

Road Watch in the Pass Web News Summer 2011

This year Road Watch has been very busy, being active in several wildlife initiatives.

Over the past several months, the Crowsnest Pass has experienced a significant increase in wildlife mortality, due to vehicle collisions. The contributing factors appear to be adverse driving conditions, and an increase in the number of animals crossing the highway, most likely due to the prolonged and heavy winter and spring snowfalls.



Local Road Watch Coordinator, Rob Schaufele, is an active member of the Crowsnest Pass Bear Smart Committee. He assisted with a Bear Smart presentation to the Crowsnest Pass Municipal Council. The presentation was well received by council. They stated their support of the program and thanked Bear Smart for their efforts. During the month of April, Road Watch participated in the Grizzly Bear Intercept Feeding Program in the South Rockies Area/Pincher Creek/Front Range Canyons. The program, an Alberta S.R.D. Grizzly Bear, Carcass Relocation Project, is designed to mitigate Grizzly mortality. Road killed wildlife were strategically transported by helicopter to predetermined selected sites. The Local Coordinator was pleased to assist Fish & Wildlife in this critical endeavour. Recently, Rob and the CNP Bear Smart Committee members had the opportunity to assist Fish and Wildlife in processing a young Grizzly Bear from the Cardston area. The bear was tranquilized, measured, tagged with ear tags, implanted with a microchip, hair samples were taken, and Road Watch was able to help. This was a great experience and the bear was successfully relocated!



Road Watch had a display booth at the Crowsnest Pass Home and Auto Trade Show on May 6th and 7th^h 2011. Community members that expressed an interest in entering data on the website are encouraged to register on the Road Watch Website. Send Rob your contact info and R.W. I.D#, and you will be entered in a draw to win a pair of binoculars. Please indicate if you are interested in doing transect drives using the Otto Wildlife GPS Units that were displayed at the trade show. Given the substantial amount of ungulate carcasses on the highway this year, the trade show was timely. It generated a lot of community interest, and provided an opportunity for locals to voice their concerns about the volume of road kill this year. Rob noted that community members talked about being “disturbed, worried, and troubled” by what many of them referred to as “road carnage”. Additionally, locals said that they were seeing wildlife feeding on the railway tracks. Overall, the trade show was very successful, and a great place to connect with the CNP community about local wildlife movement and Road Watch in the Pass.

Also, Rob collaborated with the Crowsnest Pass Conservation Society to coordinate the Highway #3 Report Community Meeting, held on May 11. Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting! We continue to work with Volker Stevin to update mortality data and complement RW data to help decision makers and the community understand the location of wildlife/vehicle collision zones. In fact, information collected by RW participants was used in the H3 report. If you were not able to attend the meeting, copies of the report can be downloaded from the project website www.rockies.ca/crossroads.



This summer there have been quite a few deer fawn taken by people who think they have been abandoned. When their captors realize they are very difficult to care for they often call Fish and Wildlife. Rob and his wife, Loretta (a Road Watch volunteer, and Bear Smart committee member), have been involved in caring for and transferring some of these fawns to a rescue facility. People need to be reminded that when young fawns are discovered in the wild, their mothers are most likely foraging very close by, usually within 100metrers. Very young fawns just lay there still, as a defence mechanism against predators. People often think they are in distress, when they are not. The best thing to do is to leave them alone. Usually, fawns are only on their own if their mother’s have been hit by vehicles or have been killed.

Keep an eye out for different creatures this summer. There was a mink killed by a vehicle recently, and Raccoons have been spotted, both on, or near highway #3 in Bellevue.

Road Watch would like to thank all the volunteers that have contributed to the collection of critical wildlife crossing data, the community for their support at the Trade Show, and Loretta Schaufele and Jan Brigan for their volunteer assistance.