Living with Wildlife in BC

A new series of wildlife guides is available for free on line. The guides cover options for wildlife management, worker safety, and finding solutions and deterrents for common species that pose problems in agriculture settings.

Covering:

Black Bear
Deer
Coyotes
Wolves
Snakes
Rodents
Cougars
Starlings
Conflict management

Funding provided by:

Canada
Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia
British Columbia The Best Place on Earth
Regional District RDOS Okanagan-Similkameen
Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance
BCAC BC Agriculture Council
Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society

Download or view the guides at:

Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance
Living with wildlife pages
www.osca.org

BC Winegrape Council
Health & Safety pages
http://www.bcwgc.org/health-safety

Regional District Okanagan Similkameen
Wildsafe/Bear Aware pages
www.rdos.bc.ca/public-works/wildsafe-bc-bear-aware.

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Got critter problems?

Check out a new wildlife management series for agriculture.


Living with Wildlife in BC

CONFLICT REDUCTION TECHNIQUES #8

"Living with Wildlife" is a series of nine wildlife management guides for people who work outdoors where wildlife is encountered. Options for wildlife management, worker safety, and animal deterrents are provided for each species. Many guides suggest completing a wildlife conflict management plan to be used as a resource for managers and large property owners. Web links to the guides and other resources are on the back page.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE BALANCE

Learning to live in balance with wildlife while reducing potentially destructive and dangerous threats has long been an issue for large property owners and those working on the land. Large lands and agricultural holdings are most often on the edges of populated regions, and therefore in wildlife interface zones. Attractants are an unavoidable part of agriculture, and will continue to be an issue when attractants are being produced as a commercial product. This coupled with little or no wildlife mitigation effort will drastically increase the possibilities of conflicts occurring.

Wildlife Control agencies are understandably reticent to respond to complaints about damage to commercial crops or livestock, if little or no predator control is in place such as fencing and basic attractant management practices. Responsibility for the reduction of potential conflicts lies first with the land owner or operator.

Farmers and ranchers can use existing hunting and trapping seasons to control predators but must ensure they comply with all Federal, Provincial and Municipal regulations. See the following link for the BC Wildlife Act at http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96488_01

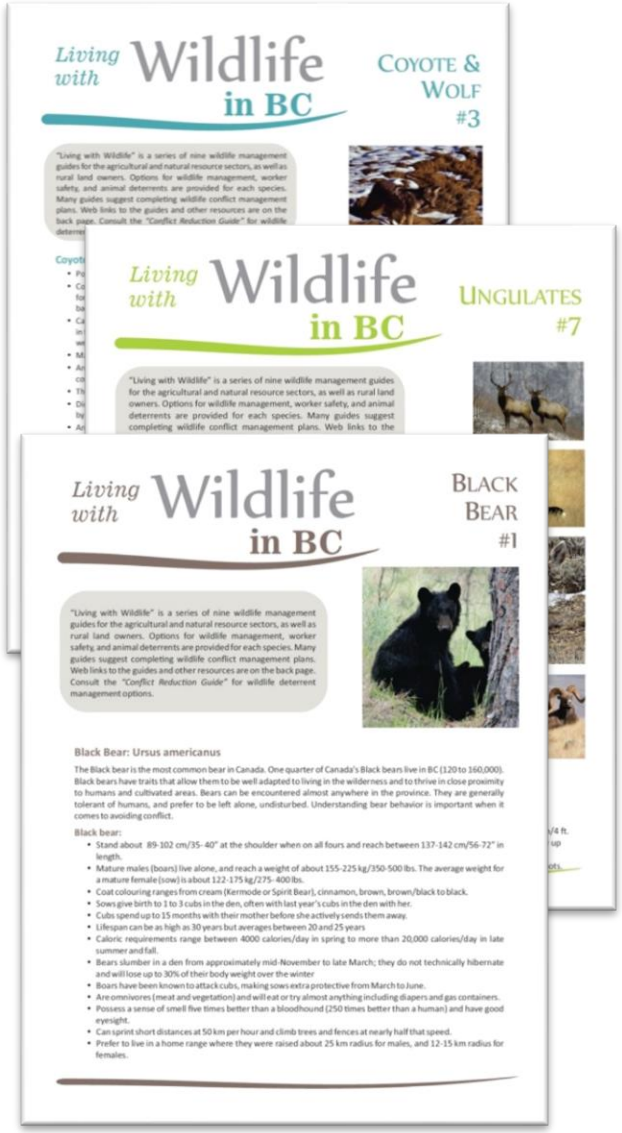
Conflict management requires a balanced approach. Elements of an effective management system include identifying hazards and planning procedures to reduce conflict with wildlife and increase human safety. Ongoing monitoring contributes to sound decision making; insuring impacts to wildlife and the environment are minimized.

Contents:

Conflict Reduction Techniques

This 12 page guide provides management suggestions applicable to all wildlife. Topics such as design of buildings, attractant management, fencing options, wildlife gates, predator deterrents, bird deterrent options, worker safety supplies, and safety plans are covered. Links to further information and equipment suppliers are on the back page.

Black Bear, deer and coyotes have learned to thrive in close proximity to humans and cultivated areas. They are attracted to fruit crops but also come into conflict with livestock and domestic pets.


Living with Wildlife in BC — COYOTE & WOLF #3

Living with Wildlife in BC — UNGULATES #7

Living with Wildlife in BC — BLACK BEAR #1

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Black Bear: Ursus americanus

The Black bear is the most common bear in Canada. One quarter of Canada's Black bears live in BC (120 to 160,000). Black bears have traits that allow them to be well adapted to living in the wilderness and to thrive in close proximity to humans and cultivated areas. Bears can be encountered almost anywhere in the province. They are generally tolerant of humans, and prefer to be left alone, undisturbed. Understanding bear behavior is important when it comes to avoiding conflict.

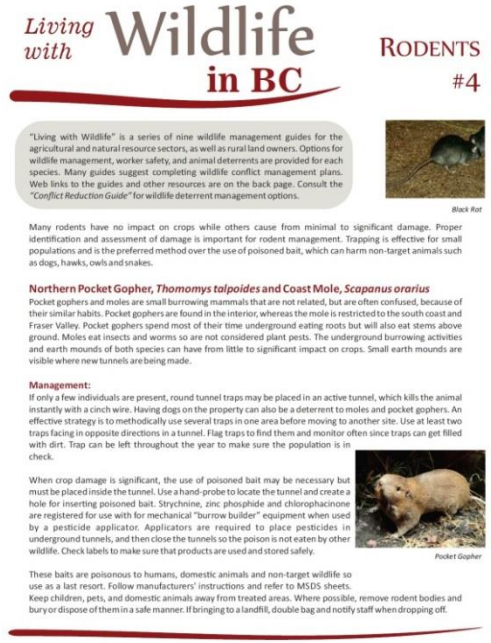
Black bear:

- Stand about 89-102 cm/35- 40" at the shoulder when on all fours and reach between 137-142 cm/56-72" in length.
- Mature males (boars) live alone, and reach a weight of about 155-225 kg/350-500 lbs. The average weight for a mature female (sow) is about 122-175 kg/275- 400 lbs.
- Coat colouring ranges from cream (Kermode or Spirit Bear), cinnamon, brown, brown/black to black.
- Sows give birth to 1 to 3 cubs in the den, often with last year's cubs in the den with her.
- Cubs spend up to 15 months with their mother before she actively sends them away.
- Lifespan can be as high as 30 years but averages between 20 and 25 years
- Caloric requirements range between 4000 calories/day in spring to more than 20,000 calories/day in late summer and fall.
- Bears slumber in a den from approximately mid-November to late March; they do not technically hibernate and will lose up to 30% of their body weight over the winter
- Boars have been known to attack cubs, making sows extra protective from March to June.
- Are omnivores (meat and vegetation) and will eat or try almost anything including diapers and gas containers.
- Possess a sense of smell five times better than a bloodhound (250 times better than a human) and have good eyesight.
- Can sprint short distances at 50 km per hour and climb trees and fences at nearly half that speed.
- Prefer to live in a home range where they were raised about 25 km radius for males, and 12-15 km radius for females.

European Starling
This non-native pest of cherries, blueberries and grapes can be controlled through a variety of scare techniques and trapping. Removing nest sites should be part of management.

Snakes
Tips on working in rattlesnake country as well as how to identify and if necessary, relocate snakes.

Rodents
Best practices for rodent control, managing attractants, and reducing rodent nest sites are reviewed.


Living with Wildlife in BC — RODENTS #4

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Black Rat

Many rodents have no impact on crops while others cause from minimal to significant damage. Proper identification and assessment of damage is important for rodent management. Trapping is effective for small populations and is the preferred method over the use of poisoned bait, which can harm non-target animals such as dogs, hawks, owls and snakes.

Northern Pocket Gopher, *Thomomys talpoides* and Coast Mole, *Scapanus orarius*

Pocket gophers and moles are small burrowing mammals that are not related, but are often confused, because of their similar habits. Pocket gophers are found in the interior, whereas the mole is restricted to the south coast and Fraser Valley. Pocket gophers spend most of their time underground eating roots but will also eat stems above ground. Moles eat insects and worms so are not considered plant pests. The underground burrowing activities and earth mounds of both species can have from little to significant impact on crops. Small earth mounds are visible where new tunnels are being made.

Management:

If only a few individuals are present, round tunnel traps may be placed in an active tunnel, which kills the animal instantly with a cinch wire. Having dogs on the property can also be a deterrent to moles and pocket gophers. An effective strategy is to monitor and rotate several traps in one area before moving to another site. Use at least two traps facing in opposite directions in a tunnel. Flag traps to find them and monitor often since traps can get filled with dirt. Trap can be left throughout the year to make sure the population is in check.

When crop damage is significant, the use of poisoned bait may be necessary but must be placed inside the tunnel. Use a hand-probe to locate the tunnel and create a hole for inserting poisoned bait. Strychnine, zinc phosphide and chlorophacinone are registered for use with for mechanical "burrow builder" equipment when used by a pesticide applicator. Applicators are required to place pesticides in underground tunnels, and then close the tunnels so the poison is not eaten by other wildlife. Check labels to make sure that products are used and stored safely.

Pocket Gopher

These baits are poisonous to humans, domestic animals and non-target wildlife so use as a last resort. Follow manufacturers' instructions and refer to MSDS sheets. Keep children, pets, and domestic animals away from treated areas. Where possible, remove rodent bodies and bury or dispose of them in a safe manner. If bringing to a landfill, double bag and notify staff when dropping off.