



55% of the people surveyed reported bear activity in their community this year.

Managing wildlife attractants in the Southern Lakes



Results of community door-to-door education project

We are happy to report that some residents had made changes suggested during our 2014 visits.

Door-to-door surveys and conversations reveal a community mindset of respecting nature and placing value on the opportunity to observe wildlife.

In 2014, WildWise Yukon (WWY) teamed up with Environment Yukon (EY) Conservation Officers to visit homes in the Southern Lakes communities to inquire about people's encounters with wildlife and share information about managing wildlife attractants. The team delivered educational materials, looked at available attractants on properties and shared tips on managing the ones we saw. We wanted to gain an understanding of what was needed to make properties safer for humans and wildlife (particularly bears).

In early summer 2016, WWY paid follow-up visits to these properties to ask if our door to door outreach had any effect on attractant management practices, whether this kind of outreach is valued and how we can improve our services. We visited properties at Army Beach, South McClintock, North McClintock, Robinson, and the Annie Lake Road.

We asked if this outreach program is worthwhile and received a resounding "yes" from 86% of the homeowners surveyed.

Top 3 Bear Attractants by Community

	South McClintock	North McClintock	Annie Lake Road	Army Beach	Robinson
Yards & greenspaces	1	1	2	2	1
BBQs, unsecured freezers & fridges	2	3	3	1	2
Garbage	3			3	3
Pets & domestic animals		2	1		

Keep bears alive and communities safe.

Many people go years without a negative encounter with wildlife on their property and it is easy to forget that bears and other wildlife are still at our doorstep.

Every year Conservation Officers are called to relocate or destroy animals that have become food conditioned (used to eating human foods and wastes). A food conditioned bear is a dangerous bear because bears will defend the resources they need to survive a long, cold winter and to reproduce. Bears and other wildlife look for easy calories!

Reducing and securing attractants ensures we can safely coexist with wildlife. It is our responsibility to ensure our attractants aren't contributing to the problem! Communities can work together to maintain the culture of appreciation for wildlife and wilderness in Yukon's Southern Lakes Regions.

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Commonly found attractants and what you can do

The surveys show where improvements can be made. Some attractants are more attractive to wildlife than others and deserve more immediate consideration. Sometimes it is helpful just to know where to start making changes.

Bear Safe Culture

Sharing a property line with someone who does not work to reduce attractants increases the chance of a bear wandering into your own backyard. Many communities have developed a culture of securing attractants by sharing ideas and making sure newcomers understand that attractant management is expected. Using electric fences on chicken coups or around large gardens and encouraging your neighbours to do the same can improve safety for the whole neighborhood.

You live in bear country.

Bears use areas near subdivisions as travel corridors throughout the foraging season. Attractants on properties can bring bears from the edges of shared habitats onto people's properties.

Thank you for participating and for being WildWise!

Natural attractants in yards and greenspaces

Dandelions, clover heads and other common plants, as well as some of the things you are hoping to harvest from your garden are all things that bears like to eat. They don't care about your canning plans. By keeping lawns cut we can reduce attractants on our properties and sometimes improve visibility. Bears don't like to be surprised by an encounter any more than we do. Harvesting our gardens as soon as the food is ripe reduces the chance of loss to wildlife and return visits next summer and fall.

Barbeques, unsecured freezers and garbage

While these are all ranked considerably attractive to bears, they are easy to secure. Burning off residue on your barbeque and cleaning the grease trap after each use makes it a lot less attractive to bears. Freezers can be locked (Padlocks should be used on both ends of the freeze as bears, especially grizzlies, have long claws and strong arms). Garbage can be stored in a locked shed, garage or container and taken to the landfill regularly.

15% of participants are not using bear proof garbage containers and 20% are not using bear proof compost technique. Please visit our website to learn how electric fencing can be used to secure these.

Pets and domestic animals

Making sure that feed for pets and livestock is stored inside or in a bear-proof container will deter wildlife and save you money in having to replace feed raided by bears and other wildlife. It is also important to make sure that pet and livestock faeces is cleaned up. Having trouble enjoying an evening on your porch because something just doesn't smell right? Hire a neighborhood kid to shovel that poop! As a bonus, your pets will be healthier, your yard prettier and the kids happier.

Bird seed

Bird seed is very high in calories and attractive to bears. It is important to clean spills under feeders and limit their use to the months that bears are in their dens. Feeders should be hung at least 3 metres from the ground to get them out of reach of foxes and other winter foragers.



photo: Phil Timpany