

Tahoe bears finding human garbage

By Colin Lygren, KOLO-TV

This year's dry winter could mean an active season for black bears in higher elevations, according to wildlife officials.

Evidence of what's to come was seen Thursday morning on Palmer Court in Incline Village.

A mom and two cubs reportedly broke through a garage door in search of food. This is the second time the bears have broken into that house in eight days. Neighbors say the homeowners repeatedly leave garbage in the their garage.

"If it is up to us, if we move into bear country, we need to take care of this area including the animals," said neighbor Carolyn Stark.

Years ago, bears did not see humans as a food source. But a series of drought years reduced their food supply. They discovered garbage as a food source.

Nevada Wildlife officials say dry conditions this year and last mean more bears will be in search of food.

"We are sure that we are going to have a pretty good sized nuisance bear year, because of the lack of natural foods. The bears will turn and look towards humans and human garbage as a source of food and that will create conflict," said Nevada Wildlife spokesman Chris Healy.

In addition to garbage; compost bins, bird feeders, and pet food attract bears.

Residents in bear country are asked to take preventative measures. If bears become too comfortable with humans, they

can become dangerous and are often killed by wildlife officials.