

July 16, 2024

BC's Deadliest Communities for Black Bears List Released

Canadian charity The Fur-Bearers sees opportunity for change and growth to protect bears

VICTORIA – British Columbia's Top Ten Deadliest Communities for black bears were identified by the BC Conservation Officer Service (BC COS) – but the government agency wouldn't release the location of over 50% of the black bears they killed.

The Fur-Bearers, a non-partisan, registered charity founded in 1953, has used freedom of information legislation to access data about where black bears are killed by the BCCOS annually, with the goal of helping communities make changes to reduce negative encounters, and ultimately deaths of black bears.

"Following a deadly year for black bears in British Columbia, we expected to see the familiar names of communities where issues remain unresolved," says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Fur-Bearers. "Unfortunately, this year the BC COS only provided ten communities – and did not tell us where they killed 356 of the alarming 603 black bears killed."

The list provided by the BCCOS shows:

Prince George - 76	Burns Lake - 17
Kamloops - 31	Vanderhoof - 17
Mackenzie - 28	Squamish - 11
Smithers - 24	Fort St. James - 11
Quesnel - 22	Fraser Lake - 10

"The location of where over 50% of the black bears killed remains unknown by the public, and that's completely unacceptable both for conservation and government accountability," says Fox. "We're calling on the BC COS to begin publishing bear kill statistics monthly, by location, for the public to see. There is no way for communities to do better when they don't know there's a problem."

Many of the encounters that lead to BCCOS officers killing black bears include attractant management – such as garbage being left unsecured or put curbside inappropriately, fruit from trees being left uncollected, bird feeders and others. Urban expansion and resource development also lead to bears exploring areas they may otherwise avoid. A full list with which residents can identify attractants around their homes can be found at TheFurBearers.com/attractants.

The historic list of BC's Deadliest Communities for Black Bears can be viewed at TheFurBearers.com/BCBlackBears.

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CONTACT:

Lesley Fox

Executive Director

The Fur-Bearers

604-435-1850 ext. 803

Lesley@TheFurBearers.com