



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PROTECTION
of Fur-Bearing Animals

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Bear who fell to death prompts complaint against COS

Non-profit says officers are under equipped and not following their own policies

VANCOUVER – A wildlife non-profit has filed a formal complaint with the provincial Conservation Officer Service following a preventable death of a mother black bear in Whistler.

According to media reports, a conservation officer responded to a call about a sow and her three cubs eating a natural food source in the residential area of Creekside. After treeing the sow, the officer tranquilized her. However, due to the lack of any kind of netting or protective equipment, the sow fell out of the tree and broke her neck, leaving her three cubs orphaned.

“Officers know that a bear may sustain injuries when they fall from a tree when they are tranquilized,” says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Fur-Bearers. “In one media report, an officer even identified that this is an ongoing issue with several years of history. Yet, despite the availability of various products used by other wildlife agencies across North America, the Conservation Officer Service has only recently ordered a catch net – which won’t be available until next year. This is unacceptable, particularly given the Service’s history.”

In 2017, a treed bear shot with a tranquilizer by an officer fell and broke through a Burnaby shed’s roof. In 2016, a cub was killed underneath his mother in a cage after she was immobilized by an officer.

“According to the Conservation Officer Service’s own conflict matrix this sow should never have been immobilized,” Fox adds. “Bears eating natural vegetation during a critical time before denning is not cause for concern, and certainly not cause for the use of tranquilizers.”

The complaint was filed on October 25, 2018. The Fur-Bearers are requesting new policy that requires all officers issued tranquilizers also have and use some form of netting or protection for animals who may fall from trees, and that oversight be created to investigate incidents when officers’ actions result in the death of an animal.

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The original complaint is attached to this media release.

The Fur-Bearers is a non-profit formed in Vancouver in 1953. They advocate on behalf of fur-bearing animals in the wild and in confinement, and provide policy, education, and in-field solution assistance to communities to aid in the promotion co-existence.

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