Bears in Buncombe

Dane Pedersen

Ashley Hobbs

FCC Bear Carts

- Bear carts available through FCC
- Purchase Option at $320
- Lease option at $10 additional per month
  - $28.65 basic service rate + $10.00 bear cart lease = $38.65 per month
- FCC currently has approximately 2,853 bear carts deployed
- Increase of 800 bear carts deployed yoy
- Manufacturer lead times with producing bear carts orders
- Average lead time from customer order is approx. 2 weeks to receive bear cart


Toter
VO237316


Credit: C.Davenport

Escalating Bear Behavior in Asheville & Buncombe County

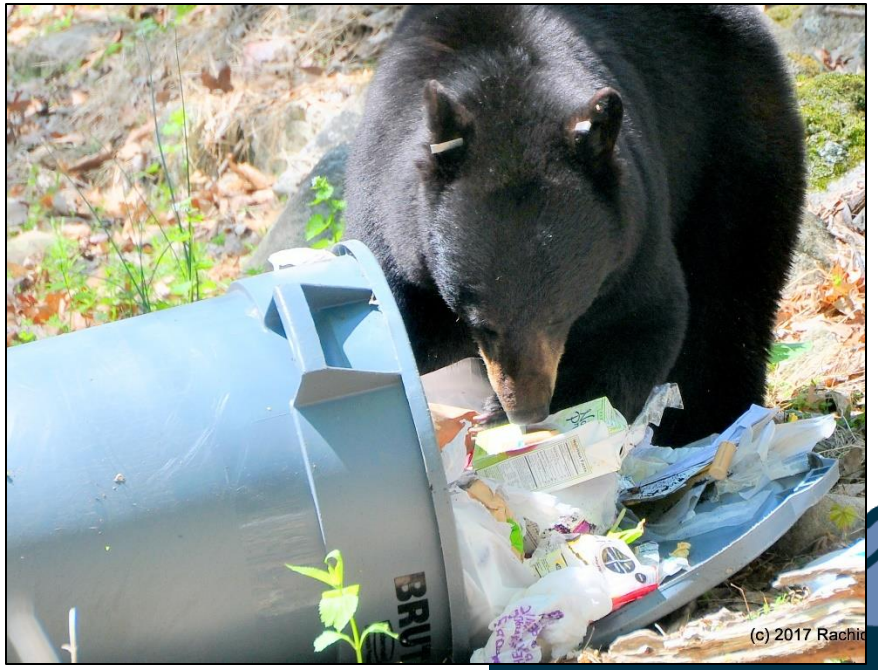
Ashley Hobbs

NCWRC Special Projects Biologist



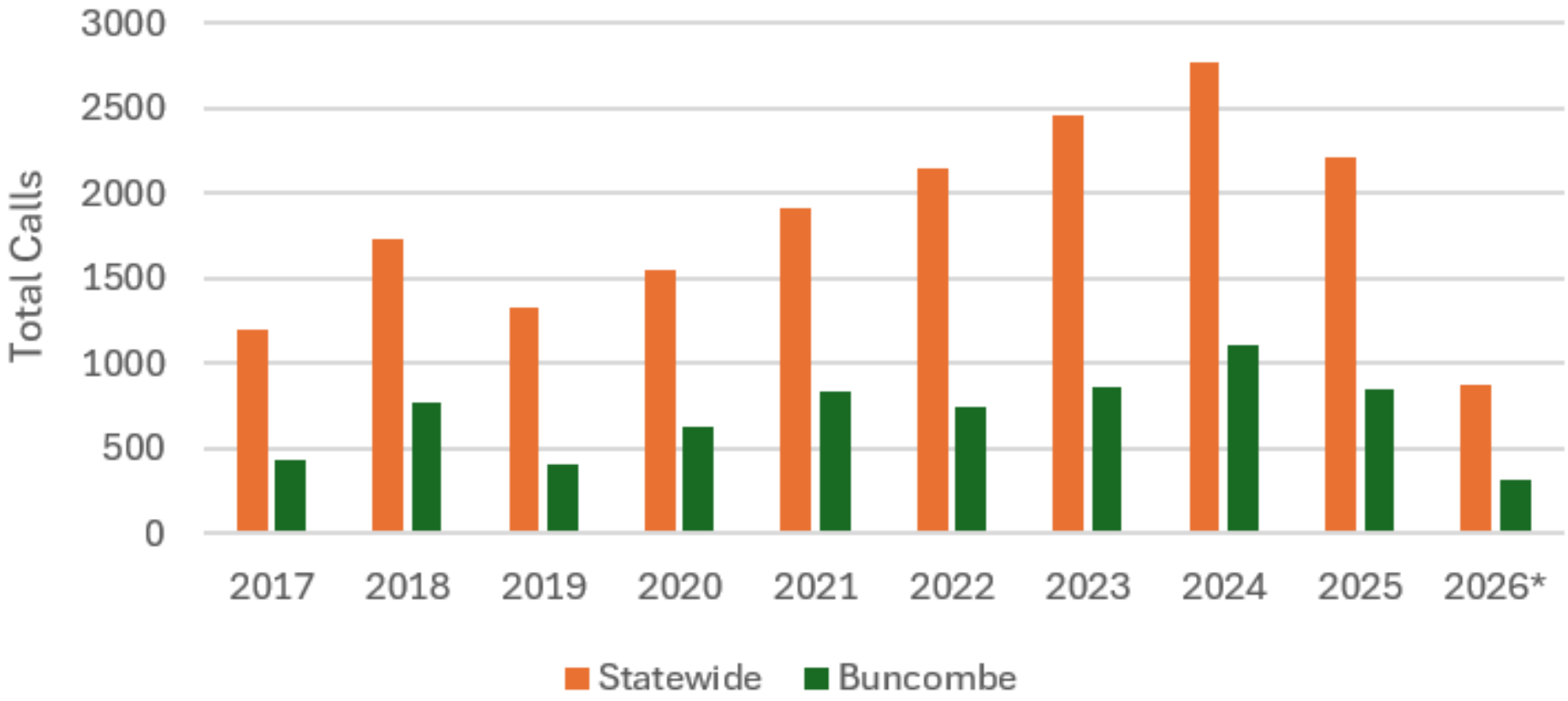






NORTH CAROLINA Wildlife RESOURCES COMMISSION

Annual Bear Calls to NC Wildlife Helpline 2017-present



Buncombe County: 2017-Present



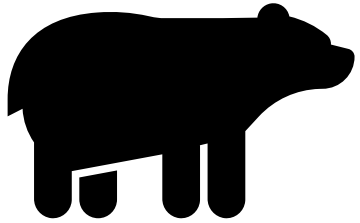
Average 38% statewide calls annually



11 humans injured



250+ entries to homes



30 bears dispatched for human safet

NCWRC staff have responded by:

- Providing immediate BearWise education
- Providing technical guidance on nonlethal techniques to deter bears
- Conducting aversive conditioning.
- Conducting site visits to homeowners feeding bears purposely and incidentally.





Since 2009, bears have made physical contact with humans **11 times in Buncombe County.** In contrast, in the other 99 NC counties, bears have made contact 8 times since 2007.

abc13 NEWS | NEWS | WEATHER | NEWS 13 INVESTIGATES | COMMUNITY | MONEY

Bear that injured resident in Buncombe County will be put down: officials

by Marisa Sardonia & Ruby Annas | Tue, August 18, 2026 at 10:56 PM
Updated Wed, August 19, 2026 at 8:58 PM



FILE - A bear in western North Carolina. (Photo: WLOS Staff)

What does NCWRC recommend?

- ✓ Wildlife feeding ordinance
  - Continue to enforce & communicate with public
- Consistent BearWise outreach by the County
  - Promote NC Wildlife Helpline as go-to contact for bear concerns
- Expand bear-resistant cart program
  - More bear-resistant carts
  - Encourage retrofit options
  - Education & communication

NORTH CAROLINA Wildlife RESOURCES COMMISSION

Wildlife
NC WILDLIFE HELPLINE
HELPING PEOPLE SOLVE WILDLIFE PROBLEMS

Why does trash matter? – Florida Study

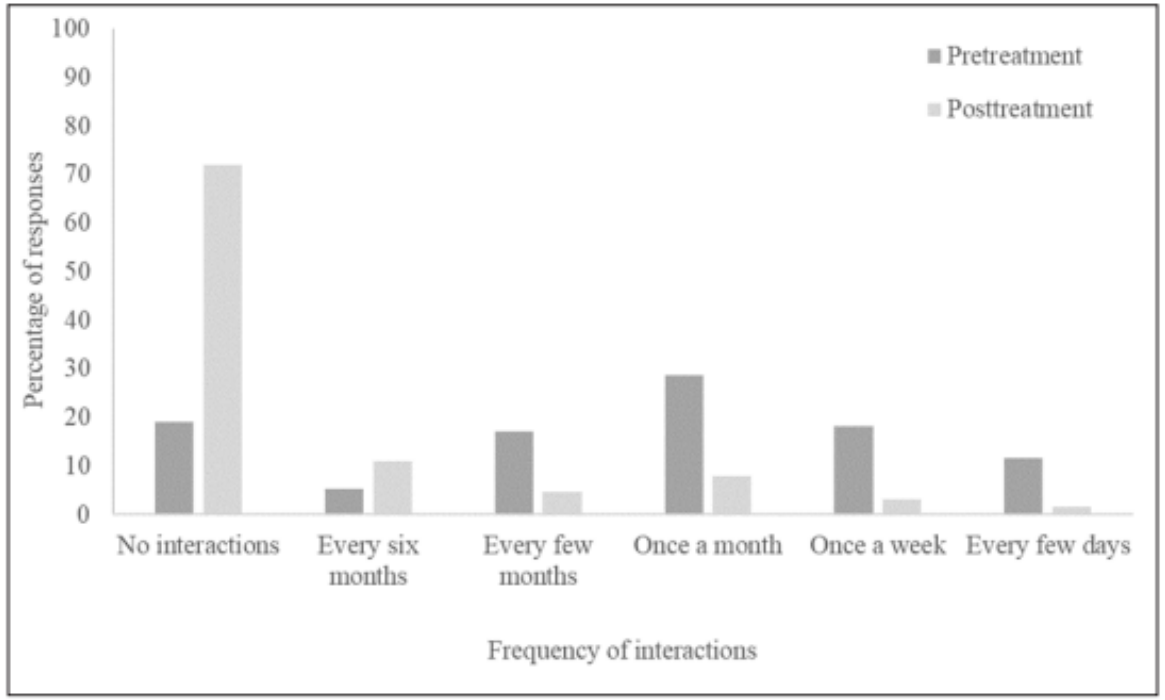


Figure 2. Percent frequency of human–bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) interactions from combined surveys in 2 residential neighborhoods within an urban bear ordinance zone in Seminole County, Florida, USA, for 1 year before (pretreatment) and 1 year after (posttreatment) receiving bear-resistant garbage cans in 2017.

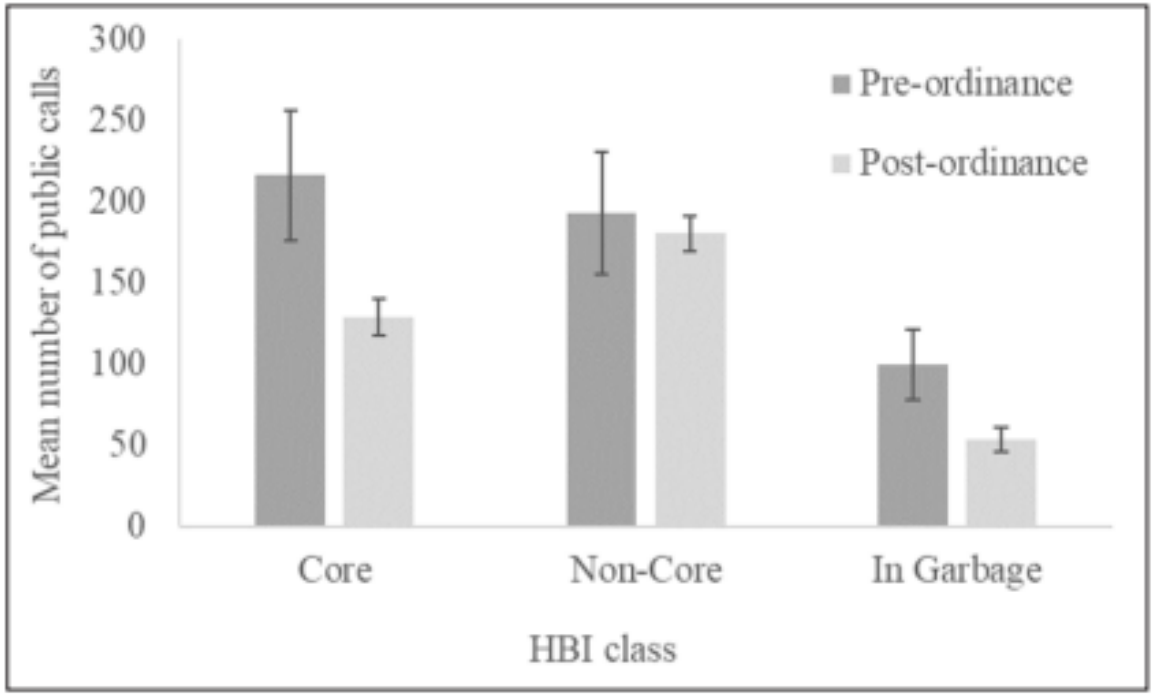


Figure 4. Mean (± standard error) number of human–bear (Ursus americanus floridanus) interactions (HBI) categorized as core HBI (determined to be conflicts with bears) and non-core HBI (general observations of bears in the area) that were summarized from public calls to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for 5 years before (pre-ordinance) and 5 years after (post-ordinance) an urban bear ordinance zone was established in 2016 within Seminole County, Florida, USA. In garbage (a core HBI) was also shown separately being a primary management concern.

NORTH CAROLINA Wildlife RESOURCES COMMISSION

Barrett, Mark A.; Barrett, Sarah E.; Telesco, David J.; and Orlando, Michael A. (2023) "Human–Black Bear Interactions and Public Attitudinal Changes in an Urban Ordinance Zone," Human–Wildlife Interactions: Vol. 17: Iss. 1, Article 10.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.26077/f546-9ddd

Why does trash matter? – Colorado Study

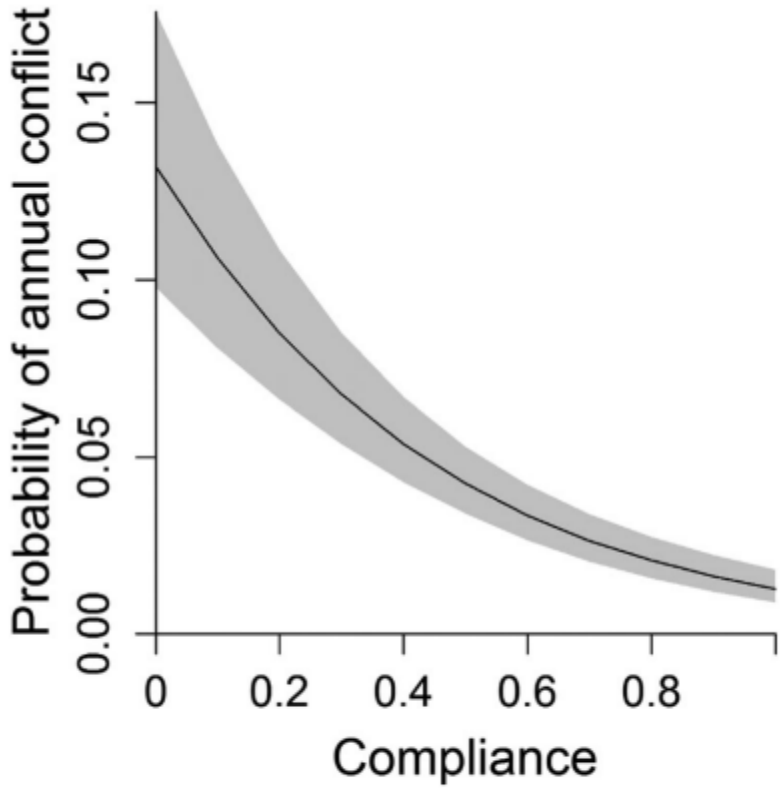


Figure 3. Annual probability of a black bear-related trash conflict being observed at an individual residence on the morning of trash pick-up (Jul–Sep) based on the proportion of homes within the city block that complied with a city ordinance requiring residents to secure their garbage from wildlife in Durango, Colorado, 2013–2016.

Johnson, H.E., Lewis, D.L., Lischka, S.A. and Breck, S.W. (2018), Assessing ecological and social outcomes of a bear-proofing experiment. Jour. Wild. Mgmt., 82: 1102-1114. https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.21472

Why does trash matter? – Asheville Study

Table 4. Trash and recycling cart spills outcomes by retrofit, 2021-2023.

	No Retrofit		R1		R2		B		Total
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	
Success (cart contents not breached)	90	13.7%	13	2.0%	14	2.1%	29	4.4%	146
Failure (cart contents breached)	484	73.6%	8	1.2%	9	1.4%	11	1.7%	512
Total	574	87.2%	21	3.2%	23	3.5%	40	6.1%	658

Table 5. Cart spills observed on waste collection vs. non-waste collection days, 2021-2023.

	Trash Spill		Recycling Spill		Total
	n	%	*n*	%	
Collection day	121	56.5%	18	8.4%	139
Non-collection day	61	28.5%	14	6.5%	75
Total	182	85.0%	32	15.0%	214

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