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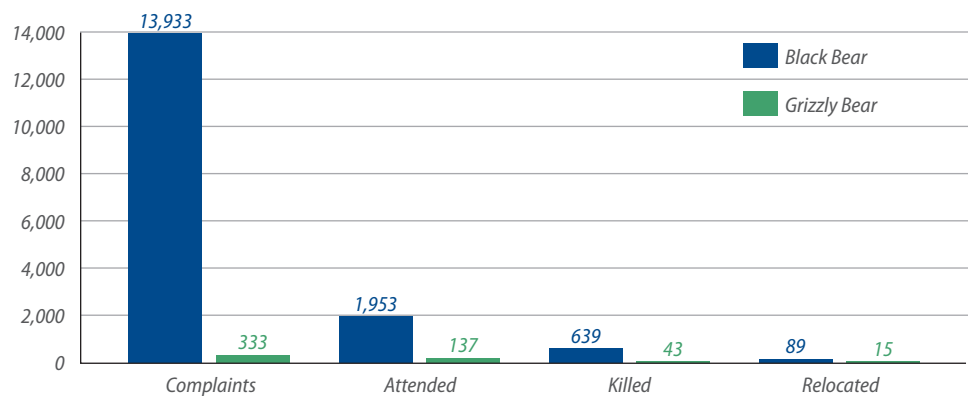
# Bear Smart Communities

**BRITISH COLUMBIA CONSERVATION OFFICER SERVICE**

## WHY IS THE BEAR SMART COMMUNITY PROGRAM IMPORTANT?

Every year, B.C.'s Conservation Officers respond to thousands of complaints regarding bears. Most of these conflicts begin when people allow bears to access non-natural food sources. Unfortunately, because there are few alternative control methods once bears have learned to access human food, Conservation Officers have no choice but to euthanize those bears.

### 10-Year Average of Bear Conflicts in British Columbia



## ACCESS TO HUMAN FOOD

People teach bears bad habits. If bears are allowed to access human food and garbage, they quickly learn to associate it with people and become what is called food-conditioned. These bears also become habituated to people as they lose their fear of humans.

Habituated and food-conditioned bears learn to expect human food and are more likely to approach people, increasing risks to public safety, and are more difficult to drive away than wild bears.

## WHAT IS THE BEAR SMART COMMUNITY PROGRAM?

The Bear Smart Community Program is a proactive conservation initiative that encourages efforts by communities, businesses and individuals to reduce human-bear conflicts.

It is a co-operative venture that recognizes the responsibility to manage bear-human conflicts rests with everyone and will require participation from the provincial government, municipal governments and local citizens to be effective.

It is community led, entirely voluntary on the part of the community, and acknowledges that each community will be unique in the conflicts that occur and the opportunities that exist to reduce those conflicts.

## THE BEAR SMART VISION

- » Focus efforts on addressing the root causes of bear-human conflicts.
- » Reduce the overall number of conflicts.
- » Reduce the number of bears that have to be destroyed due to conflicts.



## THE BENEFITS OF BEING "BEAR SMART"

The primary goal of the Bear Smart Community Program is to diminish the rate and intensity of human bear conflicts and thereby:

- » Improve public safety.
- » Reduce property damage.
- » Have fewer bears killed due to conflict.

## THE BEAR SMART COMMUNITY PROGRAM IS BASED ON A SERIES OF ESTABLISHED CRITERIA:

### 1. Prepare a bear hazard assessment.

Review the history and pattern of bear conflicts in the community and identify high-use bear habitat, human-use areas (school yards, playgrounds, etc.) and non-natural attractants such as accessible garbage, fruit trees, bird feeders, compost, etc.

### 2. Prepare a bear/human conflict management plan.

Develop strategies to resolve the hazards identified and reduce the potential for human-bear conflicts.

### 3. Revise planning and decision making documents.

Ensure the community's commitment to the Bear Smart Community Program by incorporating Bear Smart practices into official community documents such as the Official Community Plan and/or Solid Waste Management Plans.

### 4. Implement a continuing education program.

Education is a key component of human-bear conflict reduction and the community must have an ongoing education program that is directed at all sectors of the community and consistent with the WildSafeBC/Ministry standard.

### 5. Develop and maintain a bear proof waste management system.

Ensure that all components of municipal waste management including waste, recycling and composting are managed appropriately and made inaccessible to bears. This may be done through bylaws, the use of bear-resistant containers and/or electric fencing.

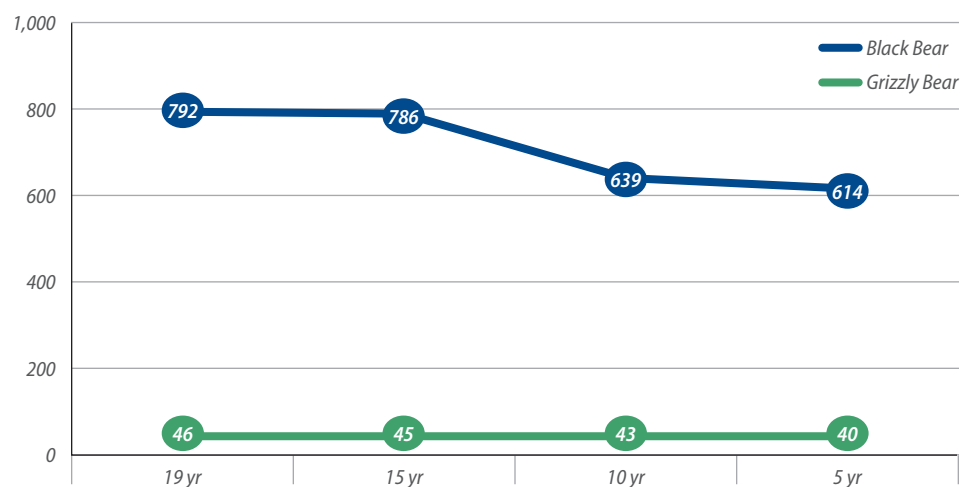
### 6. Implement Bear Smart by-laws.

Implement "Bear Smart" bylaws prohibiting the provision of food to bears as a result of intent, neglect, or irresponsible management of attractants. Implement a compliance strategy for these bylaws to ensure that there is full compliance with them.

## BEAR SMART SUCCESSES

We have seen a steady decrease in the number of bears killed annually in response to conflict with people.

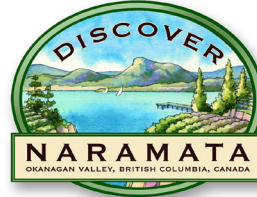
### Average Number of Bears Killed Due to Conflict





More than 20 communities in B.C. are actively pursuing Bear Smart status.

Congratulations to eight communities that have successfully attained official Bear Smart status: Kamloops; Squamish; Lions Bay; Whistler; Port Alberni; Naramata; New Denver; and Coquitlam .



The Conservation Officer Service and the Province recognize there are challenges to the implementation of the Bear Smart Community Program and are committed to supporting and assisting with community efforts.

For more information regarding Bear Smart please visit us online or contact the Wildlife Conflict Manager.

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Bear Smart Community Program:  
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/human-wildlife-conflict/staying-safe-around-wildlife/bears/bear-smart>

## R.A.P.P.

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