

North Shore of yore was a bearless Eden

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Dear Editor:

I would like to echo the sentiment expressed by James R. Thomson in his July 29 letter (Bears Should Go Back to Blueberries, North Shore News). Mr. Thomson was challenging an earlier letter to the editor, Learn to Change Behaviour If You Live in Bear Country, submitted by Tracey Weldon July 13.

Tracey Weldon is advancing the oft-repeated myth that bears roamed throughout the forests of the North Shore where homes now exist.

I was born in the North Lonsdale area in 1932. In those days the hillside from the Capilano River east to Mountain Highway and north of the present day Upper Levels Highway was the personal playground of most boys living in North Lonsdale.

At that time, I would estimate the human population was maybe five per cent of what it is today. The area was a young boy's paradise, and our parents gave us the freedom to explore the forest without fear of bears or any other dangers.

Starting at age 10, for five years I delivered the afternoon Vancouver Sun on routes that took me by road and trail to the upper reaches of St. Georges Avenue and Prospect Road, as well as west on Queens Road to Mosquito Creek.

Many residents grew fruit trees and berries in their backyards. Yet, never once did I or my buddies ever come across a wild bear, even on hikes to the top of Grouse Mountain. For that matter, there were no raccoons, skunks, or crows to bother us either, just lots of beautiful little songbirds. The only bears I remember seeing were those in the zoo in Stanley Park and the one kept in a small cage at the north end of Capilano Road.

Let's get real. The bear population has grown and moved into our developed areas. It is the behaviour of bears rather than people that needs to be changed.

Gerry Scott North Vancouver

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