



# 2021 WildWise Yukon Electric Fence Support Program Report

Prepared by the Centre for Human-Wildlife Conflict Solutions

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **Wild Wise Yukon Outreach Funder Report 2021**

WildWise Yukon's 2021 outreach activities took place between April 21<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> of the same year. Tourism and Culture funding (the Stay Another Day and Product Development Partnership Program initiatives) allowed Wild Wise Yukon (WWY) to hire a full-time Outreach Coordinator and to help meet our work plan goals. The Outreach Coordinator, Madison Hurst, assisted our Electric Fence Program Coordinator in building bear-proof electric fences in 24 homes in the Southern Yukon region; assisted Community Services with improving electric fence maintenance in the waste facilities across several communities in the Yukon; performed a roving bear safety education program at several Yukon campgrounds; conducted Bear Safety Info Sessions on a regular basis in Visitor Information Centres (VICs) in several communities; and conducted 20 specialized bear safety training events for different groups and organizations.

### **A note on the impacts of COVID-19 on the outreach season**

Territorial travel restrictions were updated several times over the course of the season, altering the groups of people visiting VICs and staying in campgrounds. While most "travelers" early in the spring were Yukoners, changes in self-isolation mandates, vaccination exemption, and at the Canada-US border caused a gradual increase in out-of-territory visitors. Despite looser restrictions, many potential visitors were hampered by the risk of having to isolate when returning home. Likewise, municipal rules around public engagement were also inhibitive at times: for example, a ban on non-food booths at the Fireweed Market meant that WWY could not host its habitual bear safety booth.

While the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of out-of-territory visitors, resulting in unusual visitor needs and interests, WWY outreach activities still garnered much enthusiasm and participation from tourists and Yukoners alike. Events such as training at the VIC may have had less people than there would be in a non-pandemic season, but smaller group sizes had more opportunity to work one-on-one, increasing the impact of the training.

### **Campground Roving**

To offset the low number of people entering the VICs, the Outreach Coordinator also visited territorial campgrounds on weekends and offered bear safety training to interested campers. After a round of solicitation, the Outreach Coordinator would set up in a public area, talk to campers about bear-safe camping, and allow them to practice deploying bear spray using inert bear spray. Uptake was high, albeit weather-dependent, and the Coordinator noted that it was a good way to connect with Yukon families. The Coordinator also noted that territorial campgrounds were kept in very good and bear-safe condition by park officers.

In total, the Outreach Coordinator performed 35 separate roves on 19 different days, visiting a total of 17 different locations across the Southern Yukon, and engaging with almost 400 visitors using the campground roving method. For more visitor statistics, see attached file "WWY 2021 campground outreach visitor statistics."

### **Visitor Information Centres (VICs)**

VIC Bear Safety Info Sessions were conducted on 34 occasions over the summer in Whitehorse (17), Haines Junction (7), Dawson City (8), and Faro (2). These sessions were advertised in the weeks prior to the sessions and promoted by the VIC staff. The training had three components: bear spray training, an

information booth, and the viewing of the [Staying Safe in Bear Country](#) video. The information booth had the most impact, but visitors were less likely to stay and view the video (see Table 1 in Appendix).

The Outreach Coordinator noted that the number of VIC visitors increased over the course of the summer. Info sessions in Whitehorse and Haines Junction VICs had generally high uptake, while Faro had lower uptake, perhaps due to a smaller visitor flow. For more data on visitor impact at VICs, see Table 1 in Appendix.

### **Specialized Group Training Sessions**

In addition to campground roves and VIC sessions, the Outreach Coordinator also performed bear safety information sessions to private groups. The diversity of these groups – which ranged from daycare children to CIRNAC employees to Mt. Sima staff – required that Outreach Coordinator tailor the sessions to each group’s needs. These were highly popular and positive word-of-mouth reviews meant that the Coordinator saw an increase in demand for Specialized Group Training Sessions as the season progressed. While several of these were specifically Wild Wise Yukon events, some of these were also conducted in partnership with other ENGOs (Yukon Conservation Society, Yukon Wildlife Preserve) for mutual promotion and greater impact.

One share-worthy feedback was one WWY received from Early Learning at the Gardens daycare after the children in their care had received bear safety training from the Coordinator. This is a direct quote from the daycare staff:

*“Well you’ll never guess what happened today. We were having circle time outside with all the kids just like when you were here and we were reviewing what we had learned from you. Then, one of our kids stood up, spread his arms wide and said “BEAR”. Sure enough, there on the other side of the fence, maybe 20-30 feet away, was a bear. All the kids stood up and said “bear!” And walked calmly to the nearest adult and as a group we all walked calmly through the yard and into the preschool. I was busting with pride and you should be too that these kids all knew just what to do to keep safe!”*

For more visitor impact data from Specialized Group Training Sessions, see Table 2 in Appendix.

**Appendix – Visitor Impact Data***Table 1. Number of adults (18+ yrs) and youth (<18 yrs) at various outreach activities in Yukon Visitor Information Centres in the summer of 2021.*

Date	Location of VIC or special event	Number of ADULTS at video	Number of YOUTH at video	Number of ADULTS at bear spray training	Number of YOUTH at bear spray training	Number of ADULTS at Booth	Number of YOUTH at Booth
5-Jun-21	Haines Junction VIC	0	0	6	0	15	0
9-Jun-21	Whitehorse VIC	1	0	1	0	2	0
11-Jun-21	Whitehorse VIC	1	0	1	0	1	0
12-Jun-21	Haines Junction VIC	0	0	7	0	7	0
16-Jun-21	Whitehorse VIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
18-Jun-21	Whitehorse VIC	0	0	2	0	4	4
19-Jun-21	Haines Junction VIC	3	0	3	0	3	0
23-Jun-21	Whitehorse VIC	1	1	2	0	3	1
25-Jun-21	Faro VIC	0	0	0	0	2	2
26-Jun-21	Faro VIC	0	0	1	0	1	0
30-Jun-21	Whitehorse VIC	4	2	4	2	4	2
3-Jul-21	Haines Junction VIC	0	0	8	0	11	0
7-Jul-21	Whitehorse VIC	2	2	3	3	3	3
9-Jul-21	Whitehorse VIC	2	0	3	0	3	0
10-Jul-21	Haines Junction VIC	2	0	2	0	10	0
14-Jul-21	Whitehorse VIC	1	0	2	0	4	0
16-Jul-21	Dawson VIC	8	0	8	0	8	8
17-Jul-21	Dawson VIC	0	0	10	10	30	20
17-Jul-21	Dawson VIC	1	0	1	0	6	0
18-Jul-21	Dawson VIC	2	0	15	5	30	10
21-Jul-21	Whitehorse VIC	0	0	4	1	8	1
23-Jul-21	Whitehorse VIC	17	1	17	1	17	1
29-Jul-21	Whitehorse VIC	0	0	4	0	8	0
11-Aug-21	Whitehorse VIC	0	0	0	0	6	0
12-Aug-21	Dawson VIC	0	0	6	0	22	0
13-Aug-21	Dawson VIC	0	0	3	0	14	0
13-Aug-21	Dawson VIC	0	0	12	1	21	1
14-Aug-21	Dawson VIC	0	0	0	0	6	0
18-Aug-21	Whitehorse VIC	1	0	4	0	8	0
20-Aug-21	Whitehorse VIC	2	0	3	0	7	0
21-Aug-21	Haines Junction VIC	1	3	5	3	10	4
25-Aug-21	Whitehorse VIC	2	0	6	2	14	2
27-Aug-21	Whitehorse VIC	0	0	4	0	9	0
28-Aug-21	Haines Junction VIC	9	5	15	8	20	9
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>68</b>

Table 2. Number of adults (18+ yrs) and youth (&lt;18 yrs) at special group training sessions in the summer of 2021.

Date	Training Event	Adults (18+)	Youth (<18)
5-May-21	Hillcrest bear spray training	6	0
8-May-21	Faro sheep and crane festival bear spray training	30	0
20-May-21	Little Hands Hillcrest Childcare bear spray training for staff and youth (kids aged 3-5)	8	15
21-May-21	Early Learning at the Gardens adult bear spray training	10	0
27-May-21	FawksTrot bear spray training	12	0
28-May-21	YCS bear spray training at miles canyon	5	0
29-May-21	Village Bakery in Haines Junction	12	0
2-Jun-21	Learning tree daycare	4	25
2-Jun-21	Early Learning at the Gardens kids' wildlife training	5	22
4-Jun-21	Research forest training	6	56
16-Jun-21	Mt. Sima Staff	12	0
17-Jun-21	YCS themed hike wildlife safety training	23	4
24-Jun-21	Wildlife Preserve	3	13
24-Jun-21	Wildlife Preserve	1	7
2-Jul-21	Art in Nature at the Canyon (Miles canyon)	40	0
14-Jul-21	Mt. Sima Snow School kid camp	0	15
23-Jul-21	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada attended VIC	17	1
24-Jul-21	McIntyre Creek Backyard Biodiversity event	95	0
11-Aug-21	2nd YCS themed hike wildlife safety training	13	2
25-Aug-21	Yukon University Renewable Resource Management field trip class	16	0
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>160</b>