



75 South Frontage Road West
Vail, Colorado 81657
vailgov.com/police

Office of the Chief of Police
970.479.2210
970.479.2216 fax

Date: 10/28/20

To: Town of Vail Council

From: Vail Police Chief Dwight Henninger

Subject: Bear Call Trends 2020

From our compiled information regarding VPSCC's bear calls in 2020 we've seen a significant rise in bear activity around town in comparison to last year. With currently over 200 confirmed bear sightings in both residential and public areas this year, Vail has had over two times the residential area sightings and three times the public area sightings than last year. These sightings contain over 70 reports of bears being attracted to trash receptacles, over 60 reports of bears having been seen in front and back yards, and over 60 reports of bears roaming public streets and trails. One specific area where we saw an increase was in reports of bears entering garages. Bears were unsurprisingly attracted to some sort of possible source of food such as trash or compost.

Last year much of the bear activity had ceased at the start of September. September this year marked a sudden "Pre-Hibernation Feeding Frenzy", where it was not uncommon to receive 20+ bear related calls a week. These calls included many individual sightings as well as continued sightings of specific "Trouble Bears" which were spotted numerous times often returning to the same locations. Fortunately, while much of this feeding frenzy has ended and bear sightings have declined weekly by as much as 75%, we're not quite out of the woods yet. We're still receiving multiple calls a week regarding bears searching for food, some even having broken into vehicles used to deliver bread.

Throughout the year, and especially during this busy time for the bears, Vail Police's Code Enforcement Officers have been diligently monitoring for Wildlife Ordinance Violations to ensure Vail remains a vibrant and eco-friendly community, for ours and the bears sakes. As of now our CEOs have issued 556 total Wildlife Ordinance related warnings, a slight drop from last year's 568. In occurrences with repeated offenses, a court summons is issued. In 2020 there have been three such court summons issued on the grounds of intentionally or unintentionally feeding wildlife.