

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2021

łichuuł Hitaću-Macoah

Prepared by: Marianne Paquette, WildSafeBC łichuuł Hitaću-Macoah Coordinator



Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah program between May 1st and November 30th, 2021. The program area of coverage is located on the west coast of Vancouver Island more specifically on parts of the Haañuuli (traditional territories) and treaty settlement lands of the Ucluelet First Nation and Toquaht Nation (Figure 1). The program serves communities and businesses located in this specific area, with a focus on treaty settlement lands of both Nations and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) Area C such as the communities of Hitaću, Macoah, Millstream, Port Albion, Salmon Beach and the Tofino-Ucluelet Junction.

Wildlife activity has been high in most parts of the region throughout the season. However, for residents living in the project coverage area, there have been significantly lower reports of conflict with wildlife than in neighboring communities. Reports to the Conservation Officer Service's 24/7 Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line showed that black bear interactions have slightly decreased from 2020 but are still higher than the last five years' average. It is important to note that this represents only a fraction of wildlife sightings or conflicts since a small number of events are communicated to the RAPP line each year. No cougar conflicts were reported to the COS and only one wolf sighting was reported early in the year.

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) performed outreach activities with the goal of preventing conflict with wildlife, promoting coexistence with the local fauna and enhancing public safety within each community. Following COVID-19 safety precautions, several of the standard WildSafeBC program activities were modified to ensure proper sanitization and physical distancing measures were in place. The following summarizes key program deliverables over the course of the season.

- The WCC teamed up with the WCC Pacific Rim and 8 WildSafe Ranger presentations were given to 14 classes, reaching 195 youth and teachers.
- Six presentations were given to community groups reaching 72 participants.
- 461 people were reached through door-to-door activities.
- The WCC held 4 display booths reaching 327 people.
- 58 Facebook posts were created, and the local page followers increased from 35 to 120 since January 1, 2021 (242.9% % increase).
- There are 2 campgrounds participating in the Bare Campsite Program and 6 were contacted and offered support for this program.
- There were 6 articles written by the WCC and submitted for the local newsletter.

After completing a Bear Hazard Assessment for the program coverage area in 2020, the WCC facilitated the first Bear Stewardship Committee meeting to address specific challenges regarding human-black bear coexistence in the region and work towards Bear Smart Community status. The WCC launched a pilot bin monitoring program for the community of Hitaću to raise awareness around the importance of always keeping the community bins well-

secured which in turn helps the local wildlife stay wild and keeps the community safe. To celebrate the 2021 BC Goes Wild event, both the WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah and Pacific Rim programs collaborated on a contest that had the purpose to encourage residents to share pictures and videos of their “WildSafe” activities. WildSafeBC is grateful for five local businesses that generously donated prizes for our contest winners. The contest posts on Facebook reached over 1,950 people. Additionally, one electric fence was installed around the Toquaht Nation’s community garden in Macoah and this was subsidized through the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) program funding.

The current public health crisis has made event planning and community outreach more difficult as group sizes had to be kept small and many activities had to be cancelled due to local and Provincial regulations. However, it has also allowed us to grow more online initiatives and connect and engage with people through digital tools.

Thank you to the generous support and continuous collaboration of the Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government-Ucluelet First Nation, the Toquaht Nation, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program, the Province of British Columbia, and the British Columbia Conservation Foundation.

Opportunities for next season include building on the WildSafe Pledge program to grow the number of businesses participating in this initiative, keep supporting local campgrounds in implementing the Bare campsite program, continue progressing towards a Bear Smart Community designation status for the community, providing more presentations during community events and connect with local residents on challenges they face regarding coexistence with wildlife. Moving forward, these initiatives and collaborations will help “keep wildlife wild and our community safe.



Figure 1. Figure 1. WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah program coverage area.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Highlights from the 2021 Season	6
Wildlife Activity	6
WildSafe Ranger Program	7
Presentations to Community Groups	8
Display Booths	9
Door-to-Door Education and Bin Tagging	10
Social Media and Press	11
Wildlife in Area Signs	12
Collaborations	13
Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD)	13
Businesses	14
WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program	15
Special Initiatives	15
Bear Stewardship Committee	15
Bin monitoring program	15
Bear-resistant bins education	17
Community garden electric fencing	18
BC Goes Wild Weekend	19
Challenges and Opportunities	20
Acknowledgements	22

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Figure 1. WildSafeBC Łichuuł Hitaču-Macoah program coverage area.	3
Figure 2. Reports to the COS and WARP regarding black bears from January 1, 2016, to October 31, 2021.	6
Figure 3. Black bear reports to the COS and WARP by attractant from January 1, 2016, to October 31, 2021.	7
Figure 4. WCC Łichuuł Hitaču-Macoah and Pacific Rim giving a WRP presentation at the Wickaninnish Elementary School in October 2021. Credits: Ms.Thompson	8

Figure 5. Left: Bare campsite staff training for the Wya Point Campground. Right: WildSafe Pledge staff training and wildlife awareness & safety presentation at Howlers (Kent Furey left, WCC right).	9
Figure 6. Left: Cixʷatin Center booth during food fish distribution. Credits: Niamh O'Reilly Right: Booth at Lost Shoe Campground with the WCC Pacific Rim.	10
Figure 7. Left: WCC doing door-to-door in Millstream, Port Albion, Thornton Rd. & Willowbrae Rd. Right: WCC doing door-to-door in Salmon Beach. Credits: Melanie Marchant	11
Figure 8. A wildlife in area sign was used to inform residents of black bear activity in this particular area.	13
Figure 9. Sea can in Macoah securing the recycling storage facility that had been accessed by a black bear in the past (Left: During the installation, Right: After the installation). Credits: David Johnsen	14
Figure 10. Bin monitoring program information sheet for volunteers (Left: front - Right: back).	16
Figure 11. Percentage of community bins left unlatched in Hitaću between August 2021 and September 2021.	17
Figure 12. Educational reference document for bear-resistant bin owners.	18
Figure 13. Left: The new electric fence around the ʕulcamis community garden in Macoah (from left to right: Burton Mack, Bob Hansen and David Johnsen). Right: The WCC working on the fence.	19
Figure 14. BC Goes wild weekend celebrating wildlife with display booths.	19
Figure 15. BC Goes Wild contest promotional poster displayed around both towns and promotional online Facebook posts countdown.	20
Table 1. Schools that received the WildSafe Ranger Program in 2021.	8
Table 2. Presentations given by the WCC in 2021.	8
Table 3. Media articles and phone interviews were conducted by the WCC during the 2021 season.	12

Cover Photo: Presentation to local campground operators to inform them of the benefits of the Bare campsite program in collaboration with the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program.

Highlights from the 2021 Season

Wildlife Activity

Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) through the RAPP line (1-877-952-7277) or online form (<https://forms.gov.bc.ca/environment/rapp/>) are available to the public through WildSafeBC’s Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP). This data is updated daily and this report for the WildSafeBC ʕichuuʔ Hitaću-Macoah program coverage area includes data from January 1, 2016, to October 31, 2021 (Figure 2). This season, there were 15 black bear reports which is higher than the 5-year average of 10. Garbage was the most reported attractant this year (Figure 3). Wolf reports were low with only one reported sighting to the RAPP line so far for 2021 and prior to this, the last wolf reported to the COS in the area was recorded back in 2018.

This year has been a particularly challenging year regarding high wildlife activity on the West Coast region, however, it was noted that communities in the program coverage area appeared to have fewer reports of bear sightings in their neighborhoods. It is important to note that this represents only the reports made to the COS and that many interactions with wildlife go unreported because of a hesitation to call the RAPP line. However, speaking with community members and experts in the area, it seems like there has been very little conflict in these communities this year which is very encouraging. This may be a result of increased community awareness and additional measures taken to ensure attractants are better managed.

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) has been working on building messaging to reinforce the importance of calling the COS early to enable them to act before the animal has become food conditioned and human habituated. Reporting early can help inform WildsafeBC’s education and outreach activities to find solutions to the attractant that might have lured in the animal in the first place. Removing the attractant at the source or securing it with bear-resistant products or electric fencing can encourage the animal to return to feed on natural food sources.

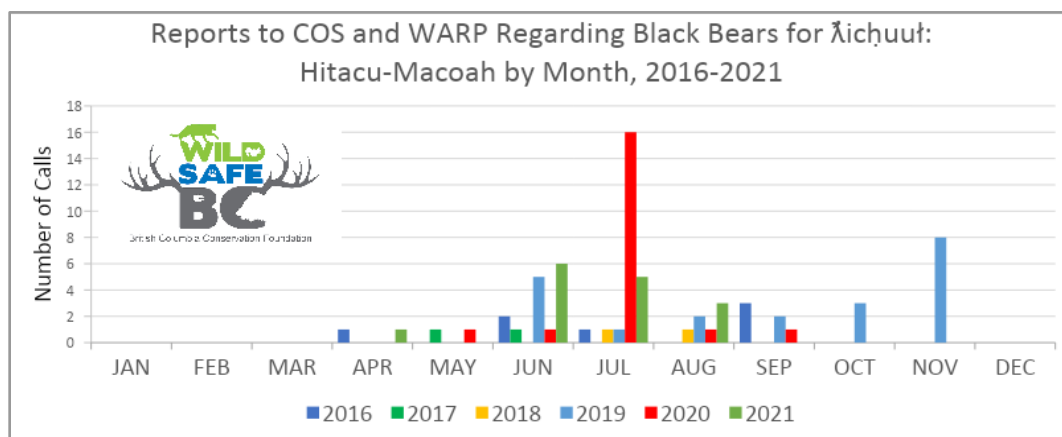


Figure 2. Reports to the COS and WARP regarding black bears from January 1, 2016, to October 31, 2021.

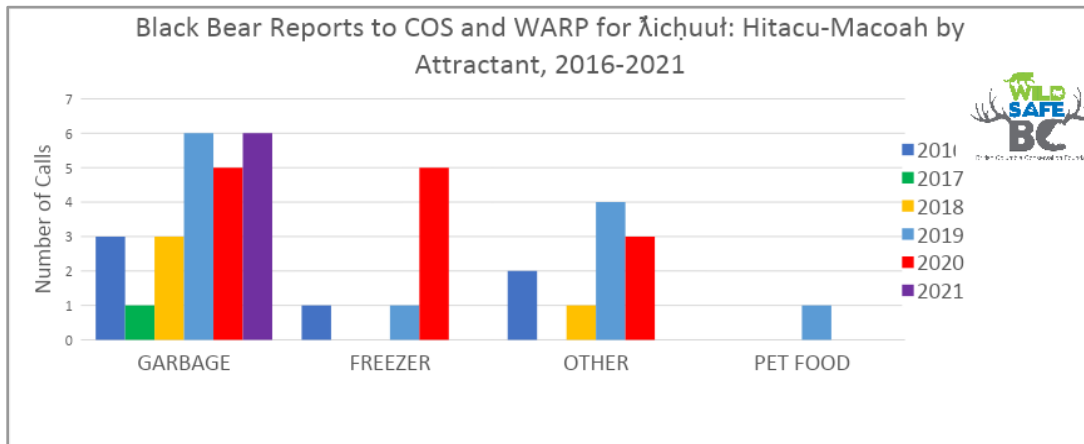


Figure 3. Black bear reports to the COS and WARP by attractant from January 1, 2016, to October 31, 2021.

Calls made to the RAPP line this year have been predominantly for black bears and one report was for a wolf early in the year. Black bear reports started in April and have been spread out over the season, however, there was a defined peak in June and July with a total of 11 reports during these two months representing 73% of total reports for the season (Figure 2). Cougar activity has not been reported to the COS through the RAPP line this year, however, the WCC is aware of cougar activity (sightings) in the area based on social media and conversations with residents.

Last year, there was a high number of vehicle-wildlife collisions and a low number of destructions, however, this year there seems to be a reverse situation where no vehicle collisions with black bears have been reported, but a high number of destructions have been recorded in the west coast region (both Pacific Rim and ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah program areas). So far, 13 black bears have been destroyed this year in the region and many are a result of continuous access to unsecured attractants. While only a small number of black bear conflicts occurred within the ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah program area, many of these bears regularly travel from one community to another and there are several overlaps of individual animals found in both program areas. This illustrates the importance of a close collaboration between both programs since poor attractant management in one area will often have repercussions in surrounding communities.

WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafe Ranger Program (WRP) introduces youth to the concept of human-wildlife conflict. A total of three schools participated in the WRP program (Figure 4). Over 190 students became WildSafe Rangers and received activity books to take home (Table 1). One of these presentations was to support a local Bear Smart club and discuss ways they can get involved in their community to help keep bears wild.

Table 1. Schools that received the WildSafe Ranger Program in 2021.

School	Grade	Students & Teachers
Wickaninnish Elementary	K,1,2,3,4,5,6,7	174
Ucluelet Elementary	6,7	11
Heartwood School	K,1,2,3	10



Figure 4. WCC ʕichuuł Hitaču-Macoah and Pacific Rim giving a WRP presentation at the Wickaninnish Elementary School in October 2021. Credits: Ms.Thompson

Presentations to Community Groups

The WCC gave a total of 6 presentations through webinars and outdoor presentations to over 70 participants (Table 2) (Figure 5).

Table 2. Presentations given by the WCC in 2021.

Organization or location	Topic	Number of people
Wya Point Campground	Bare Campsite staff training	6

WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaču-Macoah Annual Report **2021**

Clayoquot Biosphere Trust	CBT AGM - Reporting on WildSafeBC activities	32
Ucluelet Campground	Bare Campsite workshop for operators	12
Wya Point Campground	Bare Campsite staff training follow-up session	6
Howler's	WildSafeBC staff training/wildlife awareness & safety	10
Lost Shoe Campground	Bare campsite introduction for operators	6



Figure 5. Left: Bare campsite staff training for the Wya Point Campground. Right: WildSafe Pledge staff training and wildlife awareness & safety presentation at Howlers (Kent Furey left, WCC right).

Display Booths

The WCC hosted a total of 4 outdoor booths reaching over 327 people (Table 3) (Figure 6). Many of these booths were a collaboration between the WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaču-Macoah and the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim programs to give both programs more exposure and an extended reach within our adjacent coverage areas.

Table 3. Booths hosted by the WCC during the 2021 season.

Location	Date	Number of people
Lost Shoe Campground	July 20 th , 2021	3
Cixwatin Center	September 8 th , 2021	20
Amphitrite Lighthouse	September 25 th , 2021	260



Figure 6. Left: Cixwatin Center booth during food fish distribution. Credits: Niamh O'Reilly Right: Booth at Lost Shoe Campground with the WCC Pacific Rim.

Door-to-Door Education and Bin Tagging

Door-to-door education was modified this year to consist of leaving door hangers; the WCC did not knock on doors as has been done in the past.

Through door-to-door education, a total of 40 people were reached during in-person conversations and 421 people were reached with door hangers. All residential neighborhoods included in the program coverage area (Hitaću, Macoah, Port Albion, Millstream, Thornton Rd., Willowbrae Rd. & Salmon Beach) have received door-to-door packages which included a letter about specific wildlife activity in their community, wildlife brochures and a door-hanger outlining the best practices for coexisting with the local wildlife. As a second-year program, it was important for the WCC to travel to each community to ensure the WildSafeBC information was distributed widely and ensure residents were aware of the program and ways the WCC can assist the community with challenges they might be facing when it comes to living with wildlife (Figure 7). Also, all neighborhoods are situated in productive wildlife habitats and have all received a high level of activity in past years.



Figure 7. Left: WCC doing door-to-door in Millstream, Port Albion, Thornton Rd. & Willowbrae Rd. Right: WCC doing door-to-door in Salmon Beach. Credits: Melanie Marchant

Garbage bin tagging consists of placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on top of containers set curbside the day before collection. During 3 outings, a total of 1 bin was tagged in the program coverage area that receives garbage pickup, which includes Port Albion, Thornton Rd., Willowbrae Rd. and Millstream and there were no observed repeat offenders. The residential neighborhoods receiving garbage pickup in this area are limited to only a few small communities and over the past couple of years, they have been very diligent with ensuring no bins are put curbside the night before.

Social Media and Press

The WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah Program Facebook page grew 242.9% in 2021 from 35 to 120 page followers and a total of 58 original posts were made to promote human-wildlife coexistence. The WCC submitted six news articles to the Umacuk and YG Newsletter about various topics regarding attractant management and following the seasonal wildlife activity, as well as trends observed within the region (Table 4).

The WCC took part in two phone interviews regarding wildlife activity in the area and ways residents and visitors can help keep wildlife wild and the surrounding communities safe (Table 4). One interview was with the Westerly News and the other with the West Coast N.E.S.T.

Table 4. Media articles and phone interviews were conducted by the WCC during the 2021 season.

Media	Topic	Hyperlink
Umacuk	End of the 2020 season and program coming back in the spring	https://ufn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Umacuk-Spring-2021.pdf
Westerly News	WildSafeBC is back for the season	https://www.westerlynews.ca/community/bears-feasting-on-springs-bounty-around-tofino-and-ucluelet/
YG Newsletter	WildSafeBC is back in town & securing attractants	https://www.ufn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/YG-Newsletter-April-2021.pdf
YG Newsletter	Fawning season	https://www.ufn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/YG-NEWLSETTER-May-2021.pdf
Umacuk	Summer edition: bear activity & ways to keep them wild	https://www.ufn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Umacuk-Summer-2021.pdf
West Coast N.E.S.T.	Preventing human-wildlife conflict (tips for residents & visitors)	https://www.westcoastnest.org/stories/preventing-human-wildlife-conflict
YG Newsletter	Bin monitoring and program resources	https://www.ufn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/YG-NEWLSETTER-July-2021-Web.pdf
Umacuk	Fall bear activity, hyperphagia & attractant management	https://www.ufn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Umacuk-Fall-2021-1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0D7LHydGB5seIC7U2js1_uwf9TrEpaqC-t5XgoVUSShodUGMI4LMzb6Fo

Wildlife in Area Signs

Wildlife in area signs were used in specific areas that were known to have a high amount of bear activity but also were known to have potential attractants left unsecured. This had the purpose to alert the community to ensure they were aware of the presence of black bears within the community and also try to encourage safe attractant management in these targeted areas (Figure 8).

Signs were also given to community sponsors and local campgrounds to help provide residents and visitors with timely information about wildlife sightings in the area. For many communities, campgrounds or wildlife activity hotspots, permanent wildlife in area signs are needed as they are situated within productive wildlife habitats and wildlife travels through established corridors in the area on a regular basis.



Figure 8. A wildlife in area sign was used to inform residents of black bear activity in this particular area.

Collaborations

The many collaborations throughout the season have been a great way to increase the visibility of the program, engage with a wider range of people, and bring projects to completion that would not have been possible without the help of many.

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD)

The ACRD has provided the program with funds that allowed residents to get the cost of their electric fences or bear-resistant products subsidized at 50% of the final price (up to 500\$). The ACRD was also able to provide additional funding to some of the communities enabling them to make their infrastructure wildlife-resistant. With this collaboration between the ACRD, the WCC and the Toquaht Nation, the community of Macoah is now able to secure its recycling storage facility securely with a sea can container (Figure 9). Also, the community now has bear-resistant bins available for each resident receiving curbside pickup and a new electric fence which was recently installed around their community garden to keep bears and other wildlife away from fruits, vegetables and compost found within the fence.



Figure 9. Sea can in Macoah securing the recycling storage facility that had been accessed by a black bear in the past (Left: During the installation, Right: After the installation). Credits: David Johnsen

The WCC has also been able to take part in the ACRD waste consultation meetings which is a way for multiple partners and stakeholders to be informed on new developments regarding local waste management on the West Coast. It is important for the WCC to be able to not only stay informed but also discuss any challenges waste management can represent for wildlife coexistence in the region.

Businesses

Thanks to many collaborations with businesses across the region, the program has been able to expand its reach and develop new innovative initiatives serving specific challenges within the region. By collaborating with Sonbird Refuse and Recycling, it was possible to create an effective communication plan to ensure that damaged community bins in Hitaću could be replaced as quickly as possible to ensure wildlife would not be able to access the contents. They have also been supplying additional replacement chains and clasps that need to be changed on a regular basis for the bins to remain bear-resistant.

Another great collaboration early this season was with the Ucluelet Campground who have allowed the WildSafeBC ʕichʕuuʕ Hitaću-Macoah and Pacific Rim program to host a Bare campsite workshop for campground operators to showcase the effectiveness of the practices they have put in place within their business and encourage more operators to implement the program. Lastly, the Den Ucluelet is now including an educational poster regarding best practices for visitors staying in vacation rentals to coexist with wildlife. This collaboration is a

way for WildSafeBC to reach a broader audience and expand our education to a wider array of visitors in the region.

Other collaborations throughout the season include the Conservation Officer Service, the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, Margo Supplies, Toy Box Storage, the Association of Wetlands Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds and many others that have made all the initiatives possible.

WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program

Through the WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program, WildSafeBC is able to provide clear guidelines and resources to assist campground operators in maintaining a safe campsite for both people and wildlife. There are two campsites that are participating in the Bare Campsite Program and six campsites were approached about this new WildSafeBC initiative.

The WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah program would like to recognize the efforts made by the Wya Point campground and the Secret Beach campground in their commitment to reducing conflict with wildlife and enhancing their guest's safety by keeping attractants secure, having well-maintained bear-resistant infrastructure available for their campers and for being dedicated throughout their operations to keeping wildlife wild.

Special Initiatives

Bear Stewardship Committee

Last year, a Bear Hazard Assessment (BHA) was completed by the WCC along with the help of many experts to have a better understanding of specific challenges experienced within each community and identify ways to further prevent conflict with black bears in the region. With the information gathered in this report, the WCC has started facilitating a Bear Stewardship Committee to discuss the challenges highlighted in the BHA and work towards a Bear-Conflict Management Plan. These bi-monthly meetings with multiple partners, stakeholders and experts give the opportunity to each member to put forward ideas and address specific challenges regarding human-bear coexistence in the region.

Bin monitoring program

The WCC launched a pilot bin monitoring program for the community of Hitaću to raise awareness around the importance of always keeping the community bins well-secured which in turn helps the local wildlife stay wild and keep the community safe (Figure 10). This program has also allowed for easier communication of damaged bins along with helping with timely replacement from the waste management company serving the community.

Would you like to take part in the volunteer community bin monitoring program?

How?

As you walk around Hitaču, take a quick look at the community bins you pass by.

- ✔ Is the bin up? Is it well latched with the clasps?
- ✔ If it is not, close the bin correctly to make sure crows, black bears or other wildlife cannot access the contents.
- ✔ Once that is done, please text Marianne (WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaču-Macoah Coordinator), at 514-622-7317 and indicate the number of the bin that was unlatched.

If you notice any damage or if the bin cannot be closed because of a bent lid or other reasons, please provide those details.

Why participate?

Garbage is a strong attractant for crows and other wildlife species and by taking part in this monitoring program and making sure that the community bins are well latched at all times you can help keep crows wild and the community safer as a result.

Thank you everyone and don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions. A clipboard and community bin map will be provided to each volunteer.

Hitaču community bin map

Found an unlatched bin?

Please text or email the **number & condition** of the bin ➔

Marianne Paquette
WildSafeBC ʕichuuł
Hitaču-Macoah Coordinator
514-622-7317
hitacu-macoah@wildsafebc.com

Keeping Wildlife Wild and Communities Safe

Figure 10. Bin monitoring program information sheet for volunteers (Left: front - Right: back).

This initiative would not have been possible without the help of SonBird Refuse and recycling, Robin Jackson (SonBird Depot Manager), Jay Millar (Jr. Lands and Resources Officer) and Justin Jackway (SonBird Depot employee), who have done incredible work this season. The WCC is hoping to grow the interest in this program during the 2022 season and have additional volunteers taking part in this initiative creating broader community awareness. Over the months of August and September 2021, seven community bin surveys were conducted. On average, the bins were found unlatched 26% of the time (Figure 11). This shows the need for innovative solutions to one day achieve the goal of having local community bins latched 100% of the time.

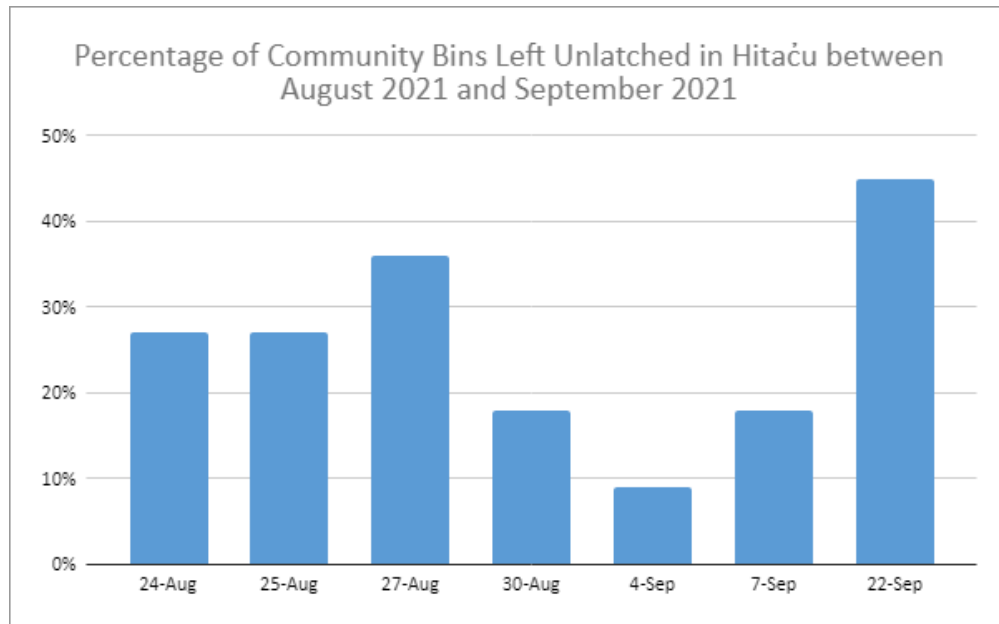


Figure 11. Percentage of community bins left unlatched in Hitaʕu between August 2021 and September 2021.

Bear-resistant bins education

As mentioned earlier in this report, bear-resistant containers were provided by the ACRD to each resident of Macoah and to facilitate the roll-out of the bins the WCC created an educational reference document to indicate best practices regarding the use of these specific bins (Figure 12). Bear-resistant containers need to be used appropriately to keep bears and other wildlife out otherwise they can be a strong attractant within communities. To prevent the food-conditioning of wildlife, it is key to understand how strong, clever and resourceful bears and other animals can be when it comes to finding food sources. Bear-resistant containers used in an optimal way can help ensure that wildlife will not be able to access its contents.

Bear-resistant garbage containers

Note that the bear-resistant bins provided are **NOT BEAR-PROOF**. Given enough time and motivation, a čims (black bear) can cause serious damage and eventually access the contents.

Čims that learn to access containers may continue to cause more damage, get into conflict with residents, which then leads to safety concerns and the potential death of that bear.

Help čims stay wild!

- Keep your bin stored inside a sturdy structure if available.
- If you do not have a storage structure, keep the bin secured to a sturdy post or another solid object. This will prevent the bear from dragging it away.
- Always keep both clips latched until the morning of collection to prevent access by čims.
- Freeze smelly items and only add them to the bin on the day of collection.

Any questions? Contact:

Marianne Paquette
hitacu-macoah@wildsafebc.com
(cell) 614-622-7317

Follow us on Facebook

WildSafeBC Hitacu Macoah

Report wildlife conflicts:

BC Conservation Officer Service **1-877-952-7277**

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District
WildSafeBC
Toquaht Nation

Figure 12. Educational reference document for bear-resistant bin owners.

Community garden electric fencing

The newly built electric fence around the ʕułcamis community garden in Macoah has been a collaboration between the WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah program, the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program and the Toquaht Nation Government (Figure 13). This initiative would not have been possible without the subsidy funds provided by the ACRD, Margo supplies, David Johnsen (Director of Lands and Public Works and Ressources), Brett Freake (Manager of Lands and Resources) and Burton Mack (Public works). The community garden had been an attractant for wildlife in the past and had been damaged by a black bear trying to access it. The garden is surrounded by great wildlife habitat and backs onto the forest and is also near many well-used wildlife corridors. This area has been identified by the WCC as a potential hotspot in the BHA and the solution proposed was electric fencing. With this new electric fence, the community can now feel confident that their crops and compost won't be an attractant for the local bears and residents can carry on with their activities as normal as long as the fence keeps being well maintained over the years.



Figure 13. Left: The new electric fence around the łulcamis community garden in Macoah (from left to right: Burton Mack, Bob Hansen and David Johnsen). Right: The WCC working on the fence.

BC Goes Wild Weekend

BC Goes Wild is a campaign to celebrate wildlife in BC and it occurs in September which is typically the month when human-bear conflicts are at their highest in BC. Throughout the second week of September, the WCC teamed up with the Pacific Rim WCC to host two booths in both Ucluelet and Tofino (Figure 14). During that weekend, the WCC's were joined by Janel Saydam (Parcs Canada interpreter), Barbara Beasley (Founder of the Association of Wetlands Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds) and expert bird naturalist Ian Cruickshank. Each organization presented information about the many wildlife species they specialize in and



Figure 14. BC Goes wild weekend celebrating wildlife with display booths.

shared their knowledge with locals and visitors alike. A total of 304 people participated in the event.

The WCCs also collaborated to host a three-week-long contest which consisted of encouraging people to submit a photo or a video of themselves doing a “WildSafe” action around their home, workplace or community (Figure 15). Thanks to the generous support of Paddle West Kayaking, Rhino Coffee House, Gaia Grocery and Ocean Outfitters, five amazing prizes were donated for the contest winners. The contest was successful in reaching over 1,900 people on the WildSafeBC Hitacu-Macoah Facebook page and the program now has great videos and photos to use for educational purposes.



Figure 15. BC Goes Wild contest promotional poster displayed around both towns and promotional online Facebook posts countdown.

Challenges and Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on the program delivery and activities as many communities were closed for parts of the season and community events were restricted. However, this being the second year for the program and also the second year working during the pandemic, it was a lot easier to keep working on initiatives initiated in 2020 and evaluate where the program should focus educational outreach while adhering to Provincial regulations. The pandemic had made presentations more difficult to organize and attendance quite low in most cases, but it was an opportunity for the WCC to focus more effort on door-to-door activities, outdoor booth outreach, and building an online presence with the program’s Facebook page.

Garbage continues to be a strong attractant in each of the communities as it is drawing wildlife into residential areas. Having different waste management options available in each jurisdiction is also a challenge when it comes to education since it is essential to take into consideration each area's specific needs. Some areas also offer waste management services to the community that are unfortunately not adequate for all residents because of physical barriers. There is a need to address these challenges and find a way to offer additional services to residents needing assistance. This could be achieved with community volunteers or perhaps become a part-time employment opportunity. Also, with the new organic waste diversion roll-out coming to the West Coast next season, it will be important to prioritize messaging on proper household and commercial waste management. Additionally, creating uniform bylaws and regulations across jurisdictions would greatly support educational messages and would provide the opportunity for additional enforcement to be in place for those not receptive to education. Within the program coverage area, options such as restorative justice could also be explored.

To address the issue of wildlife accessing unsecured garbage on a regular basis within local neighborhoods, the following initiatives should be implemented in 2022:

- Building a larger volunteer base within each community, especially for the bin monitoring program.
- Maintain door-to-door campaigns for each neighborhood.
- Keep discussing solutions with the Bear Stewardship Committee during bi-monthly meetings.
- Continue working on education campaigns focusing on hazards and solutions through social media, news articles, workshops and flyers in municipal tax information.
- Keep working with businesses to sign the WildSafeBC Business Pledge and encourage and support campgrounds to take part in WildSafeBC's Bare Campsite Program.
- Actively promote ways that the program can support residents in keeping wildlife wild and their community safe by ensuring members are aware of optimal waste management practices in wildlife country.
- Support better solid waste management strategies in the region to reduce access by wildlife.

Next year, the WCC is hoping to be able to provide more staff training for Bare Campsite Program operators and WildSafe Businesses, along with additional opportunities for bear spray workshops and wildlife awareness and safety in-person presentations. Additionally, the WCC would like to grow the volunteer network, develop more opportunities for youth engagement in each community and collaborate with the Yuulułif?ath Government Culture and Heritage department to create educational materials on wildlife coexistence. Lastly, there is a need for further outreach about the benefits of calling the RAPP line early as there is still a reluctance to involve the COS when wildlife is either sighted in residential areas or accessing attractants.

Acknowledgements

The WildSafeBC ʕichuuł Hitaću-Macoah would not have been possible without the generous funding from the Yuuluʕiʕath Government-Ucluelet First Nation, the Toquaht Nation, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the Province of British Columbia, and the British Columbia Conservation Foundation.

A special thank you to the BCCF staff and Bob Hansen (Pacific Rim Coordinator, Jonquil Crosby (Yuuluʕiʕath Manager of Fish and Wildlife) and David Johnsen (Director of lands, public works and resources at the Toquaht Government) and Brett Freake (Manager of lands and resources at the Toquaht Government) for their ongoing support and advice.

There are many people to thank, and I apologize if I missed anyone, your time and efforts are highly appreciated. Many thanks to:

Andrew Riddell (COS), Stuart Bates (COS), Mallory Blake (Wildlife Safety Response Officer), Daryl Keeble (Lands and Resources Officer-YG), Jay Millar (Lands and Resources Officers-YG), Tori Pollins (Lands and Resources Administrative Assistant - YG), Niamh O'Reilly (Traditional Foods Coordinator - YG), Marie & Damien (Ucluelet Campground Managers), Janel Saydam (Pacific Rim National Park Reserve naturalist), Jeff & Conrad (Margo Supplies), Jenny Brunn (ACRD Manager of Operations), Jonathan Cross (Operations manager for the Wya Campground), Barbara Beasley (Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds), Todd Windle (PRNPR Co-Existence Specialist), Terry (Salmon Beach Facebook page moderator), Jeff Anderson (Wya Campground Manager), Wya Campground staff (thanks to Fred, Hannah, Toni, Chris & Josh), Burton Mack & Jim Fox (Toquaht Government Public Works), Natalie Mitchell & Kristen O'Keefe (the Den Ucluelet), Haley Stevenson (West Coast N.E.S.T.), Melissa Boucha (Manager of Communications and Public Relations - YG), Samantha Touchie (Culture and Heritage Assistant - YG), Jeneva Touchie (Culture, Language and Heritage - YG), Robin Jackson (Sonbird Refuse and Recycling), Noah Plonka (Manager of Business Operations - Toquaht Government), Brenda Sauve (Environmental Services Coordinator - ACRD), Jodi Frank (Organics Diversion Coordinator - ACRD), and many more.