

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2023

Pacific Rim Region

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Figure 1. 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Activities and Funders Collage

Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program activities between April 11th and November 30th, 2023. The Program is situated on the unceded traditional lands of the Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht and Ucluelet First Nations. It includes the communities of the Ahousaht First Nation – Ahousaht, the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation – Opitsaht – Esowista – Ty-Histanis, the District of Ucluelet, and the District of Tofino (Figure 2).

Compared to the past two years, 2023 black bear activity in the Pacific Rim program area communities was significantly lower.

Bear activity in communities spiked and peaked in July, then dropped off dramatically in August and continued to be low through the fall. Lower activity in the fall coincided with increased salal abundance and runs of returning salmon.

The main source of unnatural attractants for bears in communities is solid waste. In years past bears often accessed diverse sources of solid waste. Rubbermaid trash containers stored in sheds and unsecured commercial garbage and grease bins were common sources. These sources were rarely targeted in 2023.

Bears in 2023, instead focused on the new residential trash and organics polycarts provided by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District as part of the Sort'n'Go West Coast initiative. These containers are certified bear-resistant but are not bear-proof. This system is designed to divert organics and recycling away from the landfill and has the potential to significantly reduce human-bear conflicts in West Coast communities.

To realize the full potential for reducing human-bear conflicts there is a requirement that carts be managed in a way that prevents bears learning how to break into them. In 2023, the first year of this new system, most west coast residents did not adopt wildsafe cart management practices. Bears in several communities developed the skill of breaking the carabiners on trash and organics polycarts that were stored outside and not anchored.

The Pacific Rim WildSafeBC Community Coordinators (WCCs) worked in close collaboration with the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) on a variety of initiatives. Education and outreach regarding effective wildsafe cart management was a top priority for the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program in 2023. Information on cart management wildsafe practices was incorporated in all the education, outreach and

training activities delivered by the WCCs. These activities complemented the extensive and ongoing education campaign of the ACRD.

This priority was included within a broad scope of human-wildlife conflict prevention activities delivered by the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program. At the core of the program was the on-going focus on education, outreach, training, implementation of conflict prevention best practices and infrastructure.

The WCCs performed these activities with the goals of facilitating coexistence with the local wildlife and enhancing public safety.

Some key program deliverables over the course of the season included:

- 8 WildSafe Ranger presentations were given to 19 classes, reaching 282 youth and 20 teachers.
- 32 Presentations were given to community groups, reaching 388 participants.
- 224 people were reached through door-to-door activities.
- 1,198 people were reached during 11 display booth days.
- 72 Facebook posts with 120 new page followers (9.5% increase) and 78 new page likes (10.6% increase) (November 12th).
- 3 additional businesses completed the WildSafeBC Business Pledge criteria bringing the total to 8, and 12 others working towards making their operation “WildSafe”.
- 1 new video completed featuring the Business Pledge Journey of the Wickaninnish Inn.
- 2 campgrounds implemented the Bare Campsite Program (BCP) and their staff participated in a BCP training workshop.
- Involvement in the making of a CBC mini documentary on the Bare Campsite Program.
- 8 completed electric fencing projects (residents and businesses), 1 pending installation.
- and 9 detailed consultations were provided that may lead to future installations.
- 3 electric fencing workshops were delivered.
- 2 electric fencing videos were completed and posted province wide.
- 6 special initiatives were undertaken including videos, podcasts, articles, new infographics and advertisements.

The 2023 season was made possible thanks to generous financial support from the BC Conservation Foundation, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the Province of BC, the District of Ucluelet, the District of Tofino, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the Wickaninnish Inn, Hotel Zed, the Pacific Sands Beach Resort, Jamies Whaling Station, the Long Beach Lodge Resort, the Tofino Coop, Gaia Grocery, the Black Rock Resort, Crystal Cove Resort, Island Return It as well as private donors. The Pacific Rim

National Park Reserve, Gateway Strata Council, Tofino Times Magazine and TuffCity Radio provided much appreciated in-kind support.

Some key challenges highlighted in the 2023 season were:

- Widespread non-compliance with requirement to anchor and clip residential trash and organics polycarts that are stored outside.
- The absence of a uniform Wildlife Attractant Management Bylaw adopted across the region.
- Unsecured commercial garbage, recycling and grease bins.
- Many commercial bins awaiting conversion from lift bar to self-latching design.
- Chicken and duck coops without electric fencing.
- Freezers and fridges that are kept outdoors.
- Intentional feeding of wildlife.
- The need of a year-round WCC position to undertake important tasks outside of the busy bear season.

Moving forward, many initiatives and collaborations are underway to address these and other challenges to help keep wildlife wild and our communities safe.

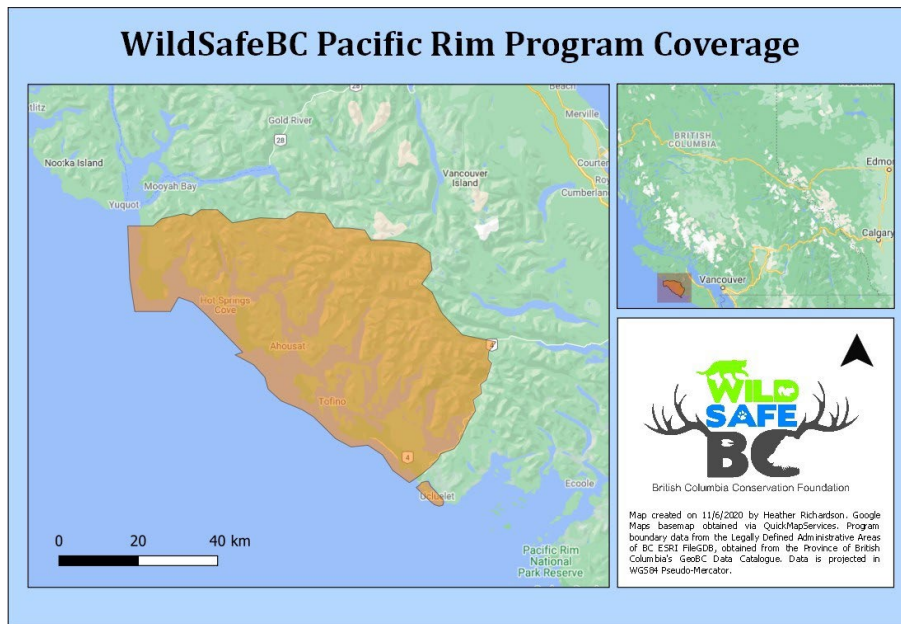


Figure 2 Coverage area for the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program.

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Highlights from the 2023 Season

The highlights are contained within two documents. This document and a companion document entitled “2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices”. The companion document contains seven Appendices with descriptions and examples of various educational initiatives and products in 2023. There is also a table describing 57 collaborations, with partners and sponsors, to help keep wildlife wild and communities safe.

Overview of Wildlife Activity and Human-Bear Conflicts

Wildlife Activity - Overview

The Pacific Rim WCCs collected and entered reports into a wildlife database they maintained, of wildlife activity over the course of the season.

Some early season reports were obtained from the provincial Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP). This dataset contains the details of reports made to the provincial Report All Poachers and Polluters Line (RAPP) which allows people to make wildlife reports 24/7. Technical issues resulted in the WARP data being unavailable for most of the 2023 bear season.

Other sources of reports that were collected by the WCCs included reports passed on by the BC Conservation Officer Service, Bylaw Services, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve and by individuals.

Reports from social media were also included if the details could be confirmed by speaking with the person who made the post.

The Reports documented in the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim wildlife reports database indicated:

- Bear report numbers were lower from 281 in 2022 to 152 in 2023 (Figure 3).
- Cougar reports were lower from 6 in 2022 to 3 in 2023.
- Wolf reports were higher from 11 in 2022 to 19 in 2023.
- Wolf reports came mostly from areas near but outside of the communities.
- 2 bears died due to human causes in 2023, 1 from a vehicle collision and 1 was lethally euthanized.

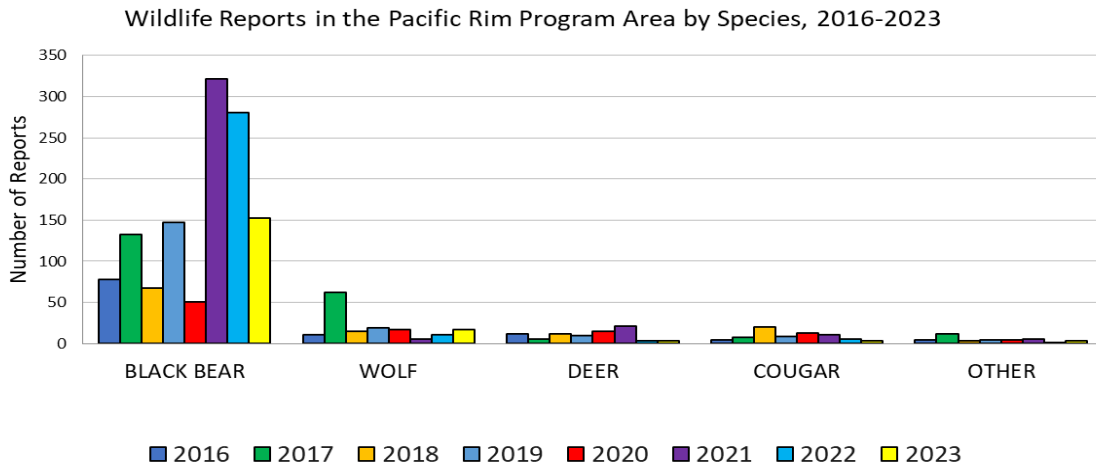


Figure 3. Wildlife reports from January 1, 2016 to November 30, 2023.

2023 black bear reports were significantly lower than in 2021-2022 and slightly lower than the seven-year average from January 1, 2016, to November 30, 2022. Cougar reports were lower than the seven-year average. Wolf reports were slightly lower than the seven-year average (Table 1). There were no human-wildlife conflicts reported involving wolves or cougar in 2023.

Table 1. 2023 Black bear, cougar and wolf reports over multiple years and the 2016-2022 seven-year averages.

Species	2023	2022	2021	2020	2016 to 2022 Average
Black bear	152	281	325	44	154
Cougar	3	6	12	12	10
Wolf	19	11	4	14	20

Wildlife Activity – Black Bear

Black bear activity was reported throughout the season. As in most years bears were first sighted feeding on emergent green vegetation in roadside ditches starting in March. In April there were only two bear sighting reports. Reports increased slowly in May for all the communities in the program area. Almost all early season reports were sightings and did not involve conflicts.

Later in May the first human-bear conflict was reported. There was an intense close encounter involving an aggressive bear, a person and a dog. The person and their dog were walking along a road next to the forest edge at a remote resort in Clayoquot Sound. The bear appeared out of the forest and grabbed the off-leash dog. The dog was two meters away from the person. The bear carried the dog into the forest. Later the bear was found feeding on the dog and was euthanized. This was the only bear lethally euthanized due to conflict in 2023.

In June reports shifted from sightings of bears (three) to reports of human-bear conflicts (14). The main sources of unnatural attractants involved were the new trash and organics polycarts distributed to residents of west communities in November 2022. Bears hitting trash and organics polycarts became the most common type of human-bear conflict report in 2023. This phenomenon will be described in more detail in subsequent areas of this report.

The pace of conflict incidents increased dramatically and peaked in July. There were multiple reports on many days in July. Most reports documented the activity of food-conditioned bears in Ucluelet and Tofino in the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program area. Reports were also received of food-conditioned bears hitting carts from Millstream, Port Albion, Hitacu in the neighbouring WildSafeBC Hitacu-Macocha program area.

Reports dropped off sharply in all communities in August and continued to drop in September. There were no reports from September 9th to October 5th. A medium-sized food-conditioned bear resumed activity in Tofino in October which continued into November.

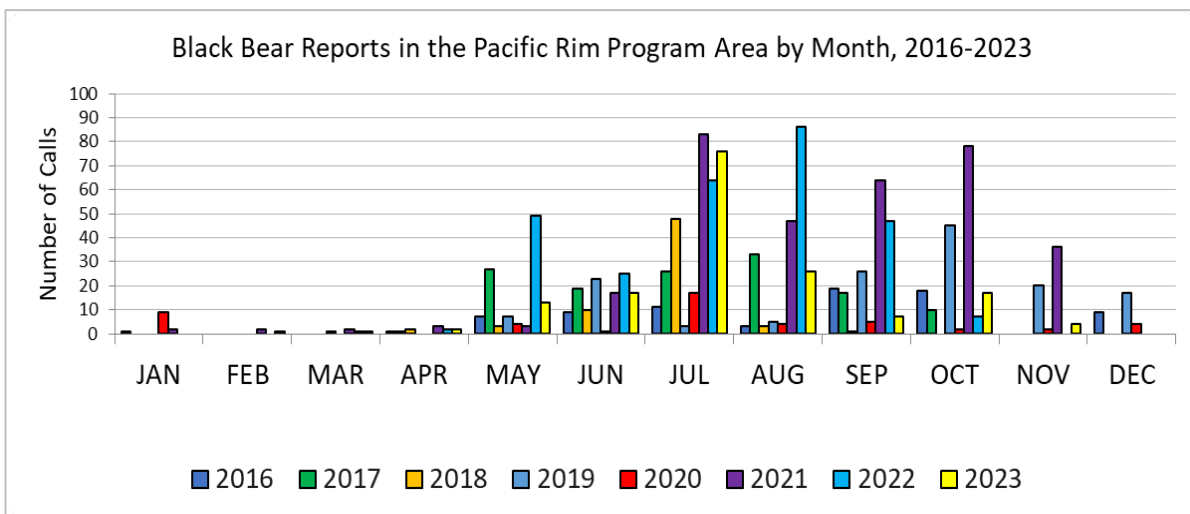


Figure 4. Black bear reports by month from January 1, 2016 to November 30, 2023.

Compared to 2022, there was a lower frequency of bear reports for six of the eight months from April to November 2023 (Figure 4).

Human-Sourced Attractants Involved in Human-Bear Conflicts

The overview of attractants involved in human-bear conflicts for 2023 is markedly different from that of recent years.

The 2023 reports primarily involved garbage and compost stored outside in residential trash and organics polycarts (Figure 5). In comparison incident reports from 2022 were associated with a wider range of unsecured attractants.

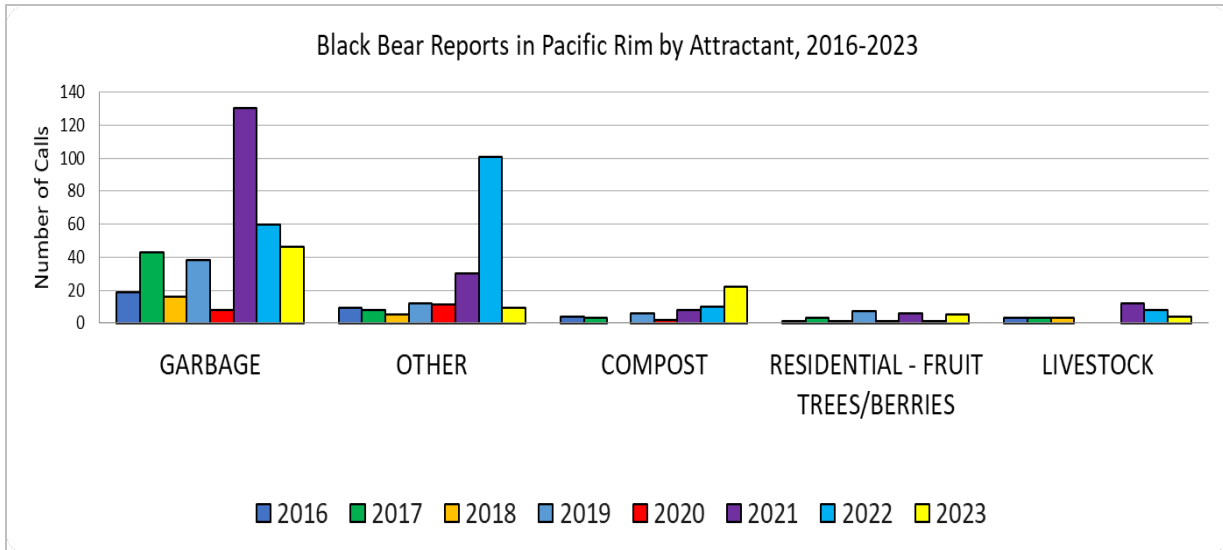


Figure 5. Black bear reports in Pacific Rim region by primary attractant from January 1, 2016 to November 30, 2023.

In the 2021 and 2022 seasons attractants stored inside sheds were the most common conflict issues. There were 80 reports in 2021-2022 of sheds or other structures damaged by bears seeking attractants such as garbage, recycling, pet food and freezers stored in sheds.

In 2023 four sheds were broken into.

Other incidents in 2022 involved unsecured commercial bins (21) and bears opening vehicles (35).

There were two commercial bin incidents and no reports of bears opening vehicles in 2023.

The primary attractant issue of 2023 was improperly managed residential trash and organics polycarts.

In Figure 5 the “Garbage” bar for 2023 represents 42 incident reports, 40 of which involved residential trash polycarts. All 22 of the reports for the 2023 “Compost” category involved residential organics polycarts.

The residential trash and organics carts are provided by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. These containers are certified bear-resistant but are not bear-proof. This system has the potential to significantly reduce human-bear conflicts in West Coast communities if best practices for wildsafe management of the carts are employed by residents.

In 2023, the first bear season for the new system, most west coast residents did not adopt these practices. At least nine bears in the program area developed the skill of breaking the carabiners on trash and organics polycarts that were stored outside.

Incident patterns emerged as the 2023 bear season progressed. The main targets for the bears were polycarts stored outside that had the carabiners clipped to lock down the trash and organics cart lids but were not anchored to prevent being dragged away.

Bears on 15 occasions took the opportunity to drag carts away to somewhere more secluded where they could work on breaking into the carts. Multiple bears in Ucluelet and Tofino dragged carts away and eventually determined that the brass carabiners on the cart lids could be broken (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Bears most often dragged unanchored poly carts into secluded locations and eventually learned how to break carabiners.

Bears seemed to become more proficient over time and eventually were able to break into carts in place rather than dragging them into the bush (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Some bears eventually became proficient at breaking into carts in place.

The Livestock category in Figure 5 refers primarily to chickens and/or ducks. These reports were highest in 2021 with 12 incidents involving chickens and/or ducks. Incident numbers were lower in 2022 at eight. Reports were less again in 2023 at four. This may be due in part to the 20 electric fencing projects for protecting livestock completed since 2019 with area residents and the WCCs (Figure 8). See the report section entitled Electric Fencing on.



Figure 8. Example of a backyard duck co-op electric fence installation in Ucluelet.

The 'Other' category shows numbers for a variety of incident types. There were three reports of outdoor freezers being accessed. One report involved pet food and there were five reports of bears accessing fruit or berries in gardens.

Overview of Human and Bear Behaviours from Incident Reports

The PACIFIC RIM WCCs collected incident details by interviewing the people involved. Within the WCCs' wildlife report database are fields for documentation of both bear and human behaviours.

There were two incidents where a bear entered a building and a third where the bear was scared away just as it was entering an open door.

There were 49 close encounters reported indicating bears were habituated and/or food-conditioned.

Habituated refers to a loss of wariness of people and human activity. Food-conditioning is when a bear has come to associate human activity with access to unnatural food rewards.

On 35 occasions people employed different actions to chase a bear or bear(s) away. People used a variety of deterrents including yelling, throwing things, banging pots, setting off their car alarm and bear bangers. Hazing actions such as these failed to deter bears in 23 incidents and in four events the bear bluff charged the person that was trying to scare them away (Figure 9). Bear spray was used in one incident and caused the bear to leave.



Figure 9. Defensive aggressive, food-conditioned bear huffed at person and pushed the cart towards the person.

Factors Contributing to Bear Activity in Communities

The availability of natural bear foods in the region is always a significant dynamic.

The west coast in 2023 experienced two periods of record-breaking weather events that affected the availability of natural foods. April saw exceptionally high rainfall amounts and was followed by three months of drought. The ripening of the most abundant berry crop and important bear food, salal, was delayed by several weeks during the drought.

Widespread ripening of the berries appeared to happen quickly after the return of rainfall in early August. Bear activity in communities declined in August and continued to decline in September. September is a month when spawning salmon return to many local rivers.

The high levels of loss of bears since 2019 may have contributed to lower levels of conflict in 2023.

By the late fall of 2022, most food-conditioned bears, that had learned how to break into sheds, open unsecured commercial bins, grease bins, open vehicles and access other human-sourced attractants had been removed from the local bear population. This may partially explain the low numbers of incidents in 2023 involving these attractants.

Overall, the 2023 levels of bear activity in WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program area communities were lower than in past years. Bears that did become food-conditioned focused on the new residential trash and organics carts. Common unnatural food sources exploited in past years were rarely targeted or not at all. The only bear lethally euthanized in 2023 was due to an aggressive incident involving a person and their dog. One bear cub was killed in a vehicle collision.

Realities and Consequences of Human-Bear Conflicts and Looking Ahead

The Pacific Rim region has had a WildSafeBC program for eight seasons 2014-2015 and 2018-2023. Review of season-end reports reveals the complexity of the challenges west coast communities experience in navigating the forever relationship with wildlife in this shared landscape.

Each season many dynamics are at play that affect the district's capabilities to prevent human-wildlife conflicts and to co-exist with wildlife. Some factors such as the mandating of bear-resistant waste management, official community planning, passage of bylaws and support for the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program are directly determined by District actions. These actions have and continue to create positive changes that support conflict reduction.

Dramatic weather events such as the heat dome, atmospheric rivers and drought, in recent years have been wild-card dynamics. They've affected the availability of natural foods relied on by local bears. Bears each year must adapt to the ups and downs of natural foods such as berry crops and salmon runs.

Each year some bears are tempted into conflict by unnatural, human-sourced attractants. This report and those of years past, going back to 2014, describe consistent extensive efforts to reduce the availability unnatural attractants through infrastructure improvements and reducing risk factors due to human behaviours through education, outreach, training and regulation.

Within all the interplay of complex dynamics local bears adapt and those that end up in conflict show clearly where the vulnerabilities are and where more efforts are needed, and those needs keep changing.

Education, Outreach and Training Activities

Sortn'Go West Coast Education/Outreach Collaboration

The previous section Human-Sourced Attractants Involved in Human-Bear Conflicts described how the new residential trash and organic carts, when stored outdoors, can be vulnerable to bears.

Education regarding wildsafe cart management to deter bears was a top priority for the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District and the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program. The Pacific Rim WCCs worked in close collaboration with the ACRD on a variety of initiatives throughout the program season.

Information on cart management best practices was incorporated in all the education, outreach and training activities delivered by the Pacific Rim WCCs.

The key messages around wildsafe cart management included recommended options:

1. **Store the polycarts in the house or a secure garage (not a shed) until morning of pickup.**
 - a. Freeze smelly items of trash and organics in between pickups.

- b. Clean recycling before putting it in cart.
- 2. **Store empty carts outdoors and only place trash, organics or recycling in the appropriate cart on the morning of pickup.**
 - a. Freeze smelly items of trash and organics in between pickups.
 - b. Clean recycling before putting it in cart.
- 3. **Store polycarts and contents outdoors but ensure carts are always anchored so that they cannot be dragged off by a bear. Also keep the lids on the trash and organics carts secured with both carabiners on each lid always clipped.**
 - a. Freeze smelly items of trash and organics in between pickups and just add to the cart on the morning of pickup.
 - b. Clean recycling before putting it in cart.

As the season progressed and more bears targeted carts the Pacific Rim WCCs engaged with the ACRD to update the Sort’n’Go Bear Smart key messaging and to also investigate compliance tools.

Various communication tools were employed to reach as many residents as possible and to encourage behavioral change including development of infographics (Figure 10).

REPORT ALL WILDLIFE CONFLICTS TO THE BC CONSERVATION OFFICER SERVICE RAPP LINE AT 1-877-952-7277.

Bears are Smart: Anchor your Cart.






Best option: Store your carts inside your home or closed garage until collection day.

Next best option: Store your carts outside empty and thoroughly cleaned, keep your waste inside until collection day.

Other options: Do store bear-resistant carts outdoors, **BUT** ensure that they are securely **CLIPPED** and **ANCHORED**:

- to a building or wall
- to a robust feature e.g., metal pole or sturdy fence
- by bundling up all your carts (and additionally)
- anchoring them to cement blocks

Get your Garbage Can Bear Kit at Slegg Tofino or Windsor Plywood Ucluelet

For cart repairs contact 250-736-SORT (7678) or email sortngo@acrd.bc.ca

Keeping wildlife wild and communities safe



Figure 10 Poster to advertise the availability of Cart Anchoring Kits while at the same time sharing cart management guidelines and RAPP Line.

Facebook posts, addition of a new section Wildlife Awareness and Safety training materials, media interviews, door-to-door handout packages, business posters, booth day displays and a podcast episode (Figure 11). See Appendix III in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document to learn more details about extensive educational activities and to see new educational resources that were created.



Figure 11. Examples of initiatives to highlight wildsafe cart management resources.

The ACRD Waste Management Bylaw has provisions specific to the requirement to anchor and clip trash and organics polycarts. The ACRD undertook to inform the public of these mandatory requirements. A compliance notice was developed. The WCCs and Bylaw Services delivered notices to residents who had their carts damaged by bears and who did not have their carts properly anchored and/or clipped. The WCCs worked with these residents to help them take corrective actions.

WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafe Ranger Program (WRP) introduces youth to the concept of human-wildlife conflict and prevention measures. Wildlife awareness and safety information is covered including what to do in close encounters. The Wickaninnish Community School participated in the WRP by hosting classroom presentations in May and the Ucluelet Elementary School in October this year (Figure 12). The total number of youth and teachers that received WildSafe Rangers sessions and received education kits in 2023 was 282 (Table 2).

Table 2. Classes that received the WildSafe Ranger Program in 2023.

School	Grade	Students
Wickaninnish Community School	K/1	22
Wickaninnish Community School	1-2	37
Wickaninnish Community School	2-3	32
Wickaninnish Community School	3-5	34
Ucluelet Elementary School	1-2	36
Ucluelet Elementary School	2-3	35

Ucluelet Elementary School	4-5	49
Ucluelet Elementary School	6-7	37
Total	K-7 + teachers	302



Figure 12. (Left) WildSafe Ranger presentations at the Wickaninnish Community School and (Right) Ucluelet Elementary.

Presentations to Community Groups

The WCCs gave a total of 32 in-person presentations (Figure 13) to over 380 participants (Table 3).

Table 3. Presentations provided by the WCCs in 2023.

Organization/ Location	Date	# of Participants	Topic
Coexisting with Wildlife AGM	April 20 th , 2023	11	WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program 2023 Season Overview & Road Ahead
Hello Nature Adventures	May 16 th , 2023	6	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
lisaak Sin Hay Tiic?mis Regional Co-existence Network	June 1 st , 2023	15	WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program 2023 Season Overview & Road Ahead
Ucluelet Campground	June 7 th , 2023	10	Wildlife Safety & Awareness, Bare Campsite Training
Tofino Guides Forum	June 7 th , 2023	54	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
ReddFish Restoration	June 14 th , 2023	4	Regional Wildlife Habitat Dynamics
Ucluelet Coop Gas Station	June 14 th , 2023	5	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Ucluelet Coop Food Store	June 18 th , 2023	9	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Ucluelet Coop Food Store	June 18 th , 2023	8	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Black Rock Resort	June 19 th , 2023	17	Wildlife Safety & Awareness

Wickaninnish Inn	June 20 th , 2023	11	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Wickaninnish Inn	June 20 th , 2023	19	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
	June 21 st , 2023	4	Wildlife Safety & Awareness, Bare Campsite Training
WYA Point Resort			
	June 28 th , 2023	14	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Ucluelet Coop Food Store			
	June 28 th , 2023	16	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Ucluelet Coop Food Store			
Pacific Sands Resort	July 11 th , 2023	8	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Clayoquot Wilderness Resort	July 21 st , 2023	26	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Tourism Tofino	July 28 th , 2023	10	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Surf Grove Campground	August 9 th , 2023	10	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Tofino Village Green	August 12 th , 2023	6	Electric Fencing Workshop
West Coast Resources Society	August 21 st , 2023	3	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Long Beach Lodge	September 20 th , 2023	9	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
World Rivers Day	September 24 th , 2023	6	Electric Fencing Workshop
ReddFish Restoration	September 25 th , 2023	15	Wildlife Safety & Awareness, Bear Spray Workshop
Gaia Grocery	October 5 th , 2023	6	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Harvest Celebration Tofino	October 14 th , 2023	6	Electric Fencing Workshop
Tofino Coop - All Departments	October 26 th , 2023	7	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
Online Workshop	November 1 st , 2023	7	Electric Fencing Workshop
Embarc	November 6 th , 2023	5	Wildlife Safety & Awareness
District of Tofino Delegation	November 14 th , 2023	18	WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program 2023 Season Overview & Road Ahead
	November 16 th , 2023	7	Wildlife Safety & Awareness, Bear Spray Workshop
Lighthouse Keepers-CCG			
District of Ucluelet Delegation	November 21 st , 2023	18	WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program 2023 Season Overview & Road Ahead
ACRD Delegation	December 7 th , 2023	18	WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program 2023 Season Overview & Road Ahead
Total of people reached:		388	



Figure 13. Bear Spray workshop ReddFish Restoration Society and staff training for local resorts.

Display Booths

The WCCs hosted a total of 10 interactive booths reaching over 1,198 people (Table 4). Booth days are a great way to connect with visitors and residents alike to discuss subjects such as attractant management, recreating in wildlife country, safe use of bear spray and answering all types of questions related to wildlife in the region.

Two WildSafeBC Pacific Rim volunteers, Kelsey and Benjamin, helped greatly to host booth days at Ukee Days and the Wild Pacific Trail. Both spent hours discussing wildlife awareness and safety with hundreds of visitors and residents and engaging them with fun facts as well as games (Figure 14). The WCCs are extremely grateful for their help!

For the 8th Annual BC Goes Wild the WCCs collaborated with the WildSafeBC Alberni-Valley community coordinator, the DFO, BC Parks, the ACRD, local First Nations and other local groups in the organization of Alberni Valley Rivers Day. Through the event, BC’s great biodiversity was celebrated including the essential interconnectivity between bears and salmon and the value of local watersheds. The WCCs provided education around human-wildlife conflict prevention at a booth and hosted an electric fencing display. See Appendix IV in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document for more details.

Table 4. Booths hosted by the WCC during the 2023 season.

Location	Date	# of people reached
Earth Day Ucluelet Aquarium	April 23 rd , 2023	20
Wild Pacific Trail	July 11 th , 2023	133
Ukee Days	July 29 th , 2023	233

Ukee Days	July 30 th , 2023	123
Wild Pacific Trail	August 7 th , 2023	119
Tofino Village Green	August 12 th , 2023	156
Wild Pacific Trail (BC Goes Wild)	September 15 th , 2023	60
Tofino Market (BC Goes Wild)	September 16 th , 2023	109
Ucluelet First Nation Day	September 18 th , 2023	32
Alberni Valley Rivers Day	September 24 th , 2023	133
Tofino Harvest Celebration	October 14 th , 2023	80
Total of people reached:		1,198



Figure 14. Booth Day at the Tofino Saturday Market.

Door-to-Door Education

Through door-to-door education, over 220 people were reached with door hanger education packages (Tables 5). WildSafeBC education packages were also provided to Ucluelet Bylaw for when they were out on neighborhood patrols. WildSafeBC will keep providing these resources to Bylaw in the future.

In addition, in a collaborative effort with the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District and Ucluelet Bylaw a letter was created and distributed to selected households, where garbage and/or organic bins hadn't been secured. The goals were to notify people about the requirement to secure carts and work with them to take corrective actions.

Many big thanks to the two WildSafeBC volunteers from Tourism Tofino, Jody Kirk and Jess McGarry, who have helped with door-to-door activities in the Ocean Park neighborhood as well as the Gateway Strata in Tofino. They greatly helped increase the program's capacity to provide education directly to

residents in neighbourhoods where conflicts were occurring. (see Appendix VI in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document for door-to-door materials).

Table 5. Door-to-door canvassing in 2023.

Door-to-Door Canvasses	Neighborhood	# of Residences
Ucluelet	Holly Crescent	41
	Rainforest Drive	52
	Several (ACRD letter for notification of residents about requirement to secure carts)	20
	Yew Street	16
Tofino	Ocean Park - WildSafeBC packages provided to Jody Kirk	71
	Gateway Strata – WildSafeBC packages provided to Jess McGarry	22
Hitacu	Several (ACRD letter for notification of residents about requirement to secure carts)	2
Total # of residences:		224

Social Media, the Press and Other Medias

The WCCs made 72 posts on the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Facebook page. Page followers increased by 120 from 1255 to 1375 (9.5% increase) and the page likes by 78 from 733 to 811 (10.6% increase) (November 12th). Various forms of media (Figure 15) were utilized to extend the educational reach of the program (Table 6).

The WCCs initiated a collaboration with the ACRD to update the Sort'n'Go Bear Smart key messages for radio and print media public service announcements. See Appendix III in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document.

A new opportunity arose with the launch of Off the Edge Radio 102.1 FM. The WCCs came together with producer Lance Blackwell to record a podcast series of 5 short episodes, which talk about human-bear coexistence and WildSafeBC messaging. More topics have been outlined for future broadcasting in the next year, all sponsored by Long Beach Lodge.

Table 6. Media employed to increase educational reach in 2023.

Type (radio, news article, phone, email, tv)	Media Outlet Name	Date	Title/ topic
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Radio Interview	Tuff City Radio	April 19 th , 2023	WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program job opportunity and season ahead
YouTube Video	CBC Creative	May 29 th , 2023	Bear Campsite Program at Ucluelet Campground “Keep it bare, when you’re not there” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDnLOFoRluc
News Article	Westerly News	July 19 th , 2023	“Unnatural food addiction puts three bears in peril around Tofino-Ucluelet”
News Article	Tofino Times Magazine	August 2023	“Do you part, secure your cart – a simple action with great impact”
Monthly Ad	Tofino Times Magazine	September 2023	Bears are Smart: Secure your Cart - infographic
Podcast Series	OffTheEdge Radio 102.1	Oct/Nov 2023	5 short episodes around human-bear coexistence played for a 1-month period on a daily rotation and will be rebroadcast at times in the future.
Monthly Ad	Tofino Times Magazine	October 2023	Bears are Smart: Secure your Cart - infographic
Video	On the Beach Motion Pictures	Oct/Nov 2023	“Business Pledge Journeys” video initiative – featuring Charles McDiarmid, Managing Director of the Wickaninnish Inn Resort. https://vimeo.com/881598338/6ee4eda56b?share=copy
Video	2023 Activities Video	November 2023	WCC Mandy Lawrenz created a three-minute video reel showing the range of the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program 2023 activities. Included in PowerPoint presentations.

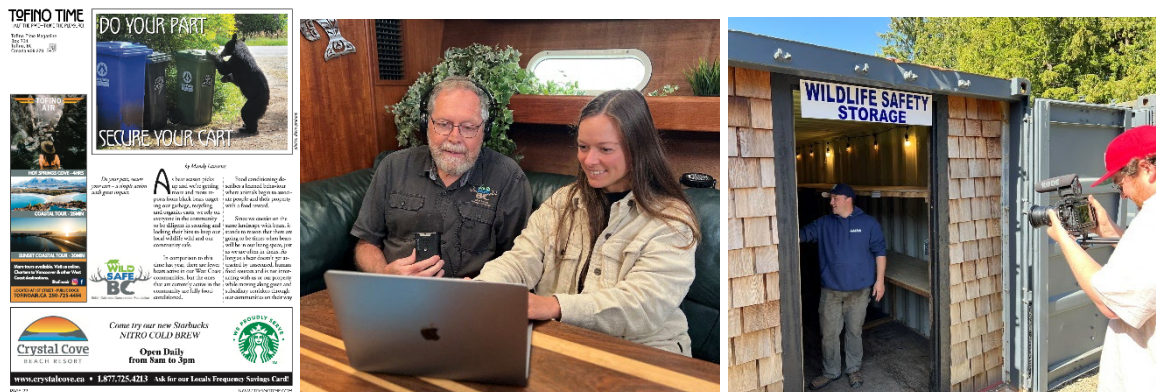


Figure 15. (Left) Tofino Times Magazine, (Middle) WCCs recording a podcast, and (Right) a CBC Creative video shoot about the Bare Campsite Program.

Partners and Collaborations

WildSafeBC is grateful for the support of its funders and the many that collaborate with the program to help keep wildlife wild and communities safe in the region. See Appendix VII in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document for details on 57 initiatives with funders, partners and collaborators. The capacity of the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program is directly related to this broad base of working relationships.

Thank you to our partners, funders and in-kind collaborators for all your help and support of our initiatives over the season, including: the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the District of Ucluelet, the District of Tofino, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the Province of BC, British Columbia Conservation Foundation, Yuułu?it?ath First Nation, Toquaht First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Wickaninnish Community School, Ucluelet Elementary School, the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, Hotel Zed, the Wickaninnish Inn, the Lisaak Sin Hay Tiic?mis - Regional Coexistence Network, the Ucluelet & Tofino Chambers of Commerce, the Conservation Officer Service, the Ucluelet & Tofino Bylaw services, BC Provincial Parks, ReddFish Restoration, Tourism Tofino, the Tofino Community Food Initiative, the Regional Fruit Gleaning Program, West Coast Resources Society, Ardent Properties, West Coast Nest, Ozzard Environmental, Black Rock Oceanfront Resort, Tofino Resort and Marina, Crystal Cove Shelter Waterfront, Shed Restaurant, Gaia Grocery, Island Return It, Hello Nature, Majestic Ocean Kayaking, Tofino & Ucluelet Coop, Pacific Sands Beach Resort, Embarc Ucluelet, Long Beach Lodge Resort, Jamie's Whaling Station, Ucluelet Campground, Wya Point Resort, Surf Grove Campground, Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge, The Wild Pacific Trail, 4VI, Tofino Market, Ukee Days, Ucluelet Aquarium, Westerly News, Tofino Times Magazine, WildLife Illustrations, On the Beach Motion Pictures, Off the Edge Radio and Tuff City Radio.

WildSafe Business Pledge

The WildSafe Business Pledge Program has been developed to recognize and support businesses that are good examples of how to safely co-exist with wildlife. To take the pledge, a business is required to follow best practices in solid waste management, provide appropriate wildlife awareness and safety training to staff and disseminate WildSafeBC's safety and conflict prevention information.

In return, WildSafeBC will provide ongoing support to the business in the form of staff training, WildSafeBC materials (subject to budget constraints) and a WildSafeBC Business Pledge poster. A total of 11 businesses, 9 in Tofino and 2 in Ucluelet, are still working towards fulfilling the criteria of the Pledge and many of them have made tremendous progress over the season. On top of the existing 5 WildSafeBC businesses, 4 more businesses completed the pledge this year: Congratulations to the Wickaninnish Inn, the Ucluelet Coop, Hello Nature Adventure Tours and the Tofino Coop for meeting all the criteria of the WildSafeBC Business Pledge (Figure 16).

In a special initiative the WCCs launched a new video series this fall: *Business Pledge Journeys*, a selection of short video clips about the individual journeys of our registered WildSafe businesses. In collaboration with The Wickaninnish Inn, which completed the WildSafe business pledge in July this

year, as well as local videographer Mark McKeough the WCCs produced the first clip of its kind (see Appendix VIII in 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document for video). It showcases the resorts' comprehensive efforts in adopting practices that will reduce conflict with wildlife to keep their staff and guests safe, and the local wildlife wild (Figure 17).

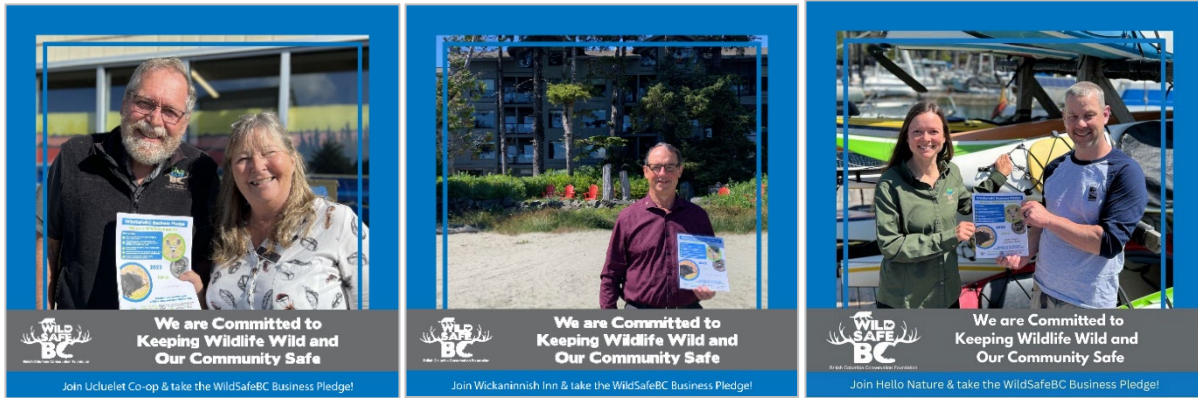


Figure 16. The Ucluelet Coop, the Wickaninnish Inn and Hello Nature Adventure Tours all met the criteria of the WildSafeBC Business Pledge in 2023.



Figure 17. Business Pledge Journeys video shoot at the Wickaninnish Inn.

WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program

Through the WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program (BCP), WildSafeBC provides clear guidelines and resources to assist campground operators in maintaining a safe campsite for both people and wildlife. BCP staff training was provided in the spring of 2023 for the Wya Campground and Ucluelet Campground staff. A total of 14 staff members from both campgrounds have been trained, including supervisors.

Campgrounds that have fully implemented the program have met all the criteria for training, bear-resistant infrastructure and utilization of WildSafeBC BCP educational resources such as brochures, posters and signs (Figure 18). Some campgrounds have a modified BCP or are part of the Business

Pledge Program like Surf Grove Campground. They may utilize the WildSafeBC educational resources and/or are working on upgrading infrastructure or have yet to participate in training (Table 7).

Initiated by the video producers Jevan Crittenden and Lauren Thu, the short film ‘Keep it bare, when you’re not there - Learn about campsite safety’ (YouTube) got produced for CBC Vancouver/Creator Network in a collaborative effort with Pacific Rim National Park Reserve staff, Ucluelet Campground and WildSafeBC Pacific Rim. The short film highlights Green Point Campground as the birthplace of the Bare Campsite Program and showcases Ucluelet Campground as the first private campground in BC to implement the initiative elaborately.

Table 7. Bare Campsite Program update.

Campgrounds	Status	Have taken BCP training
Ucluelet Campground	fully implemented	2021-2023
Wya Campground	fully implemented	2021-2023

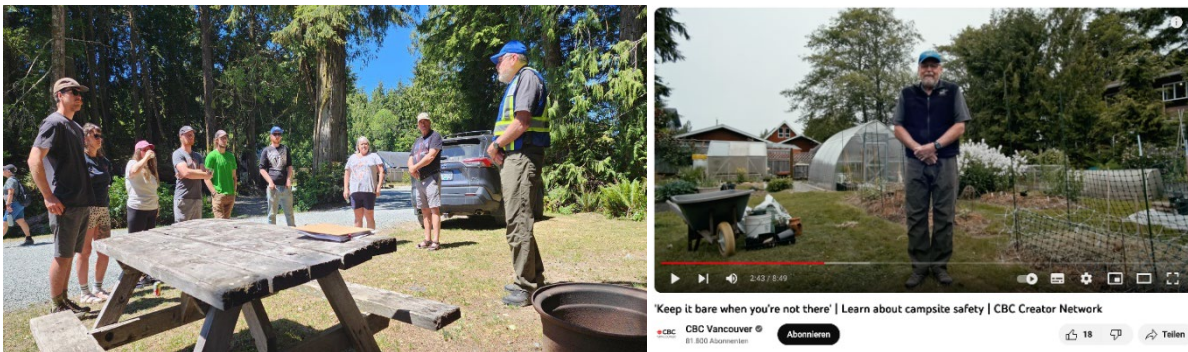


Figure 18. (Left) Bare Campsite Staff Training at Ucluelet Campground, (Right) CBC Vancouver mini-documentary “Keep it bare when you’re not there.”

Indigenous Awareness and Engagement

The Hitacu-Macoah WildSafeBC Community Coordinator position was unfilled for the majority of the 2023 season. The WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Coordinators assisted with several activities in support of the Ucluelet and Toquaht First Nations. The WCCs had a Booth at the Ucluelet First Nation Day (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Booth at the Ucluelet First Nation Day.

Many residents had concerns with the new residential trash and organics carts. Many residents had their cart(s) dragged off and broken into by a large food-conditioned bear. Another issue was the need to increase the size and/or number of carts assigned to some residences.

A follow-up meeting with Jonquil Crosby, Manager of Fisheries and Wildlife, Yuułu?it?atł Government, of the Ucluelet First Nation resulted. After discussion a project was created to address the issues raised. The project elements included:

- Document conflict event reports supported by photos (e.g., bear knocking over a cart) posted on the private Ucluelet First Nation Facebook group. Follow-up on reports with residents to confirm and add to details.
- Enter confirmed reports in a spreadsheet. Analyze and summarize data.
- Identify households that:
 - need 240L carts rather than the 120L carts.
 - need additional carts.
 - need repairs to their carts.
 - need assistance with attaching anchoring chain to the carts and the concrete block provided to each residence by the Nation.
- Endeavour to replace the brass carabiners, which the bear was able to break, with steel carabiners.

Another project was undertaken for the Ditidaht First Nation (DFN) in partnership with Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. DFN Guardians were experiencing conflict with a food-conditioned bear at a remote patrol cabin (Figure 20).



Figure 20. Solar powered electric fencing for a Ditidaht First Nation Guardian patrol cabin.

Electric fencing was constructed around the cabin and no further conflicts were experienced.

Both WCCs completed the BC Conservation Foundation Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples Course.

Electric Fencing

The ACRD once again provided subsidy funding for electric fencing for the prevention/resolution of human-wildlife conflicts. With the subsidy funds, residents and businesses were able to have 50% of the cost of their fence reimbursed (maximum of 500\$). There is recognition that electric fencing is an effective option for protecting chickens, composters, garbage sheds, commercial recycling facilities, campground food caches, community gardens, fruit trees and for many other applications (Figure 21).





Figure 21. Completed Electric Fencing project for a resort recycling storage facility (Top) and (Bottom) to protect chickens, ducks and beehives.

The new Tofino Wildlife Attractant Management Bylaw, when formally enacted will require residents to install electric fencing for protection of bee hives, chickens and other livestock.

There has been a diverse range of electric fencing applications since 2019 and each of these projects has resolved pre-existing or current conflicts (Table 8).

In 2023 there were also discussions and site visits with another 9 residents to assess the best electric fencing options for their situation. These residents have yet to decide on proceeding and are listed as pending.

Three electric fencing 101 workshops and one webinar were delivered. Two electric fencing instructional videos were completed and posted on wildsafebc.com and on the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Facebook page. <https://wildsafebc.com/learn/electric-fencing/>

Table 8. A diverse range of electric fencing applications that resolved pre-existing or current conflicts.

Electric Fencing / Subsidies	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total	Detailed Consults - 2023
Chickens/Ducks	5	2	3	5	1	16	3
Livestock		2	2			4	
Gardens		1		1		2	
Greenhouses			1			1	
Compost	1		1	1		3	1
Garbage Shed		1		1		2	
Garbage Compound					1	1	1
Polycarts					1	1	1
Recycling Shed			2	2	1	5	1

Electric Fencing / Subsidies	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total	Detailed Consults - 2023
Garbage/Recycling Shed			1	1		2	1
Sheds - other		2		1		3	1
Cabin					1	1	
Smoker							
Freezer							2
Fruit Trees		1	1			2	1
Damage repairs			1	2	2	5	
Energizer replacements				2	2	4	
	6	9	11	16	8	52	9

Increasing Online Visibility

By collaborating with many partners and businesses, the WCCs have been able to increase the visibility of the organization and WildSafeBC messaging. Having multiple partners referencing wildsafebc.com and sharing Facebook posts has created a greater awareness around best practices for co-existing with wildlife.

Additionally, many resort & accommodation providers have included the wildsafebc.com website link and information about wildlife in their confirmation emails to their guests. The WCCs have also been working with the Tofino and Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce to send important timely information to the business community. The hope is to keep growing this number year after year.

Here are some links referencing our messaging:

- Surf Grove Campground [Garbage and Food Waste Policies](#)
- Wickaninnish Inn [Awards and Recognition](#)
- Hello Nature Adventures, [Sustainability Initiatives Blog Post](#)
- West Coast Nest [Event Promotion](#)
- Tourism Tofino Event Promotion [Event Promotion](#)
- Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce [The Buzz Newsletter](#)

Other Special Initiatives

An important objective for this year's season was to keep on amplifying the spreading of our WildSafe messaging by further exploring creative communication media like:

- the production of a new video series called Business Pledge Journeys.
- development of five "Let's Keep it Wild!" podcast episodes for Off the Edge Radio 102.1FM.

- a new initiative to create educational resources that are geared towards and resonate with front line eco-tourism staff. See Appendix V in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document.
- the creation and use of a QR code incorporated into a business card, handouts and posters to promote WildSafeBC's Elearning offerings, such as the free Bear Safety When Recreating course. See Appendix II in the 2023 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Annual Report Appendices document.

Challenges and Opportunities

This year was a departure from the patterns of recent years. The primary new challenge is the implementation of the new ACRD waste management system in west coast communities. There was a widespread lack of understanding of the importance of securing and anchoring organics and trash carts.

This provided bears opportunities in every community to easily access these bins. Even when more people began to routinely clip the carabiners on their carts, they did not have those carts anchored.

Nine bears (Ucluelet - 3, Hitacu –2, Millstream – 1, Tofino – 3) independently learned how to break the clips on the carts.

This was a new set of challenges that seemingly replaced the issues of bears breaking into structures, opening vehicles and targeting commercial bins in the past year. There were some incidents of these types, but the numbers were much reduced from previous years.

Outdoor freezers and livestock coops without electric fencing continue to be a challenge as in the past.

There were several instances of a bear(s) not responding to efforts to deter them, remaining in people's yards and at times reacting aggressively or displaying bold behaviors in close encounters. These behaviors suggest a high degree of food-conditioning which impacts the safety of people, pets and property.

To address the abundance and availability of unnatural wildlife attractants in the community, the following actions should be implemented in 2024:

- The ACRD Waste Management Bylaw has provisions specific to the requirement to anchor and clip trash and organics polycarts. Continue the ACRD's initiative to issue compliance notices to residents who had their carts damaged by bears and who did not have their carts properly anchored and/or clipped.
- Implementation of the Tofino new wildlife attractant management bylaw and adoption of a similar bylaw for Ucluelet.
- Passing a formal resolution by the Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino to pursue Bear Smart Community Status.
- Provide secure multi-year funding to support the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program and create an opportunity for a year-round full-time position as well as a seasonal position.

- Consider adding “WildSafe” practices to the local business license conditions and development permit conditions.

The 2024 Work Plan for the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program will include:

- Taking actions in collaboration with all three districts to ensure residents, when storing trash and organics in polycarts outdoors, have them properly anchored and always clipped. There is critical opportunity to seize to prevent the creation of food-conditioned bears and their subsequent euthanization.
- Discussions to take place this winter around resourcing a year-round WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Program. There are many activities with partners that are not possible to engage in during the busiest portion of the year that also coincides with bear season.
- Continued support for development of additional public information portals that link to comprehensive wildlife-conflict prevention and co-existence information. Key websites include the Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino, Tourism Ucluelet, Tourism Tofino and Business Pledge partners.
- Electric fence workshops to showcase the effectiveness of this tool in preventing and/or resolving human-wildlife conflicts.
- Continued electric fence installations supported with the expertise of the WCC and the ACRD subsidy funds.
- A continuing comprehensive education campaign through social media, news articles, workshops, infographics inserts, municipal tax notices, public service announcements and other opportunities to extend the program’s reach.
- Engagement of volunteers to help increase the frequency of door-to-door campaigns in hotspot areas.
- Continued facilitation of working groups in both communities to discuss and develop strategies for reducing the availability of attractants, both commercial and residential, to bears and other wildlife.
- Ongoing engagement with businesses on the WildSafeBC Business Pledge Program. Promote the goal of creating a regional network of businesses taking leadership in efforts to keep wildlife wild and the local communities safe.
- Engagement and support of more campground operators in the full implementation of the Bare Campsite Program.
- Continued offering of Wildlife Awareness and Safety / Bear Spray training courses as well as staff training sessions for businesses.
- Promotion of the WildSafeBC E-Learning courses
- Maintenance and growth of working relationships in the region with the Lisaak-Sin-Hay-Tiic?mis Co-existence Network, the ACRD Sort’n’Go working group, local and Vancouver Island tourism organizations such as 4VI, the Chambers of Commerce, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust/West Coast Nest, Indigenous Led Stewardship Corridor initiative and other forums.
- Maintenance of presence in the schools through the WildSafe Ranger Program.

- Continued exploration of innovative means of engagement such as a ‘Business Pledge Journey’ video series, customized education for people living in staff accommodation, podcasts for local radio etc.
- Maintenance of higher presence in all communities through booth events, staff training sessions, workshops, local radio and newspaper interviews
- Maintenance of 7 day a week access through email, phone and social media channels

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC is grateful for the support and funding provided by the BC Conservation Foundation team, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District – General Manager of Community Services Jenny Brunn, Solid Waste Manager Paulo Eichelberger, Environmental Services Coordinator Brenda Sauve, Organics Diversion Coordinator Jodie Frank, the District of Ucluelet - Mayor Marilyn McEwen and Council, District of Tofino - Mayor Dan Law and Council, the Province of BC, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) – Executive Director Rebecca Hurwitz, Janessa Dornstauder - CBT Conservation Partnerships Coordinator, Marianne Paquet - CBT Communications Coordinator, Nicole Gerbrandt - CBT Director of Education, West Coast N.E.S.T, the Wickaninnish Inn – Owner Charles McDiarmid and Sustainability Coordinator Margaux Martin-Jarrand, Long Beach Lodge Resort – General Manager Samantha Hackett, Black Rock Oceanfront Resort - Assistant General Manager Lara Kemps and Manager on duty Josh Brown, Gaia Grocery – Owner Amorita Adair, Hotel Zed – Assistant General Manager Myles Beeby and Staff Accommodation Manager Arthur Bohler, Tofino Co-op – General Manager Calvin Milliken, Pacific Sands & Surf Side Grill – General Manager Sabrina Donovan and Property Operations Manager Chris Bruno, Jamies Whaling Station – General Manager Adam Doolittle and Visitor Experience Manager Kelsey Smith, Crystal Cove Beach Resort, Island Return It as well as private donors.

Thank you for crucial in-kind support from Pacific Rim National Park Reserve - Arlene Armstrong - Ecologist Team Leader, Todd Windle – Wild about Wolves Research Coordinator, Francis Bruhwiler - the Human-Wildlife Co-existence Specialist and the wildlife team, Ucluelet Bylaw Officer Brittney Willms, Tofino Bylaw Supervisor Alwyn Cox, Director of Recreation Abby Fortune and other staff of the District of Ucluelet, Kim & Cameron Dennison from Tuff City Radio, Baku Spieler from Tofino Times Magazine, Michael Grandbois and Alec Patterson of the Provincial Parks Ranger Service, and Sgt. Daniel Eichstadter, Andrew Riddell and Chris Miller of the Conservation Officer Service. Finally thank you to our volunteers, Jess McGarry, Jody Kirk, Benjamin Reckner and Kelsey Wight for all your time and dedication!