

SPIRIT BEAR RESEARCH FOUNDATION | 2015



Our Vision

- To advance **locally relevant** scientific knowledge of grizzly, black, and Spirit Bear populations, and the ecosystem that supports them, 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.

2015 in Review

This past year has come and gone and we want to share some highlights from 2015 with you. Our team has completed another successful year of bear research in Kitasoo/Xai'xais territory, collecting hair and remote camera footage from **over 70 research sites** that we set up in May and take down by fall. Travelling by boat and helicopter allows us to reach bears throughout their range, from estuaries to mountain tops. In addition to our research season, we also launched our **new website**, www.spiritbearfoundation.com, hosted a **community feast**, had our research highlighted in a number of media, and engaged with students at Kitasoo Community School, SEAS interns, and guests from around the world at Spirit Bear Lodge.

Visit our new website
spiritbearfoundation.com
to learn more about
SBRF, our research,
learn about job postings,
and meet our team
members, directors,
and advisors, both
past and present.



Two 2015 bear research sites

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.

Carnivore Conservation

We held public events in Vancouver (at Science World) and Victoria (at University of Victoria) in November, which over 400 people attended.



Doug Neasloss speaking at an SBRF event in Vancouver

Great Bear Sea Film

Our research is highlighted in this documentary about ecosystem-based management and marine planning, which was shown at the community feast in June.

BBC Wildlife

Check out the Media page on our new website to read this fantastic article by BBC as well other media highlights from this year.



The SBRF community feast in June

In the Community

We are grateful for all the interest and support SBRF receives from the community. We love sharing our research and findings in creative and fun ways. Our goal is to share our research beyond a university - to children and elders, in Klemtu and around the world.

Community Feast

In June, we hosted a community feast for over sixty people. Christina and Chantal shared research findings, reflections from the season, and requested community feedback on our research programs. Best of all, we all shared great company and a feast of local foods.

SEAS

We teamed up with the SEAS (Supporting Emerging Aboriginal Stewards) program this year, teaching the interns about our research and having them work with our team to collect hair samples and install and monitor our remote cameras.

Kitasoo Community School

Visiting the school was a highlight for our research team. This year Chantal and Christina gave a short presentation to students K-12, after which students got to apply their newly learned information to play a game that involved species identification using our remote camera footage. The students picked up species identification so quickly, we can't wait to hire some as interns in the upcoming years!

Spirit Bear Lodge

Klemtu welcomes hundreds of guests from around the world every year at Spirit Bear Lodge. We give research talks to groups at the lodge whenever we get a chance. We hope these guests return home inspired and full of knowledge about bears in Kitasoo/Xai'xais Territory.

Research Updates

We have been conducting this research program for a number of years and have now genetically identified **49 individual grizzly and 74 individual black bears** within Kitasoo/Xai'xais Territory. We work with researchers at the University of Victoria, and the Nuxalk, Heiltsuk, and Wuikinuxv Nations all conducting bear research in the same way. Together we are monitoring about one third of the Great Bear Rainforest.



A kermode (Spirit) bear and a black bear caught on SBRF remote cameras in 2015

Salmon & Bears

Our most recent analysis demonstrates how the **presence of grizzly bears results in black bears eating much less salmon**. This is important as the amount of salmon in bears diet is directly related to their body condition, the number and health of their cubs, and eventually, population health; the more the better!

We also map large-scale patterns of where and how much salmon bears eat throughout the territory. The results show **black bears eat much less salmon than grizzlies**, and that the amount of salmon blacks eat changes drastically year to year. We also compared how much salmon bears ate inside and outside of parks, to find that **parks do not capture areas of high female salmon consumption**.

Hair Snags

To identify individual bears, we set up **71 wire corrals** around groups of trees and place a scent inside each one to attract bears in the area. As bears enter or exit our site, a few strands of their shedding winter hair is snagged the wire, which is all we need. 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 bear detected.

Remote Cameras

This year we set up **43 remote cameras**, which capture photos and videos that provide us with additional information about the animals that visit our hair snags. This includes the species, sex, number, and behavior of these animals. In addition to bears, we sometimes see wolverines, cougars, wolves, and more!

Our Team

We were lucky to have a great research crew 2015. A student intern in 2014, Chantal Pronteau returned as a full time research technician this year. Robbie Duncan was hired as a student intern in 2015 and Tony Robinson came aboard as our research skipper. Christina Service & Rosie Child returned from Vancouver Island along with Ashley Stocks who also joined the team this year. Past employees Brandon Robinson and Krista Duncan also worked on call whenever we needed their help!

We're Hiring!

Job postings for the 2016 research season will be posted in March. Keep an eye out for the postings on our website, Facebook, and at the Band Office. We'll be looking for research technicians, student interns, and research skippers.



Robbie & Chantal disassembling a hair snag on Pooley Island

Grizzlies on Islands

Thanks to the help of community members, we have been documenting and tracking grizzly bears on islands. **This spring we will be conducting interviews** to stay up to date on the latest observations of grizzlies on islands.

Gratitude

We are so grateful to everyone who supports Spirit Bear Research Foundation, we couldn't do our work without you.

Thank you to the **community of Klemtu** for welcoming our out of town team members, supporting our youth interns and local team members, and attending SBRF events in town to learn about our research and to provide us with direction and community priorities.

We would also like to acknowledge our **volunteers** - everyone who helped put together the community feast in Klemtu & the Carnivore Conservation events in Victoria & Vancouver, as well as Marlie VanRoy and Daryl Dancer for analyzing remote camera footage.

Thanks to our **private donors** for investing in our vision and supporting our work. In addition to financial donations, we have also gratefully received donations of artwork, remote cameras and field gear, all of which directly benefit our research programs.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to foundation partners and donors including LUSH Cosmetics, University of Victoria, Raincoast Conservation, Wilburforce Foundation, Tides Canada, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Mountain Equipment Co-op, and The Conservation Alliance.

Stay in Touch

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Spirit Bear Research Foundation - SBRF



SpiritBearResearch



Left to right: Rosie Child, Robbie Duncan, & Chantal Pronteau at a research site in the alpine of Princess Royal Island