

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 25526
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**BLACK BEAR
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.: W-33-12

PROJECT NR.: 17.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Black Bears and Factors Influencing Their Populations

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes Black Bear survey and inventory activities. Regionwide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

**The Status of Black Bear
and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region I**

Regionwide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on black bear management.

We used data from black bear harvest and ongoing research that will be used to update the Alaska Board of Game and Regional Advisory Council at their next Southeast Region Meetings (winter 2015).

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor the black bear harvest through field observations, black bear sealing reports, and interviews with successful hunters.

ADF&G Wildlife Conservation staff as well as Alaska Wildlife Troopers and designated sealing agents sealed black bears harvested in the region. Area biologists and other staff tracked harvest trends and collected biological samples whenever possible. Where appropriate, harvest was monitored to keep it within the guideline levels established by the Board.

ACTIVITY 3: Collect data related to sex, age, body condition, and harvest location from black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

Black bear skulls were measured and the sex determined as bears were sealed. Except in cases where the hunter damaged the skull or external sex identifiers were removed, this data was collected on every bear presented for sealing. Approximately 369 hunter killed black bears were sealed in Region I during the period. The reduction from previous periods is likely a direct result of Region I going to a limited draw hunt for black bears.

ACTIVITY 4: Coordinate with community decision makers on local bear issues.

In Juneau, biologists communicate almost daily with the Juneau Police Department, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and local refuse collection, as well as other municipalities such as Haines, Skagway, and Gustavus in identifying areas of bear activity and determining what types of structures are most effective in thwarting foraging bears. Biologists continue to work with the city-appointed bear committee to provide radio and TV news releases about urban bears and refuse management

In Petersburg and Ketchikan, the area staff worked with the local police department and Department of Public Safety Troopers to coordinate responses to nuisance bear complaints within the community.

ACTIVITY 4: Reduce the number of nuisance bear problems and possible DLP kills resulting from improper refuse handling and disposal.

Efforts continue throughout the region on this activity, in particular, in the Juneau, Gustavus, Skagway, and Ketchikan communities.

Unit 1C

ACTIVITY 1: Capture one or two urban black bears opportunistically and monitor their movements using GPS radio collars to identify problem areas and to assist educational efforts towards better refuse management.

Two bears were captured in the community of Juneau and fitted with radio collars as part of this activity.

ACTIVITY 2: Capture up to 4 bears at Gustavus as part of an educational and information gathering effort.

Attempts were made to capture and collar bears at Gustavus, but they were unsuccessful.

ACTIVITY 3: Work with USFS to capture and radio collar up to 5 bears near the Mendenhall Lake Recreation Area as part of a study to learn more about how bears in this area use the available habitats.

Two bears were captured under this activity.

Unit 2

ACTIVITY 1: Capture and radio collar black bears on Prince of Wales Island as part of a study to understand bear ecology.

This project completed with final collars removed from bears and final den site visits completed in winter 2013/2014. Data analysis and report writing has begun.

Unit 3

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the Kuiu Island nonresident harvest.

The non-resident harvest of black bears on Kuiu Island is monitored in season to ensure compliance with the non-resident guideline harvest quota.

Activities by Unit

Unit 1C

ACTIVITY 1: Reduce the number of nuisance bear problems and possible DLP kills resulting from improper refuse handling and disposal.

Biologists continue to work with the Juneau Police Department, Juneau city leaders, and the local refuse company to keep garbage unavailable to bears.

ACTIVITY 2: Capture one or two black bears opportunistically and monitor their movements using GPS radio collars to identify problem areas and to assist educational efforts towards better refuse management.

Biologists captured 2 black bears in the Juneau area and fitted them with GPS radio collars during this report period. The goal of this program is to provide department staff, students and members of the community of Juneau with a better understanding of where, when, how and why bears use certain areas in the community. With a better understanding of these questions, we can learn things that can help us the community to minimize conflicts with black bears in this urban setting. Also, we hope this program will generate a greater appreciation of black bears that will prompt residents to accept greater responsibility in keeping bears from becoming human food conditioned.

ACTIVITY 3: Establish hair snare transects and conduct snaring operations in high density bear locations within the city and borough of Juneau.

No hair snares were deployed during the reporting period. Snares may be used during the next reporting period in conjunction with a black bear radio collaring project.

Unit 2

ACTIVITY 1: Data analysis and reports are nearing completion for a hair snare mark-recapture effort conducted in 2009-2010.

ACTIVITY 2: Radio collar bears and monitor to assess demographics, life history and movement patterns.

During regulatory year 2013, ADFG staff removed collars from remaining bears in the study. No further capture efforts or den site visits are planned.

Although data analysis is preliminary we are generally observing that females have small home ranges while males tend to have much larger ones due to long distance movements during the rut. Other movements are typically associated with timing of fish runs or berry production. It also appears that some bears may be specializing on deer fawns in spring. We are finding low cub production and cub survival rates. Denning structure is 100%

associated with large diameter trees (either stumps or old-growth). Several bears have multiple denning locations during the winter. We are experiencing high evacuation rates of bears from dens when we approach to re-capture. Bears are displaying a high degree of susceptibility to harvest by associating with roadways, with eleven bears killed by hunters (8 confirmed, 1 confirmed wounding loss, 2 unconfirmed wounding loss). Data analysis is ongoing and reports are in draft.

Unit 3

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the Kuiu Island nonresident harvest.

During the report period nonresident hunters harvested a total of 49 Kuiu Island black bears, including 18 during fall 2013 and 31 during spring 2014.

The Status of Alaska Black Bears and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY : Draft a triennial Black Bear management report.

Black Bear management report was due during this period. Staff collected and analyzed information and submitted report for publication.

ACTIVITY : Monitor the Black bear bear harvest through field observations, bear sealing reports, and interviews with successful hunters.

These are standard activities accomplished in each office. See Area specific activities.

ACTIVITY : Collect harvest data, determine the sex from black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

All bears taken in Region were presented to staff or appointed sealers for specimen collection and sealing. See area specific activities for additional information.

ACTIVITY : Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on black bear management.

Staff routinely interact with federal staff and discuss management of black bear relative to the respective regulatory systems. Staff prepared information for presentation to the Board of Game meeting during the next reporting period.

ACTIVITY : Evaluate the new harvest ticket reporting system.

All region II GMUs with black bear seasons require hunters to obtain harvest tickets. At the time of this report deadline all reports have not been entered into the system for the reporting period.

Activities by Unit:

Unit 6

ACTIVITY : Final data for 2012-2013 showed 410 harvested (56% males), nearly 30% higher than the preliminary total harvest presented in the performance report. This regulatory year, the preliminary total is 224 bears (58% males).

ACTIVITY : In Unit 6D, collected teeth from approximately 175 black bears harvested to be sent to a laboratory for aging.

Units 7 & 15

ACTIVITY : Preliminary data indicates that 2013 black bear harvest declined 58% compared to the most recent 5 years. The preliminary 2013-2014 harvest was 166 Males, 78 Females and 0 unknown for a total of 246. This decline is likely due to a number of reasons, but appears to be driven by hunter participation (52% decline) possibly linked to increased participation in moose hunting.

Unit 14C

ACTIVITY : The preliminary 2013/14 harvest was 16 Males, 9 Females for a total of 25. An additional 5 bears (3 males and 2 females) were taken in defense of life or property.

ACTIVITY : Worked with local residents of Anchorage to reduce bear attractants within the municipality. Worked with local garbage collection agencies to provide bear-resistant tipper carts for garbage in areas where human-bear conflicts are common.

The Status of Black Bear and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region III

Regionwide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor black bear harvest through field observations, sealing reports, community harvest reports and interviews with successful hunters and analyze harvest data.

Monitored preliminary harvest of 426 black bears through field observations, sealing reports, community harvest reports and interviews with successful hunters and analyzed harvest data.

ACTIVITY 2: Collect harvest information and extract a tooth for aging from black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

Collected harvest data, determined sex and extracted a tooth for aging from 391 black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

ACTIVITY 3: Obtain estimates of ages of harvested bears by tooth sectioning.

Obtained estimates of ages from approximately 26 black bears.

ACTIVITY 4: Monitor and analyze black bear bait station permit distribution.

Monitored and analyzed preliminary distribution of permits for approximately 590 bait stations.

ACTIVITY 5: Provide black bear management information to State and Federal regulatory processes.

Provided information to 11 state advisory committees, 2 federal regional councils, and the state Board of Game concerning black bear management.

The Status of Black Bears and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region IV

Project Location: Game Management Units 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16, and 17

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a triennial black bear management report.

The triennial black bear reports were drafted and submitted to the region for review.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor the black bear harvest through field observations, black bear sealing reports, and interviews with successful hunters.

Bear harvests were monitored through the sealing program, where bear sealing is required, and through harvest ticket reporting in all other areas.

ACTIVITY 3: Collect data and determine the sex of black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

	Males	Females	Unk.	Total
<i>Unit 9</i>	4	0		4
<i>Unit 11:</i>	8	2		8
<i>Unit 13:</i>	115	48		163
<i>Unit 14A:</i>	40	23	2	65
<i>Unit 14B:</i>	7	2	1	10
<i>Unit 16</i>	154	125	1	280
<i>Unit 17</i>	3	0		3