



Black Bears in Sudbury

Presentation to
City of Greater Sudbury
Policy Committee
April 21, 2010

Bears in Ontario

- Live primarily in forested areas and are found throughout most of Ontario
- Large, powerful animals.
- Female bears have their first cubs when they are between five and seven years old; do not produce cubs every year.
- Sows stay with their cubs throughout their year of birth and until the following spring

Black Bears in Ontario

- Black bears:
 - are an important part of our ecosystem
 - are highly intelligent, powerful and potentially dangerous.
 - usually avoid and fear humans
 - are opportunistic omnivores; will eat just about anything people will eat
 - will also eat food waste created by humans.

Hibernation

- Black bears hibernate for about six months. In this time, they do not eat or drink
- Most black bears in northern Ontario move into their winter dens by mid-October.
- In most years black bears in northern Ontario emerge from their dens between mid-April and early May.

Food

- Bears feed from mid-April to late fall
- From the time bears come out of hibernation until berry crops are available, bears live off their stored fat and the limited energy provided by fresh spring greens
- Black bears are selective feeders and prefer foods that are accessible, high in energy and easy to digest.
- In late summer and early fall some bears actively feed for 20 hours a day, ingesting as much as 20,000 calories
- Bears need to fatten up so they can survive winter hibernation and in the case of females, produce and feed young.

Human-Bear Conflicts

- If natural foods are not readily available, bears will look for other food sources – whatever is easily accessible
- Once bears learn where to find and access a non-natural food source, they will return again and again
- The objective of the Bear Wise Program is to work with Ontario communities to improve safety by denying bears access to food sources associated with human occupancy.

Attractants

- **Garbage**
- **Bird/Pet food**
- **Fruits/Vegetables/Compost**
- **Smells**

Issues for the City of Sudbury

- Geographic Area
- Spreading urbanization / new subdivisions in rural areas
- Greening of the municipality
- “Not My Responsibility” attitude by some residents





Geographic Area

- One of the largest municipalities in the country
- Diverse topography with large areas that remain rural and remote
- Many areas within the central core provide good habitat options as well as travel corridors across the city
- Acidic soils support excellent food crops (blueberries)

Urbanization / New subdivisions

- Formerly rural areas now being developed as subdivisions
- Bears being pushed from traditional habitat by new development
- During construction, subdivisions often become a source of food as a result of food remnants left about by construction crews
- New residents do not expect to share land base with bears

Greening of the Municipality

- Environmental Improvements benefit residents as well as the wildlife that share the land base
- Improved habitat across the community (Junction Creek, Lily Creek, green spaces, Conservation Areas) supports a variety of wildlife, including bears

“Not My Responsibility”

- Every resident has an obligation to themselves, their family, their neighbours and their community to realize that discouraging nuisance animals, including bears, is everyone's responsibility
- Education is a key to reducing human bear conflict issues in the municipality

Public Education

- Remove attractants from property
- Encourage and support neighbours to keep their property clean
- Require landlords to maintain rental properties for the health and safety of the building/complex residents as well as the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Inform residents of what to do in the event there is a bear on their property

What Can the City Do?

- Recognize that bears are drawn into communities by such things as garbage, food left out for birds and other animals, barbeques that are not cleaned after use and fruit trees.
- Implement and enforce residential garbage by-laws.
- When problem areas are identified, implement plans to address them.

What Can the City Do?

- Install bear-resistant containers at landfills, transfer stations and in parks and recreational areas.
- Improve landfills to keep bears and people away.
- Provide black bear information in mailings to residents and in community centres, libraries, etc.

Working With MNR

- Continue to work with MNR to address issues
- Excellent partnership with the Sudbury Regional Police to address emergency situations
- Continue to utilize community funding opportunities through the Bear Wise Program with Solid Waste and Parks and Recreation
- Provide educational materials for the community

Contacts

- Provincial Bear Reporting Line

1-866-514-2327

- In case of immediate emergency

911

- Sudbury District Office (ask for Bear Tech)

564-7823

- Beth Litchfield, Sudbury Area Supervisor

564-7853