

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2023

## Columbia Shuswap

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BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CONSERVATION FOUNDATION



**SALMON ARM**  
SMALL CITY, BIG IDEAS

## Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Program between June 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The program covers the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Areas G and E, as well as the City of Salmon Arm (Figure 1). This includes the communities of Blind Bay, Sorrento, Notch Hill, Swansea Point and Malakwa. This is the third season for the CSRD Areas G and E and the first year of the program being implemented in Salmon Arm. WildSafeBC acknowledges that the program takes place on the unceded traditional territory of the Secwépemc People.

Consistent with previous years, black bears were the most reported species in conflict to the British Columbia Conservation Officer Service (COS). Deer, moose and cougars were the next most reported species, respectively. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) performed various outreach activities with the goal of preventing human-wildlife conflict in communities.

The following summarizes key program deliverables over the course of the 2023 season:

- 25 WildSafe Ranger Program presentations were delivered to schools and children's groups, with a total of 681 youth reached.
- 9 presentations given to various community groups with a total of 251 participants
- 14 bin tagging outings and 767 bins tagged in total in all city and private solid waste collection zones
- 79 residents reached through door-to-door education and provided information on attractant management and wildlife safety
- 7 display booths held at various community events and 568 people reached
- 47 Facebook posts on the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap page and 31 new followers from June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023
- 7 media interviews and article press releases were conducted for various media outlets throughout the Columbia Shuswap
- Ongoing participation in the Columbia Shuswap Wildlife Working Group

WildSafeBC continued participation in the Columbia Shuswap Wildlife Working Group this season. partnership with the Sunnybrae Stewardship Society. The purpose of the Wildlife Working Group is to facilitate knowledge sharing between the COS, local government, various community organizations, and community members to address human-wildlife conflict in the region.

Unsecured solid waste and residential fruit trees, among other unnatural food sources, continue to draw wildlife into residential areas. Building on connections made this year in the community and continuing with WildSafeBC outreach activities will help to address these challenges and help "keep wildlife wild and communities safe".

Thank you to the BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF), the Province of British Columbia, the CSRD, and the City of Salmon Arm for funding and supporting the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Program. The WCC is grateful for the support and collaborative efforts of many community organizations that were instrumental to the success of the program. WildSafeBC appreciates the efforts of all involved in this program's return to the community.

## WildSafeBC CSRD Areas G&E and City of Salmon Arm Program Coverage

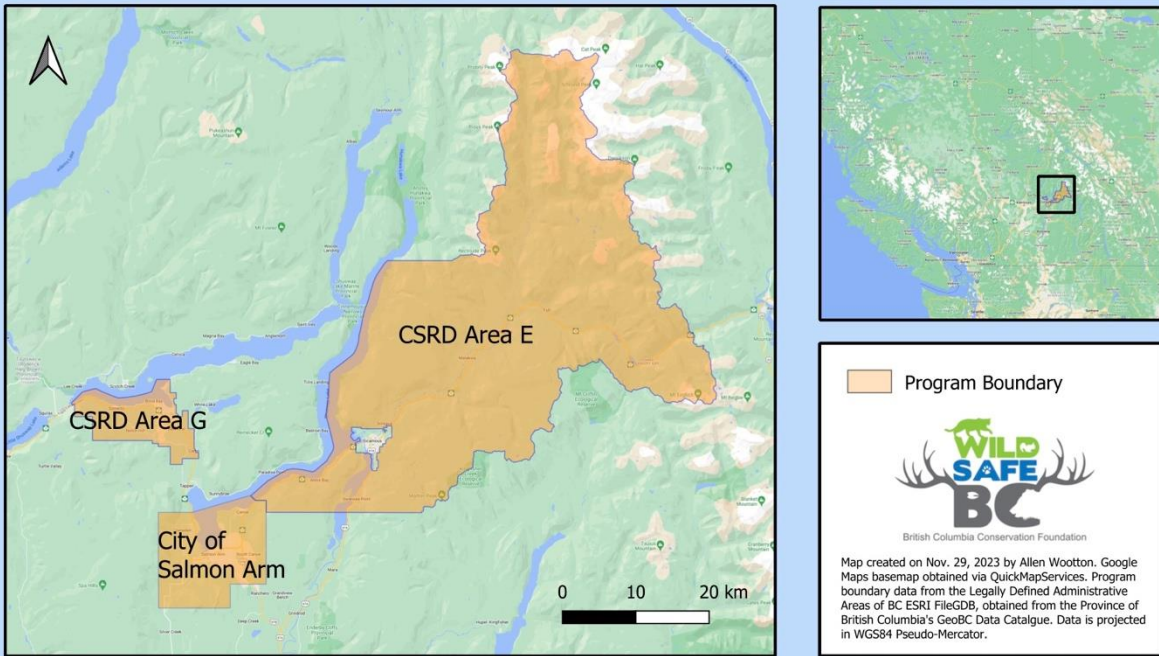


Figure 1. WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Program coverage area in 2023, which includes Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Areas G & E, and the City of Salmon Arm.

Figure 2. WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Program coverage area in 2023, which includes Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Areas G & E, and the City of Salmon Arm.

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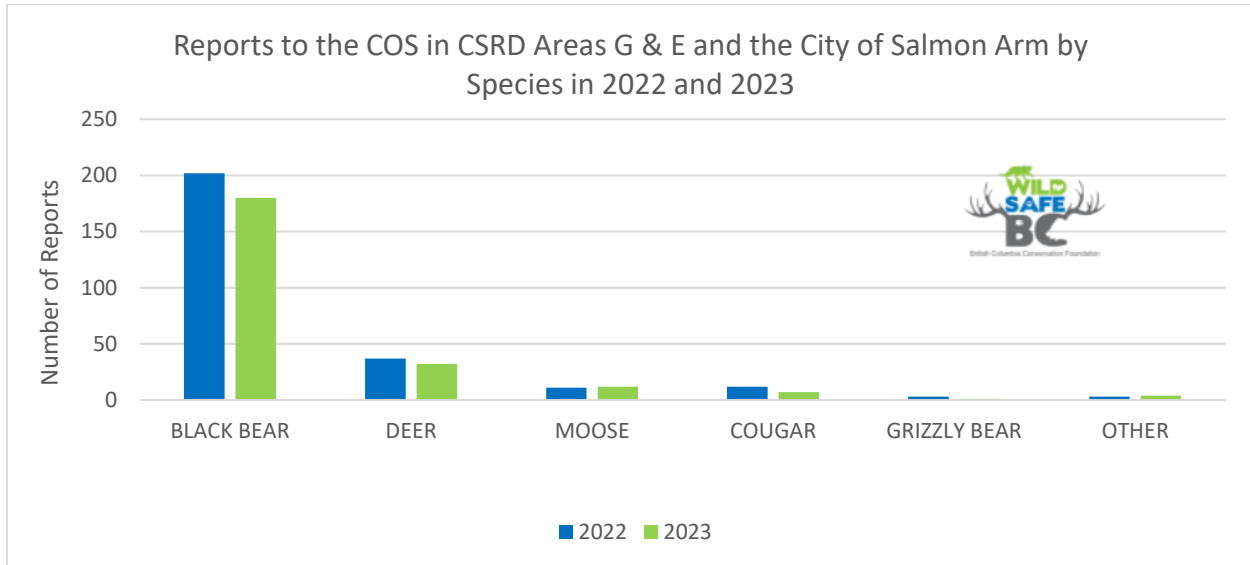
## Highlights from the 2023 Season

### Wildlife Activity

Reports made to the BC Conservation Officer Service (COS) through the RAPP line (1-877-952-7277) and online (<https://forms.gov.bc.ca/environment/rapp/>) are available to the public through WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) and are uploaded daily. This report for the Columbia Shuswap WildSafeBC Program only includes data from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 to November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Due to technical difficulties with the WARP, data used in this report regarding wildlife reports made in 2023 and 2022 were obtained directly from the COS. Wildlife activity from previous years is available from the [WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Annual Report 2022](#) or the [WARP](#).

Similar to previous years, black bears were the species most often reported to the COS, followed by deer, moose, cougars and grizzly bears (Figure 3). From January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, there were 180 black bear reports, which is lower than the number of reports made in 2022. This high number of black bear reports may be contributed to the droughts, heat, and wildfires experienced across the Province this year, resulting in an increased number of human-black bear conflicts. This year, there were 32 reports made regarding deer in the Columbia Shuswap, which is lower than last year's total. Moose accounted for 12 reports made to the COS, which is higher than the previous year. There were 7 reports made regarding cougars, which decreased from last year. There was 1 report of a grizzly bear this year, which is lower than last year. Lastly, there were 4 reports of other wildlife made to the COS, which included coyotes and bobcats. In total this year, 236 reports of wildlife were made to the COS, which is lower than the previous year.

As deer are the second most commonly reported species to the COS, they also contribute to human-wildlife conflicts in the Columbia Shuswap. Deer are abundant throughout the entire area and urbanized deer can contribute to an increase in wildlife collisions or become aggressive towards people and pets. Drivers should always use caution, especially at dawn, dusk and early evening when deer may be crossing roads. Wildlife collisions with moose occur most often in January and February and drivers should take similar precautions as with deer. Moose cows are very protective of their young and may become aggressive towards people and pets. Cougar reports were most commonly sightings in residential areas or conflict with livestock or pets. House pets should be kept indoors, especially at night, and chickens or livestock should be protected by an electric fence.



**Figure 3. Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) by species from January 1, 2022 to November 14, 2023 in the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Areas G & E and the City of Salmon Arm.**

There are many natural and anthropogenic bear attractants throughout the Columbia Shuswap that increase the potential for human-wildlife conflict as well as wildlife travel corridors. Solid waste, including organics and garbage, is the most commonly reported bear attractant in this region and in the Province. Solid waste should be kept secure at all times, preferably indoors or in a secure structure, and inaccessible to wildlife, as per the *BC Wildlife Act*. In Salmon Arm, solid waste bins are not to be set out to the curb the night before collection day per the *City Bylaw 4281*. Other commonly reported attractants this season included livestock or pets, bird feeders and fruit trees. Bird feeders should only be used in the winter when bears are hibernating and fruits trees should be kept well-managed, ensuring fallen fruit and seed is cleaned, to prevent the food-conditioning of wildlife. The WCC also spoke with many residents who claimed to have seen black bears accessing attractants in their community but did not report the incident to the COS. Underreporting of human-bear conflict appears to be a common trend in most communities in the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap coverage area.

Historically, the highest number of human-bear conflicts in BC occur during the fall months when bears goes through hyperphagia (“extreme eating”) and eat an average of 20,000 calories a day. This year, black bear reports were highest in May, June and July (Figure 4). In July and August, the Bush Creek East wildfire burned in CSRD Area F and Area G, which may contribute to the higher number of human-black bear conflicts this season as bear populations were displaced. Out of 236 wildlife reports this season, 179 reports of wildlife were from the Salmon Arm area, accounting for 77% of the total reports; 43 reports were from the CSRD Area G (18%) and 12 reports were from Area E (5%) (Figure 5).

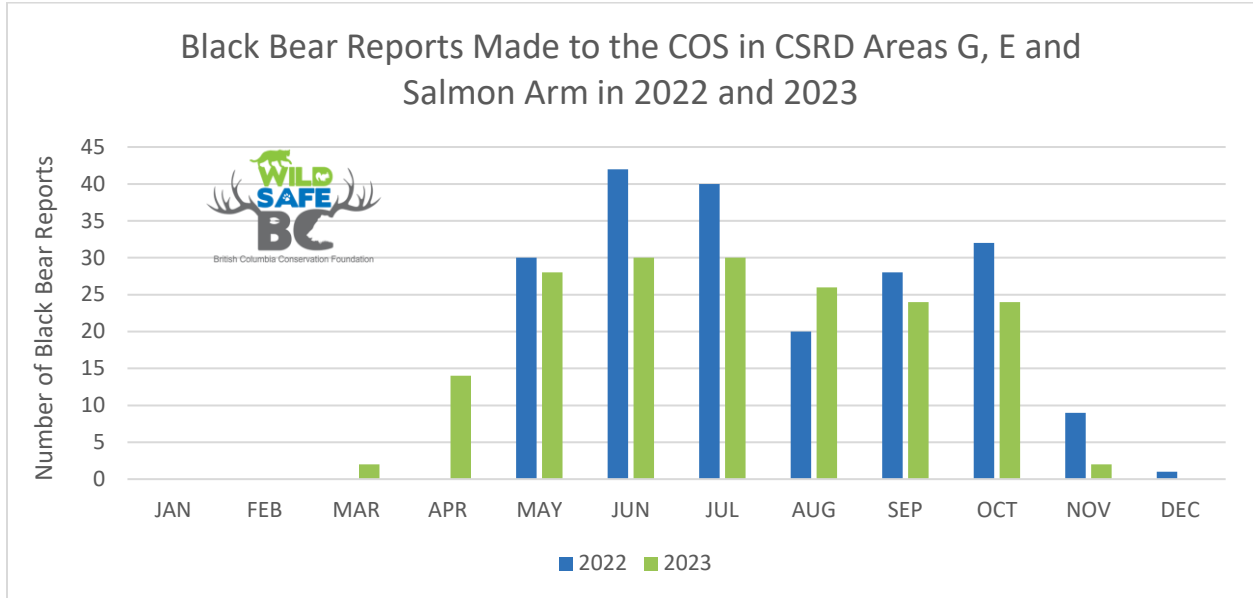


Figure 4. Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) regarding black bears by month from January 1, 2022 to November 14, 2023 in Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Areas G & E and the City of Salmon Arm.

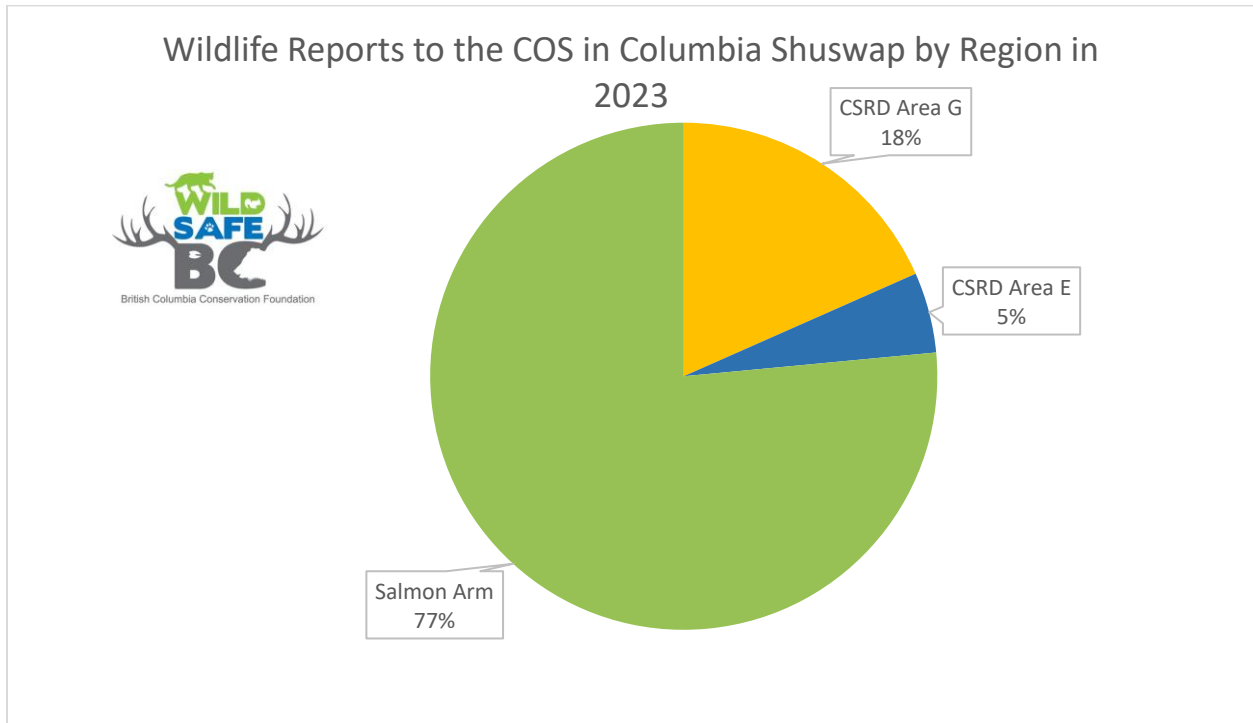


Figure 5. Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) regarding wildlife in the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Areas G & E and the City of Salmon Arm, from January 1, 2023 to November 14, 2023.



## WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafe Ranger Program (WRP) introduces students to the concept of human-wildlife conflict and encourages them to take an active role in reducing human-wildlife conflict at home by helping their families identify backyard wildlife attractants (Figure 6 & Figure 7). Students are also educated on safety basics when encountering local wildlife species. Five schools participated in WRP this season (Table 1). A total of 762 children became WildSafe Rangers and received a WildSafe Ranger kit which included an activity book, a WildSafe Ranger oath card, a sticker, a WildSafe Ranger pin, and a bookmark (Figure 8).

**Table 1. Schools and community organizations that received the WildSafe Ranger Program in 2023.**

School / Community Organization	Grade	Presentations (#)	Youth	Date
<b>Bastion Elementary School – Wild School Days Event</b>	K – 5	10	370	June 21
<b>South Canoe Elementary School</b>	1 – 5	3	68	October 4
<b>Hillcrest Elementary School</b>	1 – 5	6	109	October 23
<b>Bastion Elementary School</b>	K – 3	5	117	November 6
<b>Salmon Arm West Elementary</b>	2 – 3	1	17	November 13
<b>Hillcrest Elementary School</b>	K – 1	1	38	November 20
<b>Sorrento Elementary School</b>	2	1	20	November 23
<b>Parkview Elementary School</b>	3 – 4	1	23	November 27
<b>Totals</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>762</b>	



**Figure 6. WildSafe Ranger Program delivered at South Canoe Elementary School, October 4, 2023.**



Figure 7. WildSafe Ranger Program delivered at Bastion Elementary School’s Wild School Days Event, June 21, 2023.



Figure 8. WildSafe Ranger take-home kits for students and children’s groups, 2023.

## Presentations to Community Groups

The WCC gave a total of 9 presentations to 264 participants (Table 2). Three of these presentations were bear spray workshops that allowed participants to practice using inert bear spray that does not have the active ingredient (Figure 9 & Figure 10). The other presentations were wildlife awareness and bear safety workshops, where participants learned about wildlife behaviour and biology, factors that lead to human-wildlife conflict, and the many solutions available to reduce conflict and stay safe (Figure 11 & Figure 12).

Table 2. Community organizations that partnered with WildSafeBC to host presentations in 2023.

Community Organization	Type of Presentation	Date	Attendees (#)
City of Salmon Arm	Bear Spray Workshop	June 29	50
Sorrento Place on the Lake	Wildlife Awareness & Safety	July 7	30
Shuswap Rotary Club	Wildlife Awareness & Safety	August 14	45
Shuswap Naturalist Club	Wildlife Awareness & Safety	September 5	14
Lakeview PROBUS Club	Wildlife Awareness & Safety	September 7	60
City of Salmon Arm	Wildlife Awareness & Safety	October 12	15
Shuswap Lady Striders	Bear Spray Workshop	October 17	30
Swansea Point Community Association	Overview of WildSafeBC	October 25	7
South Canoe Elementary	Bear Spray training for staff	November 8	13
<b>Total Attendees</b>			<b>264</b>



Figure 9. Bear Spray Workshop training demonstration provided by the WCC with the Shuswap Lady Striders on October 17, 2023.



Figure 10. WildSafeBC's Wildlife Awareness and Bear Safety Presentation delivered by the WCC at Salmon Arm City Hall, October 12, 2023.



Figure 11. WildSafeBC's Wildlife Awareness and Bear Spray Workshop hosted by the Shuswap Lady Striders at the 5th Avenue Seniors' Centre in Salmon Arm, October 17, 2023.



Figure 12. WildSafeBC's Wildlife Awareness and Bear Safety presentation at the Shuswap Rotary Club meeting, August 14, 2023.

## Display Booths

The WCC held 7 display booths at community events in CSRD Areas G & E and the City of Salmon Arm, reaching a total of 568 people (Table 3). These events provided an opportunity for the WCC to introduce both tourists and residents to WildSafeBC messaging, make connections with local businesses and community organizations, and to learn from residents about local wildlife conflicts (Figure 13 & Figure 14).

Table 3. Community events that the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator attended with the WildSafeBC display booth, and the number of people reached, 2023.

Community Event	Date	Booth attendees (#)
Sicamous Farmers' Market	June 16, 2023	66
Sicamous Farmers' Market	July 7, 2023	81
Sorrento Farmers' Market	July 8, 2023	130
Swansea Point Fire Hall BBQ Event	July 16, 2023	35
Sicamous Farmers' Market	July 21, 2023	56
Salmon Arm Farmers' Market	August 12, 2023	146
Sorrento Farmers' Market	August 26, 2023	54
<b>Totals</b>		<b>568</b>



**Figure 13. The WildSafeBC display booth set up by the WCC at the Swansea Point Fire Hall BBQ Event, July 16, 2023.**



**Figure 14. The WildSafeBC display booth at the Sicamous Farmers' Market, June 16, 2023.**

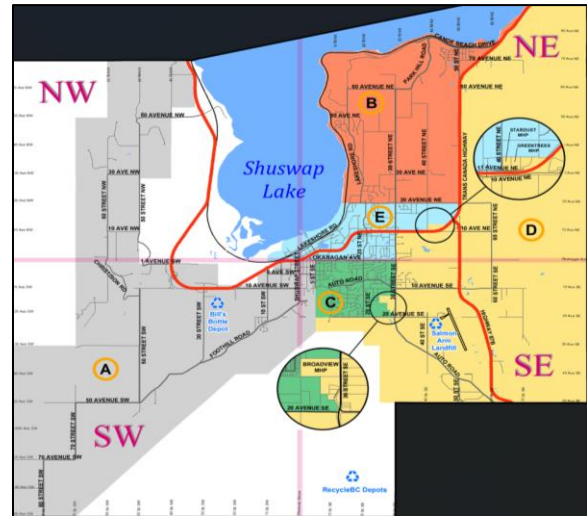
## Door-to-Door Education and Bin Tagging

Door-to-door canvassing was conducted in areas that were experiencing high human-wildlife conflicts and requested by the COS. A total of 79 homes received WildSafeBC's wildlife safety and awareness messaging through door-to-door canvassing, and 22 people were reached with an in-person conversation. Discussions regarding attractant management and wildlife activity, along with educational materials such as door hangers, brochures, and written letters specific to each neighborhood, were delivered to these high conflict areas. This messaging pertained specifically to black bears in areas of Deer Ridge Estates in Sorrento and Canoe Creek Estates in Salmon Arm. Residents that were not reached face-to-face were left with informational handouts on how to avoid human-wildlife conflict in their neighborhood.

WildSafeBC's solid waste bin-tagging program consists of placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on top of containers that are set out on the curbside the night before collection day (Figure 15). All five of the waste collection zones in the City of Salmon Arm boundaries were surveyed, with Zones A, C, D and E receiving a second survey along the same route initially taken by the WCC (Figure 16). A second survey was conducted to see if the residents who received a warning in the first survey had changed their behaviour in the second survey. The first two surveys conducted in Zone B covered the entire collection zone once; a third survey was conducted in this area to revisit the same addresses in the initial two surveys.

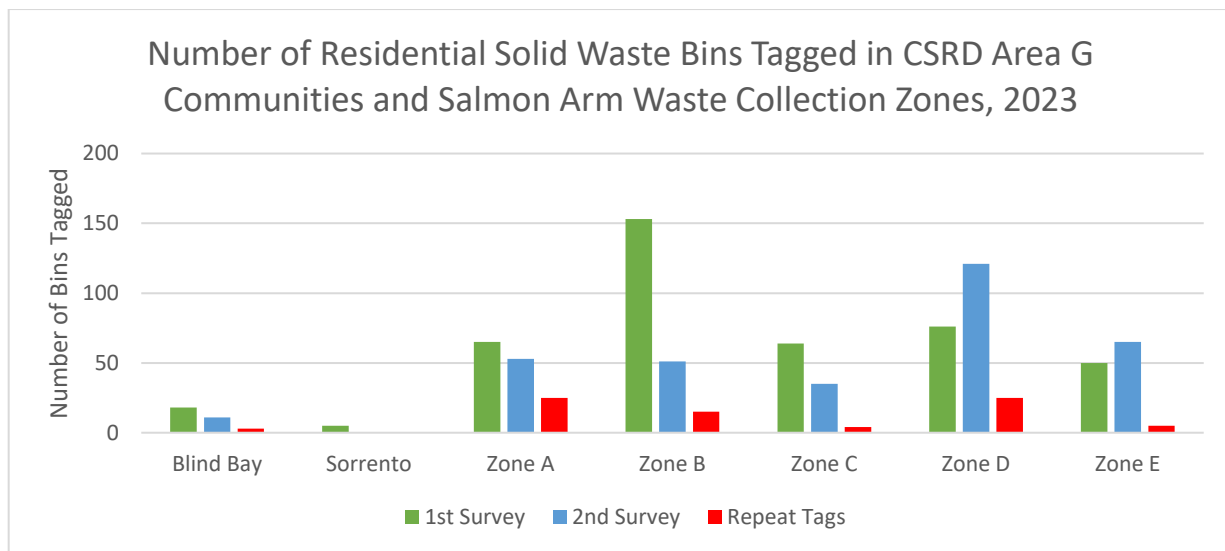


**Figure 15. Highly visible and educational warning stickers that are placed on solid waste bins set out to the curb the night before collection day by the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator.**

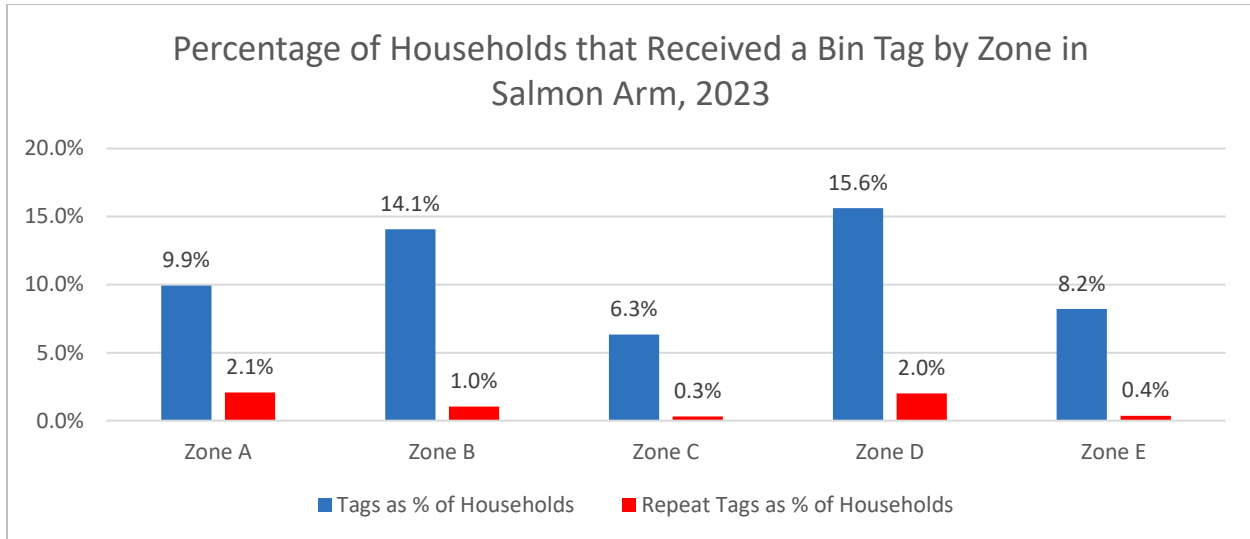


**Figure 16. City of Salmon Arm Curbside Collection Program map showing the boundaries of the five different waste collection zones.**

In total, 767 bins were tagged throughout the Columbia Shuswap and 77 residents had their bins tagged in both surveys (Figure 17). On average, 87% of residents that had their bin tagged during the first survey did not have their bin placed out during the second survey. In CSRD Area G, residents of Blind Bay received the greatest number of bin tags, with 29 bins tagged. In Salmon Arm, residents of Zone D received the most amount of bin tags, after taking into considering the number of households in each zone, with 16% of households receiving a bin tag (Figure 18). Of all the bins that were tagged this season, only 10% of residents still placed their bin out again after receiving a warning sticker. This demonstrates the efficacy of bin tagging education for changing residents' behaviour in managing wildlife attractants.



**Figure 17. The number of solid-waste residential bins that were tagged by the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Coordinator during bin-tagging surveys, by community or zone, 2023.**

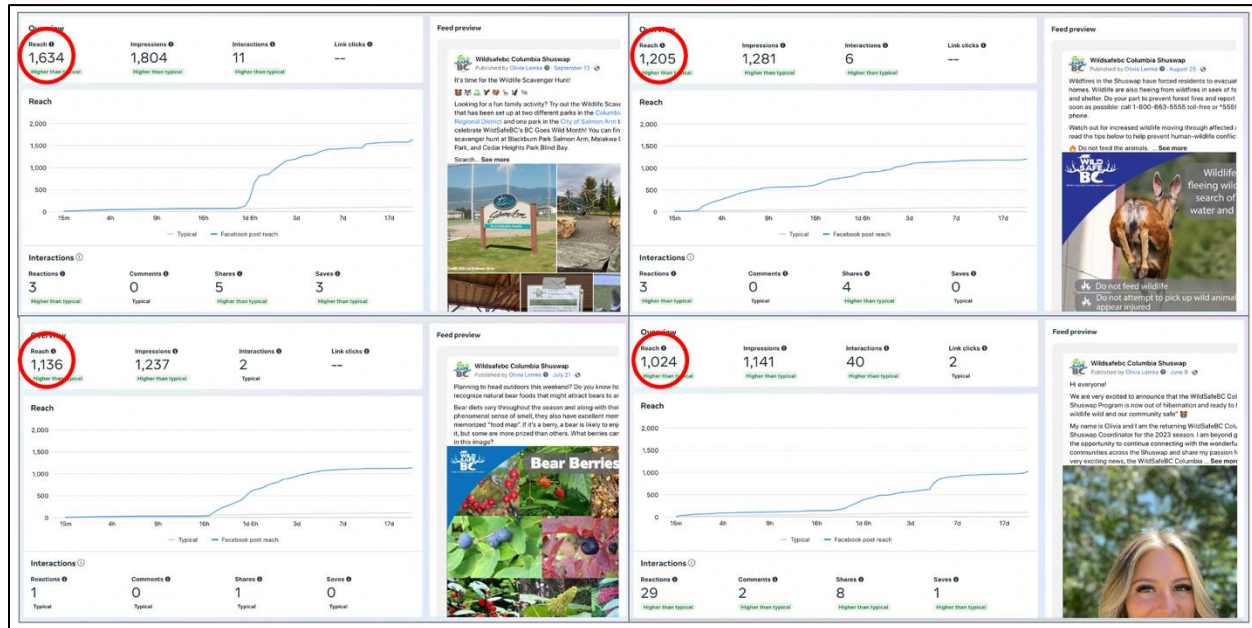


**Figure 18. The percentage of households in each solid waste collection zone that received a bin tag by the WCC in Salmon Arm, 2023.**

Bin tagging surveys were purposefully conducted before the September long weekend in areas with many summer seasonal residents. Curbside collection in CSRD Area G is provided by private companies. The WCC determined which days to go bin tagging based on discussions with residents and waste contractors regarding which company provided curbside collection to more residents in each community. Shuswap Enviro Solutions was the most commonly used solid waste management private company in Area G. In Area E, landfill and transfer stations are more commonly used.

## Social Media and Press

The WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Facebook page came out of hibernation on June 9<sup>th</sup> with an introductory post from the WCC. Since coming out of hibernation, the page has grown by 7% with 31 new Facebook followers to total 198 followers in November 2023. As well, the page currently has 168 Facebook Page likes. The WCC created 47 Facebook posts that reached 6,300 people from June 9<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>. Many posts reached over 1,000 Facebook users, with the most impactful post being the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual BC Goes Wild Event post, reaching approximately 1,600 people (Figure 19). Many Facebook posts were also shared by Facebook users into other community groups or on their own personal timeline, which helped promote the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Facebook page.



**Figure 19. Facebook posts made on the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Facebook page that had the highest reach to Facebook users, June to November 2023.**

Throughout the season, the WCC engaged with social media posts relating to wildlife activity and provided education and information to residents in community Facebook Page groups. The WCC made posts regarding upcoming events or recent wildlife activity in local community Facebook pages such as the ‘Blind Bay & Area Wildlife Sightings’ and the ‘Cambie-Solsqua Neighborhood Watch’ group. This proved valuable in reaching more people through social media and directed people to the local WildSafeBC Facebook page. By monitoring local community Facebook pages, the WCC was also able to gather information about wildlife sightings and conflicts that occurred in the region that were not reported to the COS.

The WCC participated in 7 media releases in the 2023 season:

- News article in the *South Shuswap SCOOP* announcing the return of the WildSafeBC program to the Columbia Shuswap - [WildSafeBC Return](#)
- News article in the *Swansea Point Community Newsletter* regarding being bear aware during the fall season while bears are in hyperphagia and bear activity increases
- News article in the *Salmon Arm Observer* regarding being bear aware during the fall season while bears are in hyperphagia and bear activity increases - [WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap branch shares bear aware tips](#)
- News article in the *Eagle Valley News* regarding being bear aware during the fall season while bears are in hyperphagia and bear activity increases - [WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap branch shares bear aware tips](#)
- News article in the *Swansea Point Community Newsletter* about having a WildSafe Halloween this season
- News article in the *South Shuswap SCOOP* summarizing and announcing the end of the 2023 WildSafeBC season - [Summary of the 2023 WildSafeBC Program](#)



- News article in the *Swansea Point Community Newsletter* about the importance of attractant management when bears emerge from hibernation in the spring

## BC Goes Wild

Throughout September, when human-bear conflicts are at their highest in BC, WildSafeBC celebrates its annual BC Goes Wild campaign to acknowledge the spectacular diversity of wildlife in the Province. For the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual BC Goes Wild Event, the WCC hosted a Wildlife Scavenger Hunt in three different parks across the Columbia Shuswap: Cedar Heights Park in Blind Bay, Malakwa Community Park in Malakwa, and Blackburn Park in Salmon Arm. Informational posters about different wildlife species were posted around the park for the last three weeks of September and participants used these informational posters to fill in an answer sheet to unscramble the “master answer” (Figure 20). Participants that answered the “master answer” were entered to win one of two prize packages.



**Figure 20. The 8th Annual BC Goes Wild Wildlife Scavenger Hunt hosted at Cedar Heights Park in Blind Bay, Malakwa Community Park, and Blackburn Park in Salmon Arm, September 2023.**

## Wildlife in Area Signs

The WCC worked with the COS team to deploy wildlife in area signage, particularly in relation to bears (Figure 21). When bears were confirmed (usually through multiple sightings) to be frequenting a particular area, the COS requested that the WCC place signage in the area to alert residents of a bear in the area and remind them to secure garbage or carry bear spray. Due to the large WildSafeBC Community Program coverage area, the WCC relied on the help of volunteers to assist in putting up signs and taking them down in a timely manner. Signs are removed by the WCC or volunteers after the wildlife is no longer a concern in the area. Taking the signage down in a timely manner prevents residents from becoming used to their presence and will deliver the message more effectively when required.



**Figure 21. Bear-in-area signage that was posted at a high traffic area in Swansea Point following frequent sightings, June 16, 2023.**

## Collaborations

The WCC continued to support community associations and businesses who were interested in taking steps to address and prevent human-wildlife conflicts. WildSafeBC received support from many community organizations that assisted the WCC in spreading information about human-wildlife conflict, as well as hosted and/or facilitated a WildSafeBC presentation or workshop. The relationships established during the first two years of the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Program were further built upon and expanded during the 2023 season. The WCC worked with members of the COS to identify hotspots of wildlife activity and provide consistent messaging to residents dealing with human-wildlife conflict. Support provided to the COS included educational assistance during a human-bear conflict call, where the WCC provided a resident with livestock management information to prevent conflict with black bears (Figure 22). This season, the WCC collaborated with the City of Salmon Arm to create signs about bear safety, human-bear conflict and attractant management information (Figure 23).



Figure 22. The WCC provided livestock attractant management education to a resident in the Columbia Shuswap during a human-black bear conflict call to the COS, June 2023.

### Being Bear Aware This Fall

Bears have an incredible sense of smell and can be attracted to odours from garbage, pet food, barbecues, bird seed in feeders, fruit trees, berry bushes, compost, fruit and vegetable gardens, beehives, chickens and small livestock. These temptations bring them into our neighbourhoods and closer to our homes, which can result in property damage and safety concerns for both people and bears. Things you can do to help reduce conflicts with bears are:

- Harvest fruit and berries before they ripen and pick up fallen fruit. If you must leave fruit on trees to ripen, protect them with an electric fence.
- Do not use bird feeders until winter. Offer a bird bath or plant flowers instead.
- Keep barbecues clean by burning off bits of food, giving the grills a good scrape, and cleaning the grease trap after each use.

- Ensure garbage, recyclables and compost are stored indoors.  
**As per the City of Salmon Arm Bylaw 4281, your bins and bags are to be put out at the curb on the morning of collection day by 7 am, not the night before.**
- If you do not have an indoor space to store your waste, use a ratchet strap to secure the lid of the bin as well as securing it to a solid structure (e.g., concrete post, fence post), or a bear-resistant container.
- Feed pets indoors. Keep livestock feed indoors and in a secure container.

#### Did You Know?

- Bears are omnivorous mammals with vegetation making up about 80% of their diet.
- Bears have an amazing sense of smell and can detect food over 1 km away.
- Bears will sleep away the winter in dens when food is less available. Cubs are born in the dens in midwinter. Bear cubs are born in late January, blind and helpless, weighing 250 to 500 grams.
- Bear's caloric demands increase in late summer and fall in preparation for denning. They may consume an average of 20,000 calories per day!

WildSafeBC Credit: Bernie Hurd

Bears have excellent memories. Once they recognize your neighbourhood as a source of food, they are likely to return year after year. Help break the cycle and never let a bear associate your neighbourhood with good foraging habitat. It is important to report sightings and conflicts with bears to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) RAPP line (1-877-952-7277) in a proactive manner before a bear becomes food-conditioned. These reports help inform our Wildlife Alert Reporting Program which is data used by WildSafeBC and others to prioritize education and outreach. This data is available to everyone. Do not wait until a bear becomes a threat to community safety before calling it in. Speak with your neighbours and work collectively as a community to secure all food sources.

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION

**WILD  
SAFE  
BC**

Wild Columbia Shuswap

**SALMON ARM**

Figure 23. Custom signage for the Salmon Arm City Hall that was created in collaboration with WildSafeBC, 2023.

## Business Pledge

The WildSafe Business Pledge Program has been developed to encourage businesses to be good examples in their community on how to safely co-exist with wildlife. To take the pledge, a business is required to follow best practices in solid waste management, provide adequate

training to staff and support WildSafeBC safety and conflict reduction information. In return, WildSafeBC will provide ongoing support to the business in the form of staff training, WildSafeBC materials and a WildSafeBC Business Pledge poster. The WCC did not approach any businesses these season regarding the WildSafeBC Business Pledge Program.

## Bare Campsite Program

Through the WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program (BCP), WildSafeBC can provide clear guidelines and resources to assist campground operators in maintaining a safe campsite for both people and wildlife. The WCC reconnected with two campgrounds in CSRD Area E that were interested in pursuing the BCP in 2022 and offered continued support; however, no commitment was made to the BCP. One campground in Salmon Arm was introduced to the BCP and follow up is recommended for 2024.

## Indigenous Awareness & Engagement

The WCC introduced herself and offered information about the WildSafeBC program to nearby First Nations bands. She offered support through introduction of the Wildlife Awareness and Bear Safety Workshops, the WildSafe Ranger Program, and the WildSafeBC display booth.

## Special Initiatives

The WCC worked with the Sunnybrae Canoe Point Stewards to coordinate a meeting for the third year of the Columbia Shuswap Wildlife Working Group (WWG); goals of the working group are to achieve decreased human wildlife conflicts, increase community safety and accomplish objectives of the WildSafeBC Community Bear Smart Program. In 2021, WildSafeBC collaborated with the Sunnybrae Canoe Point Stewards to create a Wildlife Working Group for the Columbia Shuswap region. The third WWG meeting took place in September, 2023, and included the WCC and WildSafeBC Program Manager, the President of the Sunnybrae Stewardship Society, staff from the CSRD and the City of Salmon Arm, and directors of CSRD Areas G & E.

## Challenges and Opportunities

The absence of CSRD Bylaws regarding feeding wildlife or nuisance animals in communities of Areas G and E created challenges for WildSafeBC and the COS in handling situations where wildlife was accessing unnatural food sources. Unsecured garbage continues to draw bears and other wildlife into residential areas. Waste management practices are extremely varied throughout CSRD Areas G and E. Residents may receive curbside collection from a private waste management company or take their waste to a CSRD landfill or transfer station. Further, there is a mixture of permanent residents, seasonal residents, and tourists, all with a different knowledge base about human-wildlife conflict and attractant management. These different groups also have a different tolerance for wildlife. Those with a higher tolerance of large predators may not be as inclined to report conflicts to the COS. This may explain why there were so few official reports in

areas where there were anecdotal reports made to the WCC or social media of bear/cougar activity. WildSafeBC outreach activities must be strategically used to reach different cohorts in the community. Continued efforts to educate the public about attractant management will not only help to reduce human-bear conflicts, but will also help reduce conflicts with rats, raccoons, and marmots, which are prevalent in some communities.

Residential fruit trees are a common wildlife attractant, and they are often considered a natural food source by some residents. However, they can lead to food-conditioning and habituation to people which in turn can lead to future conflicts that require the intervention of the COS. To prevent future conflicts involving fruit trees, educational efforts on social media and in person should be made early in the season to reduce spring blossoms. Although there is not an official gleaning program in the region, gleaning days are sometimes organized by different community organizations. Promoting gleaning initiatives, as well as fruit-sharing groups on Facebook, would help draw attention to the issue of residential fruit trees as a wildlife attractant. The area would benefit from electric fencing workshops, not only to secure fruit trees but also beehives, chickens, or other livestock in rural areas.

The following opportunities exist for the 2024 season to continue “keeping wildlife wild and communities safe”:

- Continued participation in the Columbia Shuswap Wildlife Working Group
- Increase door-to-door campaigns in hotspots and recruit volunteers to assist in canvassing neighborhoods
- Continue to promote WildSafe Ranger Programming in schools and to youth organizations to education children on human-wildlife conflict and wildlife safety
- Note the neighborhoods in Salmon Arm that have solid waste bins outside but not on the curb and follow up during the day for door-to-door canvassing to speak with residents about storing waste securely
- Utilize the WildSafe Business Pledge to increase awareness in the business community
- Continue promoting the WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program to local campgrounds and assist already interested campgrounds in implementing the program in the spring
- Continue to increase the followers of the WildSafeBC Columbia Shuswap Facebook page and share more posts on community neighborhood pages
- Host electric fencing workshops in more rural areas of the community where there may be need or interest
- Continue to support the City of Salmon Arm as they explore further ways to help residents secure their solid waste
- Continue to promote the use and importance of bear spray when recreating – this could be done by reaching out to recreation/hiking clubs again next year to train new members
- Continue to develop relationships with Indigenous groups and other Columbia Shuswap communities and neighborhood association groups
- Continue to promote greater use and awareness of the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program
- Continue to work with the COS and strengthen working relationship

The WildSafeBC Community Program was well received and gained support of many residents and community organizations that saw the need and the value of the program. Connections made in the community this year can be built upon in the future to increase the reach of the program and further reduce human-wildlife conflict.

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