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## Spring cleaning can save lives of wildlife

*Attractants like unsecured garbage, outdoor pet food, bird feeders draw animals like bears into yards and busy urban areas.*

**VICTORIA** – Spring cleaning can help protect local wildlife and biodiversity by removing attractants that draw animals like bears and coyotes closer to homes, reminds a BC-based wildlife group.

The Fur-Bearers, a non-partisan charity founded in 1953 to protect fur-bearing animals, is asking residents and business owners to check for common attractants and help prevent unnecessary risks and suffering to native species.

“We all love seeing wildlife visit our yards, but when they’re drawn in by food sources, it can lead to behavioural changes that have significant consequences,” says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Fur-Bearers. “Whether its bird seed attracting bears and rodents or outdoor pet food drawing in raccoons, the animals are the ones who end up paying the price.”

An average of 500 black bears are killed by the BC Conservation Officer Service annually, often due to attractant issues; animals are also more likely to take risks like crossing busy streets and getting closer to people or pets when attractants are available.

The Fur-Bearers is reminding residents and business owners to check for and remove attractants before issues begin. Common attractant issues include:

- Unsecured garbage. Keep all garbage secure until pickup and follow local regulations on when and how to place garbage curbside.
- Bird feeders. These are high calorie, high fat snacks for all wildlife from rodents to black bears. As plentiful resources exist during spring, summer, and fall, bird feeders can be put away when most wildlife are active.
- Outdoor cooking and eating areas. Clean barbecue grills and grease trays after every use and ensure all food waste is cleaned from the site.
- Pet food and treats. Keep pet food indoors or clean up immediately after it is eaten.

Additionally, The Fur-Bearers remind residents that feeding wildlife like black bears and coyotes (directly or indirectly by leaving food out that they access) is illegal in British Columbia and can result in a significant fine. Anyone witnessing wildlife feeding or dangerous behaviour around wildlife is asked to contact the BC Conservation Officer Service.

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

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