

Region I Black Bear Management Update



ALASKA BOARD OF GAME

Sitka - January 2013

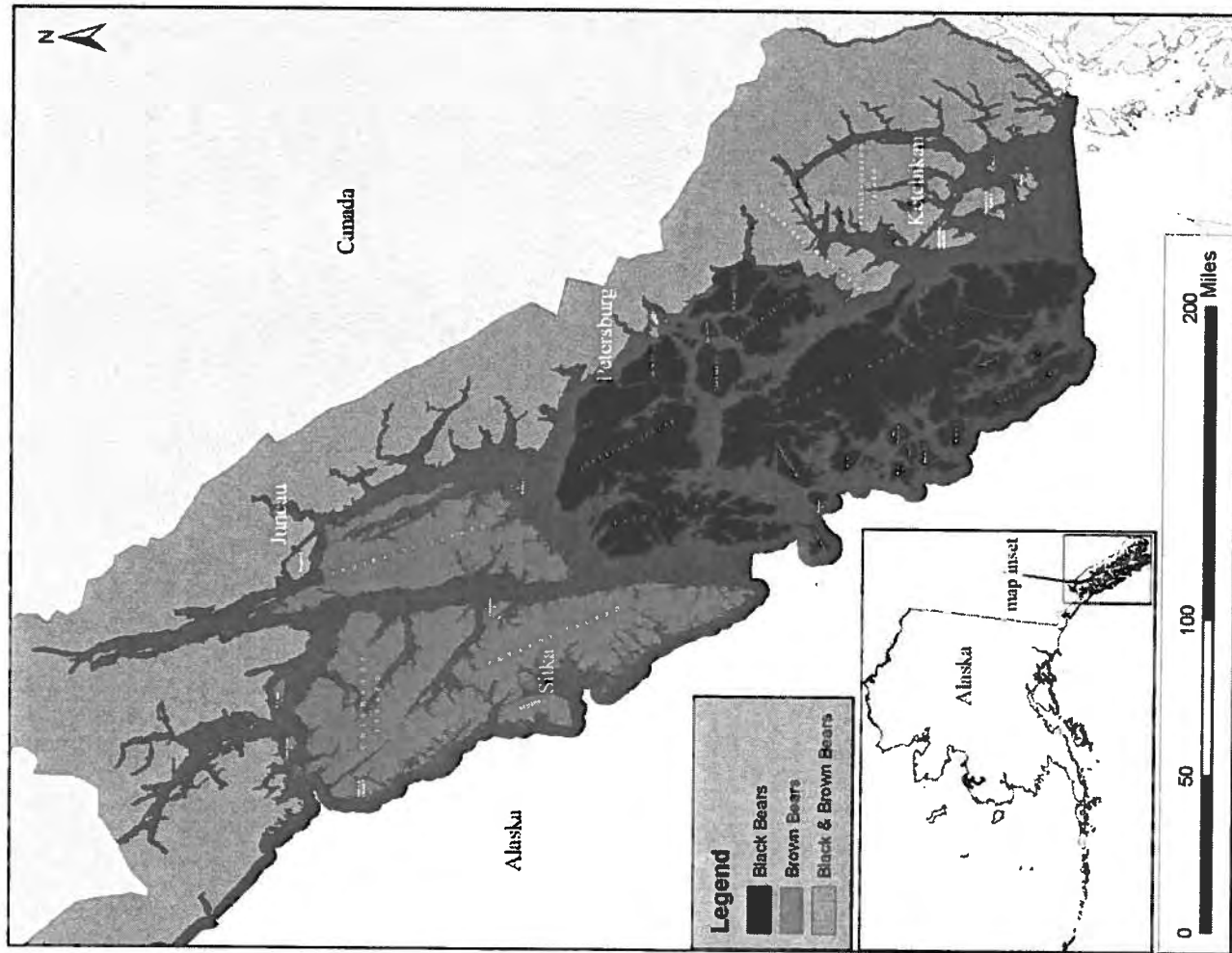
(Neil Barten, Management Coordinator)

Staff Report

Presentation Outline

- **Black bear distribution in Southeast Alaska**
- **Brief review of Southeast Alaska black bear concerns pre-2010 board meeting**
- **Board of Game actions, 2010**
- **USFS role in Black Bear Management**
- **Black Bear Management Working Group**
- **Progress with implementing decisions from 2010 Board of Game meeting**

Black and Brown Bear Distribution within Region I

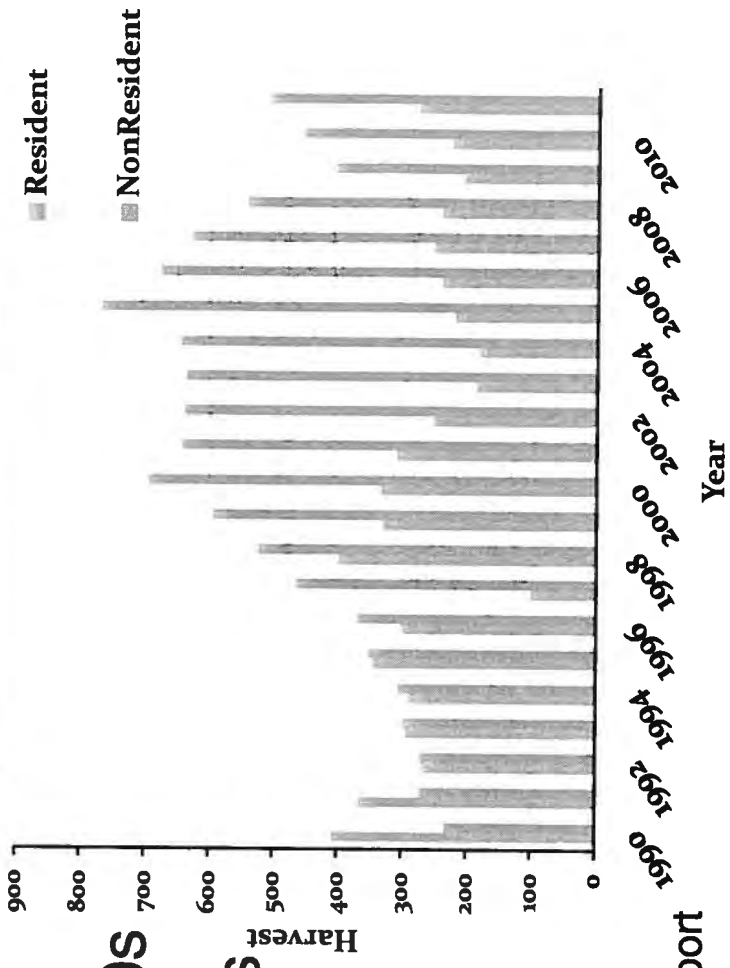


Black Bears in Southeast Alaska

- Highly prized trophy
- Multiple values for bears: trophy, subsistence, viewing
- Density estimates as high as 4 bears/mile²
- Harvest escalated in late 1990s
- Hunters, guides, and residents concerned that bear numbers are declining in some areas
- ~ 75% non-resident harvest



Region 1 Black Bear Harvest By Residency



Main factors thought to be affecting declining black bear harvest

- Hunter effort and selectivity
- Economics: hunters traveling to Alaska
- Forest management
- Wolf predation on bears



Staff Report

Board of Game 2010

- Black Bear management concerns generated 20 proposals across the region
- The main issues were reoccurring from previous board cycles
 - Suspected over harvest in some areas had impacts on hunters and viewers
 - High nonresident harvest

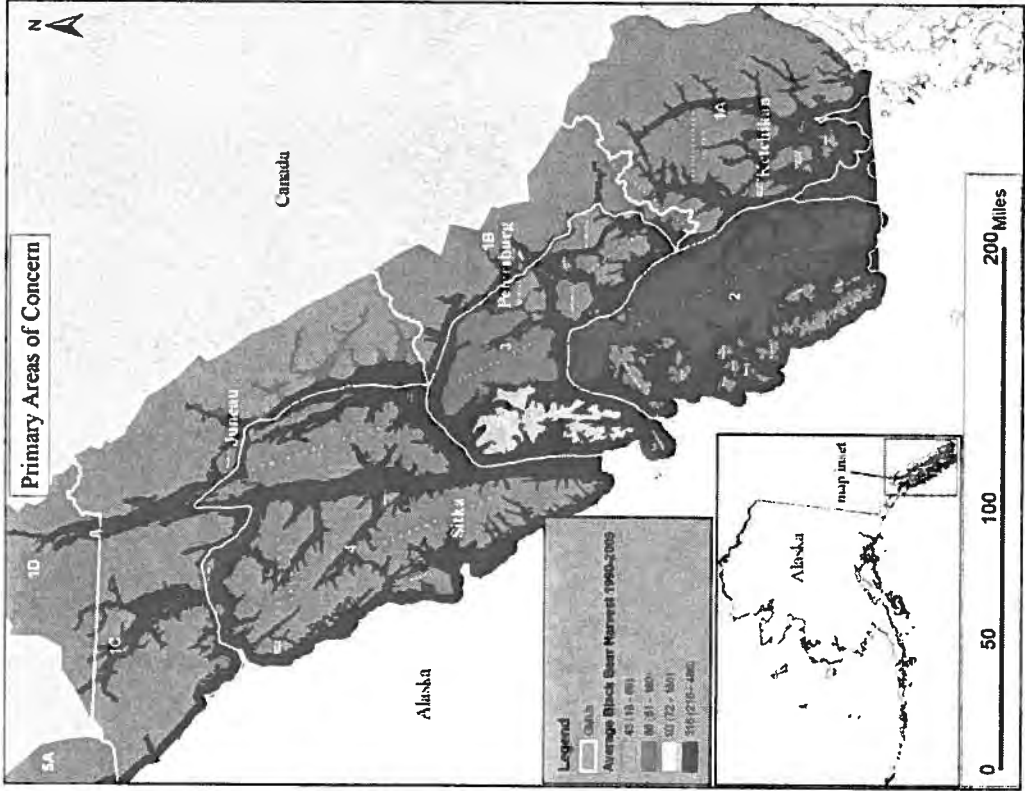
Board of Game 2010

(2 main outcomes on black bear mgmt)

- 1) A proposal was passed that required unguided nonresident hunters to apply for a draw permit to hunt black bears in Units 1, 2 and 3
- 2) The board encouraged the USFS to work with the department to limit hunting guides to a set number of hunts/year
 - This number of hunts would equal their yearly average during 2007-2009

Black bear draw hunts in Units 1-3

Drawing Permits Available
(10 hunt areas: 11 hunts)



Black Bear

Hunt Maps available on our web site at <http://hunt.alaska.gov>

- A black bear hunting tag is required in all hunt areas listed below.
- The bear tag is one bear and a log book is one bear except units 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H, 1I, 1J, 1K, 1L, 1M, 1N, 1O, 1P, 1Q, 1R, 1S, 1T, 1U, 1V, 1W, 1X, 1Y, 1Z, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.
- The skill minimum and maximum for each hunt area is listed in the table below.
- If successful or you did not hunt, you must return your completed hunt report within 15 days of close of season.
- No resident hunter hunting without a registered guide and bow or crossbow permit.

If under-subscribed, information about these permits will be posted online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> when available. Under-subscribed drawing hunts are hunts that had fewer applicants than available permits.

Game Management Unit Area	Hunt No.	Number of permits	Season Dates	2013	2014	Additional Requirements and Information
1A	DLD16	75				Hunt Area Unit 1A
1B	DLD17	24				Hunt Area Unit 1B
1C North	DLD18	10	Sept. 1 thru June 30			Hunt Area: That portion of Unit 1C east of the Haines Borough boundary in Lynn Canal, from the South bank of Tahliktah and the Tahliktah River to the US-Canadian border, then north to the Unit 1C/D boundary at Eldred Rock.
1C South	DLD19	10				Hunt Area: That portion of Unit 1C from the south bank of Tahliktah and the Tahliktah River to the US-Canadian border, then south to the Unit 1C/D boundary at Cape Fairbank.
1C West/Border	DLD20	24				Hunt Area: That portion of Unit 1C west of the Haines Borough boundary in Lynn Canal, but not including lands within Glacier Bay National Park (Glaikah Targah).
1D	DLD21	26				Hunt Area Unit 1D
2	DLD27	30		Sept. 1 - Dec. 31		Hunt Area Unit 2
3	DLD28	80			Jan. 1 - June 30	Hunt Area Unit 3
4	DLD29	40				Hunt Area Unit 4
5	DLD30	80			Sept. 1 thru June 30	Hunt Area Unit 5
6	DLD31	48				Hunt Area Unit 6

Black bear draw hunts in Units 1-3

(Permits Awarded)

- With lag time associated with implementing a draw hunt, the 1st draw permits were made available fall 2012
- Implementation of a new management strategy often takes the public time to understand and fully embrace
- Of 433 permits available in the 10 management areas, only 87 hunters applied (20% of permits issued)
- Through the undersubscribed permit process, the department has since issued another 179 permits (61% are now issued)

Guide Allocations

- Department’s concern relates to “dead bears”
- Board intent was that guides would be held to their average annual “hunts,” based on data from 2007-2009
- Department organized a Southeast Alaska Black Bear Working Group to help sort out implementation details associated with the transition to the new management strategy

USFS Role in Black Bear Management

- USFS is primary land manager in Southeast Alaska
- USFS permits are required for commercial hunting guides who utilize USFS lands
- Each guide is permitted a certain number of hunts
 - Through permitting, the USFS can manage commercial bear harvest through allocation of hunts
 - At the conclusion of the 2010 board meeting, the board sent a letter to the USFS requesting that they work with the department to control commercial harvest through hunt allocation

Black Bear Working Group

- Group consists of BOG, ADFG, and USFS personnel, as well as several commercial hunting guides
- This group convened one teleconference, June 27, 2012

Black Bear Working Group

(Topics identified by working group that need clarification with new strategy in place)

- USFS method of adjusting guides' hunt allocations to stay within 2007-2009 harvest levels
- Determining whether unguided nonresidents who hire a guide are included with the "guides" or with the "permittees"
- Responding to guide interest in lightly harvested areas
- Responding to transfers or sales of guide areas/businesses from one guide to another
- Dealing with bear wounding loss as it relates to hunt quotas

Summary

- Recent letter from Board to USFS in November, 2012 reiterated the Board's expectation that the USFS will work with the Department to adjust guide "hunt" levels to remain within 2007-2009 average harvest levels
- Regional staff are working with USFS designee to design, implement and monitor numbers of hunts and methods for how and when to adjust hunt numbers
- The Black Bear Working group will convene as necessary to address implementation

Conclusion

- Current black bear research efforts on Prince of Wales Island will broaden our understanding of black bear life history and help inform black bear management decisions in the future in Southeast Alaska

