Biologist Calls Recent Bear Sightings 'Unusual'

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Not all bears choose to hibernate during the winter -- a fact which has been very evident in Kodiak the last few weeks. A handful of bears have been spotted just outside of town, in Bells Flats and out toward Monashka Bay. Kodiak Fish and Game biologist Larry Van Daele said it’s not uncommon for bears to come out for short periods of time during the winter, but this year’s sightings are definitely unusual.

-- (Bears Awake 1 :26 “I guess there’s no such thing … I honestly don’t know.”)

Van Daele said his best guess attributes the behavior to Kodiak’s mild winter.

-- (Bears Awake 2 :17 “And they had food all the way ... just be guessing.”)

He said he’s heard of a couple single bears lingering around in Bells Flats and Monashka Bay area, along with a sow and a single cub spotted between the Kodiak airport and Gibson Cove. Despite acting lethargic, Van Daele said people still need to stay away from those bears.

-- (Bears Awake 3 :19 “One thing about even a … in the summer time.”)

Van Daele said pregnant female bears usually go into hibernation around October, and November or December is when other bears will. He said residents can expect more bears to be out in the coming months as

the ones that did go to sleep come out of their dens around April. Sows and cubs don’t usually come out until June. In general, Van Daele said he isn’t too worried about the lingering bears because they are still finding food.

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