



Bear activity picks up at Tahoe

Bear activity lower than previous summers

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After a wet spring that kept bears in the backcountry, bruins are again making their rounds in Lake Tahoe neighborhoods in search of food.

California and Nevada authorities said 13 black bears have been euthanized so far this season after breaking into homes or causing other problems — 10 in California and three in Nevada.

Ann Bryant of the BEAR League said her bear advocacy group has been getting five to 10 calls daily about bear break-ins around Tahoe.

She blames the problem on tourists and residents who fail to stow garbage properly and fail to discourage bears from coming into neighborhoods.

Bryant said bears are becoming so bold that they're beginning to crawl under people's decks for use as daytime beds

The bruins also are starting to figure out how to turn door knobs, testing to see if doors are locked, she said.

"They're showing signs of being more intelligent than residents and visitors, and that's how we lose the battle," Bryant said, adding people should throw rocks, make a lot of noise and let bears know they're not welcome in neighborhoods.

On the Nevada side of the lake, bear activity is still relatively slow compared to past years, said Carl Lackey, a Nevada Department of Wildlife biologist.

He attributed the slowdown to a wet spring that produced a lot of natural food for bears, and the recession that has kept many tourists away from Tahoe

"It's picked up but nothing compared to past years," Lackey told Truckee's Sierra Sun newspaper.

But on the California side, bear activity started picking up in July, said Jason Holley, wildlife biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game.

"It's ramped up to be relatively busy with lots of calls," Holley said.

Nevada Gov. Jim Gibbons last week declared August as Bear Awareness Month in northern Nevada, and urged residents to take precautions to reduce human-bear conflicts.

Among other steps, Gibbons said residents should not stash their trash until the day of pickup and not leave their pets or pet food outside.

While a smaller number of human-bear problems have been reported in Nevada so far, there still have been some problem areas such as Caughlin Ranch residential area in Reno and Incline Village on Tahoe's north shore.