

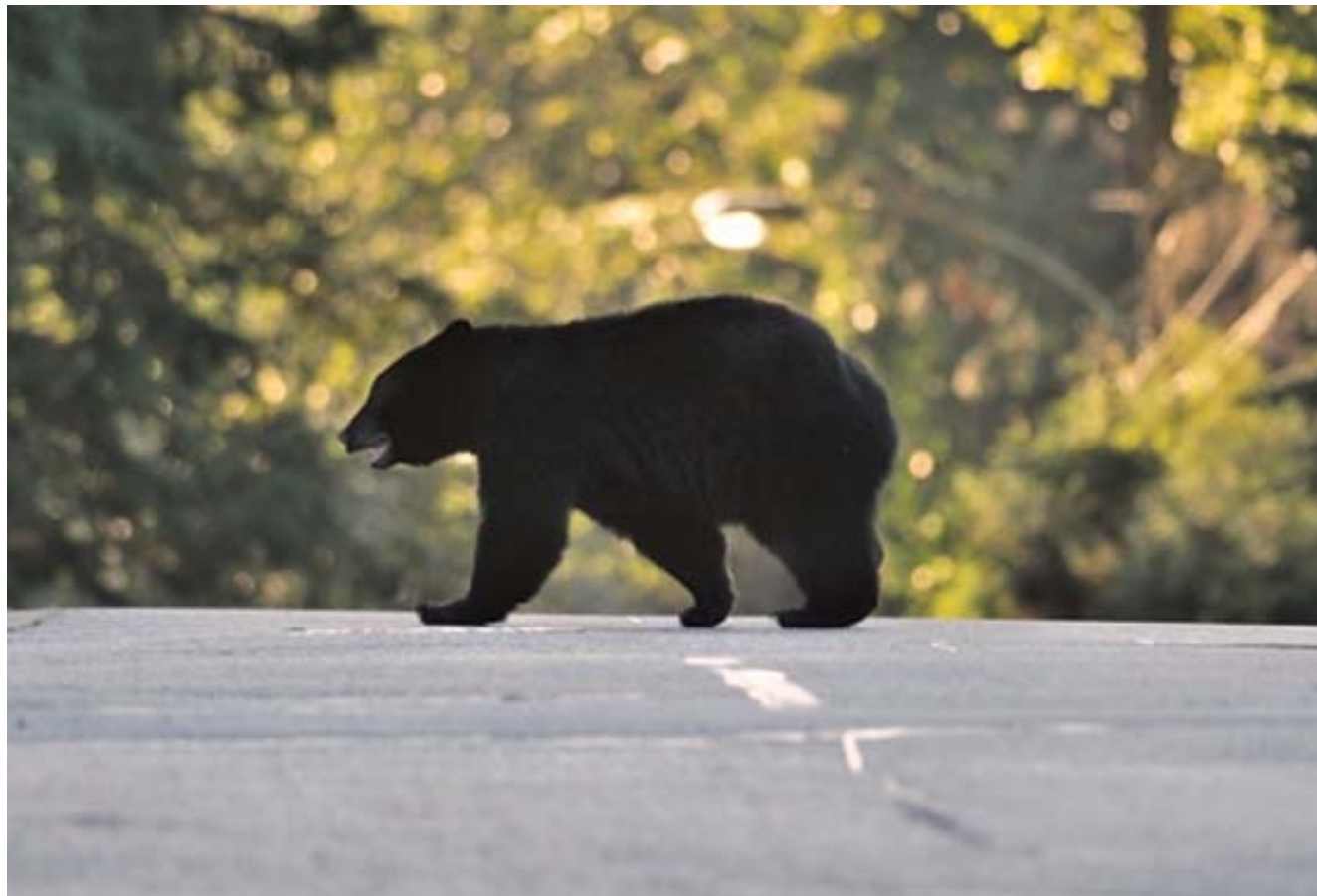
north shore news

Black bear killed in West Vancouver

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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A black bear, similar to the one shown here, has been shot by a conservation officer in West Vancouver. Photo file, North Shore News

Conservation officers have killed the first black bear of the season on the North Shore.

The bear had broken into a garage on the 200-block of Onslow Place, a side street sandwiched between the Capilano Golf and Country Club and Capilano River Regional Park Tuesday morning.

Homeowner Maria Bleszynski raced home from her medical practice in Surrey after her 91-year-old mother called in a panic to report the bear.

West Vancouver police arrived quickly and shooed the bear off the property using air

horns while conservation officers made their way to the scene.

The bear - a healthy, four-year-old male - was highly determined, according to conservation officer Kent Popjes.

"It broke open a deadbolted door on a garage. It ripped it right off its hinges, entered the garage and opened a freezer up and got some food out," Popjes said.

Popjes waited at the scene, knowing the bear would have to be killed.

"We've had a number of reports in that area of bears trying to break into garages and vehicles," he said. "It had done property damage and was quite a safety risk at that stage for re-entering buildings, possibly homes. There wasn't a lot of options. It wasn't a good candidate for relocation. ... There's a 99-per-cent chance if we move this bear, it's going to come back and repeat this behaviour."

About an hour later the bear returned to the scene and Popjes shot it.

There are other bears active in the area, including a mother with two cubs who have also been attempting break-ins who may be better candidates for relocation, he said.

Bear sightings have been down across the North Shore this year, according to Christine Miller, education co-ordinator for the North Shore Black Bear Society. But, she added, they may soon be picking up.

"Around now is when the young males will be dispersed from their home range. The mothers take the young males out farther so we might see a little bit more activity with young males trying to find their way somewhere," she said.

It is possible this is the same bear that broke into a vehicle parked on nearby Rabbit Lane in May after smelling some baked goods inside, Miller said.

West Vancouver police have had 15 bear-related calls for service since May, according to Const. Jeff Palmer, department spokesman.


Bleszynski said she is grateful for the prompt response from police and conservation officers.

"The response was immediate from the West Vancouver Police Department and the

conservation officer service," Bleszynski said. "I left my office suddenly. I had to cancel my patients. They dealt with this with amazing help and amazing support."

The incident underscores the need to keep attractants like food, garbage, fruit from backyard trees or bird feeders out of eyesight and nose-shot from the bears, Popjes said.

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This would mean no food or cooking in any home. Bet some wives are all for that!- cjk