PACIFIC RIM ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Keeping Wildlife Wild and Communities Safe



lofino

DISTRICT OF



ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT REGIONAL DISTRICT







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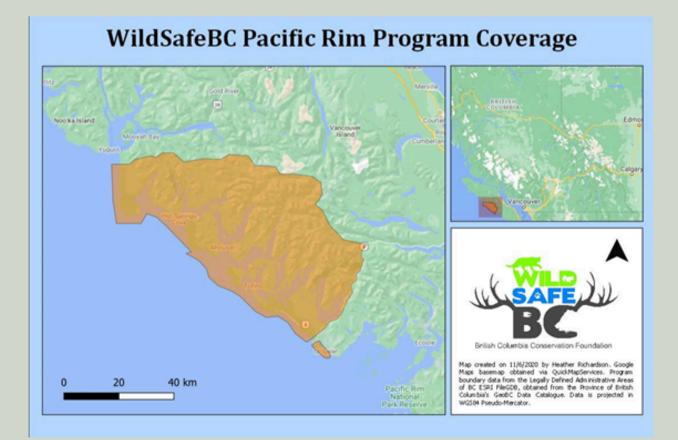
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Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program for the 2024 season between April 7th and November 30th. The main goal of the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator is to assist communities in preventing human-wildlife conflicts through educational programs, collaboration, and community solutions. The following report summarizes key program deliverables over the course of the 2024 season, and will help shape the delivery of the program for the 2025 based on coordinator, community, and sponsor needs.

Program Coverage Area

The Pacific Rim region is located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, 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.



2,702

Residents and Visitors Educated in Person

718

Contacts Reached through Door-to-Door Education

32

Presentations, 596 contacts

17

Community Event Booths, 1,334 contacts

Year-Round Community Coordinator Hired

Wildlife Reports

From January 1 to November 30, 2024 a total of 470 wildlife reports have been received from various sources. 173 wildlife reports have been made to the COS through the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line (1-877-952-7277) or online form (https://forms.gov.bc.ca/environment/rapp/). Additionally, WildSafeBC Pacific Rim received 145 wildlife reports on social media including community Facebook pages and 152 from email, in-person or by phone.

Similar to previous years, black bears were the species most often reported in 2024, followed by wolf, deer, and cougar (Figure 1). From January 1st, 2024 to November 30th, 2024, there were 322 black bear reports in Pacific Rim. Of those reports, 90% were related to bears accessing garbage and organics from unsecured residential carts. The carts are not bear proof, however, they are bear-resistant when used correctly.

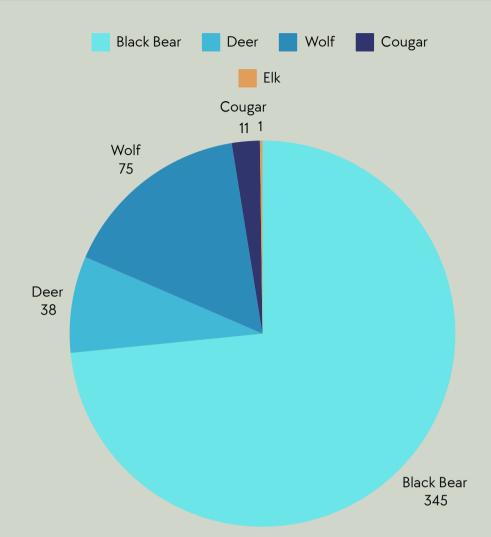
Pacific Rim received 26 reports of bears accessing different types of unsecured commercial bins within the community. Some of which were targeted by bears multiple times.

WildSafeBC community coordinators worked closely with residents and local businesses to implement long-term solutions to help prevent human-wildlife conflict.



Everyone has a role and responsibility in keeping wildlife wild, wary and alive. Residents, local businesses owners, WildSafeBC coordinators and the conservation officers work together to prevent and reduce human-wildlife conflict.

2024 Wildlife Reports (all sources)





Food conditioned bear breaking into an unsecured organic cart in Ucluelet



Multiple broken brass clips from residential carts

2024 Wildlife Report

Food Conditioned Bears 3 Tofino Ucluelet 5 13 food conditioned bears in 1 Millstream Pacific Rim Port Albion 2 Hitacu Junction 1

Food conditioned bear sighted crossing a busy intersection in Ucluelet

Human-Bear Conflict



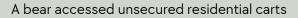


Vehicle entered by a food conditioned bear in Tofino

Human-Bear Conflict 22 **Close Encounters Bluff Charges** 5 **Bear Spray Used**

Attacks on Dogs





Human-Bear Conflict

Last year, the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) rolled out the new poly cart bear resistant carts. When used correctly (see pages 22-23), the carts are designed to prevent bears from accessing food rewards such as residential garbage and organic matter. In November 2023, WildSafeBC Pacific Rim received many reports relating to carts, and it was identified that there were 9 food conditioned bears targeting unsecured carts.

Those reports have doubled in 2024. Some of the earliest reports that we received in the spring were related to bears accessing unsecured residential carts. It is likely that the 9 food conditioned bears that were identified last year are the same ones that have been reported this year. The food-conditioned bears picked up where they left off last year and have continued to enhance their skills. Behavioural changes include foraging for unnatural attractants in the middle of the day, dragging carts away, and breaking the brass clips. Some of the food conditioned bears behaviour has progressed to "resource guarding" a term used to describe when an animal exhibits protective behaviour of resources including food. This behaviour is extremely concerning as it will continue year after year. Generational learning will occur as sows pass these skills onto their cubs. This fall, we have received reports related to a sow teaching her cubs how to break into the carts.

It is urgent that all residential carts are properly secured by anchoring them and the brass clips are replaced with steel carabiners. If residents implement these two actions, it will drastically decrease our vulnerability to human-bear conflicts going forward and prevent this type of generational learning.



Habituated and Food Conditioned Bear Behaviour



An example of a heavily food conditioned bear that successfully dragged the cart away and broke the handles off of a garbage cart. Notice the lid is still latched with steel carabiners.



Generational learning - A sow and 2 cubs have been reported breaking into carts and crossing busy intersections in the middle of the day in Ucluelet

Wolf Reports

Wolves have an important role in the ecosystem of which they live and are common in this region. It is more likely that a resident or visitor will see signs of wolves such as fresh tracks on the beach than to observe the animal themselves. Wolves often travel the beaches at night to avoid conflict with humans.

However, this year there was an increase in human-wolf conflict in this region including 52 sightings of wolves sighted in various locations including residential areas, along the beach, and on trails. There were 11 close encounters between people and wolves, 1 attack on a dog, 1 report related to a wolf consuming a deer carcass and 2 reports of wolves howling. Some of this behaviour is a result of human habituation and food conditioning. WildSafeBC and partnering organizations have identified that the 2 wolves demonstrating this behaviour are new to this region. It is likely that they have pushed out an older pack and were exploring the boundaries of their new territory. They were also sighted in communities with high deer populations as this is one of their main food sources. WildSafeBC also received reports of an older wolf with an injured front left leg. When species are injured, sick or vulnerable it is common for them to seek safety and available food sources within a community.

To keep wolves wild, wary and alive, it is essential that residents and visitors show them iisaak (respect, pronounced "ee-sock"). See page 9.



In 2024, there was an increase of wolf activity in this region, as well as sightings in the community of Ucluelet

Coexisting With Wolves

<u>Guiding Principles of iisaak</u>

Keeping wolves wild is a shared responsibility. Please show them iisaak (respect) by following these guidelines.

- Learn about wolves that live in this region
- Never feed wolves
- Keep dogs on leash
- Respect all trail and area restrictions, closures and warnings
- Give wolves space. At least 100 meters or the length of 9 school buses
- Keep wolves out of the picture. Be a good role model and do not approach wolves for photography and videography purposes.
- Report all wolf sightings and encounters to the RAPP Line at 1-877-952--7277

Photo credit: Sam Rose Philips, photo taken using a telephoto lens

Community Groups

This year, the Pacific Rim community coordinators delivered a total of 32 presentations, reaching a total of 596 people. The focus of these different presentations were to provide further education and training on human-wildlife coexistence. The programs were delivered to residents and visitors varying in age and experience with coexisting with wildlife. Some examples include:

- Wildlife Awareness and Safety This presentation was delivered to 14 different groups, reaching 318 people. It is an all-encompassing program covering many different topics.
- **Bear Spray Workshop** Pacific Rim community coordinators delivered the bear spray workshop to 4 different organizations, certifying 58 adults on how and when to use bear spray safely and effectively. The majority of the participants work or recreate in areas where there is an increased risk of human-wildlife interactions.
- **Electric Fencing** Participants learned how electric fencing is used as a long-term solution in the protection of livestock, bees and fruit trees from wildlife.
- **Black Bear Ecology** Pacific Rim community coordinators shared their expertise on black bear ecology, habitat, examples of human-bear conflict and ways to coexist.

In September, Pacific Rim community coordinators were invited by the Conservation Officer Service to be a part of a panel discussion at the Union of BC Municipality Conference in Vancouver. They were also invited as guest speakers at a multi-day humanwildlife coexistence workshop on Cortes Island where they led a presentation on humanbear conflicts and wolf corridors. These programs provided residents and visitors to this region with knowledge on how to safely and effectively coexist with wildlife.

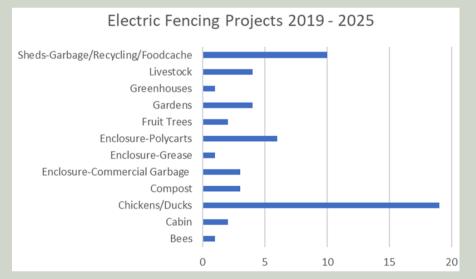


Black Bear Ecology presentation to Japanese students studying at Tamagawa University

Electric Fencing Projects

Electric fencing is a safe and effective tool used to prevent bears from accessing attractants in the garbage and organic carts. It is a long-term solution that will ultimately help keep our community and wildlife stay safe. This year, Pacific Rim coordinators completed a total of 14 electric fencing projects within our community. This number is the highest annual tally since the program began in 2019. Since the program began 56 projects have been completed.

In April 2024, the District of Tofino implemented Wildlife Attractant Bylaw No. 1317, making it mandatory that all residents have electric fencing around wildlife attractants including chicken coops and bee hives. The Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) Communities Subsidy Program as well as Bob Hansen's handy work has helped remove financial and physical barriers pertaining to the construction of electric fencing.



Almost all projects were in response to existing human-bear conflicts. All sites have not had human-bear conflicts since installing their electric fence.



2 of the 14 electric fencing projects completed this season.

Display Booths

Display booths allow the public to view and interact with our educational materials, learn about wildlife safety, discuss wildlife attractant management, and network. In 2024, more than 1,334 people visited the WildSafeBC display booth at 17 community events across the community. Pacific Rim coordinators held display booths in the following locations educating both residents and visitors.

- Wild Pacific Trail 4 days
- Ucluelet Aquarium 4 days
- Ukee Days 2 days
- Ucluelet Co-op 1 day
- Thornton Creek Hatchery 1 day
- Black Rock Oceanfront Resort 1 day
- Ucluelet Community Centre 1 day

The display booth held at Ucluelet Co-op was focused on ways to secure garbage, organic and recycle carts. Pacific Rim coordinators created a new visual display board and demonstrated how to safely and effectively secure garbage using polycarts, steel carabiners, chain and a cement block. They also displayed 2024 wildlife reports, for example, the number of black bear, cougar and wolf sightings in the community, the number of incidents relating to bears accessing unsecured garbage, the amount of bears entering dwellings and vehicles. This was a great conversation starter and made residents aware of the ongoing wildlife reports in the community.



Outreach Booth on the Wild Pacific Trail, Ucluelet



Caitlin Beaudin, Pacific Rim community coordinator educating at a community event

Bin Tagging and Door-to-Door Education

Bin Tagging - Bin tagging consists of placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on top of curbside organic, garbage and recycle carts the evening before collection day. WildSafeBC Pacific Rim community coordinators and 1 volunteer, completed bin tagging in Tofino on November 18, 2024. A total of 6 organic carts and 1 garbage cart were tagged across 1 garbage collection zone. When cross-referencing the data with last year's report it was identified that the majority of these carts were located at AirBnb's and they have been tagged before. Therefore, WildSafeBC will provide further education to the residents and owners of these carts. Additional findings include discovering several unsecured carts on residents' property. E.g. unanchored carts and/or broken carabiners.

Door-to-door Education - This season the Pacific Rim community coordinators distributed 369 educational door hangers to residents in Ucluelet following reports of two food conditioned bears successfully accessing unsecured carts. Bob and Caitlin worked one-on-one with residents and local businesses to provide them with information on when/how to report these incidents to the RAPP line and ways to safely secure their carts. Caitlin designed new flyers on how to secure attractants as seen in the photos below and on pages 21-22.



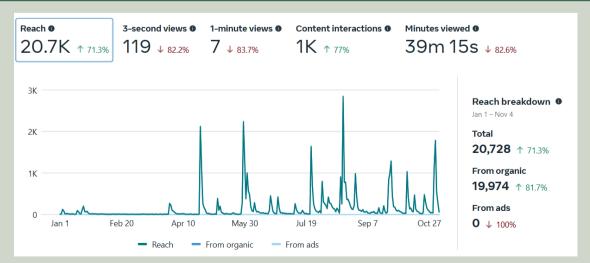
New "Do Your Part, Secure Your Cart" flyer designed by Caitlin Beaudin and distributed to residents during door-to-door canvassing.

Social Media and Press

Since January 1, 2024, the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Facebook page has **123 new followers**, with the total being **1,478** followers on December 30, 2024. As well, the page has received **1,000** content interactions including Facebook page likes, saves, shares, and replies on our content during this same time period. Throughout the season, the WildSafeBC coordinator engaged with posts relating to wildlife activity and provided education and information to residents in community Facebook page groups. This approach was an effective method to bring people in to explore our page and our content while continuing to provide engaging education. Many Facebook posts created were also shared by Facebook users into other groups or on their own personal timeline, which helped promote the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Facebook page. In total, 50 WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Facebook posts were shared that reached 20,700 people from January 1, 2024 to November 4, 2024. The most impactful post created was *"What is Food Conditioning"* written by community coordinator Caitlin Beaudin, reaching approximately **5,659** people and was shared 20 times.

WildSafeBC Pacific Rim were also involved with 12 different media projects this season.

- Web Article titled, "District of Tofino Designated A Bear Smart Community"
- **Radio** Several 3-5 minute pieces on coexisting with bears and wolves aired daily (Off the Edge Radio) and multiple interviews on coexistence (Tuff City Radio).
- **Newspaper** Westerly News Publicity regarding the first year-round WildSafeBC community coordinator.
- **TV** Featured in a French film documentary (Arte TV).
- TikTok and Radio Campaign Collaboration with 4VI on "Safer Pets, Safer Wildlife"
- News News story about bears accessing unsecured residential carts (CBC/CHEK)



Analytics from WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Facebook (January 1, 2024-November 4, 2024)

Facebook Messaging

What is Food Conditioning?

Food Conditioning occurs when wildlife receives food 'rewards' such as garbage, dog food, or even human food from people. Once the animal receives these food rewards, they often begin to seek out people or human use areas in search of further rewards. This food seeking often intensifies and can result in wildlife becoming aggressive towards people, putting both at increased risk.

Wildlife do not have to be hand-fed to become food conditioned. It can also occur by accident when we leave food or other attractants unattended while camping, hiking, and recreating outdoors. For example, if someone leaves their backpack with snacks on the beach while they go for a walk or if they throw their banana peel into the forest it can result in wildlife accessing the food and becoming food conditioned.

Ultimately – human food kills wildlife. Please remember to leave-no trace and to always secure all food attractants.



Photo credit: Parks Canada. This sign is located in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

Business Pledge

The WildSafeBC Business Pledge Program has been developed to encourage businesses to set 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's safety and conflict reduction 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.

This year, Tourism Tofino and Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge completed the requirements to be recognized as WildSafe businesses. They bring the total of recognized businesses up to 11. Black Rock Oceanfront Resort continues to work on infrastructure and operational improvements to better manage attractants. They hosted WildSafeBC community coordinators on two occasions to train their staff in 2024. Initial conversations were initiated with the management of Ukee Peninsula Motel and the Canadian Princess Lodge. Both have expressed interest in becoming WildSafe businesses.



Kevin Bradshaw, manager of Hello Nature Adventure Tours, renews their business pledge

Bare Campsite Program

Through the WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program, WildSafeBC is able to provide clear guidelines and resources to assist campground operators in maintaining a safe campsite for both people and wildlife.

This year, the Pacific Rim coordinators delivered the Bare Campsite training to 13 dedicated staff working Wya Campground in Ucluelet. They also met with manage of Ucluelet Campground, who is a strong advocate and leader for the Bare Campsite program in the community. This year, he led his own Bare Campsite training for the Ucluelet Campground staff. The Ucluelet Campground management team and seasonal staff continue to be exceptional role models to other campgrounds in Tofino and Ucluelet and demonstrate how to effectively run a Bare Campsite program. Ucluelet Campground features WildSafeBC posters throughout the campground and educational videos on their website.

Both Wya and Ucluelet Campgrounds are nestled in wildlife habitat and travel corridors. Prior to implementing the Bare Campsite program, they had multiple incidents relating to human-wildlife conflict which led to black bears having to be lethally euthanized. However, since becoming Bare Campsite stewards, they have significantly reduced the number of bear, cougar and wolf sightings in the campground.

WildSafeBC would like to encourage other campgrounds in the community to adopt the Bare Campsite program to help reduce the risk of human-wildlife conflict.

THE HARBOUR WAR	WILDLIF	E G British Columbia Conservation Foundation
Date: We had to clean up garb items from your site tod	CITED IN CONTRACTOR OF MUSICARIAN MADE INTO A DESCRIPTION OF	Please come see us at the office to collect your items and bring back this warning.
Please store garbage an your vehicle, away from	d / or food items in wildlife.	
We will have to evict gue that are not following be	ear aware guidelines.	
Visit <u>www.wildsafebc.co</u>	om for more	

Ucluelet Campground wildlife warning.

The camp host distributes this warning to campers who have left attractants out at their site

The WildSafeBC Pacific Rim program resides on the unceded traditional lands of Nuu chah nulth nations including Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht and Ucluelet. This year, WildsafeBC coordinators continued to listen, learn and collaborate with different representatives from the Nations. Some of the projects that they collaborated on were:

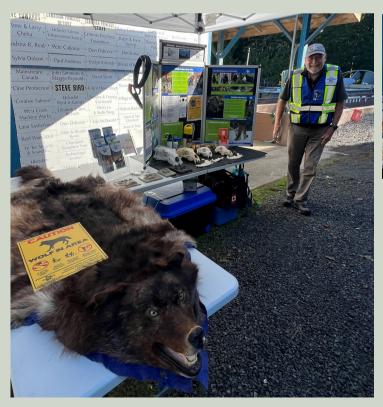
- lisaak Sin Hay Tiic?mis (Respect All Life) Meeting Bob and Caitlin attended and participated in lisaak Sin Hay Tiic?mis coexistence network meeting established by Pacific Rim National Park Reserve and Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT). Representatives from Nuu chah nulth nations, local community planners, stakeholders, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve wildlife officers, municipalities, the tourism sector and WildSafe come together to discuss human-wildlife conflict and coexistence within our community.
- Youth Programs presented the Wildlife Awareness and Safety presentations to indigenous youth groups including the Warrior Program for young men and the kakawinminh for young women.
- WildSafeBC Macoah Volunteer Dennis Hetu of Toquaht Nation became a WildSafeBC volunteer. Dennis has been a role model and advocate for human-wildlife coexistence within the community of Macoah for many years. WildSafeBC is thrilled to have him join their team and to collaborate on projects focusing on youth engagement and to share his knowledge on human-wildlife coexistence with the community.
- **Regional Forum and Workshop** Caitlin attended the Regional Forum hosted by CBT in Tofino. This gathering brings together representatives from Nuu chah nulth nations, local organizations and government involved with environmental stewardship, restoration, environmental research, and sustainable development. During the workshop participants discussed indigenous youth engagement such as future involvement, possible barriers and solutions.
- **Nuu chah nulth Language** Bob and Caitlin continue listening, learning and incorporating Nuu chah nulth teachings and language into WildSafeBC programs.

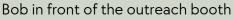


BC Goes Wild

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. This year, WildSafe celebrated it's 9th Annual BC Goes Wild Event.

This year, Pacific Rim coordinators collaborated with two local organizations, Thornton Creek Hatchery and the Pacific Rim Arts Society to deliver educational messaging on local ecology. The event took place on September 14 at Thornton Creek Hatchery. Bob and Caitlin set up a display booth where they educated 104 visitors and residents. Using props, storytelling, and an activity they shared their knowledge of local ecology, the benefits of electric fences, and general coexistence and wildlife safety messaging. Additionally, they had table set up where children could sit and colour bear, cougar, wolf and grizzly colouring sheets. This was popular among families with young kids who needed a break from walking around the hatchery and a fun way to engage the younger audience. In the afternoon, Bob and Caitlin led a bear spray workshop for 14 adults where they had the opportunity to practice setting off inert bear spray and played an educational coexistence activity lead by Caitlin. Overall, this was a successful event in which visitors and residents could learn practical skills in a fun and interactive way.







Display booth



BC Goes Wild logo

Improperly managed garbage and organic polycarts continue to be the primary source of human-wildlife conflict in Pacific Rim. While some residents are familiar with conflict and how to prevent it, others are less aware of the risks of human-wildlife conflict. Continued outreach is needed to provide people with knowledge and skills on how to manage wildlife attractants and how to stay safe when in wildlife country. The WildSafe Pacific Rim Coordinators recommends the following activities for 2025:

- Collaborate with the District of Ucluelet to draft and submit a Ucluelet Wildlife Attractant Bylaw
- Collaborate with members of the lisaak-Sin-Hay-Tiich?miss Network to resolve vulnerabilities with the West Coast residential cart system, the single largest source of human-bear conflicts
- Keep pursuing Ucluelet Bear Smart status Renew formal commitment
- Secure long-term funding Resort Municipality Initiative
- Expand on educational programing with residents and visitors throughout the year
- Increase youth engagement
- Expand on Ucluelet WildSafe Business Network



Residents and visitors at the WildSafeBC booth on the Wild Pacific Trail in Ucluelet

The WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Coordinators would like to thank the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, and the Chambers of Tofino and Ucluelet. Additionally, Bob and Caitlin would like to thank the ongoing support they have from the business community including Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Hotel Zed, Jamie's Whaling Station, Pacific Sands Resort, Gaia Grocery, Black Rock Oceanfront Resort, Wickaninnish Inn, Tofino Co-op, Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge, Embarc Ucluelet, West Coast Sustainable Tourism Association, Tamagawa University, Tofino and Ucluelet bylaw, the Province of British Columbia, and the BC Conservation Foundation for funding the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim project.

Thank you to the Conservation Officer Service for their direction and support of the program, including Daniel Eichstadter, Ryan Harnish, Jason Hawkes, and Cameron Schley. Lastly, the WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Coordinators would like to send an enormous thank you to all the British Columbia Conservation Foundation staff and fellow provincial WildSafeBC Community Coordinators for their encouragement and support. This program would not be able to succeed without the collaboration of all those mentioned.

hank Y



Door-to-Door Education Flyer - Page 1



Dear Resident,

WildSafeBC is the provincial leader in preventing human-wildlife conflict through collaboration, education and community solutions and is delivered by the BC Conservation Foundation in communities across BC. Bob Hansen and Caitlin Beaudin, your WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Coordinators, are working in the community to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Your neighbourhood often experiences bear activity due to its proximity to a wildlife travel corridor as well as the **accessibility of unnatural food sources from unsecured garbage, organics and recycle carts**. To prevent bears from accessing these attractants and avoid having a safety risk in our community, we ask that you address the following.





We encourage you to purchase a **Garbage Can Kit** (see pictures below) available at Windsor Plywood in Ucluelet and Slegg in Tofino. The kit includes a cement block and chain used to secure your carts and prevent bears from dragging them away, breaking the brass clips and accessing garbage.

We are organizing a neighbourhood garbage can **kit installation day in November 2024**. Should you need any assistance setting up the kit, or you are interested in helping us install them, please contact WildSafeBC Community Coordinators <u>pacrim2@wildsafebc.com</u>

For more updates on WildSafeBC events, free workshops, and wildlife information, please follow us on Facebook at WildSafeBC Pacific Rim https://www.facebook.com/wildsafebcpacificrim/?ref=bookmarks

Warmly,

Bob Hansen and Caitlin Beaudin WildSafeBC Pacific Rim Community Coordinators



Figure 1: Chain from the Garbage Can Kit is threaded <u>through the handles of all three carts</u> and attached to the cement block to help prevent bears from dragging them away and accessing the attractants.

Anchoring Residential Carts

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

Bears are Smart: Anchor your Cart.



Keeping wildlife wild and communities safe



A bear accessed contents from an unsecured organics cart at a staff accommodation. WildSafeBC followed up with the business to implement long term solutions on securing attractants and provide staff with coexistence training.

Black Bear Ecology



Join us this Tuesday for a fun and interactive program on black bear ecology. Topics include black bear habitat, human-wildlife conflict and coexistence.

Who: All ages Where: Black Rock Oceanfront Resort When: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 Time: 4:45 PM - 6:00 PM



For more information, please contact Caitlin at pacrim2@wildsafebc.com



Keep wildlife wild, and our community safe

Pumpkin Drop-Off



Avoid inviting a bear to your home after Halloween. Like most fruits and berries, bears are attracted to pumpkins. Please dispose of your pumpkins in the organic cart or to one of the community pumpkin drop-off stations in Ucluelet and Tofino

<u>Tofino</u>

Where: 380 Gibson Street across from the Wickaninnish School Garden When: Thursday, November 7, 2024 Time: 12:00 PM - 5:30 PM



Keep wildlife wild, and our community safe