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## Attractant check can save lives of wildlife this spring

*Charity The Fur-Bearers asking for media support to spread coexistence messages*

**VICTORIA** – Black bears and other wildlife are on the move as spring has sprung, marking an important time of year for homeowners and businesses to ensure they’re embracing coexistence practices, reminds a BC wildlife charity.

The Fur-Bearers, a non-partisan, charitable organization founded in 1953, is reminding British Columbians and media partners of the importance of this message and what individuals can do to prevent negative encounters this spring.

“Black bears, coyotes, raccoons, and even squirrels become more active this time of year as spring weather becomes the norm and will look for easy-to-access food sources,” says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Fur-Bearers. “Unfortunately, wildlife who come too close to people too often are at greater risk of injury and may be killed by government agencies. The good news is that every one of us can take a few simple steps this time of year to make sure we’re doing our part to coexist with the incredible biodiversity in British Columbia.”

Fox and The Fur-Bearers recommend homeowners and businesses spend a few minutes checking around their properties to help keep their communities safe for everyone:

- Garbage, recycling, and organic waste should be kept in hard-sided, locked containers, and only placed curbside the morning of pickup, or in line with municipal standards. Accessible waste will draw black bears and other wildlife closer to people and keep them coming back. Dumpsters should be secured, and drainage holes covered with fencing to prevent smaller mammals from accessing them.
- Check for attractants, like pet food and treats, uncleaned grills and drip trays, fallen fruits or berries, and edible gardening supplies. Bird feeders can be removed as numerous local resources are available for birds.
- Ensure sheds, garages, and vehicles are secure. Animals from mice to bears will find their way into unsecured locations if food sources are available.
- Be mindful of pets. Outdoor cats and off-leash dogs can harass or injure wildlife and lead wild animals back to owners. Sticking to defined off-leash areas and utilizing tools like catios are a great way to ensure that everyone has fun – and stays safe.

“When communities work at coexistence, the results are incredible,” says Fox. “Keeping wildlife wild by not feeding them, not trying to get closer, and respecting them as individuals is the best thing we can do to keep everyone safe.”

Educational resources like bear, coyote, and general wildlife door hangers are available free to neighbourhoods from The Fur-Bearers. Visit [TheFurBearers.com/Coexist](https://TheFurBearers.com/Coexist) to learn more.

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