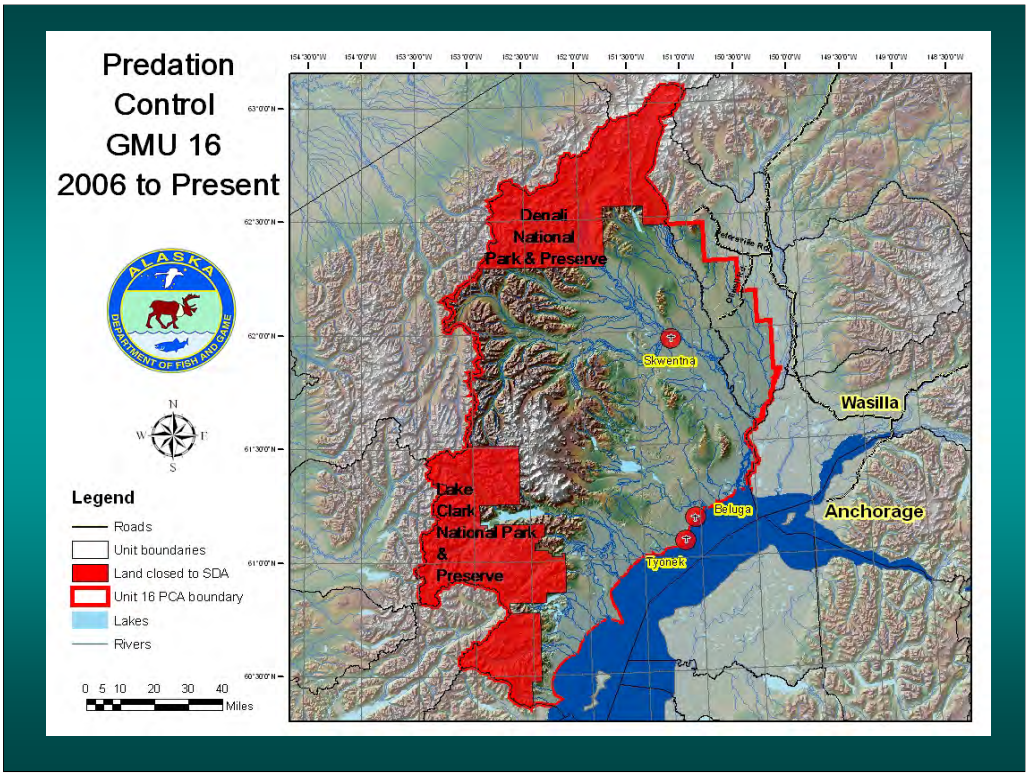
Predator Control in Unit 16

Before we begin the proposal presentations related to predator control, I will present the annual Intensive Management program update and provide some background information about the predator control programs currently in place. We will also have Mark Keech and Bruce Dale present some information on related research in GMU 19D and current research conducted in 16B.



This is the map of the current Predator Control Area in Unit 16. It includes a majority of unit 16B and western portions of unit 16A. Unit 16B contains large portions of Denali National Park on the north end of the unit and Lake Clark National Park on the south end of the unit. These areas are off-limits for predator control and also provide some refugia for bears and wolves that move in and out of the unit. It should be noted that the portions displayed on the map are very small portions of the larger park units adjacent to the game management unit.

The red portions of the map include both preserve and “hard Park” lands – that is there are portions of these lands that are closed to all hunting, some to rural subsistence only, and others to general season hunting and trapping. All park lands are currently off-limits to any control activities.

Unit 16 PCA Wolf Harvest & Statistics

Year	Fall Estimate	Harvest and SDA	Spring Estimate	Population objective
2004-05	180-200	115	65-85	22-45 (16B)
2005-06	85-114	42	43-72	22-45 (16B)
2006-07	98-145	47	51-98	30-60 (16)
2007-08	105-113	33	72-80	30-60 (16)
2008-09	83-111 *	23 *	?	30-60 (16)

* Reported as of 3/5/2009

This slide shows the 5-year reported wolf take, population estimates, and population objectives for the GMU 16 Predator Control Area (PCA); note here that the PCA was expanded for the 2006-2007 season to allow for the take of wolves that prey on 16B moose that spend time in 16A and/or wolves that spend time in both units. The population objective for the PCA was changed in 2006-2007 to reflect the objective for all of GMU 16 as described in the Wolf Management Report. An additional 6 wolves have been taken outside of PCA in Unit 16A this season. Also, 32 of 37 permitted pilots have flown 140 total days so far this season.

Unit 16 Black Bear Control Program

- **Black Bear Control Permits issued to licensed residents**
- **No bag limit and no closed season**
- **Allow for up to four bait stations per control permit**
- **Allow for the taking of cubs or sows with cubs**
- **Permittees may take black bears the same day they have flown, provided that they are at least 300 feet from the airplane**
- **Raw hides, tanned hides, or skulls may be sold with an ADFG issued permit to sell as long as the sale tag remains attached**

Contrast DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CONTROL AND GENERAL HARVEST REGS

General Season regulations in 16 include 3 bears / no closed season / no sows with cubs or cubs

(except w/in 1 mile of the mouth of Wolverine Creek)

Black Bear Control since Fall 2007 …….

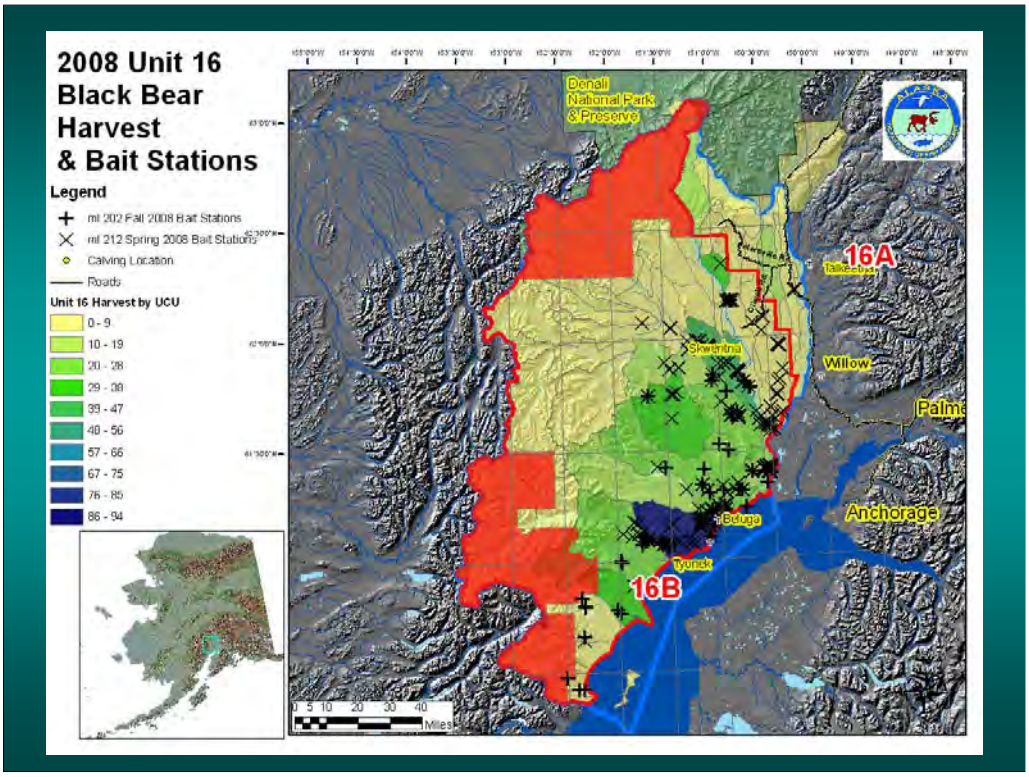
- Issued 283 ML202 Control Permits - Fall 2007
- Issued 487 ML212 Control Permits - Spring 2008
- Issued 233 ML202 Control Permits – Fall 2008
- Tracking numbers of bears taken complicated
  - Male or Female, adult, yearling, COY
  - By GMU (16B,16A) and PCA (inside, outside)
  - Taken on general hunting license or Control Permit
  - Over bait or other method (includes SDA w/Control Permit)
  - Sale Permit issued or not requested
- Requires cooperation of DWC in Anchorage, Soldotna, and Homer
- Reviewing sealing reports from taxidermists and other fur-sealers
- Assistance from Mike Harrington, Lynn Delane, and Sean Farley

Black Bear control in the unit 16 PCA began in July of 2007. Fall 2007 was the first permit period – ML202 – 283 control permits were issued

Spring 2008 was the first spring period – 487 permits were issued – control bait permits were issued for a majority of these control permits;

Administration of this control program has been complicated and challenging given the volume of interest and complicated regulations.

The cooperation of the Anchorage, Soldotna, and Homer offices has been critical along with the help of Anchorage staff including Mike Harrington, Natalie Weber, Lynn Delane, Sandy McIntosh, and Sean Farley. Recently the assistance of research staff Bruce Dale, Nick Demma, Earl Becker, and John Crouse has been important to evaluating the current program and planning for future expanded methods.



This map shows the relative concentration of bait stations and harvest during Spring 208 and Fall 2008

Note the heavy concentration of bait stations and harvest between Tyonek and Beluga

Recent Bear Harvest and Take

2005-2006	Unit 16 total black bear harvest (General Hunt harvest only)	235
2006-2007	Unit 16 total black bear harvest (General Hunt harvest only)	414
* Mar 2007	BOG – Approved Black Bear Control *	
2007-2008	Unit 16 total black bear take (Gen Hunt and Control take combined)	501
Fall 2008	Unit 16 total black bear take (Gen Hunt and Control take combined)	121

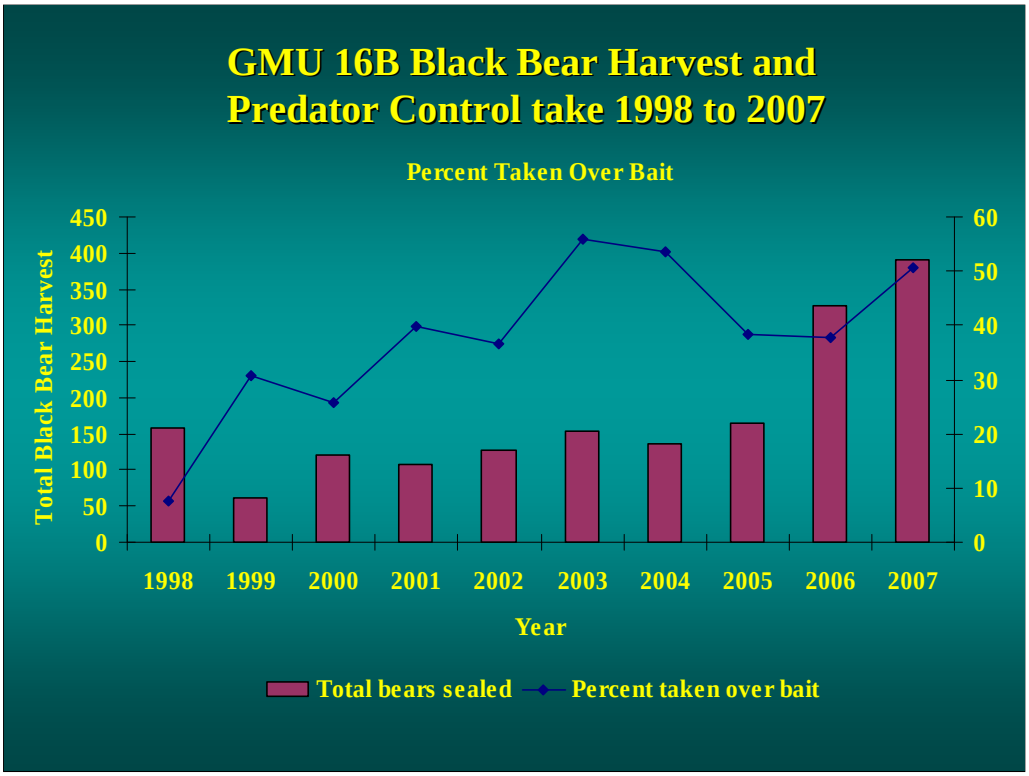
Harvest went up substantially in Spring 2007 – we believe in response to the Board's attention to Black Bear numbers and the approval of a Black Bear Control program for GMU 16. Control did not begin until Fall 2007, yet there was a 76% increase in harvest from the 2005-06 to 200607 Regulatory year.

Harvest in 16B has continued to show 20-30% females taken with adult males largely making up the harvest. The harvest in 16A has shown over 40% female.

Eighteen cubs were reported taken so far in the GMU 16 Black Bear Control program (8 Spring 2008, 10 Fall 2008)

This slide shows some of the results of the first year's black bear take in the GMU 16 Black Bear Control program.…of the 501 bears reported taken during the first full year of the program, there were 338 boars and 154 females. Also, note that the take of bears was predominantly sport harvest. During Fall 2008, 121 black bears were reported taken by hunters and predator control permittees (including 10 COY).

So how does the control program compare to historic harvest.....? GO TO NEXT SLIDE



As you can see there has been a dramatic increase in black bear take. Proportionally, bait hunting as a method wasn't generally preferred any more than in the recent past.

Given the concentration of bear baiting locations and harvest in some UCU's, we expect to see localized reductions in calf mortality in the next few years, however recovery in the Unit 16 moose population is expected to take some time. Mark Keech and Bruce Dale will talk about this shortly.

Bear Management Objectives for GMU 16

- **Maintain a black bear population largely unaffected by human harvest**
- **3-year average harvest > 270 black bears (45 in 16A, >225 in 16B) with > 30% being female**

Black Bear Population Estimates

16A	**400 - 500**
16B	**2500 - 3000**

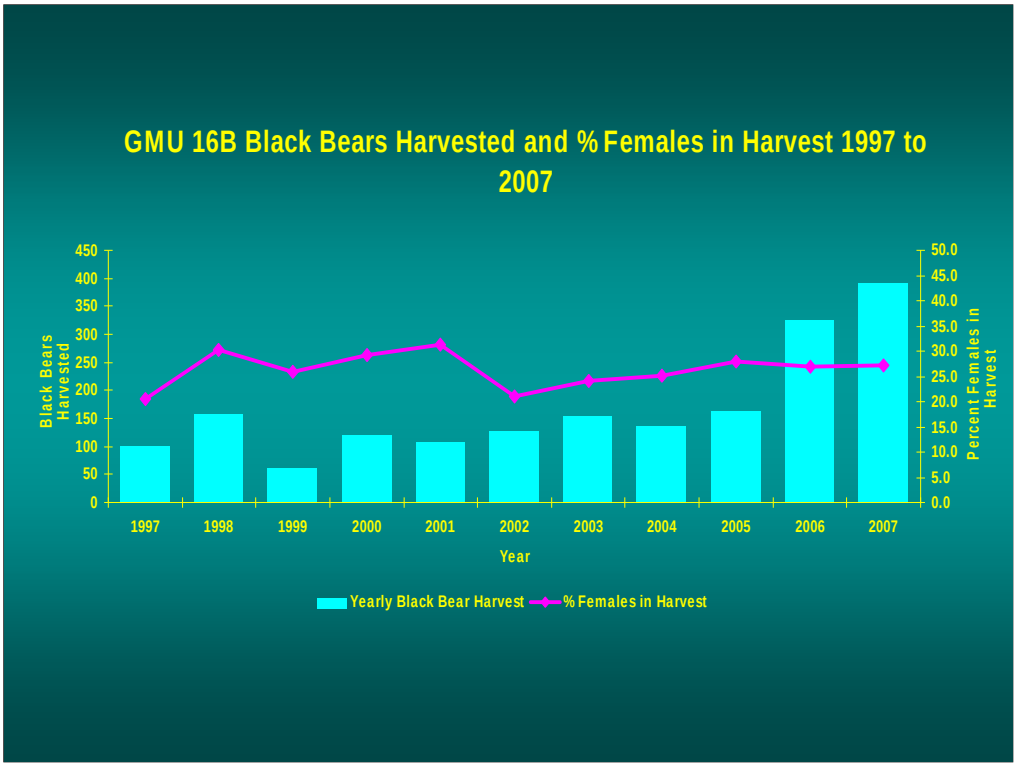
So, how are we doing relative to the Black Bear management objectives for GMU 16 …. READ OBJECTIVES.

These recently updated population estimates are based on line-transect bear surveys conducted by Earl Becker in GMU 16 and surveys conducted in Lake Clark National Park just southwest of Unit 16B

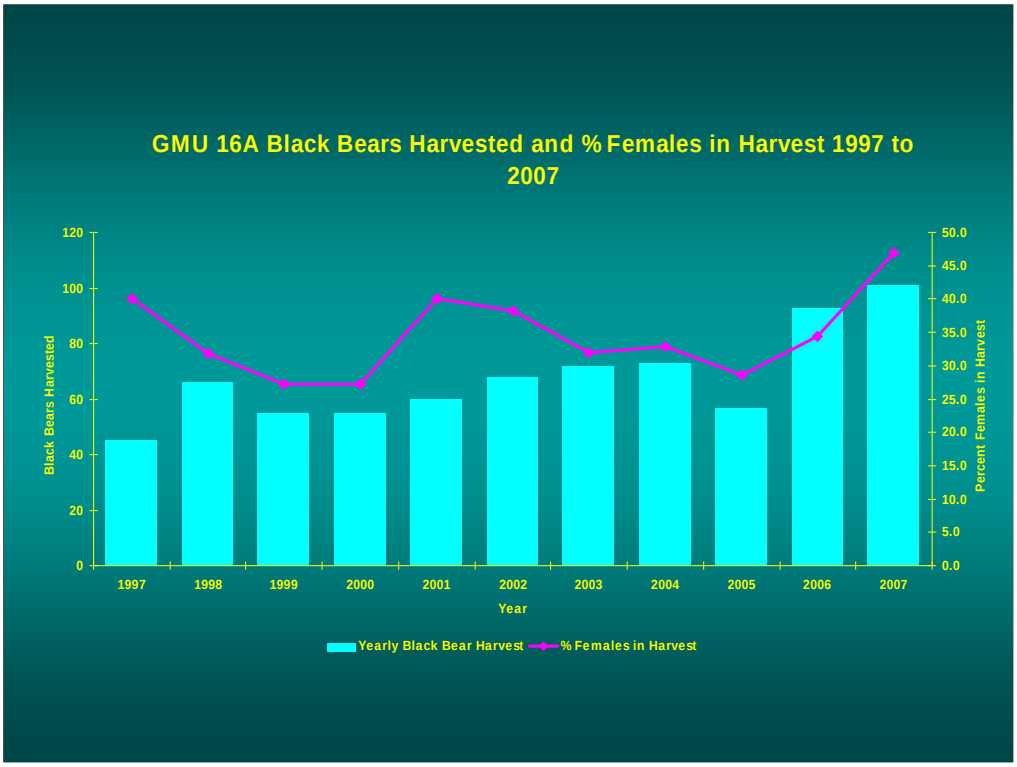
Its noteworthy that the most recent three-year average total take of black bears in GMU 16 has exceeded 270 black bears.

(this is shown in the following two slides….)

(Here I would like to note that the three-year average harvest of female brown bears in the unit is currently 38 females.)



The harvest of black bears has increased significantly over the past couple of years in Unit 16B while the percent of females in the harvest has remained the same. It is still low relative to the management objective.



While the total harvest of black bears in 16A is much lower than in 16B the percentage of females in the harvest in 16A has been increasing. With a population estimate of 400 to 500 bears a harvest of 100 bears would be 20 to 25% of the population. This could be reflected in the higher proportion of females in the harvest. Harvest objectives for this subunit are currently being met.

It is early in the Black Bear control program, but we are hopeful that we are beginning to see the effect of the increased effort and take.