

Ron Modafferi - Research Biologist, ADF&G

Western Prince William Sound Black Bear Study

Due to the relative vulnerability of black bears in Prince William Sound and the anticipated further increases in hunting pressures in this area, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game initiated a research project in 1974 to gather baseline data for management of these coastal populations of bears.

Capture techniques and the application of radio telemetry to study this coastal population of black bears were investigated. Capture techniques employing foot snares, barrel traps and helicopters were used individually and in different seasons; the use of helicopters in the spring proved to be the most efficient method. Fixed size and expandable type radio collars were used. The expandable type collar tested proved worthy of future use and/or modification.

Inconsistent success in capturing bears at salmon steams affected continuity of parts of the study related to home ranges and movements, but provided noteworthy insight into aspects of life history and food habits of coastal black bears.

The high proportions of adult male bears killed during the spring season results from their differential vulnerability and not a paucity of females in the population. Males, particularly adults, use the beach fringe habitat during the spring hunting seasons. During the same season, females, with or without young, appear to utilize the alpine areas, particularly those where avalanches have cleared the slopes of snow and a southeast exposure to the sun promotes early "greening up" and growth of vegetation. The latter areas are less accessible to hunters.

Males were found to range over much larger areas than did females.

Sightings of litters with three young appeared to be correlated with an abundance of berries (blue and salmon) in the previous summer.

Thorough analysis and interpretation of the data are currently underway. Radio relocating of previously collared bears is continuing.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST
Cordova Ranger District
P. O. Box 280
Cordova AK 99574

IN REPLY REFER TO
CRD Conference

December 31, 1980

Friends of the Copper River Delta:

This year's proceedings of the Copper River Delta Conference have been edited and prepared in record time primarily through the support of Fred Arbogast, Cordova District Ranger, the persistent efforts of Ms. Janice Johnson, Biological Technician, with support from Ms. Charlene Wright, and other Cordova District staff. We hope the enclosed copy meets your expectations.

As in the past, the task of summarizing the talks is made a great deal easier when the speaker submits an abstract of his paper. This assures that the essential points of the topic are conveyed in the manner intended. In any event, we have tried to preserve the fidelity of each presentation. If any errors or major omissions are apparent please contact the Cordova Ranger District staff for revisions. We will retain the tapes for a reasonable time should anyone require review of specific information. Alternately, the speakers themselves may be contacted for details. Likewise, please inform Cordova staff if you have suggestions which will improve the meeting.

Again, thanks to the participants for your help in making this year's conference possible.

Sincerely yours,

Garvan Bucaria
Garvan Bucaria
Wetlands Biologist

