



'Burglarizing Bears' Tear Through Tahoe Cabins

Animals Hunt For Food Amid Fewer Water Supplies, Wardens Say

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SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. -- State wildlife biologists say they are getting as many as 20 calls a day of break-ins and burglaries from bears in and around the Lake Tahoe basin.

"You can have what we call a 'rogue' bear who hits 10 houses a night," California Fish and Game biologist Jason Holley said.

Ann Bryant of Tahoe's BEAR league said they are the "burglarizing bears."

With water supplies drying out in the Sierra, bear experts said the animals are getting bolder and cleverer in hunting for food.

On Sunday, Carol Leathers said a bear twisted the doorknob of her Tahoma cottage on Lake Tahoe's western shore.

"Once inside, he ate everything in the refrigerator. The ketchup, the mustard, the flour, everything. All that's left in my pantry are three bottles, including one filled with vinegar," Leathers said.

One wildlife group adds they've taken 50 reports of break-ins or burglaries in just the first six days of August.

Both state officials and Tahoe's BEAR league are urging Lake Tahoe residents and visitors to keep all doors and windows locked when not at home to make it as difficult for bears to get in. State biologists are also working to keep bears away from homes.

Fish and Game biologists are hopeful that in the future they will be able to use DNA testing to identify and better manage the issue of bears breaking into homes.

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