

North Shore Black Bear Society
Supporting the coexistence of people and bears

North Shore Black Bear Society



2023 Year End Report

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<https://northshorebears.com/>

North Shore Black Bear Society



Introduction

The North Shore Black Bear Society (the Society), formerly the North Shore Black Bear Network, is a non-profit organization originally formed in 1999 by residents of Vancouver's North Shore after 39 bears were killed in a single year. The organization was formally structured as a non-profit society in 2005. With the help of its funding partners and a team of dedicated volunteers and staff, the Society has provided education to thousands of North Shore residents and has helped reduce the number of bear deaths.

The Society focuses its efforts on providing education to the residents of the North Shore on how to safely and effectively co-exist with black bears. The mandate of the Society is to reduce the number of bears killed every year by supporting the public with information about managing attractants and dealing effectively with bear encounters.

The Society provides door-to-door education, participates in community events, conducts workshops for schools and other groups, and responds to reports with phone calls, emails, home visits, and placement of bear-in-area signs. The Society also reaches out to new North Shore residents with a 'Welcome to Bear Country' package.

The Society's mission is to:

- Reduce the accessibility of unnatural food sources to wildlife in residential areas.
- Provide education about attractant management to reduce bear encounters and unnecessary bear deaths.
- Maintain working relationships with the North Shore municipalities and the BC Conservation Officer Service.
- Enhance the public's knowledge of how to co-exist with black bears.

This report covers work completed between November 1, 2022, and October 31, 2023.

North Shore Black Bear Society

Wildlife Sighting Reports

Wildlife sighting reports are a crucial part of the North Shore Black Bear Society's daily operations.

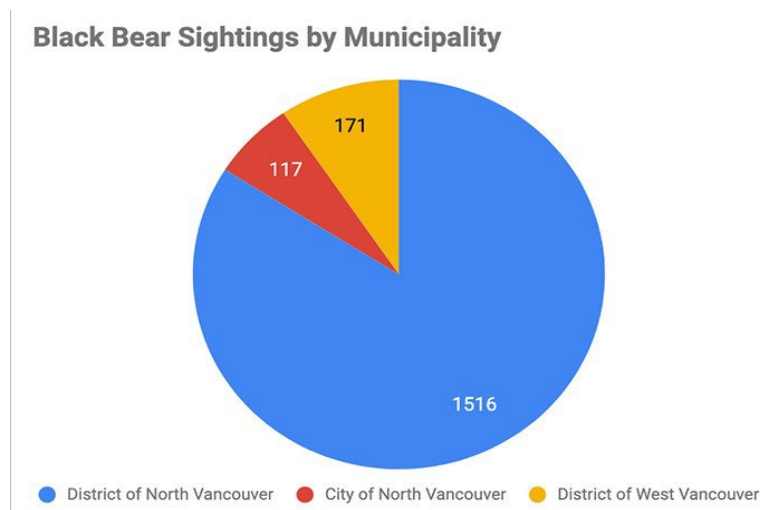
Residents contact the Society to:

- Report a wildlife sighting.
- Request signage.
- Report attractants in their neighbourhood.
- Request canvassing.
- Obtain Information or support with wildlife challenges.

Residents can contact the Society through its website (www.northshorebears.com), District of North Vancouver's Bearline (604-990-BEAR, press 2) and by calling or texting 604-317-4911. Reports can also be made by email at nsbbsocietyinfo@gmail.com. Staff respond to reports via email, phone call or text message.

Residents can also report wildlife sightings and mismanaged attractants to the municipal Bylaw services or by filing a report with the B.C. Conservation Officer Service through the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line in Victoria (1-877-952-7277).

The following statistics summarize the reports received between November 1, 2022, and October 31, 2023, in the District of North Vancouver (DNV), City of North Vancouver (CNV), and District of West Vancouver (DWV).

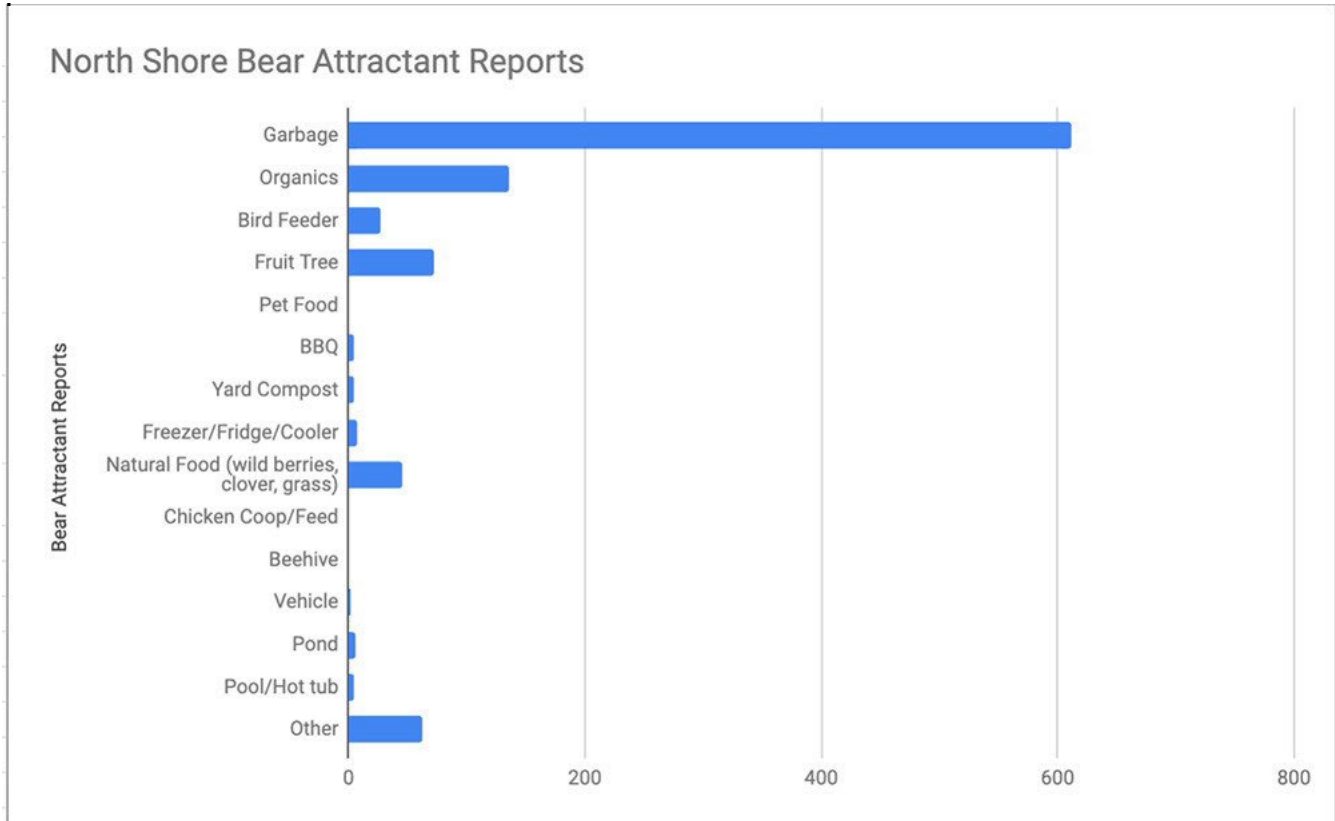


The total number of black bear sightings for the reporting period between November 1, 2022, and October 31, 2023, is 1804.

North Shore Black Bear Society

Wildlife Sighting Reports (Continued)

The wildlife sighting reports that identify an attractant can be broken down in this way.



As a result of bear visits and the subsequent follow-up by the Society, this year, letters were created for the City and District of North Vancouver residents with essential tips on how to manage garbage and organic waste.

The Society’s work supports complexes such as stratas and co-ops so that their communal garbage areas are less attractive to bears. Liaison work is also done with property managers, waste management companies, and the municipalities.

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Wildlife Sighting Reports (Continued)

While black bears remain the main focus of the Society's presentations to groups, occasionally the Society receives requests to provide information on all wildlife found on the North Shore, including cougars, coyotes, bobcats, skunks, and raccoons.

Cougar Reports

CNV: 2
DNV: 2
DWV: 1
Total: 5



Coyote Reports

CNV: 10
DNV: 28
DWV: 2
Total: 40



Other Species Reports (Bobcat, Raccoon, Skunk, Weasel)

CNV: 0
DNV: 3
DWV: 0
Total: 3

The Grand total for all wildlife reports between November 1, 2022, and October 31, 2023 is **1852**.

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Activity Summary

Bear Attractant Management

The North Shore is black bear country and residents should expect to see bears in their neighbourhoods. Bears are opportunistic feeders and will eat easily accessible foods, including residential waste and other attractants. This is one of the reasons educational outreach is important.



Garbage (including used diapers) and organic waste together account for 76 percent of all attractant reports. Other attractants include fruit trees, bird feeders, backyard compost, and beehives.

The North Shore Black Bear Society works closely with the District of North Vancouver's departments that are involved in attractant management, namely the Solid Waste and Bylaws Departments.

In the District of North Vancouver, the Society discourages residents from leaving the waste carts in areas accessible by bears, as the carts are not wildlife-proof and the locks often get broken by black bears. District staff can be notified to have damaged carts repaired. Residents looking for additional measures to prevent recurring bear visits are advised to clean and rinse the carts out with a pine- or vinegar-based solution.

Bylaw staff at the three North Shore municipalities are notified if their support is needed beyond the education the Society provides.

North Shore Black Bear Society

Activity Summary

Canvassing

When the Society learns of bear activity, there is a coordinated approach to education with the placement of bear-in-area signs and door-to-door canvassing.

With the help of volunteers, “A bear was sighted in your neighbourhood” door hangers are distributed to homes. The intention is to inform residents of the sighting, attractant management, and reporting options. In addition, many residents of the City and District of North Vancouver receive letters which offer specific tips on how to manage their bear attractants. A sample door hanger is included here.

New Homeowner Letters

The Society’s ‘Welcome to Bear Country’ Information letters are mailed out to new detached and attached North Shore homeowners. These letters provide the best practices for living and exploring in bear country.

The number of New Homeowner Letters mailed out to residents during the reporting period of November 1, 2022 to Oct 31, 2023 is:

West Vancouver - 580
337 - detached homes
243 - attached homes

North Vancouver (City and District) - 1905
634 - detached homes
1271 - attached homes



A bear was recently sighted in your neighbourhood.

Here is what you need to do:

-  Store **garbage and organics** bins inside a shed or garage until collection morning. Freeze meat, fish and bones.
-  Place all **food scraps** in the organics bin, not the garbage.
-  Remove **bird feeders** during spring, summer, fall.
-  Pick or donate **fruit** early.
-  Keep **fridges and freezers** inside.
-  Clean **barbeques** after cooking.
-  Keep **pet food** inside.
-  Surround **chicken coops and beehives** with electric fences.



Relocation is not a solution.

See a black bear in your neighbourhood? Black bears travel extensively in search of food, and it is normal for them to pass through residential areas. Problems can occur when they gain access to unnatural food sources and they remain in urban areas.

Relocation doesn't work—bears that are removed usually return to the area.

Every year, bears are killed on the North Shore for finding food in our community. When this happens, another bear will move in if attractants remain.

The answer is to manage wildlife attractants and prevent bears from finding food in neighbourhoods.

If you meet a bear:

Remain calm, speak calmly to the bear, back away slowly and report the sighting to the North Shore Black Bear Society. Remember that bears are wild animals—respect their space and do not approach for a photograph.

Thank you for helping keep wildlife wild.

Use your phone to scan here, or visit northshorebears.com for more info about co-existing with bears.



Report bear or attractant sightings to the North Shore Black Bear Society:

604.990.BEAR (2327) and press 2
nsbbsociety@gmail.com
northshorebears.com

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Activity Summary

Signs

An important part of our education programs is bear-in-area signage to inform people of a bear in their neighbourhood. These signs can be requested by residents, municipal staff, or Society staff.

During our reporting period of November 1, 2022, to October 31st, 2023, the following numbers of signs were placed in the City and District of North Vancouver.

District of North Vancouver

- 104 bear signs
- 1 coyote sign

City of North Vancouver

- 36 bear signs
- 2 coyote signs



West Vancouver Parks staff place their signs based on requests from residents or the Society.

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Activity Summary

School Outreach

Throughout the year, the Society provides in-person and virtual workshops to community groups and organizations.

Presentations and visits to schools in the Districts of North and West Vancouver are a crucial part of how the Society does education and outreach. They allow the Society to reach young audiences who can then pass the knowledge of being bear aware along to their friends and families.



In total, the Society visited six schools between November 1, 2022, and October 31, 2023.

Presentations

Impact North Shore and the North Vancouver Recreation Commission also requested information for their programs. One of the highlights for the organization was a series of three presentations at SPCA Summer Camps that educated young camp goers on bear habits and attractants.

In total, the Society completed 17 presentations to organizations, reaching over 1100 people.

Bear Safety Workshops

The North Shore Black Bear Society was contacted by the District of West Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Department to conduct a bear safety workshop for 60 of their staff.



In total, the Society presented three Bear Safety Workshops, reaching over 100 people.

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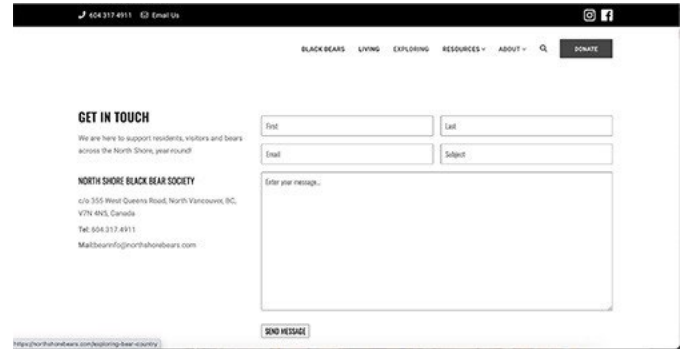
Activity Summary

Online Media

A crucial communications vehicle for the Society is its website, which provides education and allows residents to report wildlife activity. Of the 1804 bear and attractant sightings reported to the Society this year, 1020 reports were submitted through the website.

Wildlife reports, for species including bears, cougars, coyotes, and bobcats, are submitted to our website, as well as requests for canvassing and signage.

The Society has Facebook and Instagram accounts that are used to publish educational information about wildlife activity on the North Shore.



The screenshot shows a contact form on the website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for BLACK BEARS, LIVING, EXPLORING, RESOURCES, ABOUT, and DONATE. Below the menu is a 'GET IN TOUCH' section with a sub-header 'We are here to support residents, visitors and bears across the North Shore, year round!'. The form includes fields for First name, Last name, Email, and Subject. A large text area is provided for the message, with a 'SEND MESSAGE' button at the bottom. Contact information for the North Shore Black Bear Society is listed: c/o 355 West Queens Road, North Vancouver, BC, V7N 4N3, Canada; Tel: 604.317.4911; and Mail: nsbbs@northshorebears.com.



Wildlife and attractant reports can be submitted to the Society in the following ways:

- at www.northshorebears.com
- on the cell phone at 604-317-4911 (call or text)
- on the District of North Vancouver Bear Line 604-990-BEAR (2327), press 2
- by email at nsbbsocietyinfo@gmail.com

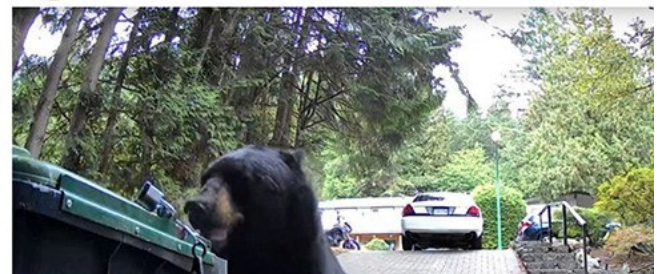
Traditional Media

Media relations is a key component of the Society's work throughout the year. Print, radio, and television provide opportunities for the Society to advise listeners throughout BC about attractant management, bear behaviour, and best practices for living, working, and recreating in bear country.

The North Shore News, for example, is an ideal way for the Society to reach local audiences. One September article, shown here, informed readers that it is the responsibility of residents to manage attractants and included quotes from the Society.

Watch: Black bear botherlessly breaks into North Vancouver garbage bin

The video provides a teachable moment for everyone living in bear country, advocates say



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Activity Summary

Community Events

Community events are important outreach opportunities for the Society, working in conjunction with partners such as the City and District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver. **The Society participated in 20 events this past year and spoke with approximately 2900 people.**



These events give the Society direct access to target audiences, using an interactive display in a friendly and relaxed setting. Door hangers and bookmarks are available to people who visit the Society's display.

Event highlights for this year include:

- Wilderness At Your Doorstep
- West Vancouver Community Cultural Festival
- Blueridge Good Neighbour Day
- Lynn Valley Days
- Maplewood Farm Fair
- Parkgate Society's Community Day
- Seymour Salmonid Society Open House
- World Rivers Day
- Coho Commotion Event
- Urban Tree Canopy Project

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Activity Summary

Bear Management

West Vancouver

During our reporting period of November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2023, two bears were killed by the BC Conservation Officer Service in West Vancouver for entering homes.

North Vancouver

During our reporting period of November 1, 2022, to October 31, 2023, the BC Conservation Officer Service in North Vancouver euthanized four bears.



Because of the Society's educational work with residents on the North Shore, some reports received are about bears who may be in distress. The Society consults with the BC Conservation Service if the health concern seems serious, and an assessment of the bear's condition is requested.

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Plans for 2024

As the Society moves into 2024, it will continue to provide and strengthen its educational programs and activities. Maintaining three part-time staff will enable the Society to meet the growing need for education on the North Shore.

The Society will also identify the hot spots of bear activity from 2023 and proactively provide education in those areas to help curb repeated animal visits.



Continued support and assistance will be offered to multi-family complexes where bear visits happen repeatedly.

The Society will consider the possibility of an expired bear spray collection service and fundraiser since bear spray canisters cannot be recycled or disposed of locally.

In 2024, online communications vehicles, such as the website and social media accounts, will be assessed and enhanced with updated information.

As with previous years, new challenges and opportunities will arise. The Society is committed to promoting the coexistence of people and bears through a variety of educational outreach programs tailored to meet the needs of the North Shore.

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Volunteers

The North Shore Black Bear Society continues to benefit from a robust volunteer program.

Volunteers form a key part of education programs by assisting with placing and removing bear-in-area signs, canvassing, community projects and assisting at community events.

Volunteers also helped with responding to bear sightings with texts, emails, or phone calls, and assisting with mailouts to new homeowners.



A concerted effort has been made to grow the volunteer base to have at least five volunteers available to assist with various initiatives for the coming year of 2024. The Society presently has 10 active volunteers.

Volunteers who deserve mention for their involvement in multiple parts of education programs include Jonathon Bagot, Sarah Bermel, Eryn Arnott, and Nelia Willis.

The Society is grateful for the expertise of Tom Saare, whose Bear Awareness Training, support for staff with access to wildlife research, tireless dedication to hanging signs in communities as well as his willingness to conduct bear walks at events and Bear Safety Workshops is to be noted.

The Society is grateful to its Board members who volunteered their time throughout this fiscal year:

- Jonathan Yasayko, Chair
- Janet Zhu, Vice-Chair
- Tom Saare, Secretary
- Margot Finlay, Treasurer
- Tony Webb
- Viki Ashman

North Shore Black Bear Society

Acknowledgements

Funding Partners

District of North Vancouver
District of West Vancouver
City of North Vancouver
BC Gaming Grants
North Vancouver Cares Foundation

Education Outreach Partners

District of North Vancouver

Solid Waste Department
Bylaws Department
Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre

City of North Vancouver

Parks and Environment Department
Bylaws Department

District of West Vancouver

Engineering and Solid Waste Department
Bylaws Department
Parks and Recreation Department

Special Appreciation

The District Bear Line, 604-990-BEAR (2327) press 2, makes it easy for North Shore residents to contact the Society to report bear or attractant sightings and to request information or support with their attractant management challenges.

The North Shore Black Bear Society maintains positive working relationships with the three North Shore municipalities, as well as the BC Conservation Officer Service. The Society appreciates the working relationships with Parks, Engineering, Solid Waste and Bylaw Officer Service Departments in the three municipalities.

The Society is also grateful for the dedication and hard work of its staff. Their efforts enable North Shore residents, visitors, and bears to co-exist safely in bear country.