

Brazen bears make record number of trips to town

Local conservation officers have wrapped up one of the worst bear seasons on record, with more complaints and more shootings than in recent memory. And while a number of explanations exist for the increased visibility of bears, conservation officers are once again pointing to the need for better management of household garbage to prevent the demise of bears.

"It's no secret that we live in bear territory and sightings are a part of life in the north," said Bob Coyle, District Conservation Officer. "But the fact of the matter is, the majority of these bears have become habituated to garbage. And a garbage habituated-bear stands little chance of being successfully relocated."

In the Omineca Sub-Region, an area comprising Prince George, Vanderhoof, MacKenzie and Valemount, conservation officers received 1,187 bear complaints, 1,022 of which were reported in the Prince George area alone.

Of those numbers, 10 bears were tranquilized and relocated to habitat within a 100 kilometre radius of where they

were captured. Unfortunately, nine bears returned to civilization to create a problem and had to be destroyed. A total of 50 bears had to be destroyed this year because they were either aggressive, injured or garbage-habituated.

"There's no magical scenario where we catch a bear and it automatically reverts back to the wild," said Mr. Coyle, who explains the dynamic of translocation.

"If a bear is healthy and this is the first time it has shown up, we'll do everything we can to relocate it. But the sad reality is, if these bears haven't been pushed out of their new territory by other aggressive bears, many of them may return to civilization simply because of the easy availability of food sources. And if we have a bear that's already used to human garbage, we've got trouble."

Mr. Coyle admits that while resources for relocation work is not always available, finding money for more tranquilizers, cages or staff time isn't the answer. "We could have 25 bear traps and all the resources possible, but if we don't have the cooperation of the public when it comes to

garbage, we're only dealing with the symptom and not the problem."

While the following tips may be to late for the bear season this year, Mr. Coyle is encouraging homeowners to get into the following good habits over the winter in time for the bear season next spring.

Keep your garbage locked up in the basement or shed until the morning of the garbage pickup.

Do not compost meat, fish, or dairy products. Try freezing these items in a plastic bag until the morning of garbage pickup. If you must compost, use a small amount of lime (available at your local garden store) to keep odors to a minimum.

If a bear does show up, do not take matters into your own hands. Call a conservation officer.

The Conservation Officer Service has received the odd bear complaint over the past week, but most of the area bears have hibernated for the winter and shouldn't reappear until late April or early May.

You're Invited to our...



OPEN HOUSE

Saturday November 12th

11 am to 6 pm

Join Bev & Dar for their Classic Christmas Open House and experience the true Spirit of the Holiday Season



FREE
1995
Calendar

Join the fun and preview our wide selection of Holiday Gifts and Goodies

- ❖ Complimentary rose for the first 50 Ladies
- ❖ In-store Specials
- ❖ Door Prizes
- ❖ Refreshments



Come
to our
OPEN
HOUSE

Many
In-Store
Specials

Open House Specials

- ❖ Floral Throws
Reg. \$78.⁹⁹ Now Only \$59.⁹⁹
- ❖ Abalone Expansion Watches
Reg. \$50.⁰⁰ Now Only \$32.⁹⁹
- ❖ Christmas Musical Watches
Reg. \$40.⁰⁰ Now \$25.⁹⁹
- ❖ Crochet Slippers
Reg. \$14.⁹⁹ Now \$9.⁹⁹
- ❖ Orange Crate Mulling Spice
Reg. \$5.⁵⁰ Now \$3.⁹⁹
- ❖ 50% OFF Decorator Tins

Sample our new product lines
Complimentary Gifts for the first 50 Ladies
Over \$500 in door prizes • Refreshments

YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT STORE

Nail Impressions
Gift Boutique

*Sometimes words simply aren't enough
- but flowers say it all!*

Beverley's Bouquets

3691 Massey Drive
561-9150



3689 Massey Drive
563-5558

