1. **In 2020, 2021, what was the number of wildlife conflicts in West Kelowna?**

Table 1. Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) in West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation (WFN) from January 1, 2016 to November 20, 2021. Due to the way the data is recorded West Kelowna and WFN data is presented together.

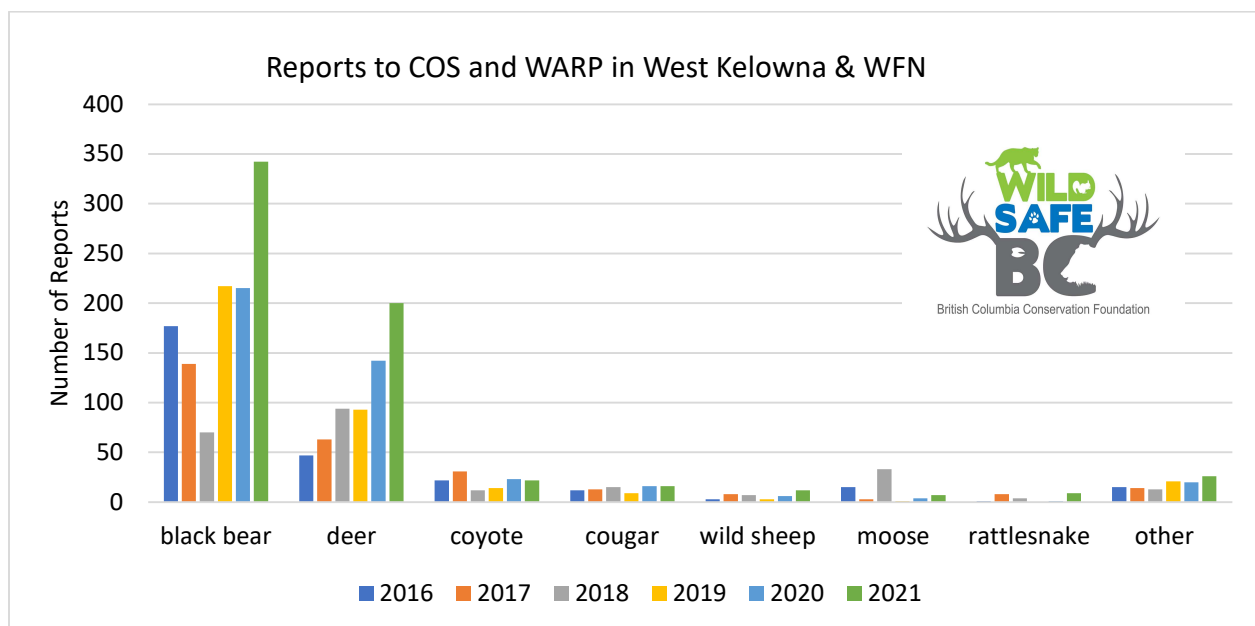|	black bear	deer	coyote	cougar	wild sheep	moose	rattle-snake	bobcat	other	**Total**
2016	177	47	22	12	3	15	1	4	11	**292**
2017	139	63	31	13	8	3	8	8	6	**279**
2018	70	94	12	15	7	33	4	1	12	**248**
2019	217	93	14	9	3	1	0	1	20	**358**
2020	215	142	23	16	6	4	1	3	17	**427**
2021	342	200	22	16	12	7	9	1	25	**634**
Total	**1160**	**639**	**124**	**81**	**39**	**63**	**23**	**18**	**91**	**2238**

Figure 1. Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) in West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation (WFN) from January 1, 2016 to November 20, 2021. Due to the way the data is recorded West Kelowna and WFN data is presented together.

In 2021 (up to Nov 20th), Black bears continued to be the most reported species in Okanagan Westside communities, with 342 reports in 2021 (Figure 1). They are followed by 200 deer reports. Coyotes and cougars were the distant third and fourth reported species, with 22 and 16 reports respectively. After this report numbers for other species are minimal.
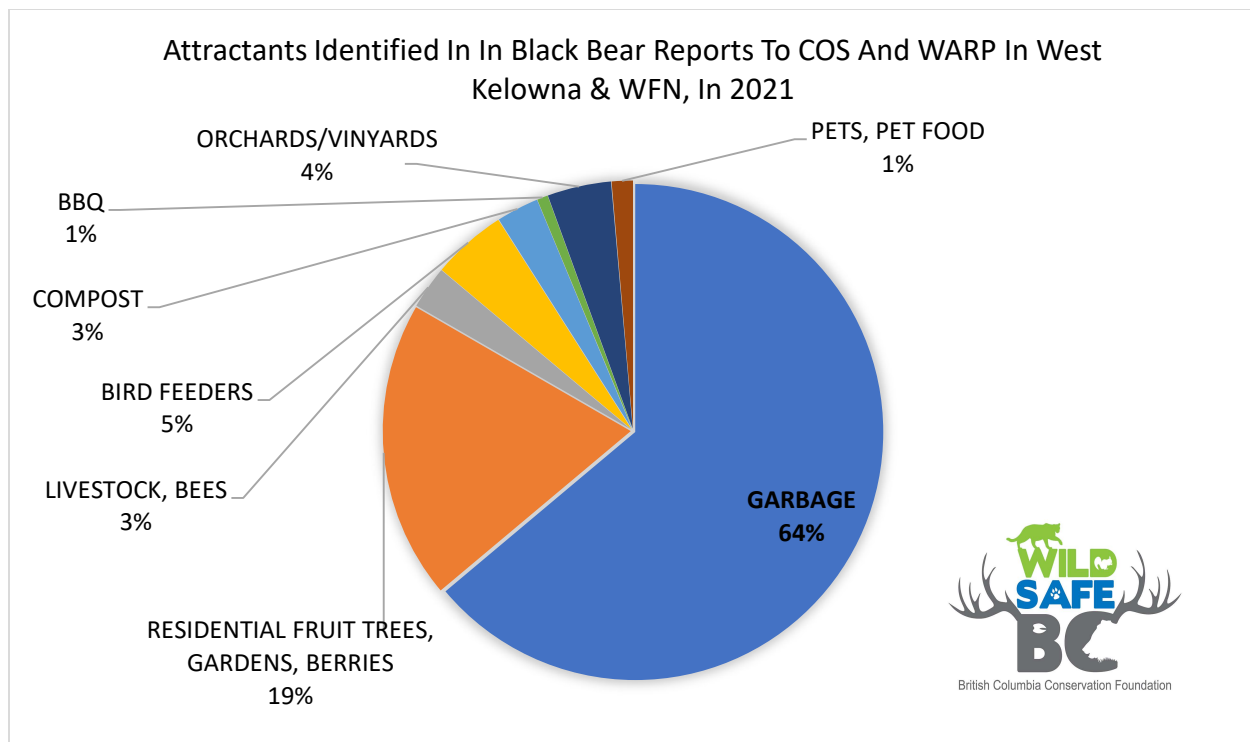
Figure 2: Attractants and their relative proportions identified in black bear reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) in West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation (WFN) from January 1, 2016 to November 20, 2021. Due to the way the data is recorded West Kelowna and WFN data is presented together.

2. **How do we use the program? How successful it is?** (How does West Kelowna use the regular wildsafe programing already in existence? How could West Kelowna use the bear smart program?)

Okanagan Westside Program:
The City of West Kelowna has sponsored a community WildSafeBC Program, along with the District of Peachland, Westbank First Nation and the Regional District since 2016. This program is called the Okanagan Westside WildSafeBC program, and is led by a part-time Coordinator. Working with the community, the Program reduces wildlife conflicts and helps keep wildlife wild and the community safe. The Program uses a multi-faceted approach to increase community knowledge with regards to local wildlife and human-wildlife conflict issues and this includes:

- Door-to-door outreach
- WildSafe Ranger presentations for school-aged children
- Wildlife awareness and safety presentations
- Bear spray workshops
- Electric fencing support
- Booths at community events
- Bin tagging
- WildSafeBC Business Pledge
- WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program

- And more! Please see the <u>Annual Reports</u> for more details.

The overall goal of the Program is to prevent human behaviours that put the community at risk of human-wildlife conflicts. We are able to measure our success through surveys and bin tagging statistics. Those that receive our education and information, are more likely to adopt best practices such as keeping attractants secure and carrying bear spray when recreating in bear/cougar country.

Since 2016, well over 3,000 kids and adults in the community have been reached through presentations, and over 1,600 people at events; over 700 homes have received door-door education and over 800 homes have also been reached with bin tagging stickers.

Bear Smart Program:
The goal of the <u>Bear Smart Community Program</u> is to address the root causes of human-bear conflict, and in doing so, to reduce the number of bears that are destroyed while increasing human safety. It is a voluntary program that has been designed by the British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy in partnership with the British Columbia Conservation Foundation and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. It provides local governments with a series of criteria to achieve, as they have been shown to be effective in reducing preventable human-bear conflicts:

1. Prepare a Bear Hazard Assessment of the community and surrounding area.
2. Prepare a Human-Bear Conflict Management Plan.
3. Revise planning and decision-making documents such as Official Community Plans and/or Solid Waste Management Plans.
4. Implement a continuing education program consistent with WildSafeBC or ministry standard.
5. Develop and maintain a bear-proof solid waste management system.
6. Implement "Bear Smart" bylaws.

A municipality can apply for official Bear Smart Community status once they have fulfilled each of the six criteria and/or they can use the criteria as a framework for addressing the root causes and preventing human-bear conflicts in their community (achieving 'Bear Smart status' does not need to be the goal in order to make a difference in the community).

The City of West Kelowna has achieved criteria step 4 to *implement a continuing education program*, with the ongoing sponsorship and support of the WildSafeBC Okanagan Westside program. Step 5, *developing a bear-proof solid waste management system* is being worked on by the Regional District with support from relevant City of West Kelowna staff. Other significant opportunities for the City of West Kelowna to consider in order to reduce the amount of human-bear conflicts in the community are step 6, *implement bear smart bylaws* and step 1, *prepare a Bear Hazard Assessment:*

- The purpose of Bear Smart bylaws are to "prohibit the provision of food to bears as a result of intent, neglect, or irresponsible management of attractants". Also known as wildlife attractant management laws, these bylaws are an essential compliment to education initiatives in order to support the promotion of resident behaviour changes to remove and/or responsibly manage wildlife attractants including garbage and fruit trees.
  - From the [2021 Okanagan Westside Annual Report](): "A contributing factor in human-bear conflicts is the presence and availability of attractants. While climate conditions cannot be controlled, management of attractants can. Garbage continues to be the primary attractant in Okanagan Westside communities. Measures like wildlife attractant bylaws, that address and reduce the prevalence of unsecured garbage are essential in order to prevent high levels of human-bear conflicts in Okanagan Westside communities."

- The purpose of a Bear Hazard Assessment (BHA) is to "review the history and pattern of bear conflicts in the community and identify bear habitat, human-use areas (school yards, playgrounds, etc.) and non-natural attractants such as accessible garbage, fruit trees, etc." Identifying factors that can lead to potential human-bear conflicts is an important step to informing management decisions and proactive efforts to prevent human-bear conflicts.

Bear Smart Communities see declines in human bear conflicts, and the number of bears that need to be destroyed due to conflict. For example, Naramata became Bear Smart in 2014 and went from having six to seven food-conditioned bears destroyed every year to only two in the first five years of being Bear Smart. The two bears that had to be destroyed were sick, and not necessarily food conditioned. Other benefits to communities include:

- Reduced litter being spread around residential areas as garbage carts are kept secured until the morning of pick-up
- Prevention of not only bears from accessing garbage, but also dogs, crows, raccoons, rats, etc
- Improved human safety with less likelihood of encounters with aggressive food conditioned or habituated bears
- Better rat population control with reduced access to food for rodents through residents managing attractants including garbage, birdseed and fruit trees
- Community Pride!