

Local Community Wildlife Information

Wildlife in Our Community

Cranbrook is not only a highly sought after place to live for humans, it is also great habitat for a variety of species including [deer](#), [bears](#), [cougars](#). It is expected that wildlife will always be present and will often pass through our community. However, when wildlife finds unnatural food sources in the community, they may linger in the community and potentially come into conflict with people. Our community has committed to several best practices to avoid conflicts to increase public safety and keep wildlife wild – here is how you can do your part:

Help Keep Wildlife Wild and Your Community Safe

Every year in BC, thousands of animals come into conflict with people as they seek out food, water or shelter in our communities.

WildSafeBC provides information on how we can **LIVE, WORK, PLAY** and **GROW** in wildlife country. Visit us at wildsafebc.com.



TOP 10 WAYS TO HELP WILDLIFE

- 1.** Keep your garbage secure – store it in a secure location indoors or a bear-resistant enclosure.
- 2.** Only put your garbage/compost/recyclables out on collection day - never the night before.
- 3.** Manage your fruit trees so that fruit is picked as it ripens and no windfall accumulates.
- 4.** Bring bird feeders in from April through November – and when they are out, ensure that the ground underneath is kept free of seeds.
- 5.** Feed pets indoors.
- 6.** Maintain your compost so that it doesn't smell. Add fruit slowly. Never add meat or other animal products.
- 7.** Protect orchards, beehives and small livestock with a properly installed and maintained electric fence.
- 8.** Respect wild animals by not feeding them. Food-conditioned wildlife are more likely to come into conflict.
- 9.** Keep barbecues clean and odour free.
- 10.** Report any wildlife in conflict immediately to the Conservation Officer Service 24/7 at **1.877.952.7277**.

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Help us keep wildlife wild and your community safe by keeping a [wildsafe yard](#) and by not feeding wildlife. Feeding wildlife is not only dangerous it can make wildlife and others at risk. You should also be aware that it is an offence under the BC Wildlife Act to attract dangerous animals (bears, wolves, cougars, and coyotes) with unsecured attractants.

The BC Wildlife Act states that:

(1) A person must not (a) intentionally feed or attempt to feed dangerous wildlife or, (b) provide, leave, or place an attractant in, on or about any land or premises with the intent of attracting dangerous wildlife.

(2) A person must not leave or place an attractant in, on or about any land or premises where there are or where there are likely to be people, in a way the attractant could (a) attract dangerous wildlife to the land or premises and be accessible to dangerous wildlife.

Special Note on Deer

Deer are ruminants and capable of digesting a much wider variety of plants and shrubs. While some plants may be more “deer-resistant” than others, when deer are numerous or hungry, they may eat anything. The Master Gardeners Association of BC provides a [“deer-resistant” plant list](#) and suggestions.

In addition, using exclusion fencing can be effective at deterring deer. Check with local bylaws before erecting a new fence. Chain-link or page-wire fencing should be at least 2.5 m high on level ground. The wires need to be taut to avoid entanglement. Avoid barbwire fencing and decorative wrought-iron picket fences that can injure deer and are not effective at discouraging deer from entering your property. Solid fences can be lower and still be effective as deer are less likely to jump into an area they cannot see. Flexible mesh netting can also be used but ensure deer cannot become entangled. Chicken wire can be used to wrap around trees and prevent deer from rubbing. In winter, shrubs and plants can be wrapped in burlap to prevent browsing.

In addition, our community also has bylaws against [Feeding Deer Prohibition Bylaw](#) No.3709, 2010 that states:

4.1 - No person shall provide deer with food either directly or by leaving or placing in, on or about land or premises food, food waste or any other material that is or is likely to be attractive to deer for the

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purpose of feeding deer, other than a conservation officer acting in the performance of his duties, or a person acting under the direction of or with the permission of a conservation officer.

Other Attractants of note – Garbage and Recycling

Many different types of wildlife seek out unsecured attractants at night since that is when humans are less active, and they perceive less risk.

The City of Cranbrook's [Solid Waste and Recycling Collection and Disposal Bylaw](#) No.4011, 2020 states that:

10.1 - Garbage Receptacles and Recycling Carts shall be kept, maintained and readily accessible for emptying between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on the day of collection. All emptied Garbage Receptacles and Recycling Carts shall be removed from the curb, by the owner/occupant, within eighteen (18) hours of collection.

19.2 - When plastic bags containing Solid Waste have been torn apart by rodents, birds, dogs or other causes, it is solely the responsibility of the Owner/occupant to collect any scattered Solid Waste in order to place it in a new Garbage Receptacle as defined in section 18 for collection, thereby preventing unsightly and unsanitary conditions. * This is also an attractant and should be noted that wildlife may be near by due to smell.

Learning how to landscape to reduce wildlife conflict

Many of the foods we grow and landscaping choices we make are also attractive to wildlife. Before conflicts arise, learn about the wildlife in your area such as deer or bears and what may draw them to your garden, and fruit tree trees. Here are some general rules of thumb to begin:

- 1. Understand that removing the wildlife** is a short-term solution. Other wildlife will take the place of the wildlife just removed - a longer term solution is to either manage the attractant or set up a barrier between the attractant and the wildlife.
- 2. Understand all you can about the wildlife** you share the landscape with. The more you know about wildlife in your community, the better you will be able to avoid conflict with it.
 - [Sign up for WARP](#) – WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP)

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- The Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) is a program developed by WildSafeBC to enable the public to view reports of wildlife in British Columbia.
 - People can also sign up for alerts regarding wildlife reports in an area of interest such as a school, park or around their home.
 - These reports are received once a day from the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and presented on a georeferenced map.
- 3. Learn how to Landscape** for reducing conflict as wildlife often use landscaping for food, shelter and security cover when travelling. While attracting beneficial insects and providing habitat for birds is desirable, avoid providing food and shelter to potential conflict species by:
- Limiting or omitting the use of **fruit-bearing plants** that may be highly attractive to bears, raccoons, and even coyotes. If you must have fruit-bearing plants, ensure they are not located near building entrances and windows.
 - Avoid **nut-producing trees** that can be highly attractive to bears.
 - **Trim trees and shrubs** to remove branches that could provide security cover close to the ground.
 - Design your yard with **clear sight lines** and avoid creating blind-spots that allow wildlife to hide.
 - **Remove tree limbs that are adjacent to your home** that would provide access to your home by raccoons, rats, or squirrels.
 - **Avoid using herbicides** that are harmful to wildlife or local pets.
 - **Do consider native plants** that are best adapted to your local growing conditions and will be beneficial to local pollinators.
 - To learn more, visit <https://wildsafebc.com/learn/grow/>
- 4. Manage Fruit Trees all season long** as domestic fruit trees such as apple, plum and cherry are unnatural food sources for bears and other wildlife. Wildlife that learn where they can access these foods are likely to return as harvest time approaches. They may even damage the trees and surrounding property in the process.

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We often plant fruit trees close to our homes for us to enjoy but this can also draw wildlife into our community and puts others at risk of a dangerous wildlife encounter. Once the harvest wanes, a food-conditioned and human-habituated wildlife may turn to other sources of food nearby.

The best way to keep people and wildlife safe is to prevent wildlife from accessing human sources of food. There several strategies and solutions to not only prevent wildlife conflicts but also produce a healthier and more productive crop:

- **Harvest fruit frequently** and do not let it accumulate on the ground. Not only does this attract predators but it can lead to pest infestations and disease.
- Use the power of social media to connect with others to swap and share fruit and other produce. You may have apples to trade for tomatoes.
- Keep trees pruned and a manageable size. A well-pruned tree is often required to have better fruit.
- If you are no longer using the fruit and do not have time or capacity to care for it, consider removing the tree and replacing it with a species that does not bear fruit or nuts, preferable native.
- If you have too much fruit, seek out local fruit tree projects or fruit-gleaning organizations, contact your local food bank, or reach out to local farmers that need feed for their livestock.

Fortunately, Wildsight Kimberley – Cranbrook offers resources the community for managing attractants such as fruit trees. Fruit Trees are a major attractant top deer and bear in Cranbrook and those who have fruit trees, such as apple trees are encouraged to manage them throughout the entire season. T

Apple Capture is a local gleaning program run by Wildsight to help you keep up with your fruit harvest. You can also share with others who can use it. Together, a wildlife attractant can be turned into a locally sourced, nutritious food. Learn how to participate in the program below:

- Wildsight lends out fruit picking, juicing, preserving, and tree pruning equipment. You can use their equipment to pick, juice, sauce and dry your harvest or to prune your trees! They have so many different types of equipment to pick from: juicers, grinders,

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dehydrators, sauce making kits, apple peelers/slicers/corers and hand pickers. They also have ladders, tall orchard ladders, special fruit picking bags, extensions, pole runners, saws, loopers, and more!

- They have a tree sharing board! This is a great resource and is highly recommended if you do not plan on using your fruit or do not have time to harvest and would rather someone else pick for you. [Check out their Tree Share Board website to get started!](#)
- Wildsight organizes community picking and juice pressing events.
- If you have leftovers from pressing, etc. they can help you connect with someone who is able to use it for animal feed. All you must do is reach out to the Wildsight Kimberley – Cranbrook branch and they will give you more information.

Special Notes for Visitors

Many visitors may want to view wildlife in your community and may not be aware of local issues. Cranbrook have urban deer that can be aggressive at times, especially for those that have dogs off leash.

Note to visitors – please do not to feed wildlife and avoid stopping on roadways in town to view or take photos of wildlife to avoid congestion and potential accidents.

Bear Safety on Trails

Trails are a great way to explore the Cranbrook area. Be aware that bears also use trails to move from one area to another. Mountain bikers, hikers, runners, and walkers use the many trails in Cranbrook – such as the [Cranbrook Community Forest](#)

Bears will likely avoid you if they know you are nearby. Stay alert and look for any signs of bear activity, such as scat, to avoid surprising a bear.

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WildSafe Tips

-  Don't wear headphones
-  Make noise with your voice
-  Be aware of your surroundings
-  Carry bear spray and know how to use it

Keeping wildlife wild and communities safe

The image features a woman in a red shirt and purple leggings hiking on a trail. A green circle highlights a black bear spray canister on her hip. The background shows a forest with mountains in the distance.

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Keep yourself and bears safe by following these tips on trails:

- Consider an alternative trail if bears have been sighted recently.
- Ride, run, hike, or walk in groups whenever possible. Keep your group close together and talk loudly, if you see fresh signs of bears (scat, tracks, claw marks on trees, overturned logs) nearby. Bears should avoid you if they know you are in the area.
- Carry bear spray in an easily accessible yet protected area and know how to use it.
- Keep all dogs on leash. Dogs can provoke defensive behaviour in bears. Mountain bikers should leave dogs at home.
- Be aware that mountain bikers put themselves at higher risk for a bear encounter, because they move quickly down a trail and are relatively quiet. Make noise if you are biking.
- Take your earbuds out; remain alert and listen for signs of a bear in the area. Creeks and rivers can muffle sounds and make it harder for you to hear an approaching bear. They also make it harder for the bear to hear you, so make extra noise when using trails near running water.
- On trails with limited visibility, use extra caution and make more noise to avoid surprising a bear.”

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 **WildSafe Tips**

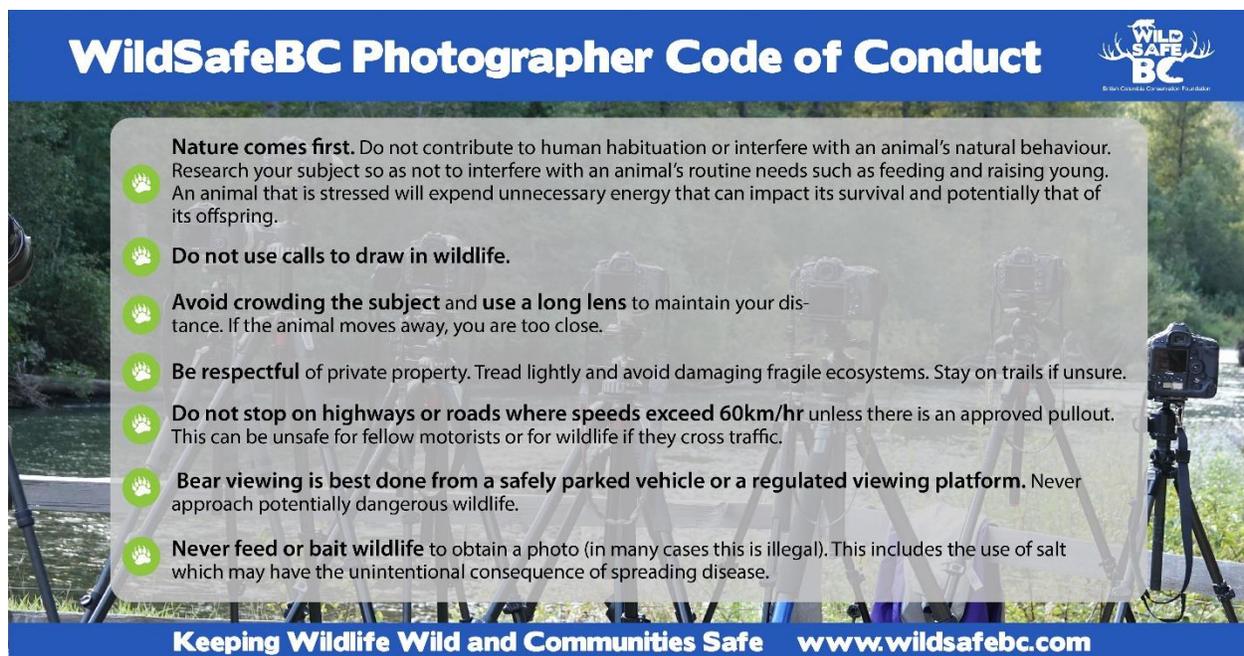
-  Carry bear spray on you and not your bike
-  Call ahead and make noise
-  Slow down when sightlines are poor
-  Bike with a partner or group

Keeping wildlife wild and communities safe

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Wildlife Viewing

If wildlife viewing is a popular past-time, you can link to [WildSafeBC's Photographer Code of Conduct](#)



WildSafeBC Photographer Code of Conduct

- Nature comes first.** Do not contribute to human habituation or interfere with an animal's natural behaviour. Research your subject so as not to interfere with an animal's routine needs such as feeding and raising young. An animal that is stressed will expend unnecessary energy that can impact its survival and potentially that of its offspring.
- Do not use calls to draw in wildlife.**
- Avoid crowding the subject** and **use a long lens** to maintain your distance. If the animal moves away, you are too close.
- Be respectful** of private property. Tread lightly and avoid damaging fragile ecosystems. Stay on trails if unsure.
- Do not stop on highways or roads where speeds exceed 60km/hr** unless there is an approved pullout. This can be unsafe for fellow motorists or for wildlife if they cross traffic.
- Bear viewing is best done from a safely parked vehicle or a regulated viewing platform.** Never approach potentially dangerous wildlife.
- Never feed or bait wildlife** to obtain a photo (in many cases this is illegal). This includes the use of salt which may have the unintentional consequence of spreading disease.

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Roadside Viewing and Safety

Wildlife frequently feed alongside the highway or roadways and will often cross these roadways in pursuit of food sources. Never stop to view, photograph or feed wildlife. Slowing or stopping to view wildlife on the side of the road creates a hazard for other drivers and habituates wildlife to human presence. It is important for the safety of all to keep wildlife wary of humans and vehicles.

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Unfortunately, every year, people die or are injured in vehicle-wildlife collisions. Use caution, especially at dawn, dusk, and early evening when deer may be crossing roads. Become aware of where deer densities are highest and be extra vigilant in wildlife collision hotspots indicated by wildlife warning road signs. Learn more at wildlifecollisions.ca.

Reporting Bears, Wolves, Cougars and Coyotes and Aggressive Deer



Conflicts with wildlife and sightings of dangerous wildlife in urban areas should be reported to the Conservation Officer Service either by calling 1-877-952-7277 or completing their [online form](#). These reports are updated daily to WildSafeBC's [Wildlife Alert Reporting Program](#) that is available to anyone with internet access. Reporting an animal does not mean it will automatically be destroyed. Prevention of conflicts is key and identifying sources of conflicts.

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WildSafeBC Local Coordinator



WildSafeBC Community Program

Local coordinators delivering education and outreach in their communities:

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

Visit www.wildsafebc.com to learn more or email bc@wildsafebc.com.

Keeping Wildlife Wild and Communities Safe www.wildsafebc.com

WildSafeBC is the provincial leader in preventing conflict with wildlife through collaboration, education, and community solutions. WildSafeBC is designed, owned, and delivered by the BC Conservation Foundation as a partnership between local funding bodies (such as municipalities and regional districts) and the Province of BC.

The WildSafeBC RDEK Area C Program runs May to November and delivers the following services in our community: door-to-door outreach, garbage tagging, wildlife awareness and safety presentations, education booths at local events, and delivery of the [WildSafe Ranger Program](#). To learn more or book a presentation, contact:

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