

August 29, 2023

Black bears are on the move this fall

September among worst months for bear deaths in British Columbia; residents reminded to secure attractants

VICTORIA – Black bears being drawn to communities by seasonal attractants like ripe fruits and unsecured garbage may end up being killed, reminds wildlife charity The Fur-Bearers. Five hundred black bears were killed in British Columbia by conservation officers in 2022, often after bears access human-created attractants.

The Fur-Bearers is a registered charity founded in 1953 that protects wildlife through conservation, advocacy, research, and education.

“The climate crisis is causing extreme weather events like the droughts and wildfires that B.C. has experienced this year,” says Aaron Hofman, Director of Advocacy and Policy at The Fur-Bearers. “These events may impact the natural food availability of bears, who will seek food sources in human environments. When black bears begin approaching human spaces, they are often killed – and this is entirely preventable.”

Fall is a time of increased bear activity across the province, as black bears are trying to consume a large amount of food in preparation for their winter dormancy. When attractants like garbage and ripe fruits aren’t removed from properties within communities or around homes, it invites black bears and other wildlife to seek food in urban areas, and often, return to the site of reliable food sources. An average of 118 black bears are killed by conservation officers in the month of September, based on government data over the past ten-year period.

While wildlife is considered a provincial responsibility, many municipalities are taking on a more proactive role by implementing attractant management and wildlife feeding by-laws. These by-laws also create another layer of local education and local response.

“Every resident in British Columbia can take simple steps to prevent unnecessary deaths of black bears by appropriately managing their garbage and compost, removing ripe fruits and berries, and doing a seasonal attractant check around their homes,” says Hofman. “We also encourage anyone who witnesses wildlife feeding or attractants not being managed to contact their local government and the BC Conservation Officer Service RAPP Line at 1-877-952-7277.”

Anyone interested in learning how their municipality can take a proactive stance by creating by-laws, view a checklist for bear attractants, or learn more about how black bears support ecosystems can visit TheFurBearers.com.

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RESOURCES/LINKS:

BC Black Bears page - <https://thefurbearers.com/bc-black-bears/>

Black Bear Coexistence Door Hangers - <https://thefurbearers.com/blog/bear-coexistence-door-hangers-available>

Wildlife by-law toolkit - <https://thefurbearers.com/blog/new-wildlife-by-law-toolkit-empowers-communities/>

Urban Feeding of Fur-bearing Animals Literature Review - <https://thefurbearers.com/blog/literature-review-on-urban-feeding-of-wildlife-released/>

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