

ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. W-33-11

PROJECT NO.: 17.0 Black Bear

PERIOD: 1 July 2012– 30 June 2013

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide: Activities in Regions I, II, III, and IV

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

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

Region I—Southeast Alaska

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 to guide decisions at the spring 2013 SE Board of Game 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, this data was collected on every bear presented for sealing. Approximately 495 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.

Several 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.

Nineteen black bears were collared on POW during this reporting period as part of an ongoing research project.

Unit 3

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the Kuiu Island nonresident harvest.

The non-resident harvest of black bears on Kuiu Island is monitored in season and measured against 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 5 black bears in the Juneau area and fitted them with GPS radio collars during this report period. Four of the bears were related to an illegal feeding site; and another was a high profile female with three yearling cubs. 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 2012, ADFG staff captured and collared 19 black bears. Twenty-Two collars were retrieved. Twenty-four den sites were visited and catalogued.

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 66 Kuiu Island black bears, including 11 during fall 2012 and 55 during spring 2013.

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

Region II—Southcentral Alaska

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY : Draft a triennial Black Bear management report.

Black Bear management report was not due during this period. Staff continued to collect information in preparation for drafting next report.

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 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 attended the state Board of Game meeting during this reporting period.

ACTIVITY : Evaluate the new harvest ticket reporting system.

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

Activities by Unit:

Unit 6

ACTIVITY : Final data for 2011-2012 showed 513 harvested (59% males), nearly 30% higher than the preliminary total harvest presented in the performance report. This year, the preliminary total is 373 bears (56% males).

ACTIVITY : In Unit 6D, collected teeth from approximately 238 black bears harvested to be sent to a laboratory for aging.

Units 7 & 15

ACTIVITY : Monitor the black bear harvest through field observations, black bear sealing reports, and interviews with successful hunters. Collect data and determine the sex of black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

Preliminary data indicates that 2012 black bear harvest is down compared to the most recent 5 years. The preliminary 2012/13 harvest was 234 Males, 140 Females and 3 unknown for a total of 377.

Unit 14C

ACTIVITY : Monitor the black bear harvest through field observations, black bear sealing reports, and interviews with successful hunters. Collect data and determine the sex of black bears presented for sealing by hunters.

The preliminary 2012/13 harvest was 22 Males, 18 Females for a total of 40. An additional 8 bears (6 males and 2 females) were taken in defense of life or property.

Submitted by: Gino Del Frate

Date: 6 September 2013

Region III—Interior Alaska

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 180 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 preliminary data, determined sex and extracted a tooth for aging from 180 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 178 black bears.

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

Monitored and analyzed preliminary distribution of permits for 587 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.

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

Region IV—Southcentral and Southwest Alaska

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

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a triennial black bear management report.

The next triennial black bear reports are due in 2014

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	Total
<i>Unit 9</i>	4	0	4
<i>Unit 11:</i>	6	1	7
<i>Unit 13:</i>	60	29	89
<i>Unit 14A:</i>	31	21	52
<i>Unit 14B:</i>	7	4	11
<i>Unit 16</i>	125	63	188
<i>Unit 17</i>	3	0	3

Project 17.0 – Black Bear S&I
FY13 Annual Performance Report

Submitted by: Lem Butler, Region IV Management Coordinator

Date: 15 August, 2013