaw officers, PRNPR Resource Conservation and COS in their investigation. The WCC followed up for two days by talking with a number of local residents about how to keep their pets safe.

Door-to-door education was focused to a large extent on engaging businesses around conflict prevention options in general and wildlife-resistant waste management in particular. Many businesses have demonstrated their commitment to using bear resistant containers and keeping them locked (Figures 9 and 10). Businesses visited by the WCC are listed below:

Ucluelet

- Lost Shoe Campground
- Surf Junction Campground
- Ucluelet Campground
- Howler's Restaurant
- Huckleberry's Coffee Shop and Bakery
- Ardent Properties Strata Management (Vacation Rentals)
- Water's Edge Suites (Vacation Rentals)



Figure 9. Amie Shimizu-Furey, the manager of Howler’s Restaurant demonstrated how to keep Ucluelet bins locked.

Tofino

- Bella Pacifica Campground
- Mackenzie Beach Campground
- Wickaninnish Inn
- Long Beach Lodge
- Ocean Outfitters
- Middle Beach Lodge staff accommodation
- Tacofino Restaurant
- Beaches
- Wildside Grill



Figure 10. Ocean Outfitters purchased a Rollin’s Wildlife Resistant bin for staff accommodation.

The WCC connected with local owners of chickens and/or other livestock. In two instances the WCC assisted owners with trouble-shooting their electric fences (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Troubleshooting Electric Fencing Problems at 2 Chicken Coops

Public Displays and Events

The WCC and volunteers engaged in education and outreach at the Ucluelet and Tofino Public Markets (Figure 12). The booth attracted attention from both locals and visitors. The Pacific Rim

Region receives over 1 million visitors annually. Many visitors were interested in learning what to do if they encountered a bear, cougar or wolves.

Besides conversations, information was provided by handing out brochures and other handouts and directing people to the WildSafeBC PacRim Facebook page.

2018 public events attended included:

- Ucluelet Sunday Market – 1 day
- Tofino Saturday Market – 1 day
- Ukee Days Festival – 2 days
- BC Goes Wild – 2 days



Figure 12. Tofino Saturday Market

Frank Ritcey, Provincial WildSafeBC Coordinator, conducted an electric fencing (Figure 13) and use of bear spray demonstration at the Tofino Botanical Garden. The turnout was small but all that attended own chickens and/or own rabbits, beehives or livestock. Participants included the Director of the Tofino Community Food Initiative, the Mayor of Tofino and the owner of the Tofino Botanical Garden.



Figure 13. WSBC Provincial Coordinator, Frank Ritcey, providing an electric fencing demonstration.

The WSBC Pacific Rim Program collaborated with 4 local organizations to put on a full slate of educational activities over the BC Goes Wild Weekend (BCGWW).

The partners were:

- The Wild Pacific Trail Society (WPT)
- The Thornton Creek Enhancement Society (TCES)
- The Raincoast Education Society (RES)
- Pacific Rim National Park Reserve (PRNPR)

There were two venues for the WSBC Pacific Rim Weekend. On Saturday and Sunday there were guided hikes on the Wild Pacific Trail (WPT) in Ucluelet while other events also ran at the Thornton Creek Hatchery (TCH). Prior to 2015, there were challenges with people approaching bears feeding on spawning salmon at the hatchery (Figure 14). Since then, the hatchery implemented changes and now provides an excellent classroom for education on preventing human-bear conflicts.



Figure 14. Photo illustrating the challenges prior to 2015 at the Thornton Creek Hatchery.

Actions were taken by the Thornton Creek Enhancement Society to allow bears to go about living their lives and to enhance people's opportunity to learn about the hatchery, salmon, bears and co-existence. This history and the changes made meant it was a great spot for two days of BC Goes Wild events. Over 450 people from near and far took part in the weekends various events.

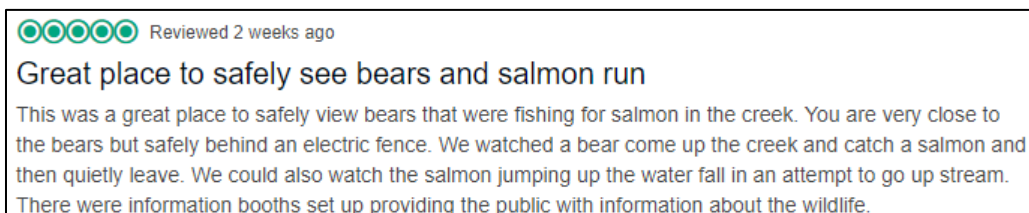


Figure 15. Trip Advisor post made by a BC Goes Wild visitor at the Thornton Creek Hatchery.

BCGW activities included:

- Guided Walk - Sea Wolves – WPT
- Guided Walk - Bear Foods – WPT
- Talk - Hatchery-Salmon-Bears-Wildlife Viewing Code of Conduct-Enhancement – TCH
- Talk - Hatchery as a practical example of keeping bears and people safe - TCH

- Talk - Connecting Students with Wildlife at Hatchery using Wildlife Cameras – TCH
- Talk - Claws-Paws and Jaws Program
- WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Booth – TCH

Social Media, Press and Other Media

Social Media

Some Facebook statistics from May 15, 2018 to October 1, 2018 for the WSBC Pacific Rim page include:

- Number of posts by WCC was 51
- Likes increased from 400 to 560
- Total reach was 21,567

Facebook reach statistics peaked following September 1st after the fatal dog attack by wolves on Chesterman’s Beach, Tofino. The WCC paid to boost posts for the next 2 weeks.



Figure 16. Peak Facebook reach statistics.

Several local organizations assisted during the season by sharing WSBC Pacific Rim posts to their Facebook followers.

Press and TV

- Westerley News – program startup article
- CBC Radio – Victoria – start-up interview
- Post dog attack coverage:
 - Local Westerley News and in 31 other community newspapers (part of same newspaper network) across BC
 - CBC News
 - CHEK TV
 - CTV
 - The Tyee
 - Blog: <https://www.paulawild.ca/wolves-and-dogs-in-tofino/>
 - Paula Wild new book “Return of the Wolf – Conflict and Co-Existence” was released in September

Other Media – WCC Interviewed by:

- Isabele Groc (Journalist/film maker): Knowledge Network documentary on people and wolves in region
- Lance Blackwell (filmmaker) - R-Town Film Productions: video on wildlife safety and conflict prevention for online posting and local cable channel
- Randy Oliwa (Ucluelet Councillor): video on wildlife safety and conflict prevention which was posted on Councillor's Facebook page

Challenges for the 2018 Season

A funded WSBC Pacific Rim Program for 2018 was made possible with additional unexpected funding from the Provincial WSBC Program. A challenge for the WCC was that he was also employed full-time at PRNPR and worked weekends. Due to time constraints some standard program elements were not pursued. To increase activities on weekends, the WCC recruited community volunteers to host the WSBC booth at Ukee Days and BC Goes Wild Weekend events.

Goals and Opportunities for 2019

- Secure increased local sponsorship for 2019 WSBC Pacific Rim Program application
- Implement a full-time, full scope program that runs from May to November
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Acquire an electric fencing demonstration kit
- Secure funding from Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Grants-in-Aid program to subsidize community conflict prevention supplies (as with WSBC Bamfield)
- Continue building working relationship with COS and local bylaw officers
- Make delegations to both Mayors and Council to keep them informed and engaged

Acknowledgements

The WSBC Pacific Rim Program was able to be restarted thanks to the hard work and generous support of the local sponsors:

- Todd Windle, PRNPR Co-Existence Specialist
- Ocean Shine – Ocean Outfitters
- Corene Inouye – Jamie's Whaling Station
- Josie Osborne – Tofino Mayor
- Abby Fortune – Director, Ucluelet Parks and Recreation

Thanks to the WildSafeBC team's excellent start-up training and on-going support throughout the season and for securing funding to make the program possible. Thanks to former WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Coordinator, John Platenius and Bamfield Volunteer Coordinator, Mandy Ross for helping get the 2018 program up and running.

Lastly thanks to all of those partners that helped deliver the program through their involvement. Apologies and thanks to those I've missed.

Wild Pacific Trail Society

Barbara Schramm

Tanya Nestoruk

Silva Johansson

Thornton Creek Hatchery

Dave Hurwitz

Jean Duckmaten

Art Skoda

Mathieu St-Laurent-Addison

Emily Fulton

Raincoast Education Society

Mark Maftai

Brittany Olson

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