



BC Municipalities Wildlife Survey
June to October 2022
External Report

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Introduction

The Fur-Bearers is a non-partisan, registered charitable organization in Canada, founded in 1953, with a mission to protect fur-bearing animals through conservation, advocacy, research, and education.

Mitigating and preventing negative encounters between humans and wildlife is a core principle of The Fur-Bearers. Research and the long-term experience of experts has shown that coexistence – and co-flourishing – is achievable and desirable for all species. Removal of wildlife from the landscape rarely resolves underlying issues that lead to negative encounters and create unseen ecological issues.

The Fur-Bearers uses our platform, expert advisors, and staff to create educational programs that will decrease calls for service regarding wildlife, increase awareness of coexistence and local ecological issues, and improve outcomes for wildlife. However, understanding how to best create resources requires input from stakeholders who are managing these issues the most: municipalities.

From June to October 2022, The Fur-Bearers appealed to 160 municipalities in British Columbia to participate in a short survey regarding wildlife in their communities and community needs. Two groups of emails were sent, resulting in 58 responses, and a total of 37 total municipalities with responses (22.98% of municipalities). Final data shows that some municipalities had multiple employees participate, many did not. However, the 22.98% of municipalities that responded give a fair overview of the diverse needs, as well as commonalities.

Highlights of the survey as well as recommendations can be found in the following pages. The Fur-Bearers would like to offer a special thanks to Dr. Elisabeth Ormandy for reviewing the data and recommendations.

Data Highlights

Survey Participants

Information regarding survey participants were asked three questions regarding themselves:

1. Job classification (what type of job/part of the municipality does the survey participant have)
2. Regions (broken into Lower Mainland, Interior, Northern BC, and Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands)
3. Region type (broken into Urban, Suburban, and Rural).

1. Job Classification

Participants were given the choice of 9 categories from which to choose. Chart 1 indicates the breakdown of responses from participants. Chart 2 indicates the breakdown of respondent regions. Chart 3 shows the breakdown of respondent region type.

Chart 1: Respondent Job Classification Breakdown

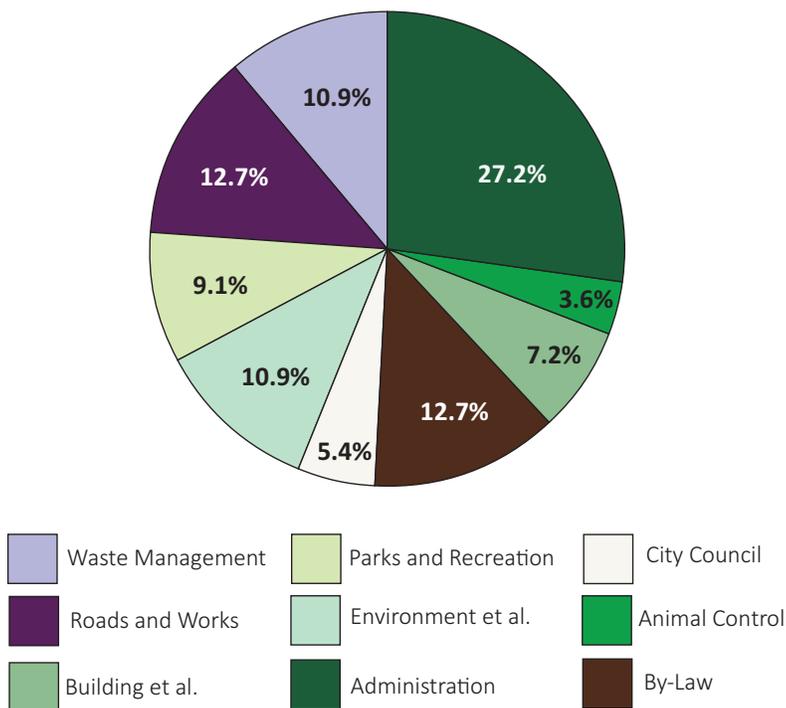


Chart 2: Respondent Region Breakdown

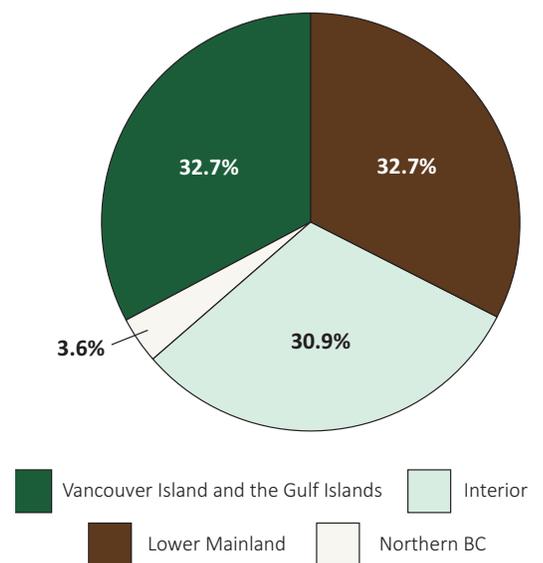
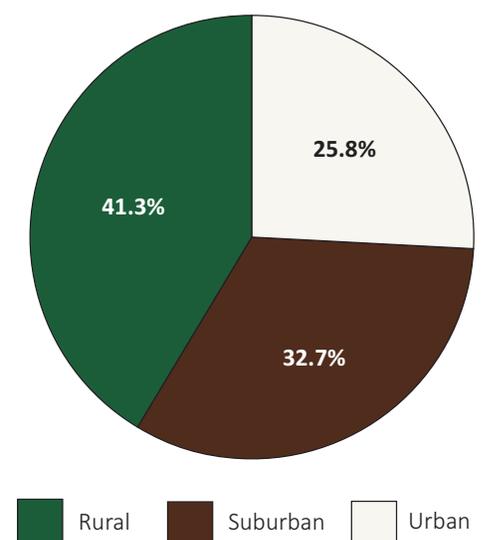


Chart 3: Respondent Region Type Breakdown

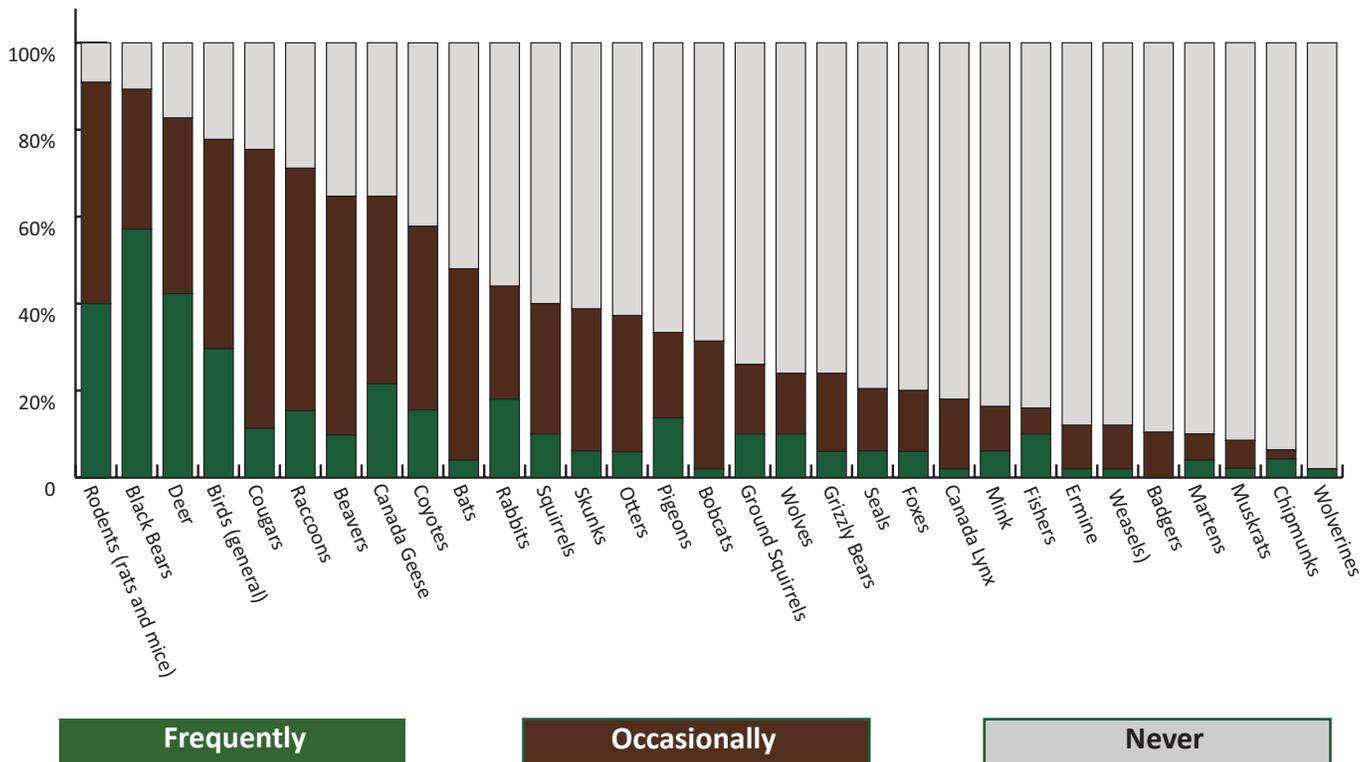


Data Highlights

Wildlife Species Priorities

Survey participants were asked “which wild animals do you most often hear about from the public while engaging in your duties?” A list of 30 species, including fur-bearing animals endemic to British Columbia, as well as other common wildlife. Respondents were given a range from which to choose: Frequently, Occasionally, and Never. Chart 4 indicates their responses, displayed in a bar graph. Varying degrees of completion of the survey (and filling in “Never” responses) explain the variation in the total responses.

Chart 4: “Which wild animals do you most often hear about from the public while engaging in your duties?”



The 12 animals with the highest percentage of combined “frequently” and “occasionally” responses in descending order:

| | | | |
|--|--------|--|--------|
| <i>Rodents (Rats and mice)</i> | 90.91% | <i>Beavers</i> | 64.71% |
| <i>Black Bears</i> | 89.29% | <i>Canada Geese</i> | 64.71% |
| <i>Deer</i> | 82.69% | <i>Coyotes</i> | 57.78% |
| <i>Birds (general)</i> | 77.78% | <i>Bats</i> | 48% |
| <i>Cougars</i> | 75.47% | <i>Rabbits</i> | 44% |
| <i>Raccoons</i> | 71.15% | <i>Squirrels (all except ground)</i> | 40% |

Data Highlights

Existing Bylaws and Regulations

Bylaws related to feeding, attractant management, and others related to keeping of domestic animals can have a major impact on how municipalities manage negative encounters and mitigate future conflicts. The Fur-Bearers' survey asked respondents if their municipality has specific wildlife feeding bylaws, wildlife attractant bylaws, and bylaws or policies allowing for backyard chickens.

Chart 5: "Does your municipality have specific wildlife feeding bylaws?"

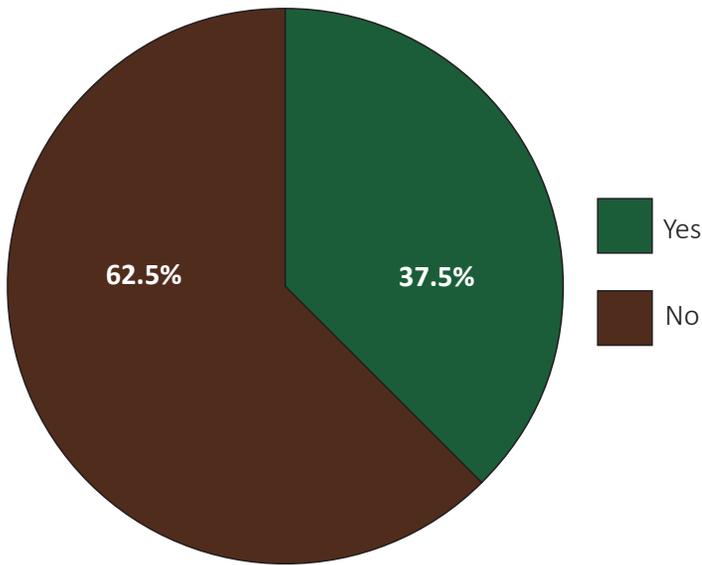


Chart 6: "Does your municipality have specific wildlife attractant bylaws?"

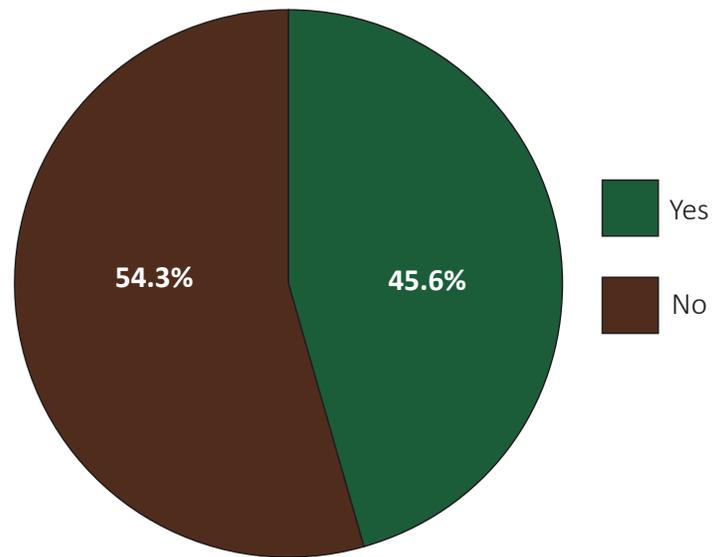
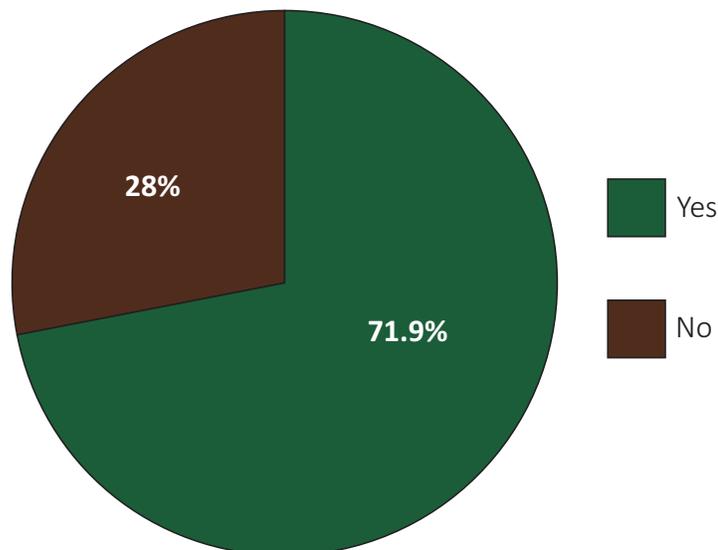


Chart 7: "Does your municipality have a bylaw or policy allowing for backyard chickens?"



Data Highlights

Role of Charities

Understanding if, how, and where charities like The Fur-Bearers could play a role in improving outcomes for wildlife and reducing negative encounters is a priority. The following questions were formed to help identify areas of opportunity, and uncertainty from municipal employees that the charitable sector must overcome.

Chart 8: “Do you think non-profits and charities can play a positive role in growing coexistence and reducing demand for service in your municipality?”

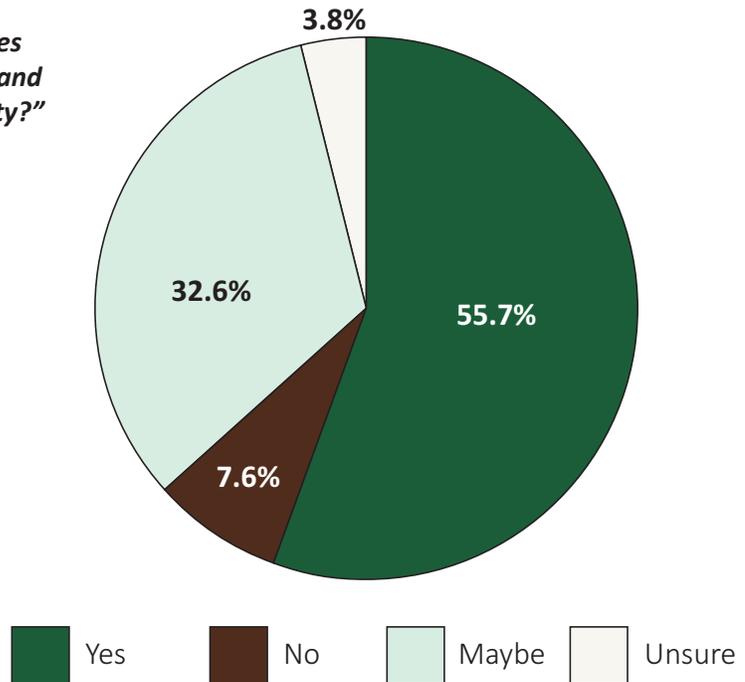
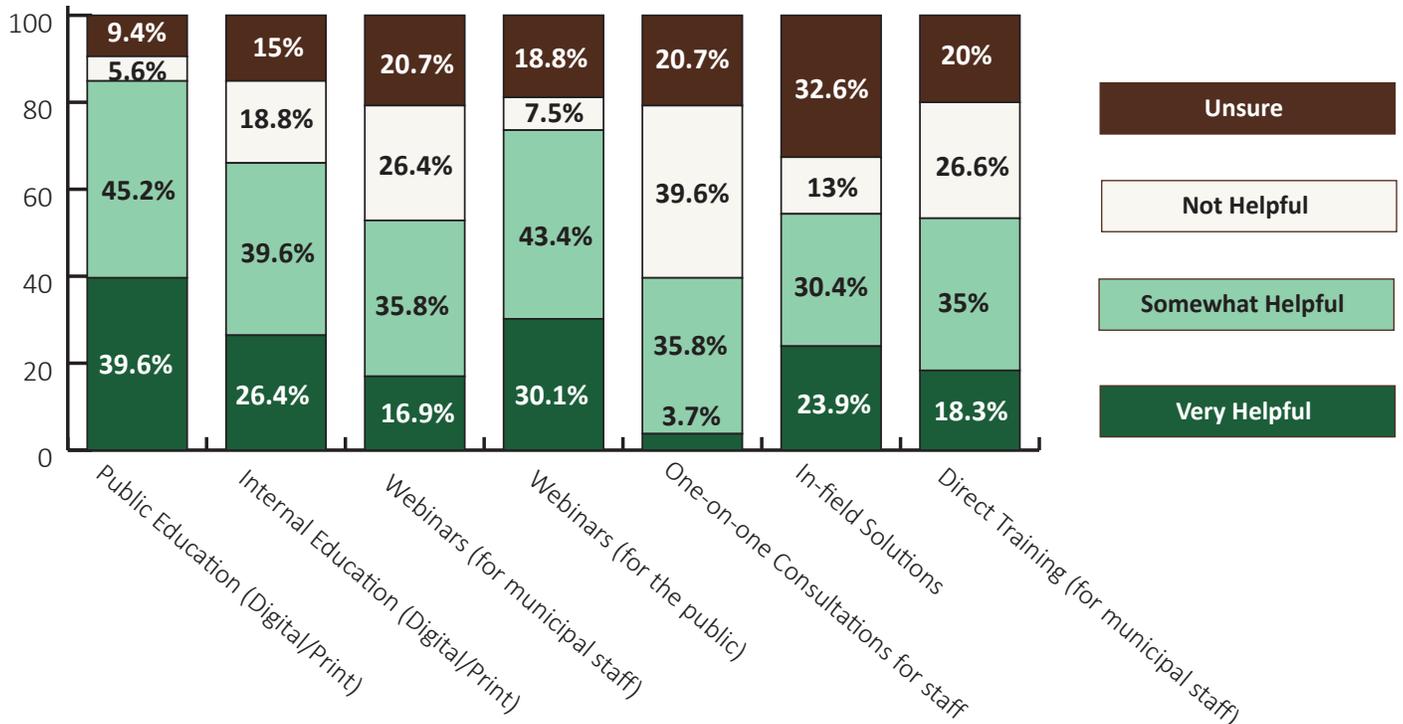


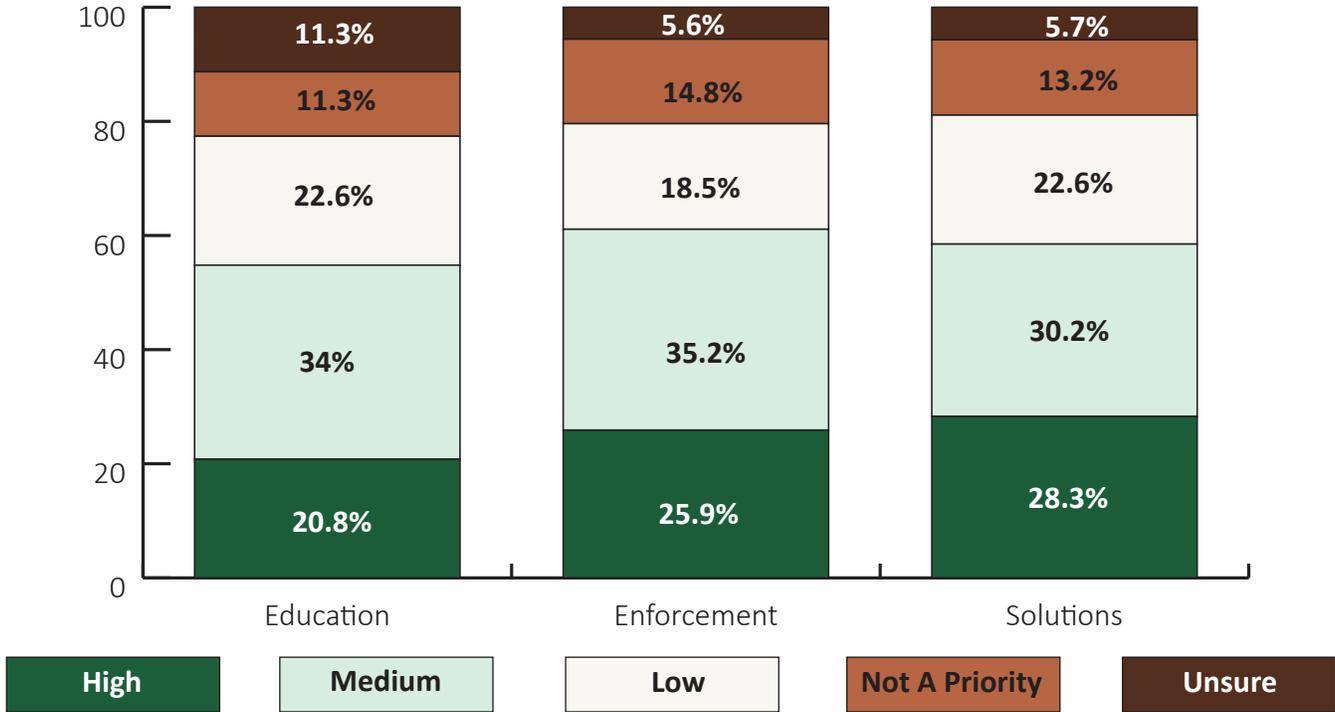
Chart 9: “What tools provided by a non-profit would be most useful in reducing wildlife conflict and calls for service in your role?”



Data Highlights

Role of Charities

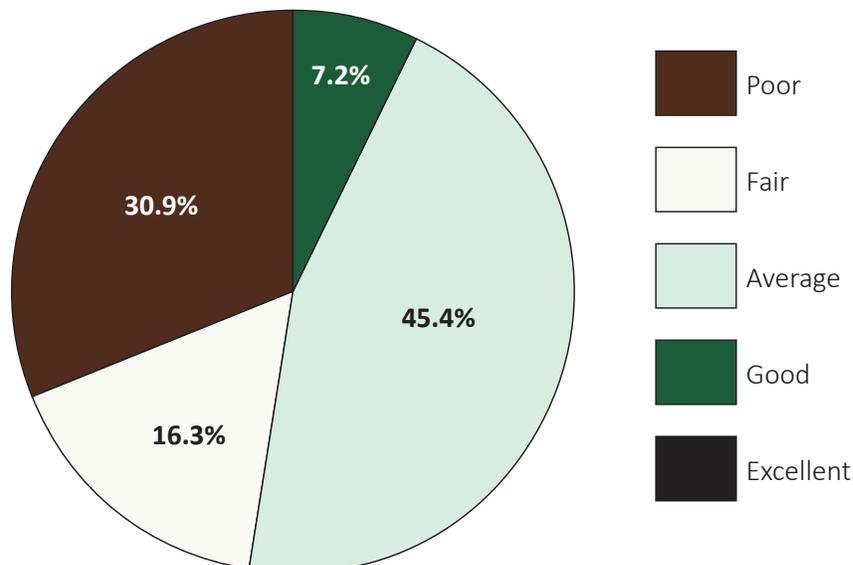
Chart 10: "How would you prioritize funding related to wildlife coexistence in your municipality?"



Jurisdiction

Understanding municipal workers' perceptions of the public's understanding of jurisdiction as it relates to wildlife is an indicator of communication opportunities.

Chart 11: "In your experience, how would you rank the public's understanding of how wildlife and related issues are managed at various jurisdictional levels (municipal, provincial, federal, private)?"



Recommendations

The BC Municipalities Survey has shown that there is an interest for public-facing education and solutions to negative wildlife encounter.

The breakdown of species most often heard about/ impacting municipal workers job delivery is also insightful, indicating that some campaign work is on the right track: black bears, for example.

This section also indicated some species that are not receiving as much coverage from The Fur-Bearers, but may ultimately have a larger impact, such as rodents and raccoons.

Finding new public-facing tools to employ, such as the short educational program developed by Coyote Watch Canada and City of Toronto, web-based learning opportunities and webinars, innovative advertising and messaging, and so on, should be prioritized.

There are clear opportunities to develop new, innovative tools for educating the public in specific regions on specific issues, and that these tools may be welcomed by municipalities. Likewise, offering public-facing tools to municipalities will likely result in a higher volume of education delivery.

1. Focus on public-facing campaigns within municipalities

2. Programmize education on commonly-mentioned species like black bears and coyotes.

3. Increase coverage of raccoons, rodents, and other fur-bearing animals with high scores in survey data.

4. Utilize innovative educational tools to deliver programs.