

**BLACK BEAR  
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

**STATE:** Alaska

**GRANT AND SEGMENT NUMBER:** AKW-4 Wildlife Restoration FY2015

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 17.0

**PERIOD:** 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015

**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.

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

**Region wide 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 to update the Alaska Board of Game and Regional Advisory Council at their winter 2015 meeting.

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, these features were recorded for every bear presented for sealing. Approximately 408 hunter-

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killed black bears were sealed in Region I during the period. That was a slight increase from the previous floor, but still lower than yearly averages prior to changing to a limited draw permit system for unguided nonresident hunters.

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.

In Craig, area staff worked cooperatively with Department of Public Safety Troopers to respond to bear complaints on Prince of Wales Island. The city of Craig went to a new garbage collection service which has resulted in increased bear related complaints in some parts of the community.

Area staff used a sow and two cubs killed DLP as an educational opportunity in the Craig School District. Staff assisted science classes in dissected the bears to complement anatomy and physiology lessons and are currently working on creating skeletons from the bones.

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 communities of Juneau, Gustavus, Skagway, and Ketchikan.

**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.

No 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.

No 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.

Data collection for this project was completed. We removed the remaining collars from bears and made final den site visits during winter 2013/2014. Data analysis and report writing is ongoing.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor the Unit 2 Island nonresident harvest.

Anecdotal evidence (roadway scats, field observations, reports from hunters, guides, lodge owners), high spring success rates (70%+), and high percentage of males in the spring harvest (~85%) indicate that the Unit 2 bear population is likely increasing. Nonresident permits are scheduled to increase from 80 to 100 for the RY2016 DL028 season (spring 2017).

## **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 did not deploy any GPS collars on black bears in the Juneau area during this report period. However, they plan to in the future. 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 hope to minimize conflicts with black bears in this urban setting. Also, we believe this program can generate a greater appreciation of black bears that will prompt residents to accept greater responsibility for preventing bears from becoming conditioned to human food sources.

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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.

Data analysis and report writing is ongoing for this activity.

**Unit 3**

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the Kuiu Island nonresident harvest.

During the report period nonresident hunters harvested a total of 45 Kuiu Island black bears, including 13 during fall 2014 and 32 during spring 2015.

**Submitted by:** Tom Schumacher, Region I Management Coordinator

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

**Region wide Activities:**

ACTIVITY : Draft a triennial Black Bear management report.

Black Bear management report was due during the previous period. Staff collected information for future analysis and publication in new 5-year report and plan in 2019. This activity will be modified in the next annual work plan submission.

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.

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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 March region II Board of Game meeting.

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 2013-2014 showed 231 harvested (58% males). This regulatory year, the preliminary total is 101 bears (70% males).

ACTIVITY : In Unit 6D, collected teeth from approximately 86 black bears harvested to be sent to a laboratory for aging.

**Units 7 & 15**

ACTIVITY : Preliminary data indicates that the 2014 black bear harvest was the lowest harvest recorded in the last 19 years. The preliminary 2014-2015 harvest was 170 Males, 70 Females and 1 unknown for a total of 241.

**Unit 14C**

ACTIVITY : The preliminary 2014-2015 harvest was 16 Males, 13 Females for a total of 29. An additional 27 bears (15 males, 8 females and 4 of unknown sex) were taken by non-hunting related causes (7 by agency kill, 3 by motor vehicle accident, 2 by train, and 15 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.

**Submitted by:** Gino Del Frate, Region II Management Coordinator

**The Status of Alaska Black bears and Factors Influencing Their Populations in  
Region III**

**Region wide Activities:**

1. Prepared 9 biennial black bear management reports.
2. Monitored harvest of 350–600 black bears through field observations, sealing reports, and interviews with successful hunters and analyzed harvest data.

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3. Collected harvest information from and extract a tooth for aging from 350 black bears presented for sealing by hunters.
4. Obtain estimates of ages of 95 harvested bears by tooth sectioning.
5. Monitored and analyzed distribution of 500–600 black bear bait stations.
6. Provide black bear management information to state and federal regulatory processes: 17 Fish and Game Advisory Committees, 1 Board of Game, 3 federal Regional Advisory Councils and 1 federal Subsistence Board.

**Covers GMUs:** 12, 20, and 25D

**Prepared by:** Doreen Parker Mc-Neil, Region III Management Coordinator

**The Status of Alaska Black bears and Factors Influencing Their Populations in  
Region IV**

**Region wide Activities:**

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>	12	7	0	19
<i>Unit 13:</i>	115	56	2	173
<i>Unit 14A:</i>	29	16	0	45
<i>Unit 14B:</i>	8	3	0	11
<i>Unit 16</i>	101	78	41	220
<i>Unit 17</i>	2	1	0	3

**Covers GMUs:** 9, 11, 13, 14A, 14B, 16, and 17

**Submitted by:** Lem Butler, Region IV Regional Supervisor