



HUMAN-BEAR CONFLICTS

Black bears account for approximately 14,000 to 25,000 reports to the Conservation Officer Service every year. Garbage and residential fruit trees are the most reported attractants cited.

Bears that learn that they can forage for foods left accessible by people can become 'food conditioned.' These bears may linger in communities and become human habituated. Bears that spend time in communities foraging on human-provided foods may start breaking into structures and/or vehicles. Bears that become highly food conditioned, and habituated to humans, are often killed because of concerns for human safety.

Relocating bears is not an effective way of addressing human-bear conflicts. They may struggle to adapt in their new environment or need to compete with other bears already established in the area. As such, they often return to their home ranges.

The most effective way to keep communities safe and reduce the number of bears getting into conflict, and being killed, is to address the root causes.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

The BC Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered charity that has been working in BC since 1969.

www.bccf.com



To report wildlife in conflict contact the Conservation Officer Service at

1.877.952.7277

WildSafeBC is funded through the Province of British Columbia and in partnership with communities and organizations throughout BC.



British Columbia Conservation Foundation

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photos by Peter Sulzle



BLACK BEAR



British Columbia Conservation Foundation





MANAGE YOUR ATTRACTANTS

If you manage the bear attractants around your house, worksite or campsite, you play an important part in keeping your community safe and preventing bears from being killed. Here are some things that you can do:

- 1. Keep all solid waste securely stored** until collection day. Placing solid waste at the curb before collection day makes it easily accessible to bears. Many communities have bylaws that have strict set-out times to prevent this.
- 2. Manage your fruit trees and berry bushes** responsibly. Pick all fruit as it ripens and ensure that windfalls do not accumulate. Consider using electric fencing to protect your harvest (always check local bylaws first).
- 3. Bird feeders often become bear feeders.** Only feed birds during the winter months.
- 4. Feed pets indoors.** If fed outdoors, bring in dirty bowls and uneaten food immediately after feeding.
- 5. Keep your barbecue clean** and free from odours. Burn off the grill after use and clean out the grease traps.
- 6. Manage your compost properly** so it doesn't smell. Add fruit slowly and never add meat, grease or other animal products.
- 7. If you keep chickens, bees, or small livestock, use a properly installed and maintained electric fence.** Store all your feed in a secure location and ensure feeding areas are clean and free of attractants.

! BEAR SAFETY

Avoid surprise encounters with bears by being aware of your surroundings and not using headphones. Watch for signs of bear activity and talk or sing to make bears aware of your presence. Avoid hiking alone and use extra caution in bear habitat with ripe berries, spawning salmon or other areas bears are known to frequent. If you find a carcass, leave the area immediately. Do not allow dogs to chase after bears or other wildlife. This may bring an angry bear back to you or your pet may be injured or killed by wildlife defending themselves. Carry bear spray and learn how to transport it and use it safely. Take training offered by WildSafeBC.



Black bears are the smallest of the three bears found in North America but can still grow to over 300 kg! They are excellent tree climbers and often use the forest to avoid potential danger.

Bears inhabit most ecosystems throughout BC and you should consider the entire province to be 'bear country.'

Black bears are mostly solitary omnivores that will travel through their home ranges to eat a variety of seasonal food sources from plants, insects, salmon and carrion. They may also prey on small mammals or young ungulates such as deer, elk, moose or caribou.

Bears mate in June and their embryos do not implant until the fall. Embryo implantation depends on whether the female has sufficient stores of fat to nurse and care for her young. While denning, sows will give birth to up to five young in either January or February. Two offspring are more common. She will care for them their entire first year and may also den with them a second winter.

Black bears have adapted to low food availability by hibernating over the winter. They do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate during this period. They become lethargic, their heart rate drops, and their body temperature lowers by about 3 °C. However, bears can be roused while denning and female bears will be alert enough to care for their newborns. In preparation for winter denning, bears go through a period of 'hyperphagia' when they consume upwards of 20,000 calories per day from late summer onwards.



BLACK BEAR FACTS:

- Males are called boars, females are called sows and their offspring are known as cubs.
- Adult males measure between 60 to 90 cm at shoulder height and weigh anywhere from 80 to 300 kg. Females are smaller weighing 40 to 140 kg.
- Bears can live over 30 years, but 15 to 20 is more common.
- Black bears, despite their name, can be white, bluish-grey, black and various shades of brown. Some are called cinnamon bears for their reddish-brown coat.
- Black bears may have unique white blazes on their chests.
- Bears have good vision, hearing and an exceptional sense of smell far greater than that of dogs. It is this sense of smell that helps them locate food at great distances.
- Black bears are extremely fast and can run equally as well uphill or down.
- Black bears are excellent tree climbers and female bears will often send their cubs up a tree for safety.
- Bears may lose approximately 30% of their weight over the winter.
- Black bears will enter their dens in early winter, anywhere from October to December, and typically emerge around April. If human sources of food are plentiful, some bears may remain active over the winter.



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