



SpiritBEAR
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2014



43 remote cameras provide us with photos, videos, and information about the animals that visit our sampling sites, including the species (over 15!), sex, number, and behaviour.



Spirit Bear Research Foundation - SBRF



Spiritbearresearch



Spirit Bear Research Foundation

Our Vision

- To advance **locally relevant** scientific knowledge of grizzly, black, and Spirit Bear populations, and the ecosystem that supports these populations, in Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation Territory.
- To support and assist with the development of **local scientific monitoring capacity** within the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation.
- To incorporate **perspectives, knowledge, and priorities** from the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation into the development and implementation of our scientific programs.

Growing Research Team

We were fortunate to have four youth interns join our team in 2014. Sierra Hall, Chantal Pronteau, Cole McKnight, and Charles Edgar brought boundless curiosity and enthusiasm to our research team and helped to ensure the season ran smoothly. We also hired Rosie Child as a part time Operations Manager to help us with administration and outreach. Krista Duncan, Christina Service, and Brandon Robinson complete our 2014 research team.

Field Research Update

This year the Nuxalk First Nation in Bella Coola joined the network of bear monitoring along the BC coast, which also includes the Heiltsuk First Nation and the Wuikinuxv First Nation. Together, we now monitor ~one third of the Great Bear Rainforest, an area almost twice the size of Haida Gwaii!



SBRF collected 1269 hair samples from 70 non-invasive hair snags throughout Kitasoo/Xai'xais Territory in 2014. This hair gives us valuable information about the individual identity (DNA), sex, species, stress levels, presence of white genes (in black bears), and even the diet of each individual detected. During 2014, 87 individual bears (63 black bears and 24 grizzly bears) were detected.



63
black bears



24
grizzly bears

Grizzlies on the Move

Recently, residents of Klemtu, Bella Bella, and beyond have reported novel sightings of grizzly bears on islands on the central coast. Combining this information with data from our remote cameras and DNA from hair snags, we were able to holistically document that grizzly bears are moving to islands, beyond their designated mainland habitat. With this expanded range comes a need to appropriately match habitat protection to include islands. SBRF is providing technical expertise in government to government negotiations to ensure this becomes a reality.



Community Engagement: In Theory and Practice

SBRF contributed to a paper entitled “Toward increased engagement between academic and indigenous community partners in ecological research” that outlines a framework for meaningful engagement with researchers and communities towards more effective conservation.



Outreach

We value outreach initiatives that give voice to our research and help to ensure the policy and management implications of our work are realized.

Media

Our work on grizzly bears moving to islands was featured on CBC and CFAX radio, The Tyee, The Austrian Tribune, and the Vancouver Sun. Our colleague and SBRF advisory board member Kyle Artelle’s work on grizzly bear management was covered in Nature and generated over 40 different news items online, on radio, on TV, etc.

Great Bear Film

Our research was featured in *Great Bear*, a film created by UBC Studios in collaboration with the Kitsoo/ Xai’xais and Heiltsuk First Nations.

This film has reached over 100,000 people and highlights the complex history, and importance of maintaining, local First Nations stewardship. Our bear monitoring program is one example of this effort by the Kitsoo/ Xai’xais First Nation to conduct research and promote conservation. You can watch it for free on Vimeo.

Researchers on the Move

If you live in Klemtu you might have noticed a helicopter flying around in May and June. Our helicopter-based sampling enabled us to access vast areas of mountainous habitat for the first time. This access gives us a better idea of where on the landscape bears are living and helps us monitor bear population numbers more accurately.



With Gratitude

We are grateful for all the support we receive! Our partnerships with the Kitsoo/Xai’xais Nation, Raincoast Conservation Foundation, and the University of Victoria Hakai-Raincoast Applied Conservation Science lab are foundational to our organization.

We would also like to thank:

Kitsoo Forestry Corporation, The Nature Conservancy, Tides Canada, and David Vernon. Thanks also to Kyle Breckenridge and Douglas Neasloss, and Rosie Child for Newsletter photographs.

Keep in Touch

Keep up to date with SBRF by following our Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram pages. We are excited to be announcing the launch of our new website early in 2015!

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