BLACK BEAR
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY

STATE: Alaska   **GRANT AND SEGMENT NO.** W-33-7

PROJECT NO. 17.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009

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: 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 Fish and Wildlife Protection 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 2: 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 741 hunter killed black bears were sealed in Region I during the period.

ACTIVITY 3: Coordinate with community decision makers on local bear issues.

> In Juneau, biologists communicate almost daily with Arrow Refuse and the Juneau Police Department staff, as well as other municipalities such as Haines and Skagway, 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.

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 and fitted them with GPS radio collars during this report period. These bears are the focus of a cooperative black bear educational outreach program by ADF&G, USFS, and the city of Juneau. 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.

Biologists worked with the US Forest Service personnel to set out hair snares at Steep Creek near the Mendenhall Glacier visitors center. Samples were collected by USFS staff and sent in for analysis by ADF&G staff. Data suggests that at least 11 different bears were frequenting the area.

Unit 2

ACTIVITY 1: Collect genetic samples from Unit 2 black bears as part of a mark recapture effort using break away snares.

Tissue was collected from both snared bears as well as harvested bears. A total of 229 samples yielded a unique identification of 147 different bears.

Unit 3

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the Kuiu Island nonresident harvest.

During the report period nonresident hunters harvested a total of 97 Kuiu Island black bears, including 19 during fall 2008 and 78 during spring 2009.

Submitted by: Neil L. Barten, Region I Management Coordinator

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

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a triennial black bear management report.

> *Unit 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17:* Triennial black bear management reports prepared and submitted.

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

> *Unit 6:* Hunters reported taking 559 bears.

> *Units 7 and 15:* Hunters reported taking 503 bears.

> *Units 11:* Hunters reported taking 22 bears.

> *Units 13:* Hunters reported taking 164 bears.

> *Unit 14:* Hunters reported taking 74 bears in 14A, 28 bears in 14B and 65 bears in 14C.

> *Unit 16:* Hunters reported taking 120 bears in 16A and 345 bears in 16B.

> *Unit 17:* Hunters reported taking six bears.

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

> *Unit 6:* Collected data and determined the sex of 559 black bears presented for sealing by hunters. The breakdown was 425 males and 134 females.

> *Units 7 and 15:* Collected data and determined the sex of 503 black bears presented for sealing by hunters. The breakdown was 352 males, 149 females and two of unknown gender.

> *Units 11& 13:* Collected data and determined the sex of 186 black bears presented for sealing by hunters. The breakdown in Unit 11 was 17 males (77%) and five females. The breakdown in Unit 13 was 108 (66%) males and 56 females.

> *Unit 14:* Collected data and determined the sex of 167 black bears presented for sealing by hunters. The breakdown in 14A was 43 males and 31 females; in 14B 14 males, 13 females and one of unknown gender; in 14C 40 males and 25 females. Unit-wide the take was 167 bears, 97 males, 69 females and one unknown.

> *Unit 16:* Collected data and determined the sex of 465 black bears presented for sealing by hunters. The breakdown in 16A was 87 males and 33 females; in 16B 255 males, 120 females and three of unknown gender. Unit-wide the take was 465 bears, 342 males, 120 females and three unknown.

> *Unit 17:* Collected data and determined the sex of six black bears presented for sealing by hunters. The breakdown was one male, four females and one of unknown gender.

Unit 6D:

ACTIVITY 1: Extract a tooth for aging from black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

> We extracted teeth from approximately 300 black bears harvested. From these we will randomly select a sample of 30% for aging.

Submitted by: Gino DelFrate, Region II Management Coordinator

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 292 black bears through field observations, sealing reports, community harvest reports and interviews with successful hunters and analyzed harvest data.

ACTIVITY 2: Collect data, determine sex and extract a tooth for aging from black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

> Collected data, determined sex and extracted a tooth for aging from 292 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 218 black bears.

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

> Monitored and analyzed distribution of permits for 770 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.

Activities by Unit:

Unit 25D

ACTIVITY 1: Capture approximately 25 black bears to deploy radiocollars and maintain an adequate sample size of collared animals for surveys

> Captured 30 black bears to deploy 30 radiocollars, with no capture mortalities.

Submitted by: Roy A. Nowlin, Region III Management Coordinator