



# HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW



**CONSERVATION  
OFFICER SERVICE**

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

MAY 2022



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the frontline environmental law enforcement and public safety agency in BC, the Conservation Officer Service continues to be a modern, innovative leader in Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) public safety response.

Across the province, the COS takes extensive action to minimize the risks that conflicts with wildlife pose to public safety and property through conflict prevention outreach, training, enforcement and responses in the field.

However, the issue of human-wildlife conflict is complex and cannot be solved by the COS alone.

Attractants drive a significant number of bear conflicts in B.C. and enforcement by the COS alone is not enough to make a significant impact. Due to the overwhelming scale of the attractant issue, Conservation Officers are unable to adequately address non-compliance.

With a lack of frontline Conservation Officers, capacity and resources are already stretched thin. Officers respond to a diverse range of proactive and reactive work under our primary mandates, which also includes natural resource law enforcement.

This translates into Conservation Officers responding to the highest priority HWC calls, with respect to public safety. It is simply not operationally feasible to respond to all calls. While prevention is critical to reducing human-wildlife conflicts, it is impossible to conduct public outreach and education prevention in every community.

These issues were a driving factor in the creation, development and outcomes of the HWC Service Delivery Review.

With the growing population of BC and the expansion of communities into wildlife habitat, human-wildlife conflict is increasing. Last year, the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) hotline received more than 42,000 human-wildlife conflict calls.

The challenges faced by the COS from inconsistent multi-ministry approaches to HWC response have also helped mobilize the need for this review.

As you will see in this preliminary report, the widespread COS review makes recommendations for improvements in all areas. These recommendations in the following report hinge on streamlining processes and response efforts across all sectors to help maximize effectiveness, efficiency and ensure resources are available where they are needed most.





# INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2020, the COS began a detailed review of all aspects of the agency's Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) service delivery model. This was done to promote continuous improvement, ensure a consistent approach to HWC provincially, address issues of program capacity, and help address the growing public interest in, and scrutiny of the government's response to human-wildlife conflicts.

While there is a great deal of progressive work that is already being carried out by the COS, it was deemed prudent for the agency to respond to these issues and ensure that best practices are clarified, modern training and tools are made available, and both are consistently applied across the province to ensure BC continues as a leader in the HWC management field.

The following is a preliminary findings and recommendations report.

## CLARIFICATION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES |

The Province of British Columbia (BC) is committed to reducing conflicts between humans and wildlife as part of its strategic goal of maintaining safe, healthy communities and a sustainable environment, and each of the Natural Resource Sector (NRS) ministries have a role to play in meeting this goal.

The Ministry of Forests (FOR) ensures the sustainable management of fish and wildlife and land-based resources and supports activities that lead to benefits for all British Columbians both economically and environmentally. FOR provides science-based direction regarding wildlife management to effectively manage wildlife populations and to mitigate, prevent or reduce negative impacts surrounding human-wildlife conflicts such as public safety concerns and impacts to wildlife. FOR monitors and manages threats to protect public health and property, promote safety and sustain healthy populations and ecosystems while taking into consideration social concerns raised by the public.

FOR developed the Together for Wildlife Strategy that is committed to making significant new investments and developing new partnerships to collaboratively deliver and improve outcomes for wildlife stewardship. They have also made cost-share funding available to help local governments and First Nations manage conflicts between humans and deer in urban areas through the Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share Program.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) provides leadership to help the Agri-food industry be sustainable, competitive, and adaptable to changing circumstances, including impacts by, and on, wildlife populations. MAF is committed to helping the industry be more proactive and less reactive to issues such as losses due to wildlife and developing a strategy to help the BC



Agriculture Industry adapt to a changing climate which includes changes in conflicts with wildlife. The Business Risk Management Branch within MAF helps producers manage risks that cause income losses and lead to financial instability, including wildlife, wildlife diseases and pests.

#### **Within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV):**

Environmental Protection (EP) Division mandates the fencing of landfills throughout the province, and this has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of bears destroyed in BC. Similarly, BC municipalities have Solid Waste Management plans that are approved by EP. In those plans it is a requirement to secure landfill attractants from wildlife. Under the *Environmental Management Act*, the Minister has the authority to amend permits or permit requirements.

Ecosystems Branch provides science-based direction regarding wildlife management to prevent or reduce negative effects of human-wildlife encounters including risks to public safety and damage to property.



The Conservation Officer Service (COS) takes actions to minimize the risk that conflicts with large carnivores pose to public safety and property through conflict prevention outreach, training, enforcement, and both less lethal and lethal responses.

The COS develops Human-Wildlife Conflict Response Guidelines to inform assessment of and response to conflict situations.

*The COS is the primary responder to human-wildlife conflicts in B.C.*

These guidelines are reviewed annually by the Human-Wildlife Conflict Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from FOR Wildlife Branch, ENV Ecosystems Branch and the COS, and amended as required to improve effectiveness and reflect updated tools and techniques.

The COS is also the primary responder to human-wildlife conflicts where there is a risk to public safety, or where significant property damage has occurred.

A CO will usually attend a human-wildlife conflict call if:



Wildlife appears to be sick, injured, entrapped, or is acting in an unusual manner.



Dangerous wildlife is causing or has caused serious and ongoing property damage, and the landowner has taken reasonable steps to avoid conflict.



Public safety is at risk due to a bear, or other large predator, becoming reliant on human food or garbage and then associating people with that food source. (i.e. food-conditioned).



Large or dangerous wildlife are sighted in a confined/urban area which may lead to a human safety incident or injury/death to the animal.

The BC COS is the primary agency that the public associates with HWC. It is COs that respond when needed, attend community meetings, and talk to the media regarding HWC.

Unfortunately, this often results in the BC COS being viewed in a negative public light as they are seen as entirely responsible for wildlife conflict outcomes that results in the death of an animal.

The BC COS receives an average of 29, 000 human-wildlife conflict public complaints a year. Conservation Officers physically attend approximately 20% of these complaints and return calls to approximately another 30%. The remaining 50% of the HWC calls receive no attendance or call back. This often leads to frustration for the public believing that the COS does not care enough to respond or provide advice. This leads to reduced calls, a negative view of the COS, and the belief that COs only attend to kill something.

Hiring Seasonal Conservation Officers and Students has worked well in the past at alleviating some of the lower level HWC duties from the field COS, increasing response levels to public complainants, as well as a development step for prospective COs in the future. Since HWCs are very seasonal, seasonal staff have proven effective for supporting full time staff during the periods:

May through October	73% of annual calls received
0600 hours to 2059 hours	90% of daily calls

To reduce the number of HWCs, the COS has taken on the leadership role for conflict reduction education and outreach including the Bear Smart Communities Program, WildSafeBC, and education of all segments of the public (farmers, ranchers, and residents) regarding proper attractant control and husbandry.

The BC COS performs outreach on a provincial level through meetings with other levels of government involving joint planning and collaboration with enforcement counterparts such as Bylaw enforcement and First Nations Guardians.



# < 50%

*Of the public is aware of legislation around attractant management*

BC COS has a mobile trailer with educational displays and promotional items that travels around the province to attend public events such as trade shows for outdoors activities and smaller, local events like Fish and Game Club meetings and local fairs. COs also participate in school talks, community meetings, and town hall meetings and use daily interactions with the public as educational opportunities.

When surveyed, field COs estimated that less than 50% of the public they interact with are aware of the laws and regulations about securing attractants from dangerous wildlife.

# + 11%

*The increase non-Bear Smart communities saw in bear conflict calls*

The Bear Smart Communities Program has potential to be a major component of community-based proactive conflict reduction. The COS administers the program and assesses communities for Bear Smart status, but the program is led and funded by the community.

The process of becoming a designated Bear Smart community can be long and expensive depending on the needs of the community. Bear Smart started in BC in 2004 and the first community to receive Bear Smart status was Kamloops in 2009. In 2021 the number of Bear Smart communities in BC has reached ten. The municipalities that have achieved Bear Smart status show a marked decrease in HWC but participation in Bear Smart is voluntary and resource intensive.

Comparing 5-year periods (2011 to 2015 versus 2016 to 2020) Bear Smart communities saw an average annual reduction of 18% in bear conflict reports while non-Bear Smart communities averaged an increase of 11%. The number of bears destroyed followed a similar trend with Bear Smart communities showing an average reduction of 19% while the rest of the province showed an average increase of 9%. The data is a strong indication that Bear Smart actions are effective, but 10 communities in 17 years is far too few and too slow to have a significant impact on the provincial totals.

A review of the Bear Smart Communities Program was completed in 2020 to provide specific recommendations to improve the program's effectiveness. The review made 14 recommendations regarding opportunities to enhance the program, foster collaborative initiatives that aim at reducing human-bear conflicts, and increase the number of communities attaining and sustaining official Bear Smart Community status.

Educating the public is considered a key component to preventing conflicts, alongside mandatory attractant management and enforcement. The COS has supported the WildSafeBC program to develop and deliver education for several years now. WildSafeBC provides education on several different species with majority of their work focused on black bears. Program delivery is limited to communities that have WildSafeBC Coordinators.



# - 18%

*The decrease Bear Smart communities saw in bear conflict calls*

*\*Figures based on average annual call data over a 5-year period*



Anyone can visit the WildSafeBC website or Facebook page to access the information and in 2019 the website had 143,000 visitors and the Facebook page 4151 visitors.

WildSafeBC Coordinator positions are dependent on being jointly funded by WildSafeBC and the participating community. Some municipalities have their own employees such as Bylaw Officers or an NGO group perform education and outreach using WildSafeBC or similar locally developed messaging. Whichever education group it is, the role is the same: provide information to the public about securing attractants from bears through social and traditional media, school talks, public presentations, and one on one conversations with the public.

The BC COS provided WildSafeBC \$275,000 in funding each year from 2014-15 to 2019-20. The total annual budget for the WildSafeBC program in 2019 was \$795,677, which provided funding support for 23 human-wildlife conflict reduction programs active in 150 communities. Despite these expenditures however, a survey of COs and analysis of the enforcement data do not indicate a corresponding growth in public participation in HWC prevention. Additionally, studies have shown that the public is not likely to secure their attractants until they have experienced a conflict, or they have received enforcement action.



BC COS are often the driving force in getting communities to apply for a WildSafeBC Coordinator and assist and participate with WildSafeBC in education of the public. However, WildSafeBC Coordinators do not assist the COS with HWC responses or compliance actions and WildSafeBC does not notify the public of possible enforcement action by the COS if attractants are not secured.

Although FOR and MAF are also responsible for HWC management, neither have contributed consistently to WildSafeBC or Bear Smart programs until 2021. Additionally, the public, NGOs and media only see members of the COS and WildSafeBC Program responding to queries and questions, often of controversial issues such as killing bears or capturing bear cubs. FOR and other NRS staff rarely participate in media coverage.

Municipalities and First Nation (FN) communities have the greatest role to play in wildlife conflict prevention. Criteria such as bylaws and bear-resistant waste management have proven to be effective at reducing HWC in Bear Smart Communities.

BC COS Conflict Response Guidelines list contacting local bylaw for attractant control prevention and education and, although progress is being made with some municipalities, small communities and First Nations communities in BC, the majority are not participating in reducing HWC in any significant manner. Many municipalities lack bylaws, enforcement officers, or the interest in enforcing attractant control measures. This gap often leaves the role of leading prevention efforts to the BC COS.

Although many communities are starting to provide attractant control information to their residents, few directly provide advice regarding legal requirements in a manner or level that the courts deem as sufficient. Some even provide advice that is inconsistent with provincial legislation and municipal bylaws.

Due to the lack of local bylaws and enforcement, COs must rely on enforcement actions under the Wildlife Act such as violation tickets and Dangerous Wildlife Protection Orders. Disputes of provincial violation tickets in the courts have resulted in findings that the legal standard was met to prove the violation and obtain a guilty verdict, but the municipality and province had not done enough to educate the residents, so the fines have been reduced by the courts from \$230 to \$25 and even \$0.

OFFENCE	WLA SECTION	VT FINE AMOUNT
Intentionally feed dangerous wildlife	33.1(1)(a)	\$345
Intentionally provide, leave or place an attractant to attract dangerous wildlife	33.1(1)(b)	\$345
Attract dangerous wildlife to land or premises	33.1(2)	\$230
Order to contain, move or remove attractant	88.1(3)	N/A
Fail to comply with Dangerous Wildlife Protection Order	88.1(7)	\$575

Other agencies and organizations also play a role in HWC management. Local police forces are authorized to respond to HWC, but some municipal police forces refuse to attend in place of a CO unless there is an imminent and significant public safety risk. Municipal police forces are also subject to workload issues and are not looking to take on more duties. Local animal control and bylaw personnel, with few exceptions, are not authorized or equipped to deal with HWC response including injured deer. Local municipal firearms bylaws may include exemptions for some agencies and officers, but few include bylaw or animal control, and some do not even list the BC COS as exempt. The *BC Wildlife Act* does not list bylaw or peace officers as officers exempt from the *Wildlife Act*. Most, if not all, of these agencies view wildlife management as the sole responsibility of the Provincial Government.

In some areas of the province licenced trappers are available to respond to livestock depredation by wolves and coyotes under a program administered by the BC Cattlemen's Association. This is largely focused on the central interior where cattle-predator conflicts are most common.

The Wildlife Monitor program is another HWC reduction and management option designed for hired contractors to provide education and wildlife safety response to workers in remote locations such as tree planters, mining operations and oil and gas operations.

The Wildlife Monitor program has training approved by the province for people delivering this service but requires a permit from FOR and to date there have only been 2 permits issued in northern BC. Wildlife Monitors provide education, attractant management and respond to wildlife that poses a safety risk. They act as a remote observer for the COS and work towards avoiding bears and other wildlife becoming habituated and conditioned. The Wildlife Monitor will contact the COS to report bears and other wildlife that may need to be destroyed due to safety risks but can also employ less lethal and lethal control in emergency situations.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## EDUCATION AND PREVENTION |

- Provide funding through the FOR Together for Wildlife Strategy (Goal 1) to support WildSafeBC and other NGOs delivery of conflict reduction education and outreach province-wide as it falls within their mandate to provide science-based direction regarding wildlife management to mitigate, prevent or reduce negative impacts surrounding human-wildlife conflicts. The COS should support, and facilitate communication between, WildSafeBC, municipalities and NGO groups that deliver education about wildlife, but not lead this initiative.
- FOR should consider developing a funding source, like the Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share Program, that would be available to communities that are implementing HWC education and prevention programs consistent with provincial direction.
- FOR with support from COS, EP and MIRR, implement the 2020 Bear Smart Review recommendations to improve and expand the program.
- FOR should develop an innovative and effective province-wide media campaign (i.e., Public Service Announcement, social media, etc.) to educate the public about wildlife, how to prevent conflicts, and that response decisions are made with science-based guidance from biologists.
- Provide an opportunity for individual businesses, housing developments, etc. to be given a designation for effectively managing conflicts with wildlife (i.e., Bear Smart honey or fruit, like Dolphin Friendly tuna). The WildSafeBC program could possibly administer an initiative such as this.
- As per their internal policy, FOR should investigate options to increase hunting opportunities in and around municipalities to manage populations of common conflict species more effectively (i.e., black bear, coyotes, deer, etc.) in and near residential areas.
- BC COS should continue to work with stakeholders and attend community events to promote the COS and be available to the public.
- FOR and COS should develop a media campaign to provide the public with information of why actions are taken, how decisions are made, and the outcomes, both successful and not successful. FOR biologists should increase media involvement regarding wildlife management issues and response decisions and provide support for COS response actions to help lessen mistrust.
- FOR in partnership with the COS, provide corrective responses in the media when inaccurate, incorrect, or false statements about the COS and their actions are made.



- Seasonal COs or similar should be hired to complete call backs to the public about HWCs and assist with low-risk field response. This would reduce the workload on field COs, provide a more efficient assessment of calls, increase data accuracy, increase the number of HWC complainants that receive CO advice and feedback. Field CO time could then be focused on higher priority law enforcement and public safety issues. It would have the added benefit of developing prospective future CO's.
- EP should investigate the option of requiring municipalities and First Nation communities to:
  - Develop and implement bear-resistant solid waste management systems.
  - Develop and enforce attractant control bylaws.
  - Educate residents about the legal requirement to secure attractants through Municipal Solid Waste Management permits or other avenues, as garbage and compost account for 60% of black bear HWCs.
- EP should consider a funding program, like their Clean BC Organic Infrastructure Collection Program, to support development of bear-resistant solid waste management in municipalities.
- The COS should refer crop depredation HWC for all species to MAF as stated in the current large carnivore procedure.
- The province should work with First Nations to create clear policy, procedure and legislation for HWC management on First Nation Reserves.

## RESPONSE |

- BC COS should continue to be the lead response agency for HWC's that have serious public safety risk potential and/or result in significant damage to property.
- Develop the necessary framework to shift responsibility for non-public safety wildlife calls (animals in distress, orphaned fawns/cubs, etc.) to municipalities, or other agencies/organizations. This may include training requirements, provincial regulations and municipal bylaws amendments, or authorizations.
- BC COS should conduct a feasibility study on the use of bear dogs in some locations.
- FOR biologists and rearing facilities should create response guidelines for bear cubs that are specific and detailed. Euthanizing cubs should be completed by rearing facility staff, biologists or veterinarian and only done in the field by provincial staff if it is for animal welfare reasons, or by directions from a FOR biologist or Wildlife Veterinarian.
- FOR should consider expanding permits for all orphaned cub rearing facilities to live capture and transport orphaned cubs. The COS should only be involved in live capture and transport of orphaned bears cubs if there is a public safety risk.
- FOR should expand the Wildlife Monitor program to remote campgrounds and communities, specifically remote First Nation communities. Employees could be trained and permitted to complete bear education, attractant management and conflict response. This would provide much quicker response times than the COS could possibly provide and allow for successful conflict management.

A bear could be hazed as soon as it presented unwanted behaviour, not hours or days later when the COS is able to attend. This would also provide the remote location or community with a sense of responsibility, possession, and empowerment.

## POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GENERAL ORDERS |

***‘The issue that results in the most public interest and scrutiny is euthanizing black bears’***

The primary procedure that guides HWC management is 4-7-04.01.1 - Preventing and Responding to Conflicts with Large Carnivores (April 1, 2019) and the associated response guidelines.

The Survey’s and interviews of COs found that officers generally agree with the procedure and guidelines as they are written and follow them unless directed to do otherwise by a supervisor, biologist, or wildlife veterinarian. However, the current decision guidelines matrices may not be sufficiently specific.

A HWC incident may result in overlapping outcome recommendations, leaving the final decision to officer discretion without appropriate consistency and guidance. Recently members of the public and NGOs have taken the COS and individual COs to court over the decision to euthanize bears.

Officers have become more reliant on the guidelines to ensure that they are protected from public lawsuits and want more detailed matrices to make their decisions clear and defensible to the public. Developing additional guidelines for orphaned bear cubs and large ungulates would also be beneficial.

FOR has several other policies and procedures that deal entirely or in part with HWC, but they have not been reviewed or updated for some time:

- Problem Wildlife Management 1984;
- Control of Species 2006;
- The Handling, Storage and Use of Pesticides for Wildlife Control 1984;
- Disposal and Storage of Dead Wildlife and Parts 1985, and the
- Management of Problem Wild Ungulates 1992.

More recently updated FOR policies and procedures regarding hunting, translocation of wildlife, and control of alien species may also apply to HWC management initiatives.

The issue that currently results in the most public interest and scrutiny is euthanizing black bears. Black bears represent 58% to 60% of all HWC reports. The average number of bears euthanized annually by BC COs is 550, which is over 6 times the average of the other 14 jurisdictions reviewed (87 bears).



However, the population estimate of 140,000 bears in BC is 5 times the average estimate of 28,000 black bears in the other 14 NA jurisdictions reviewed. When combining the number of bears harvested by hunters and the number of black bears removed for conflict by officers, the other 14 jurisdictions remove, on average, 9.1 % of their black bear population per year.

In BC, the combined total is an average of 3.3% of the population (roughly 1/3 compared to other jurisdictions). In some of the other jurisdictions (Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin), adjustments to regulated hunting focused on hunting high conflict areas in agricultural zones and near municipalities. This has resulted in higher numbers of black bears being harvested by hunters and fewer HWCs.

The current FOR Procedure, 4-7-04.01.1 Preventing and Responding to Conflicts with Large Carnivores (Section 3.3a) states, “To reduce high concentrations of large carnivores, the emphasis should be placed on the use of licensed hunters and trappers to harvest carnivores during open seasons. Open seasons, bag limits and other regulations should be adjusted by regulation or Minister’s order to allow effective harvesting.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- BC COS should review and revise conflict response guidelines to include more categories with clear definitions including less-lethal and short-distance relocation of lower risk animals and create guidelines for large ungulates and orphaned bear cubs. This will make decisions more clear and easier to defend to the public.
- FOR should review outdated HWC policies and procedures and update or redact as required.
- BC COS and FOR should conduct an annual review of procedures, guidelines, and matrices with input from other interested parties.

## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION |

In BC the roles of outreach and education are filled by numerous different agencies and as such there is an inconsistent approach depending on location. The BC COS has taken the leadership role for the province regarding wildlife conflict prevention outreach and education.

Please refer to the [Roles and Responsibilities](#) section for review and recommendations regarding provincial, municipal and First Nations roles, as well as programs such as Bear Smart Communities, WildSafeBC and Wildlife Monitors.



*The COS spends countless hours on public outreach and education.*



## TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT |

A review of current training and equipment used by BC COS for HWC response and a comparison to other jurisdictions in North America was completed, as were surveys and interviews of current COs, and interviews of Wildlife Veterinarians.

The BC COS firearms equipment and training meets or exceeds the level of most wildlife or environment agencies throughout Canada.

BC COs are trained in the use of live traps, footholds and cable snares for trapping dangerous wildlife and the training is consistent with other jurisdictions in Canada. All equipment used meets the trapping industry standards, however, there is no industry or provincial standard for culvert or live traps for bears and cougars and there are several versions of those traps currently in service in BC.

BC COs meet or exceed the training and implementation standards for wildlife enforcement agencies in chemical immobilization (“tranquilizing”) of wildlife. All BC officers are trained and equipped to chemically immobilize wildlife which is not the case for all agencies in North America.

COs use chemical immobilization to capture wildlife for relocation or euthanize it at a safer location. Most BC COs use Pneu Dart rifles but there are some older Capture dart rifles still in service.

The COS and the Wildlife Veterinarian have both expressed a desire for a recertification course every three to five years to maintain standards and keep up with changes to drugs, drug combinations, and techniques.



*COs use chemical immobilization to capture wildlife.*

Less-lethal response (hazing) has been used throughout North America to deter bears and large wildlife from becoming habituated to the presence of people. Less lethal includes various techniques and equipment, including the use of bear dogs.

BC COs have access to some less-lethal equipment but less than 30% have had any formal training in less-lethal techniques and the proper use of less-lethal equipment.

The BC COS is currently developing less-lethal training and response guidelines to provide direction regarding this management option. The use of Karelian Bear Dogs, as part of a larger, long-term program for aversive conditioning of bears, is also being considered.



*One of the bear traps in the COS West Coast Region.*



*Karelain Bear Dogs are one option being considered by the COS.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop standard bear and cougar live trap designs.
- Temporarily re-deploy COs to other regions to maintain trapping skills and offset call high volumes in busier areas.
- Require COs to recertify on Chemical Immobilization every 5 years.
- Standardize drug projection equipment to Pneu-Dart system (remove CapChur projectors from service).
- BC COS should continue to develop and implement less-lethal response for field officers including training, an approved less-lethal equipment list, and policy and guidelines on training and use.

## EMERGENCY COORDINATION CENTRE; HWCR DATA RECORDING; REPORTING |

- A detailed analysis was completed of 2019-20 Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) HWC reports by zone, region, species, month, response, and time spent. COS workplan entries were compared to the ECC data and an analysis of HWC report trends was completed. Interviews of officers and survey comments regarding ECC performance and improvement suggestions were also considered, as was a 2020 ECC review and recommendations document on HWC intake and response.
- The ECC is contracted by the COS to receive HWC calls, enter them into the ECC database, perform an initial prioritization using a decision tree, email the zone for minor conflicts, or email and make phone contact with a CO for high priority calls.



- Current staffing at the ECC is 16 full time staff and 8 Auxiliary to cover sick leave and annual leave. More auxiliary staff are hired for the higher call times in the summer months. ECC center has 8 persons scheduled per day. The COS provides ECC with \$325,000/year for this service.
- The COs role is to receive the reports, determine the level of priority, determine the appropriate action required, and update the data base with actions taken and time spent.
- To aid the ECC operators, COs complete a calendar to indicate COs availability (both on duty and after-hours). This calendar is viewable by the ECC operator for each zone.
- The ECC database system is very difficult to search, in some cases not possible at all. The ECC has switched to a new database system in 2022.

**COMMON ISSUES WITH ECC AND THE IMPACTS OF THOSE ISSUES INCLUDE:**

ISSUE	IMPACTS
Inaccurate Tombstone data (name, location, contact info)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO cannot locate HWC site.</li> <li>• CO must call complainant back for directions.</li> <li>• CO unable to contact complainant.</li> <li>• Unable to cross-reference with other HWC.</li> </ul>
Calling CO when not available on ECC calendar OR when another CO is On Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COs fail to see the value of the ECC calendar.</li> <li>• COs are screening after hours calls.</li> </ul>
Operator not calling a CO directly when required OR Calling a CO when not required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COs have lost confidence in ECC prioritization.</li> <li>• COs are screening after hours calls which in turn causes ECC to have to call multiple COs delaying response times.</li> <li>• Public safety risk.</li> <li>• Lost opportunity to remove conflict animal.</li> <li>• Public complaints or poor public opinion of COS and ECC.</li> </ul>
Multiple HWCs created for the same conflict, including the same addresses and dates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra reports may exaggerate a problem.</li> <li>• Inaccurate data for attendance, time spent, etc.</li> </ul>
Operator creating a new file when it should be an update, (i.e., bear in trap) OR ECC operator creating an update when it should a new file (i.e., occur months apart).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional administration time for COs.</li> <li>• Difficult to locate related calls to assess ongoing conflicts.</li> </ul>



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure any future HWC complaint reporting and tracking database used by call takers and officers meets minimum COS defined standards for data collection, dispatch information and outcome reporting.
- A COS database system should track HWC and Violations in one location, allow ECC operators to accurately populate the starting fields, and be easily searchable for statistics.
- Ensure ECC operators have access to software (i.e., Google Maps, BC Road Atlas) to ensure accurate location. This will also eliminate multiple calls for the same location as they will be entered as updates.
- Ensure ECC operators regularly update or refresh the COS availability calendar.
- Operators should have access to SPOT to identify nearest CO to report, regardless of zone boundaries.
- On Call or Duty Officer should be designated to assist the ECC in prioritizations and reduce the number of after-hours calls to just those calls that need immediate attendance by a CO.
- Increase outcome entry options to include more information (i.e., there is no ability to list reasons for bear destroyed such as hit by vehicle, not mobile, euthanized from humane reasons).
- Conduct feasibility study for dedicated COS complaint receipt, officer dispatch and status monitoring communication center.