



Tony Joyce

North Shore Black Bear Society

2024 Year-End Report

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Introduction

The North Shore Black Bear Society (NSBBS), 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 team of dedicated volunteers and staff, NSBBS has provided education to thousands of North Shore residents, and has helped reduce the number of bear deaths.

The North Shore Black Bear 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 North Shore Black Bear Society provides neighbourhood outreach, participates in community events, conducts presentations for schools and other groups, and responds to bear sighting reports with phone calls, emails, text messages, home visits and placement of bear-in-area signs.

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
- Enhance the public's knowledge on how to coexist with black bears
- Welcome new residents to the North Shore with a 'Welcome to Bear Country' package

This report covers work completed between November 1, 2023 and October 31, 2024.





2024 in Review

Statistics

Residents of the North Shore contact the Society for various reasons, including:

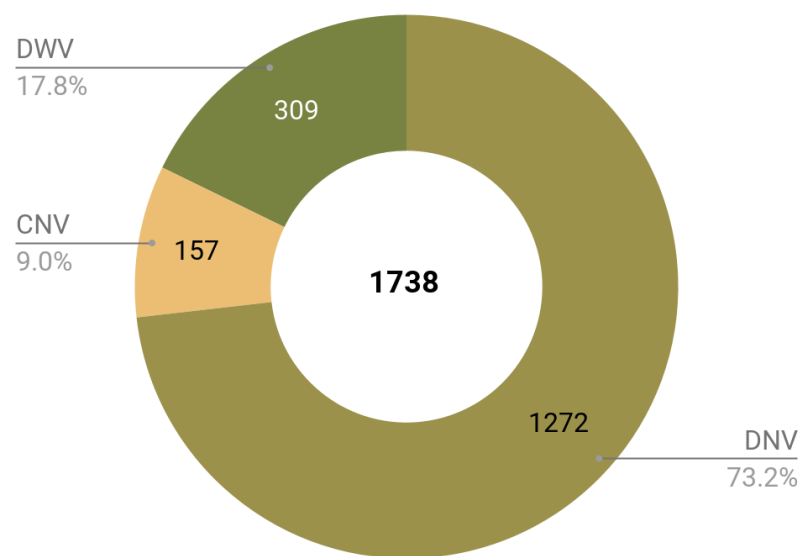
- Reporting wildlife sightings
- Reporting attractants in their neighbourhood
- Requesting support with wildlife challenges
- Requesting workshops
- Requesting signage

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 by the Society between November 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024 in the District of North Vancouver (DNV), City of North Vancouver (CNV), District of West Vancouver (DWV), and Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Wildlife Sighting Reports

2024 Black Bear Sightings by Municipality



A total of **1738** black bears, across the North Shore, were reported to the Society.



Cougar Reports

DNV: 31

DWV: 1

Total: 32



Coyote Reports

CNV: 6

DNV: 25

DWV: 1

Total: 32



Other Species Reports

(bobcat, raccoon, skunk, weasel, owl, deer)

DNV: 9

CNV: 2

DWV: 2

Total: 13

Grand Total of all reported wildlife: 1,811

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



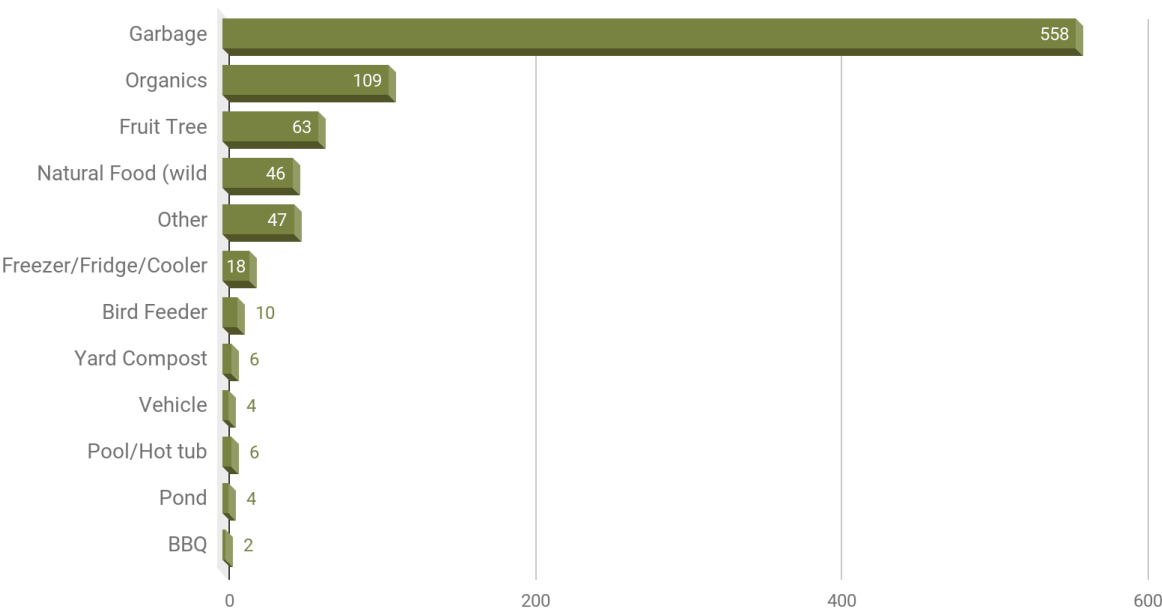
Summary of Activities

Bear Attractant Management

The North Shore is black bear country. Many of our residential areas are near wildlife corridors, and residents should expect to see bears in our neighbourhoods from time to time. As opportunistic feeders, bears are attracted to accessible foods, including residential waste (unsorted garbage, organics, and baby diapers), bird feed, fruit trees, outdoor fridges and freezers, dirty BBQs, rodenticide bait boxes, and beehives. This is one of the reasons education outreach is important.

The biggest attractant continues to be garbage and organics (which together account for 76% of all reports).

2024 North Shore Bear Attractant Reports



The Society works closely with the District of North Vancouver’s departments that are involved in wildlife management, namely the Solid Waste and Bylaws Departments.

The District Schaefer carts with clip-on carabiner locks help secure the waste carts and make them bear resistant. Because the carts are not wildlife proof and bears often break the locks, the NSBBS encourages residents to store their carts inside their garage or sturdy shed.

District staff can be notified to have the carabiner locks and carts repaired to make the carts bear resistant again. In addition, the NSBBS recommends that residents spray



carts with a vinegar solution and spritz with pine scented cleaner after each collection day. Freezing odourous food waste and wrappers and adding them to the appropriate carts on collection day is also recommended to manage odours in the carts. As well, the Society advises residents to use ratchet straps to strap the waste carts to a sturdy structure, which makes it more difficult for a bear to tip the carts and work at gaining entry, scattering, and consuming the contents.

Bylaw staff at the three North Shore municipalities are notified if an enforcement action is needed beyond providing education.

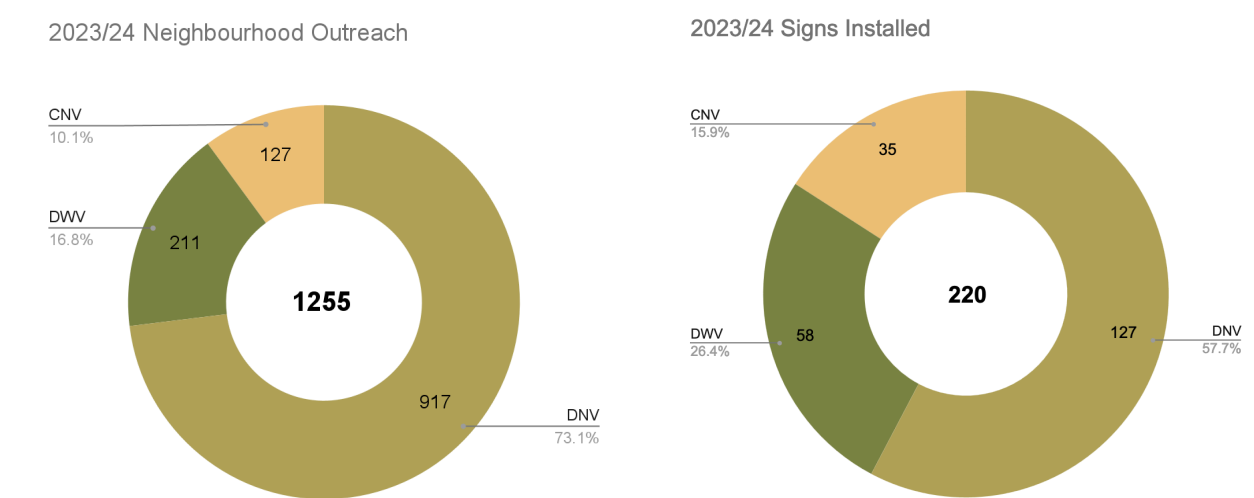
The Society also works closely with the City of North Vancouver’s Engineering, Parks and Environment staff and the District of West Vancouver’s Parks Department.

Door-To-Door Neighbourhood Outreach

When the Society learns of bear activity, there is a coordinated response which includes the placement of wildlife-in-area signs, distribution of information to community groups, communications via email, text or social media platforms, and door-to-door neighbourhood outreach. Approximately **1255** door hangers and **694** tip letters were distributed this season. **162** wildlife signs were placed in the DNV and CNV by the Society, 58 signs were placed in the DWV by DWV staff.

New in 2024

The Society brought on a volunteer who conducted laneway checks to help the Society better target, support and educate in the neighbourhoods that needed it most.





New in 2024

The Districts of West and North Vancouver re-designed their Wildlife Signs, with significant input from the Society. The new blue and white colours are eye-catching, and it was a wonderful opportunity to fine tune the messaging and contact information for residents who have seen a cougar, coyote, or bear. The Society is very appreciative of the opportunity to partner with the municipalities on developing this important tool.





Presentations & Community Events

Throughout the year, the Society provided free black bear presentations and bear safety workshops to various organizations, school groups, newcomers to the North Shore, youth groups, and outdoor school groups. These presentations were conducted in person or virtually. Presentation highlights in 2024 include:

- 200 Canada Post letter carriers
- 15 person film crew
- Metro Vancouver Watershed Employees
- Sutherland Secondary Grade 10 Outdoor program
- Daycare programs to the Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Trailhead bear information at both Cypress Mountain and Whyte Lake



New in 2024

Partnership with the Elders Council Stewardship. The NSBBS led educational nature walks to school groups while the Elders Council Stewardship provided an interactive puppet show on North Shore black bears.

The Society delivered **88** programs (presentations and community events) this year.

The Society participated in various public events across all three North Shore municipalities and Tsleil-Waututh Nation. The NSBBS display includes artifacts, interactive games and provides a welcoming centrepiece to invite public interactions and conversations.



Workshops & community events

88

Community event highlights in 2024 include:

- Tsleil-Waututh Nation Plastic Waste and Recycling Event
- West Vancouver Cultural Fest
- Family Fishing Day at Rice Lake
- Community Day at Parkgate Village
- the COHO Festival at Ambleside Park in West Vancouver
- World Rivers Day at Mosquito Creek Park, hosted by the City of North Vancouver

This year, the Society reached

8,354

Community members

The Society attended:

- 26 Community Events, reaching **5,050** people
- 46 Presentations to **2,897** participants
- 10 Nature Walks for **184** students
- 6 Bear Safety Presentations for **223** participants
- 30 School visits in the DNV, CNV, and DWV





Educational Resources

The TIPs letter is a concise and informative letter containing detail for residents who need to manage bear food attractants on their property. It is a practical resource that the Society sends to residents by email or Canada Post.


This year the Society updated the TIPs letter with reminders to residents to keep ground floor windows, doors, and garage doors closed unless closely monitored; bears will often pay with their lives if they enter enclosed spaces. The letter was also updated to include rodent bait boxes as an attractant which contain poison treated to smell like food.

Bookmarks for school groups and events were updated with attractant management reminders and bear signs.

New in 2024


A NSBBS volunteer translated the Tips Letter to Farsi.





چگونه می‌توانیم کمک کنیم تا شما بتوانید با مدیریت منابع غذایی در خانه و در محل کار، از آسیب‌های ناشی از حضور خرس در منطقه خود جلوگیری کنید. این راهنما به شما کمک می‌کند تا با رعایت برخی توصیه‌ها، از آسیب‌های ناشی از حضور خرس در منطقه خود جلوگیری کنید. این راهنما به شما کمک می‌کند تا با رعایت برخی توصیه‌ها، از آسیب‌های ناشی از حضور خرس در منطقه خود جلوگیری کنید.

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The North Shore Black Bear Society is providing tips to help reduce attractants that bring wildlife into residential areas in the District of North Vancouver. Bears remember where they get food rewards, so it is important to follow these recommendations to prevent issues.

- Wash carts and bins with vinegar to reduce any odours; a pine-scented cleaner such as PineSol (original scent, not lavender or other scents) may act as a deterrent when sprayed inside, outside and around the carts and in present and previous storage areas.
- Put all food scraps in the organics cart. Freeze all meat & fish scraps & grease until the morning of collection; wrap all other foods in newspaper or paper bags and layer with yard trimmings in the organics cart. Keep as many food scraps as possible inside until the morning of collection.
- Place washed wrappings/containers in the garbage or recycling bin. Freeze odorous wrappings and place in the garbage bin on the morning of collection.
- Wash your recyclables in hot soapy water.
- Remove rodent bait boxes. These are scented like food; bears break them open and eat the poison inside.
- Place diapers in the garbage cart on the morning of collection – and flush the solids first.
- Store carts in an enclosed shed or garage or secure upright to make more difficult to tip.

NOTE: There should be no attractants in the garbage cart. This is important because the unlocked garbage cart is emptied later in the day on collection day.

Of course, there should be no bird feeders, outside fridges or freezers, pet food, unclean BBQ, ripe unopened fruit, or fallen fruit on your property.

When the carts are empty after collection, it is a good time to give them a thorough scrub with a vinegar solution. Even empty carts can be odorous, especially to a bear that has a sense of smell 2000 times better than humans!

Final recommendations: Keep ground floor doors, windows and garages closed unless someone is there to monitor them, especially if you know a bear has been sighted in the area. Keep carts empty of food or perfumed items, with doors locked and windows fully closed. Bears may enter if they smell food, and they will often pay with their lives for following their noses or being naturally curious.

For damaged carts in the District of North Van, please request a free repair online at [DNV.org/repairs](https://dnv.org/repairs)

We live in bear country and have responsibilities. Please report attractants or sightings and learn more about our North Shore wildlife at:

www.northshorebears.com/report/

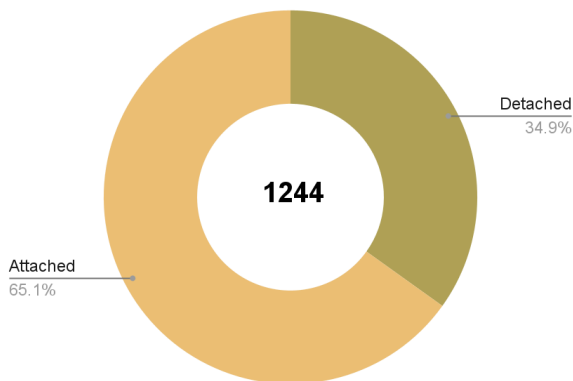
Or leave a voice message or text message on our bear cell phone 604-317-4911



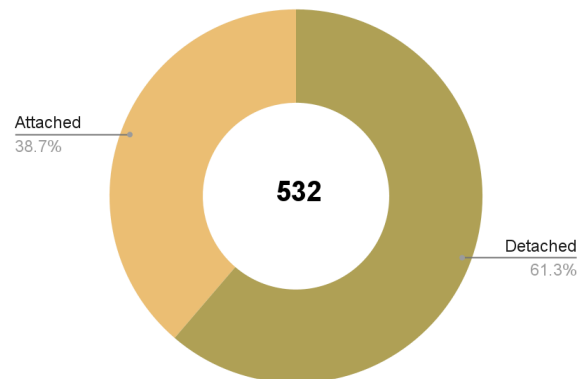
Outreach to New Homeowners

North Shore Black Bear Society volunteers mailed ‘Welcome to Bear Country’ information letters to **1776** new North Shore homeowners. These letters provide the best practices for living and exploring in bear country. **1244** letters were mailed to North Vancouver and **532** letters were mailed to West Vancouver.

North Vancouver City & District



West Vancouver



Relationships

The Society continues to build on existing relationships and establish new connections with the community, organizations, and national and international partners. These relationships are vital for the Society efforts in working with the community to reduce black bear deaths on the North Shore.

- DNV, CNV, DWV
- Conservation Officer Services
- Rodenticide Free BC
- North Shore Fruit Tree Project
- Elders Council Stewardship
- RCMP
- Block Watch
- Metro Vancouver Parks
- Metro Vancouver Watershed
- LSCR (Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve)
- Coyote Watch Canada
- Cougar Conservancy, California
- North Shore Residents



Conferences

The Society staff had the opportunity to participate in two international conferences:

- **6th Annual Western Black Bear Workshop** - Jackson Hole, WY, USA. The workshop provided a forum where leading black bear managers and researchers shared research results, management strategies, and emerging issues in the realms of black bear management throughout North America.
- **Urso Fest, 2024** - Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. NSBBS Co-Executive Director, Holly Reisner, presented at this conference via Zoom on her topic, **“Coexisting with Black Bears in our Urban Setting Using a Cooperative Approach”**. Holly represented the Society with her knowledge, thorough overview of the NSBBS and its work, and was an inspiration for others.

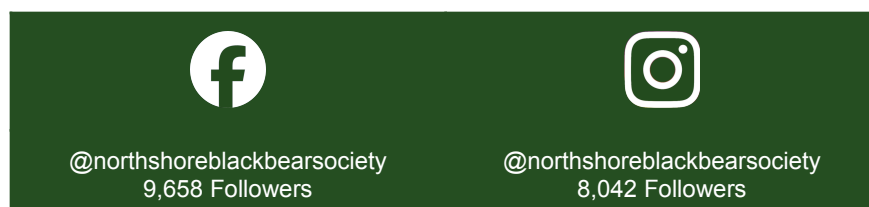
Online

Website

The Society’s website contains information on the work that the Society does, as well as resources on living and exploring in bear country. Included on the website are the TIPs letter and door hanger in pdf format which provide concise ways to manage attractants while living in bear country. The door hanger is complete with information on how to report bear sightings, along with a QR code that takes the readers to the Society’s website: northshorebears.com

Social Media

The Society also has a big presence on social media channels, including Facebook and Instagram. Currently, there are **9658** followers on Facebook and **8042** followers on Instagram. The channels are used to engage with the public, provide education on the latest methods for deterring bears from urban areas, and as open lines of communication for the public to report wildlife, attractant concerns, and other general questions.





Media

The Society has been interviewed by various media outlets and been able to provide education to the readers and listening audiences:

- North Shore News
- Vancouver Sun
- CTV
- CBC TV
- Global TV
- CBC radio
- Articles written for Streamkeepers newsletter, Blueridge Bulletin (monthly), and Blueridge Newsletter (quarterly)

Bear Management

Two bears were killed on the North Shore by the Conservation Officer Service as of October 31, 2024. One bear was killed in the Edgemont area in North Vancouver after entering a home; another bear was killed in the Deep Cove area, after biting a resident from behind in their backyard.

In addition, **three** bears were found deceased by residents on separate West Vancouver private properties. In all three cases the cause of death is unknown.

Volunteers

The Society's volunteers continue to contribute to the success of the Society's education programs in a variety of ways; in particular, by providing door-to-door neighbourhood outreach using the educational material provided to them, assisting with mail outs to new homeowners, attending community events, and placing wildlife signs throughout the District of North Vancouver. The Society welcomes high school students who need volunteer hours for graduation. Seven students volunteered with our organization this year.

The NSBBS has **27** active volunteers with **185.5** hours of volunteer time.

The Society looks forward to providing additional volunteer opportunities in 2025.



Plans for 2025

The Society's staff and volunteers will continue to distribute information about living responsibly in bear country through door-to-door neighbourhood outreach, home visits, emails, text messages, phone calls, and the placement of signs. Presentations and partaking in community events will continue to be valuable opportunities for educational outreach.

Monitoring laneways will continue in order to identify blocks with unnecessary bear activity.

The Society will continue its outreach in the North Shore communities and translate the Tips letter into other languages. Mandarin will be the next translation.

The Society will be offering Bear Safety and Bear Spray workshops with the Elders Council Stewardship offering the Heritage Centre as a venue. The Society has acquired an artificial bear which will be converted into a remote controlled prop for bear spray practice. These workshops will be available for the general public, aiding in a better understanding of bear behaviour and how to be safe in bear country. The Society plans to obtain media support to publicize the successes.

The Society will work with outdoor retailers such as MEC and Valhalla Pure Outfitters to raise money for the Society through a Bear Spray Canister return program. The program will accept expired bear spray canisters for a nominal donation which will cover the cost of recycling and include a percentage going directly to the NSBBS.

The Society secured non-profit pricing for Arc GIS which is an advanced mapping system. Use of the system will allow the Society to better track overall bear activity, the occasional individual bear with distinctive characteristics or injuries, as well as our canvassing and signage work. A UBC Geography student will work on the Arc GIS system with the Society over the 2024/2025 winter.



Bear spray practice with robotic bear



Acknowledgements

Funding Partners

District of North Vancouver

District of West Vancouver

City of North Vancouver

Other funds come from donations and honoraria

Education Outreach Partners

District of North Vancouver

- Solid Waste Department
- Bylaws Department

City of North Vancouver

- Parks and Environment Department
- Bylaws Department

District of West Vancouver

- Engineering and Solid Waste Department
- Bylaws Department

Volunteers

The Society would not have been able to accomplish all that it has in 2024 without the hard work and support of its dedicated volunteers. The NSBBS greatly appreciates the help and support of the following volunteers:

Tom Saare, Victoria Cruz, Camille Hunt, Karen Ovitsland, Eryn Arnott, Maria Lancaster, Elise Roberts, Jonathon Bagot, Ben Nassabeh, Erisa Ghasemi, Adrian Debois, Ryan Pourasadollahi, Andrea Heal, Linda Acosta, Dianne Gentili, Rachel Davies, Namwoo Kim, Laurel Newton, Mamak Aletaha, Anika Prabhu, Zain Ahmad, Teagan Sawchuk, Sarah Bermel, Juliet Zhong, Craig Davis, Annemarie Van Dijk, Penny Nelson, Phaedra Heibey, Juliet Lee, and Phillip Lee



Special Appreciation

The Society appreciates the District Bear Line [604-990-BEAR (2327)] which makes it easy for the North Shore residents to report bear or attractant sightings and request information or support with any related 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.

A special thank you to Tony Joyce for sharing his beautiful black bear photography which the Society has used in presentations, community events, and social media.

The Society's board of directors continues to meet bi-monthly to provide direction to the Society and its Executive Director; many thanks to the NSBBS Board of Directors for their support:

Jonathan Yasayko, Tom Saare, Viki Ashman, Aaron Featherstone, Janet Zhu, Margot Finlay, and Tony Webb

Thank you to Tom Saare for the incredible support and knowledge that he has shared with the Society.

A very special appreciation to Christine Miller, NSBBS Co-Executive Director, who will be retiring at the end of this fiscal year. Christine has been instrumental in establishing a sound foundation for the Society to continue promoting coexistence with wildlife on the North Shore and preventing unnecessary bear deaths. She will be very missed!



Tony Joyce