

Bear found in Incline Village killed by wildlife officials

By Anne Knowles

A male black bear identified by the Nevada Department of Wildlife as the animal who ripped siding off an Incline Village home last month was caught and euthanized on Wednesday.



The male bear captured and euthanized by NDOW on March 14, according to the BEAR League.
Photos/BEAR League

NDOW discovered the bear after responding to a call it received from an individual in Incline Village the morning of March 14. NDOW officials tranquilized the bear and then positively identified it based on distinctive markings and patterns of behavior gleaned from accounts of witnesses to the incident in February, according to Chris Healy, spokesman for NDOW in Reno.

He declined to say how many people saw the bear rip siding off a home last month, but Healy said the bear trapped and put down Wednesday was positively identified by several people, including an NDOW biologist and people living in the Incline Village neighborhood.

“We are totally confident we identified the bear,” said Healy.

Soon after the incident last month, NDOW trapped another male bear and released it because the agency believed the animal it was looking for was a female based on sightings of a mother with two cubs in the area.

Advocates for non-lethal handling of bears say the department trapped the wrong bear again, and killed it.

Ann Bryant, executive director of BEAR (Bear Education Aversion Response) League in Homewood says she believes the bear seen peeling siding off the house was a female. She says there have been sightings of a male bear rummaging through garbage in the area, but that bear has been chased into another location now and is not the bear captured by NDOW.

Bryant says the garbage-trawling bear is about 2 years old and weighs about 150 pounds, while the bear captured yesterday by NDOW was about 3 years old and 250 pounds.



A male bear
seen
rummaging
for garbage
in Incline

Village has
been chased
away,
according to
BEAR League.

“And the coloration is all different,” she said.

Bryant thinks the bear euthanized by NDOW was lulled out of hibernation by the traps set by the department.

NDOW’s Healy says the department is under fire for doing its job. He says that in 15 years NDOW has captured 900 bears and euthanized about 10 percent of them for public safety concerns.

“What do they want us to do if there is a wild bear?” Healy said. “These are dangerous situations made worse by amateurs.”

Healy says Incline Village residents should be more concerned about stricter garbage collection ordinances since it is garbage that attracts the bears.

“Blaming us is like blaming the guy who cleans up after the circus parade,” said Healy.

BEAR League’s Bryant concedes that garbage ordinances could be better enforced but says that is not the answer. The problem, said Bryant, are people who are afraid of the bears and interested only in killing them, not managing them.

“It’s another notch in their belt,” said Bryant. “And NDOW feeds into it and caters to them.”