

# Grizzly Bear Occurrence Summary 2019



Bear Management Area (BMA) 4

DECEMBER 2020

Alberta

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# Introduction

Humans and bears have been interacting with one another for as long as they have been in existence together. In recent times, those interactions have become a primary focus of bear management in Alberta and other areas of North America. As people move into what has historically been bear habitat, combined with bears also moving from public lands eastward onto private lands along the eastern slopes of Alberta, interactions between bears and people have become more widespread.

In 2010, the grizzly bear was listed as a Threatened species in Alberta. Along with this status came a Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan intended to increase grizzly bear numbers to a more sustainable population level. In 2016, an updated draft Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan was completed which identifies a Bear Management Area (BMA) specific approach to managing grizzly bears intended to address the unique management challenges within each BMA. This includes a zoning criterion with management zones: Recovery Zone, Support Zone, Habitat Linkage Zone and Outside the BMA (Figure 1). The Recovery Zone, essentially public lands along the foothills and west into the mountains, would inform the management of industrial development and human use. Managing attractants as well as other sources of human-grizzly bear conflict that often results in public safety concerns and bear mortality or translocations would be a priority within this zone. The Support Zone, those lands east of the Recovery Zone, is intended to maintain grizzly bears that have home ranges only partially in the Recovery Zone. The management intention here is to maintain grizzly bear occupancy, likely at lower density than in Recovery Zones, with an emphasis given to sows with cubs. The grizzly bear population in the Support zone will likely not be self-sustaining without dispersal from the adjacent Recovery Zone. The Support Zone will contribute to grizzly bear recovery by increasing the regional population size and ensuring that bears that move in and out of the Recovery Zone can survive. Given that the Support Zone is comprised of largely private lands, it is expected to be a focal area for proactive attractant management strategies to reduce Human Bear Occurrences. The Habitat Linkage Zone identifies key wildlife movement corridors that also have significant development within including urban areas, major highways and railways. In the case of BMA 4, these include the Trans-Canada highway in the Bow Valley and the highway #11 corridor west of Rocky Mountain House.

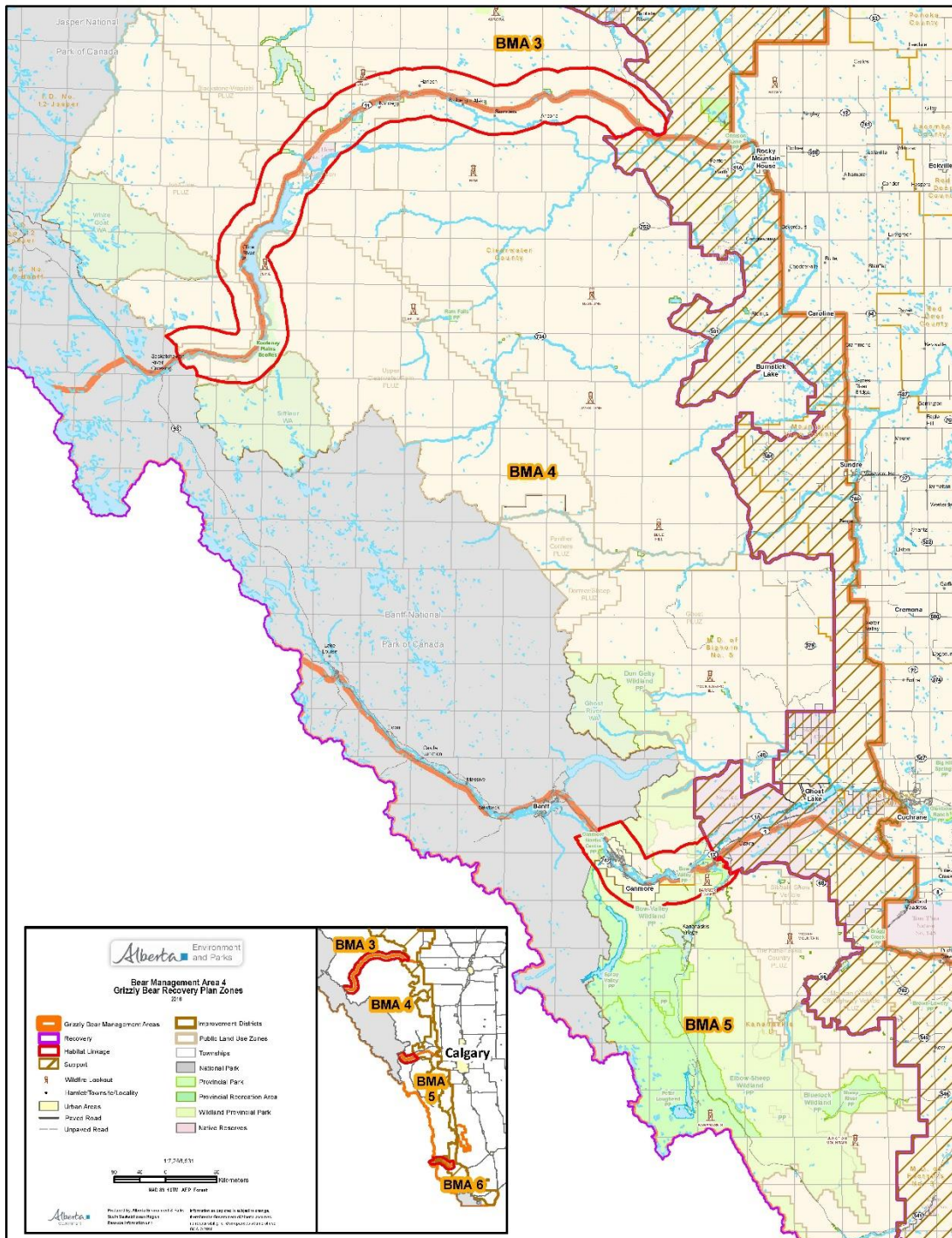


Figure 1. Bear Management Area 4

Occupancy of grizzly bears outside of the Recovery and Support Zones, i.e. Outside the BMA, is not required to recover the Alberta grizzly bear population. Management tolerance for grizzly bears that come into conflict with humans Outside the BMA would be lower, resulting in increased management removals. In the interest of public safety and conservation, wildlife managers have introduced various programs intended to reduce the number of negative interactions between bears and people. These include the [Wildlife Predator Compensation](#) and [Alberta Bear Smart](#) Programs. These Programs are important tools to help support communities and other stakeholder groups living, working and recreating in bear country. The social tolerance for bears in Alberta has to exist if grizzly bears are to sustain themselves, particularly in Support Zones outlined in the proposed Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Failure to gain that support from the people most affected by bears can result in increased human bear occurrences and human caused bear mortality, and an overall lack of public support, particularly at the local level, for bears in general.

The Wildlife Predator Compensation program is intended to compensate ranchers for livestock killed or injured by wildlife predators. Compensation currently covers cattle, bison, sheep, swine and goats that have been attacked by wolves, grizzly bears, black bears, cougars or eagles.

The Alberta BearSmart program seeks to reduce human-bear occurrences and increase public stewardship in Alberta by providing strategic information and education materials to the public, stakeholders and government agency staff dealing with bears. Stakeholders include local communities, conservation groups and industry, including oil and gas developers and agricultural producers. The Program is intended to:

- Reduce the number of undesirable human-bear interactions, which may result in injury or death to both humans and bears.
- Reduce the number of bear mortalities and translocations that occur as a result of negative interactions.
- Reduce annual costs associated with property damage and management actions to address conflict situations.

This BMA 4 Grizzly Bear Occurrence summary is intended to identify key areas and practices where Human Bear Occurrences are happening, why they are occurring, and to provide sustainable options for reducing those conflicts.

## Study Area

BMA 4 is located in the central Rockies, northwest of Calgary and includes the eastern slopes of the Rockies from the Trans-Canada Highway north to Highway 11 and Rocky Mountain House. BMA 4 includes the Foothills Natural Region, lying along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains and is characterized by grasslands, shrubs, forests and alpine areas above tree line. The South Saskatchewan River basin provides critical water supply to both humans and wildlife in the area.

Within the public lands (Recovery Zone) industrial activity in the form of forestry and natural gas development is significant. Moderate to high levels of recreation, including equestrian use, off-highway vehicle use and hunting is present within the public lands. A significant portion of the BMA is covered by motorized access management plans in the Bighorn Backcountry and the Ghost Public Land Use Zone. Work is ongoing to ensure that open route road densities do not exceed the recommendations in the proposed Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Agriculture, primarily ranching operations and small hobby farms, occur along the eastern edge of the BMA. There are several towns along the periphery of the BMA, including Nordegg, Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, Sundre, Water Valley, Cochrane, Exshaw, Lac Des Arcs, Harvie Heights and Canmore. Calgary, a sprawling city of over a million people, lies just southeast of the BMA. The area also supports an abundance of wildlife, including both grizzly and black bears. These diverse levels of human activity in bear habitat result in regular interactions between bears and people. At times, these interactions can cause public safety concerns and incidents of property damage. There have been multiple human fatalities and serious injuries to people from bears in BMA 4 over the years. The agricultural interface has experienced significant issues with livestock depredation, damage to stored grain and bears feeding on livestock carcasses near developments. These interactions can lead to bears being euthanized or translocated.

A 2005 BMA 4 grizzly bear population inventory found a low density of bears with an estimated population of 45, however this did not include significant portions of Banff National Park or the Siffleur Wilderness Area, which are expected to have a significant number of bears. Densities were highest in the western, more remote portions of the BMA. A follow up inventory was carried out in 2018/ 2019; those results are still pending. Rates of known human-caused mortality and translocations have been relatively low when compared to BMAs 5 and 6. Bears in this area are believed to have relatively low rates of productivity, although there has been limited research to



confirm this. Connectivity with British Columbia grizzly bear populations to the west is low because of the significant terrain features and glaciation along the continental divide.

## Methodology

Historical information related to bear occurrences in BMA 4 was obtained from multiple datasets including Government of Alberta ENFOR Occurrence Reports, Kananaskis Emergency Services data and Aversive Conditioning records. These included occurrences, mortalities and management translocations. Duplicate occurrences were combined into a single reported occurrence for this report. Occurrences were defined as:

- i) any situation where some form of physical damage has been done by an animal to a persons property or possessions,
- ii) the animal has obtained unnatural human foods,
- iii) the interaction has elicited a response from the bear that heightens concern over the safety of the observer or,
- iv) the interaction has occurred in a location where the presence of such animals creates a high risk to public safety.

In short, they include those situations where the risk is considered to be 'unacceptable' to the public and a formal response from government staff is required. This would include situations where bears were feeding on natural foods in occupied campgrounds or in residential areas, bears feeding on unnatural foods, causing property damage, or bears exhibiting aggressive behaviour towards the public. These Occurrences were attributed a risk based Occurrence Level category; Low, Moderate, High, Very High or Extreme which are based on work done by the Wind River Bear Institute (Hunt, 1999). They are intended to categorize the severity of each incident from a public safety / risk perspective and will help to inform management priorities for instituting mitigation efforts. For a definition of Occurrence Levels, refer to Appendix I. Situations where people saw bears on trails or in the backcountry, and the risk involved was deemed to be acceptable given the nature of the activity were defined as Sightings and are not included in this Occurrence Summary.

In the southern portion of BMA 4, primarily within the Bow Valley, ENFOR data was supplemented with Kananaskis Emergency Services and Aversive Conditioning data. Both of

these databases have been in place for 15+ years and capture additional information that ENFOR does not include. For this reason, the numbers of Occurrences may be higher in places like Canmore where the success of Bow Valley WildSmart's Education and Outreach programs has resulted in higher than normal bear activity reporting from the general public. This may result in more efficient reporting of overall Occurrence data than in other areas where reporting compliance may not be as high. It is important to note that only those situations that meet the definition of Occurrences are included here. Given that the Draft Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan identifies the need to manage by individual BMA, utilization of these databases provides a relatively accurate picture of bear activity within those specific areas.

Mortalities and translocations were summarized from both ENFOR and grizzly bear capture data located within the provincial Fish and Wildlife Management Information System. Predator compensation data was obtained through the provincial Livestock Compensation database.

Data was separated by species; only confirmed grizzly bear Occurrences were included in the analysis. It was important to identify where certain types of occurrences were located; standardized Land use categories identified in ENFOR were used. Often, bear activity is motivated by the search for food, so the type of attractant involved was analyzed to identify what foods were attracting bears to developed areas. Standardized ENFOR categories were used for attractant types. Temporal information was captured by dividing Occurrences into three primary bear seasons; Pre Berry (den emergence to July 15), Berry (July 16 to September 15) and Post Berry (September 16 to den up). The type of bear behaviour during the actual Occurrence was also considered. These were also obtained from standardized ENFOR data. For a list of terms considered for Land Use, Attractant Type and Behaviour, refer to Appendix II.

## Results

### Occurrences

There were 81 grizzly bear related occurrences recorded in 2019 within BMA 4, a 30% increase from 2018 and double the number of occurrences in 2016. There were 70 ENFOR records (86%), 10 (12%) Kananaskis Emergency Services records and one record (1%) that was captured by both ENFOR and Kananaskis Emergency Services. Of these records, 46 per cent (37 of 81) occurred in the Support Zone, 29 per cent (24 of 81), occurred Outside the BMA and 25 per cent (20 of 81) occurred within the Recovery Zone (Figure 2).

Thirty-five per cent (29 of 81) records) were Low Level Occurrences, 24 per cent (20 of 81) were Moderate Level, 16 per cent (13 of 81) were High Level and 24 per cent (20 of 81) were Very High (Figure 3). The majority of Very High Level Occurrences involved predation of livestock including cattle, chickens, horses, turkeys and ducks). There were two bluff charging incidents; one involved a bear charging a resident that came onto the bear at close range while it was killing some of their turkeys. The other incident involved a female bear with two cubs charging and making contact with a vehicle. It is not clear why the bear charged the vehicle but she was deemed to likely be defending her two cubs.

Of the 71 occurrences that involved a known attractant, livestock (20% or 14 of 71), natural vegetation (17% or 12 of 71), grain and garbage (both 13% and 9 of 71) and bee hives (10% or 7 of 71) were the primary attractants. Cattle (64% or 9 of 14) were the main species of livestock affected.

Seasonally, occurrences happened in all three seasons; 58 per cent (47 of 81) during the Pre berry season, 30 per cent (24 of 81) during the Berry season and 12 per cent (10 of 81) during the Post Berry season. Livestock predation related occurrences happened during the Pre Berry (71% or 10 of 14) and Berry (29% or 4 of 14) seasons. Rural residential areas (54% or 44 of 81) was the most common known location for occurrences followed by pastures (20% or 16 of 81) (Figure 4).

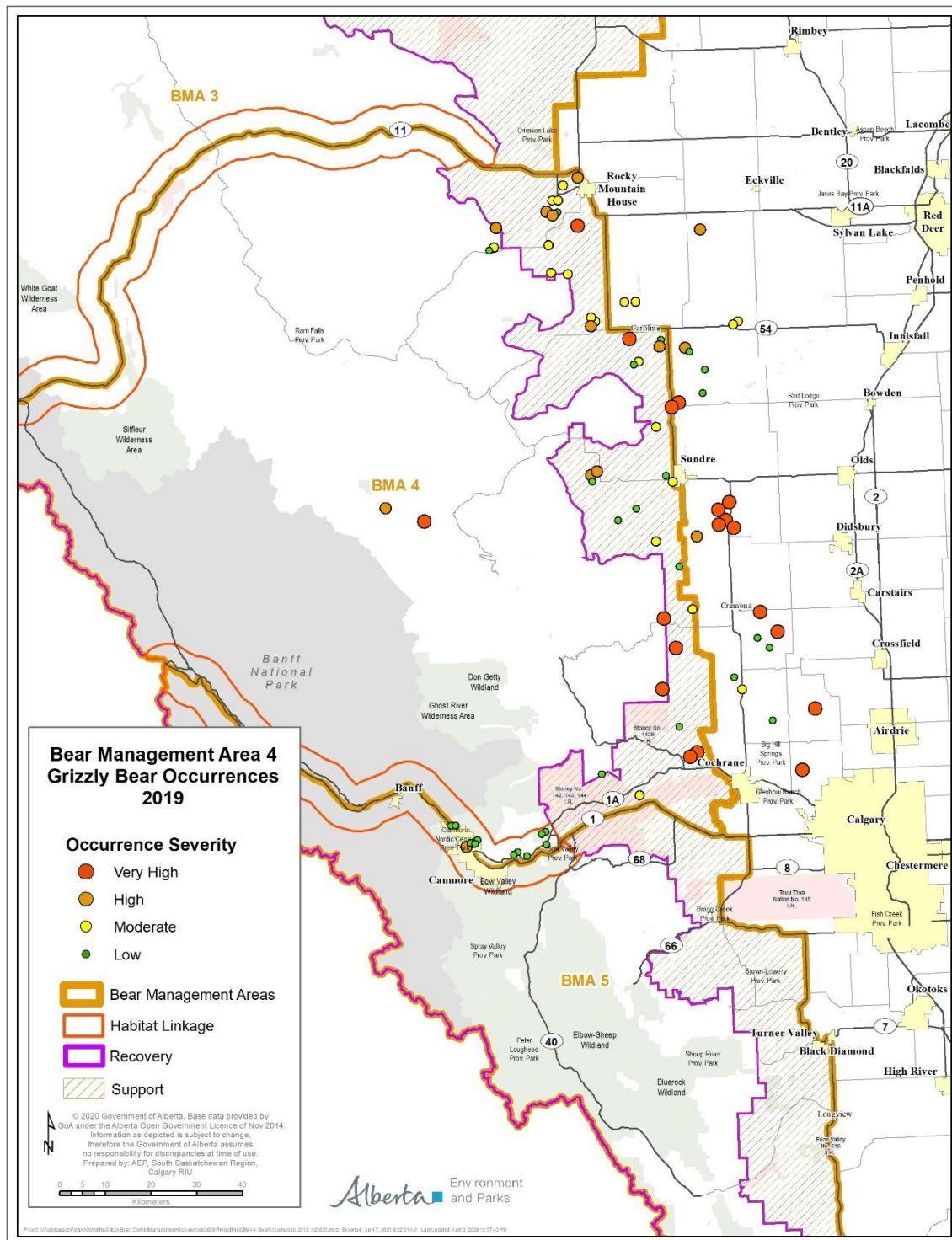


Figure 2. BMA 4 2019 Occurrences (n= 81)

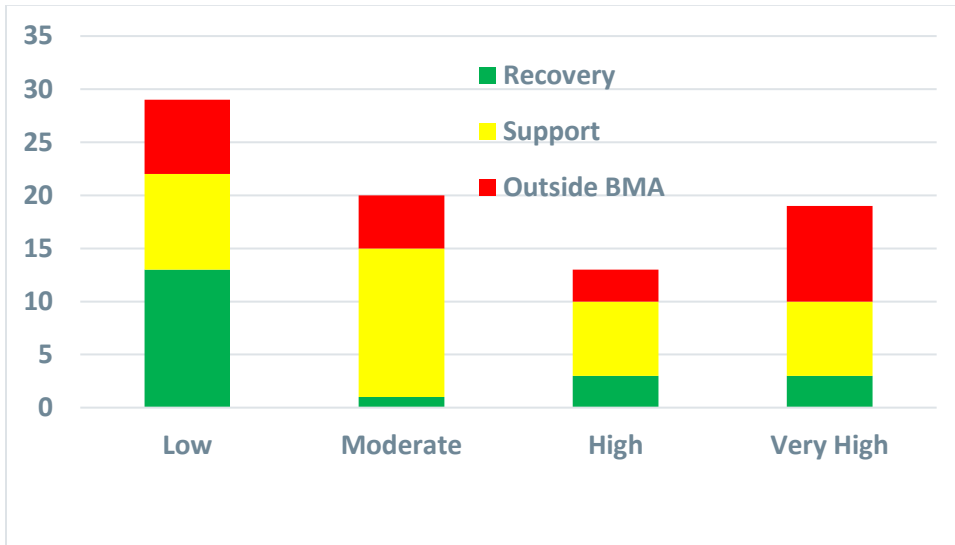


Figure 3. BMA 4 2018 Grizzly Bear Occurrence Levels by Zone (n= 81)

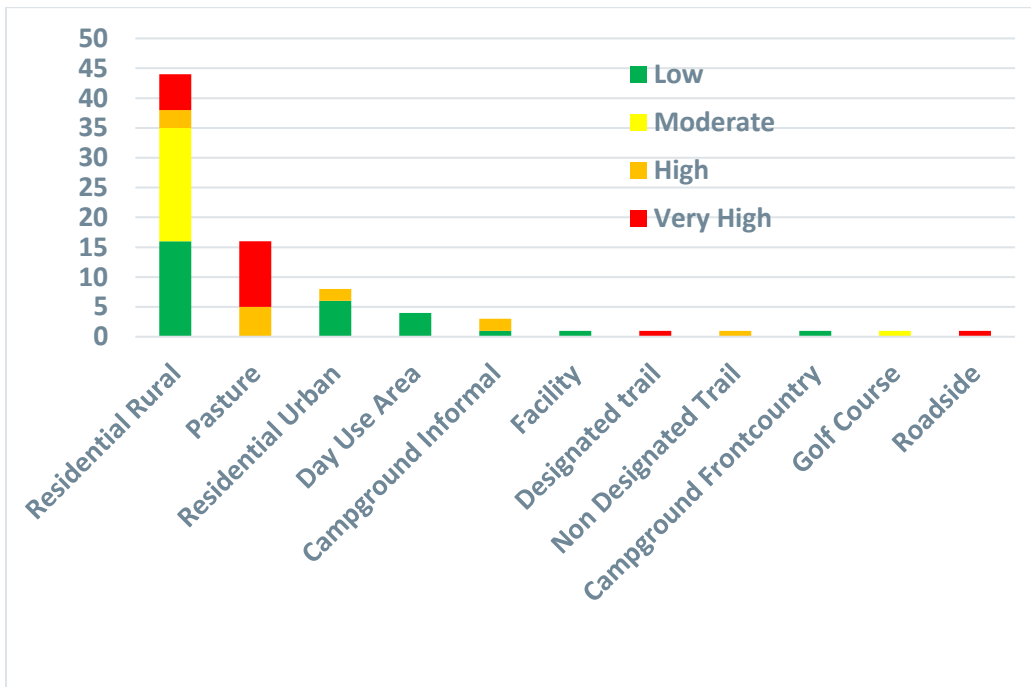


Figure 4. BMA 4 2019 Grizzly Bear Occurrence Levels by Land Use (n=81)

## Mortality

There was one known grizzly bear mortality recorded in 2019. An adult male grizzly bear was killed on the Trans-Canada highway in August near Jumpingpound Creek. Since 2009, there have been 20 known human caused grizzly bear deaths in BMA 4 (Figure 6). The illegal killing of grizzly bears is the primary cause of mortality for grizzly bears in BMA 4. Since 2009, there have been seven recorded occurrences of grizzly bears being killed illegally. Of the 15 known mortalities where a Management Zone was assigned between 2014 and 2019, 47 per cent occurred within both the Recovery and Support Zones (7 of 15 each). These mortality numbers do not include those bears translocated from the BMA.

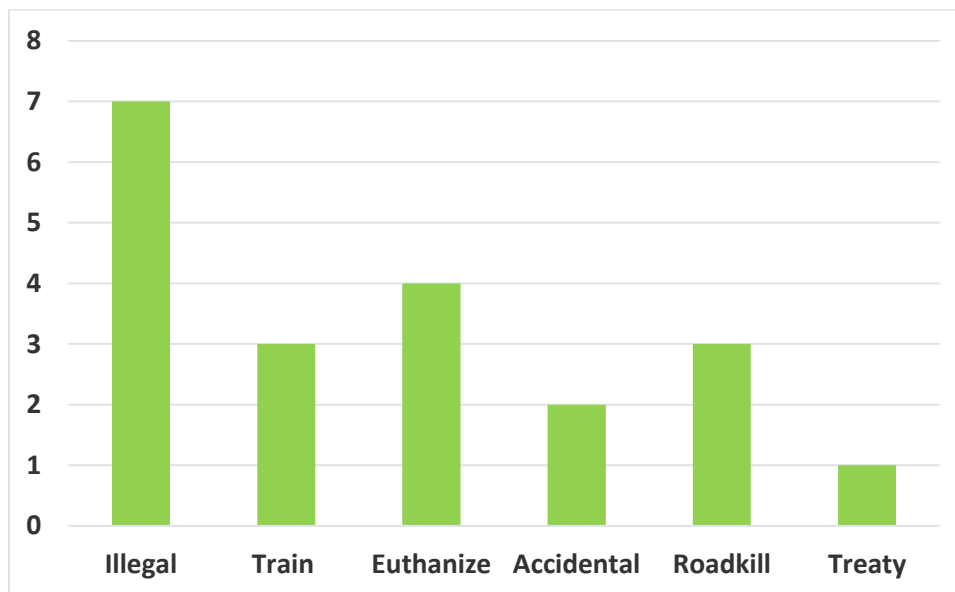


Figure 5. BMA 4 2019 Human Caused Grizzly Bear Mortality (N= 20)

## Translocations

There were three grizzly bears translocated from BMA 4 in 2019. A yearling bear was translocated for feeding on a dead calf and accessing grain NW of Cochrane in May. One adult male was translocated in the Sundre area for frequenting residences on multiple occasions in August. A sub adult bear was moved for digging up cow carcasses in close proximity to

developed areas in the Sundre area in August. Landowners in this area are in discussions with AEP regarding electric fencing or composting deadstock as a means of reducing these types of occurrences in the future. From 2009 to 2019, there have been 23 translocations from BMA 4 (Figure 7). Forty-three per cent (10 of 23) were due to attacks on livestock. These numbers only include incidents when a bear(s) was moved outside of its home range and does not include relocations where the bear was released within their home range.

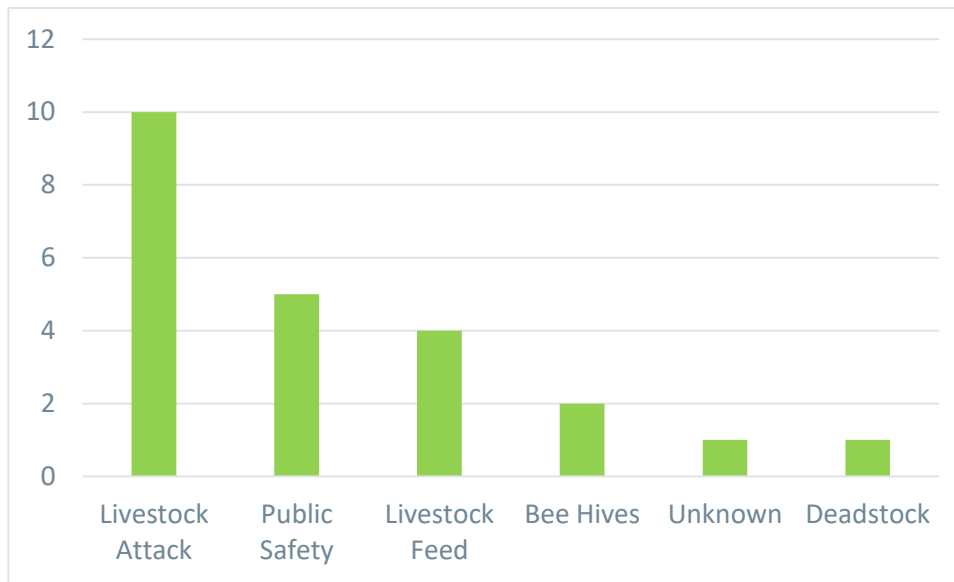


Figure 6 BMA 4 2019 Grizzly Bear Translocations (N= 23)

## Mitigation

A number of proactive mitigation programs currently exist within BMA 4, all with the aim of reducing current levels of occurrences between grizzly bears and people.

### Aversive Conditioning (AC)

There is no formal AC program in BMA 4. There have been cases in the past where aversion has been delivered on select radio collared grizzly bears in the Bow Valley but the majority of AC

actions occur south of the Trans-Canada highway in BMA 5. For the last couple of years there have been no AC actions delivered in BMA 4.

## Attractant Management

**Natural vegetation**, primarily buffaloberry, which exists in developed areas is a continued source of conflict, particularly in the Bow Valley. Programs to physically remove buffaloberry are ongoing within Kananaskis Country, the Town of Canmore and on a case by case basis in other areas of the BMA. For example, a children's camp in the Sundre area removed buffaloberry shrubs and other vegetation to improve sightlines near facilities and common trails. This work is considered an effective method of reducing bear activity in key areas of the BMA.

While some producers are successfully using electric fence in calving pens and corrals to reduce incidents of predation, many **Livestock** related occurrences are typically dealt with through the Predator Compensation Program. In 2019, there were four grizzly bear related confirmed' claims involving cattle (two heifers, one steer and one bred cow). This resulted in \$4,452 being paid to producers. Three of these claims occurred in the Support Zone and one in the Recovery Zone. Since 2015, there have been 20 grizzly bear related confirmed' claims involving 24 cattle and eight sheep resulting in \$27,631 being paid to producers. Six of these occurred in the Recovery Zone, 13 in the Support Zone and one in the Dispersal Zone.

**Grain continues to be** an ongoing concern, largely due to faulty grain bins, wooden hopper bottoms or faulty doors. Securing grain through the use of electric fence, bear proof doors and metal hopper bottoms have all shown to be an effective deterrent to bears when used. **Beehives** are becoming a growing concern as well. Promoting the use of electric fence for local bee groups is ongoing. These tools are promoted as best practices by GOA, Mountainview BearSmart (MVBS) and other stakeholder groups in the BMA.

Unsecured attractants such as **fruit trees, birdfeeders, garbage and chickens** continue to cause conflict with black bears, less so with grizzly bears. Most of these types of attractant concerns can be resolved by securing the attractants with electric fence or bear proof containers. There has been very little **garbage** related conflict within the Recovery Zone of BMA 4 since the implementation of bear proof bins. Areas outside the Recovery Zone continue to have relatively high black bear/garbage related occurrences, suggesting that garbage management remains a potential concern for both black and grizzly bears in these areas. In the case of fruit trees, some



communities have initiated programs that remove the fruit or the tree itself from residential areas and have the tree replaced with a flowering, non-fruit bearing tree. Birdfeeder and wildlife attractant bylaws also exist in some communities and provide a regulatory option in addition to standard educational programming. The Town of Canmore issued 11 warnings and six charges for wildlife related offences primarily related to fruit trees and the MD of Bighorn issued a single charge related to feeding bears.

## Loaner Programs

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), along with Mountainview BearSmart have had Loan or Cost Sharing Programs for landowners experiencing HBO for a number of years now. The Programs promote the use of electric fence, bear proof garbage bins, grain bin doors, sea canisters and metal hopper bottoms. Since 2014, there have been 36 projects implemented by these groups (Fig 8). In 2019, there were two electric fence projects to fortify older grain bins and two landowners that were loaned bear proof garbage bins to address unsecured garbage at their residences. The majority of these projects occur in the Support Zone or Outside the BMA. There have been no reported reoccurrences of conflict once these mitigation systems are in place, confirming the effectiveness of securing attractants to reduce occurrences between bears and people.

## Education

There are two main nonprofit community groups assisting AEP in delivering programs to promote best practices and reduce conflict between grizzly bears and people through education. These are:

- [Bow Valley WildSmart](#)
- [Mountainview BearSmart](#)

In 2019, AEP along with Bow Valley WildSmart, Mountainview BearSmart and other stakeholders delivered over 200 bear and wildlife safety workshops to over 11,000 people. These workshops are specifically targeted to local stakeholders including recreation groups, ranch families and communities that work, live and recreate in areas with grizzly bears and other large carnivores. They focus on securing attractants, how to avoid encounters, what to do during an encounter and

how to effectively use bear spray. AEP had created a number of Fact Sheets that are available on the [BearSmart](#) web page, including:

- [Electric Fence and Bears](#)
- [Chickens and Bears](#)
- [Bees and Bears](#)
- [Deadstock Composting and Bears](#)
- [Fruit Trees and Bears](#)

## **Area Closures**

There were no area closures in BMA 4 in 2019.

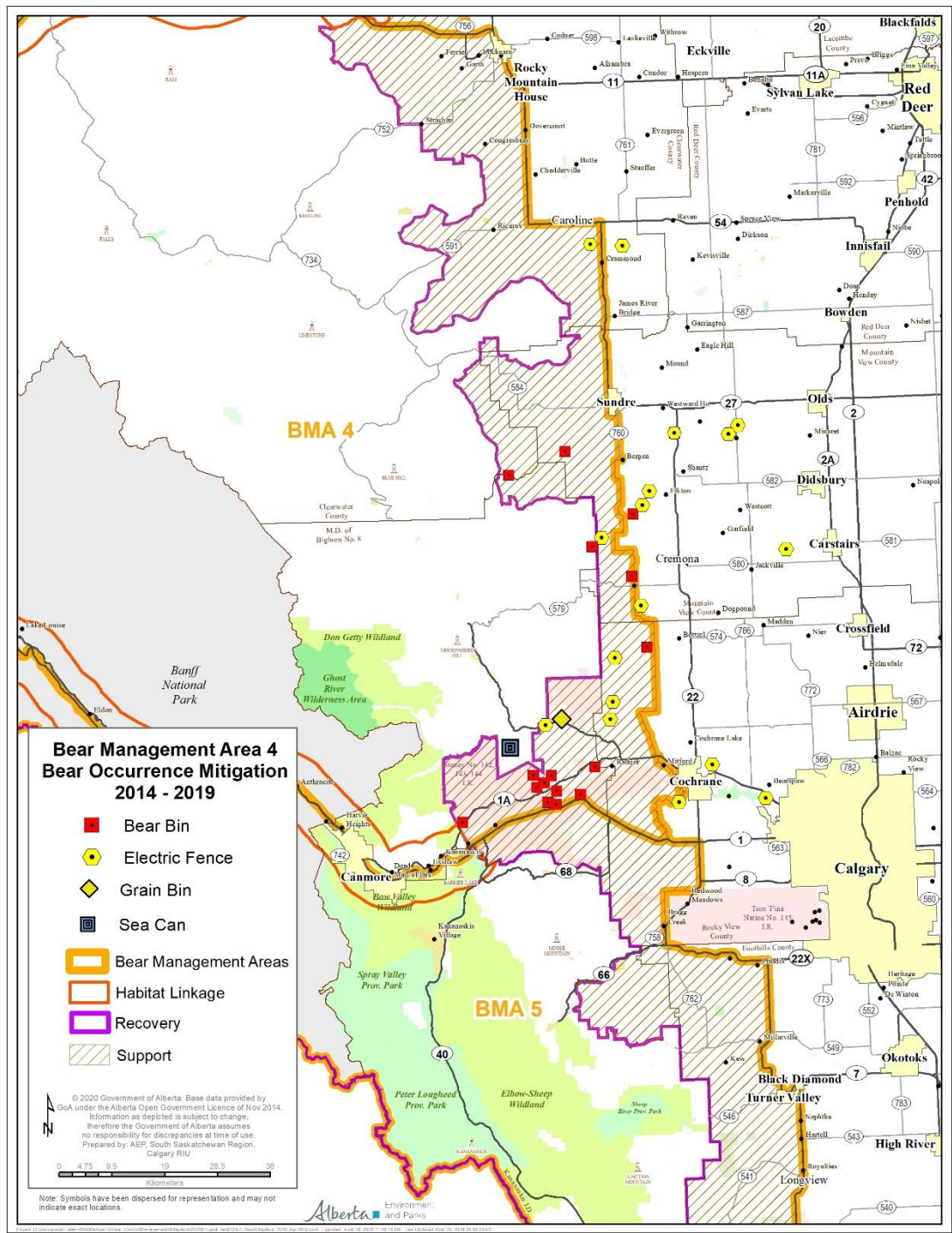


Figure 7. BMA 4 2014 to 2019 Grizzly Bear Occurrence Mitigation Projects (n= 36)

# Conclusion

## Recovery Progress

Significant portions of the BMA fall within protected areas or public land use zones where motorized access is actively being managed. There are ongoing conflict prevention and education programs in the BMA delivered by AEP, Mountain View BearSmart and Bow Valley WildSmart. These programs encourage best practices for conflict prevention that include securing attractants through the use of bear proof garbage systems, electric fence, sea cans, bear proof grain storage, natural vegetation and fruit tree removal from developed areas. AEP continues to deliver an aversive conditioning program in Kananaskis Country directed at habituated grizzly bears. All of these programs contribute greatly in reducing conflict at the local level.

## Challenges for Recovery

Agricultural conflicts along the eastern edge of the BMA continue to occur. This, coupled with an increasing expansion of the grizzly bear population eastwards and an increasing human population moving into bear country will require continuing education programs for landowners and recreationists to prevent further occurrences. The growing interest by acreage owners to produce their own food (i.e. chickens, sheep, gardens and honey), may also increase human bear occurrences. Increasing recreational activity and motorized access into Recovery areas could result in increased conflict between people and bears. These issues create the potential for continued public safety and property damage concerns and increased human caused grizzly bear mortality and translocations.

## Priorities

It is important to continue with conflict prevention programs to ensure that landowners, particularly within the Support Zone, do not experience public safety and property damage concerns from grizzly bears. Supporting local community groups working on proactive mitigation programs is key to reducing human bear occurrences in the BMA. The reduction in negative interactions with bears, particularly on private lands within the Support Zone, will help to maintain tolerance levels for grizzly bears, an essential component of grizzly bear recovery in Alberta.

# Bibliography

Hunt, Carrie. 1999. "Partners in Life" Program: Bear Shepherding Guidelines for Safe and Effective Treatment of Human – Bear Conflicts. Wind River Bear Institute, Heber City, Utah.

# Appendix I

## Human Bear Occurrence Definitions

Occurrence	Definitions
No Occurrence	Bears feeding on natural foods in non-developed areas including backcountry trails, roads, train tracks or travelling in non-developed areas (i.e. trails) or developed areas such as day use areas, golf courses, campgrounds (frontcountry, backcountry or random)
Low	Bears feeding on natural foods (except carcasses) in or adjacent to trailheads, campgrounds, picnic areas, barns, or feeding on golf courses during the day; feeding/ travelling in urban green space, facility/ playfield; feeding on unnatural food in non-developed areas or travelling through residential properties (backyards), travelling frequently through or repeated sightings on trails
Moderate	Bears feeding on unnatural foods (except carcasses) not secured at or adjacent to developed area (trailheads, campgrounds, picnic areas, playfield, barns or golf courses during the day; natural foods at or adjacent to residential areas; predating on domestic animals in non-developed areas; makes physical contact with manmade structures (decks, dumpster, pickup beds); standing ground
High	Bears feeding on lightly secured non-natural foods (coolers, non-bear proof garbage cans) in or adjacent to developed area; partially enters 2 or 3 sided structure, minor property damage, closing distance (non-aggressive) to people for food or nonfood related closing distance incidents
Very High	Bears depredating (i.e. hunt, chase, harass) on wild or domestic animals (livestock, dogs, cats, rabbits) or feeding on carcasses in or adjacent to developed areas including trails, major property damage, enters 4 sided structure ; charges people (no contact) including surprise encounters, defence of young or defending carcass
Extreme	Bear injures or kills people
Not Applicable	Does not apply

# Appendix II

## ENFOR Field Categories

Primary Attractant	Behaviour	Land Use
BBQ	Alert	Campground Backcountry
Bird Feeder	Bluff Charge	Campground Frontcountry
Carcass Livestock	Charge	Campground Informal
Carcass Wildlife	Curious Approach	Day Use Area
Compost	Indifferent	Designate Trails
Domestic Pet	Predatory Approach	Facility
Garbage	Property Damage	Golf Course
Garden	Retreat Run	Non-Designated Trails
Golf Course	Run to Cover	Other - Specify
Grain Agriculture	Stands Ground	Pasture
Human Food	Unaware	Railway
Humans	Unknown	Residential Urban
Insects	Walk to Cover	Residential Rural
Livestock		Roadside
Natural Vegetation		
Ornamental Fruit Tree		
Pet Food		
Unknown		
Unnatural Vegetation		
Wildlife		

# Appendix III

## Fact Sheets



**our challenge** Bears exist throughout most of Alberta. Black bears are found across the province, with the exception of some agricultural lands in the south east corner of the province and grizzly bears are found primarily along the Rocky Mountains and in the Foothills of western Alberta. In recent years some areas of the province, particularly parts of southern Alberta, have been experiencing grizzly bear activity in areas further east of traditional home ranges.

A large portion of Alberta's bear populations overlap areas where people live, work and play. This has resulted in increasing human bear interactions on both public and private lands. Some interactions involve bears accessing unnatural food sources including garbage, fruit trees, bee yards, livestock feed and livestock.

Fruit trees can attract bears into residential areas creating issues of public safety and potential property damage. Attempts are often made to capture and remove bears that begin to associate developed areas as possible food sources. If attractants remain available, there is a risk that other bears will eventually discover them and the issue will repeat itself. By properly securing or removing fruit from trees, bears will have no reason to frequent these developed areas and they will typically move on. The result is no loss of fruit, no property damage or public safety concerns and no need to remove bears – a win for all concerned.



Black bear in Mountain Ash tree

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BEARSMART

# Bees and Bears



**our challenge** Bears exist throughout most of Alberta. Black bears are found across the province, with the exception of some agricultural lands in the south east corner of the province and grizzly bears are found primarily along the Rocky Mountains and in the Foothills of western Alberta. In recent years some areas of the province, particularly parts of southern Alberta, have been experiencing grizzly bear activity in areas further east of traditional home ranges.

A large portion of Alberta's bear populations overlap areas where people live, work and play. This has resulted in increasing human bear interactions on both public and private lands. Some interactions involve bears accessing unnatural food sources including garbage, fruit trees, livestock, livestock feed and, in some cases, bee yards.

Aside from the obvious loss of bees and honey, issues of public safety and property damage, are also a concern when bears access bee yards. Attempts are often made to capture and remove bears that begin to associate developed areas as a food source. If attractants are left unsecured, there is a risk that other bears will eventually discover the area and the same issue will arise.

Securing attractants results in reduced incidents of property damage and public safety concerns and the need to translocate bears; a win for all concerned.



Photo Credit: Le Galde

Bear and bee yard conflict

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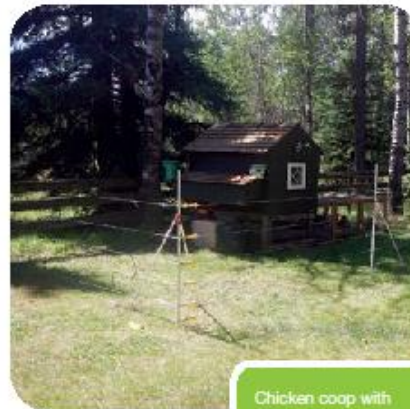
BEARSMART

# Electric Fences and Bears



**our challenge** People living and working in bear country will, at times, experience bears. Often bears will visit because of available foods, natural or otherwise, that exists. Depending on the circumstances, this can result in a loss of livestock, livestock feed or property damage and concerns related to public or personal safety. It can also result in bears becoming food conditioned and being relocated or euthanized.

Securing available attractants as much as possible is an effective way of preventing bears from visiting in the first place. This can include placing garbage and pet or livestock feed inside buildings or in a bear resistant container or removing fruit from trees or bushes before bears can get to it. A properly constructed and maintained electric fence can be an effective way of protecting livestock and bee yards from bears. These preventative measures will reduce incidents of loss, property damage and alleviate public safety concerns. It will also reduce the need to remove or kill bears.



Chicken coop with electric fence

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## BEARSMART Deadstock Composting and Bears



**our challenge** Bears exist throughout most of Alberta. Black bears are found across the province, with the exception of some agricultural lands in the south east corner of the province and grizzly bears are found primarily along the Rocky Mountains and in the Foothills of western Alberta. In recent years some areas of the province, particularly parts of southern Alberta, have been experiencing grizzly bear activity in areas further east of traditional home ranges.

A large portion of Alberta's bear populations overlap areas where people live, work and play. This has resulted in increasing human bear interactions on both public and private lands. Some interactions involve bears accessing unnatural food sources including garbage, fruit trees, bee yards, livestock, livestock feed and, in some cases, deadstock piles.

Attempts are often made to bury dead livestock to prevent access by bears and other scavengers. The reality is that bears are opportunistic feeders guided by a good nose and will likely discover deadstock piles at some point in time as livestock carcasses are a desirable food source for bears. If the location of the deadstock is close to outbuildings, ranch houses, or calving pens, issues of public safety, possible property damage, or future predation of livestock can be a concern.



Deadstock and grizzly bear

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Posted May 2017

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BEARSMART

# Chickens and Bears



**our challenge** Bears exist throughout most of Alberta. Black bears are found across the province, with the exception of some agricultural lands in the south east corner of the province and grizzly bears are found primarily along the Rocky Mountains and in the Foothills of western Alberta. In recent years some areas of the province, particularly parts of southern Alberta, have been experiencing grizzly bear activity in areas further east of traditional home ranges.

A large portion of Alberta's bear populations overlap areas where people live, work and play. This has resulted in increasing human bear interactions on both public and private lands. Some interactions involve bears accessing unnatural food sources including garbage, fruit trees, bee yards, livestock feed and livestock, including chickens

Aside from the obvious loss of chickens, issues of public safety and property damage are also a concern when bears access chickens for food. Attempts are often made to capture and remove bears that begin to associate developed areas as food sources. If attractants are left unsecured, there is a risk that other bears will eventually discover the area and the same issue will arise. By properly securing attractants, bears learn they cannot access food from a particular area and they typically move on. The result is no loss of chickens, no property damage or public safety concerns and no need to remove bears – a win for all concerned.



Bear and chicken yard conflict

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