

**Wildlife Restoration GRANT  
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

**GRANT NUMBER:** AKW-B-R4-2020 Amendment #1

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 17.0

**PROJECT TITLE:** Region IV Black Bear Management S&I program: The Status of Alaska Black Bear and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Central/Southwest Alaska

**PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** FY20 July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

**PERFORMANCE YEAR:** July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

**REPORT DUE DATE:** September 2021

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Todd A. Rinaldi

**COOPERATORS:** Heidi Hatcher, Tim Peltier, and Bryan Reiley

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Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328  
2 CFR 200.301  
50 CFR 80.90

**I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Population Size, Status, and Trend.** Assess the size and status of each population to determine the 5-year trend.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

Changes in bear density over time may be documented with a variety of techniques. The following techniques are used to detect changes in bear numbers or density in Region IV:

- Anecdotal observations such as incidental observations during moose surveys, reports of changes in bear sightings by hunters, guides, hikers, and local residents, incidence of nuisance bear problems or injuries to humans.

Region IV received 14 complaints about nuisance black bears, only 2 required field time. This level of activity is typical does not suggest any shift in demography or behavior.

- Compile/review information from incidental observations during wildlife surveys, reports of changes in bear sightings by hunters, guides, hikers, and local residents, as well as incidence of nuisance bear problems or injuries to humans to evaluate trends in black bear populations in Region IV.

Region IV received 24 complaints about nuisance black bears, only 3 required field time. This level of activity is typical does not suggest any shift in demography or behavior.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Mortality/Harvest Monitoring and Regulations.** Assess the number of black bear harvested by hunters and other sources of mortality that might have an impact on each population.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Monitor the black bear harvest through field observations, black bear sealing reports, and interviews with hunters.

Black bear are required to be sealed which provides additional animal-specific information to the hunt report. Three hundred and nine bears were sealed from Region IV including 183 bears taken over bait, 2 bears taken in DLP, 1 agency kill, and 1 MVC. The sealing process provides an opportunity to interview successful hunters and gather sex and age data from the harvested bear(s). Additionally, the sealing process provides insight into the abundance and distribution of black bears in the unit.

The Region notes black bear sightings and activities from the public and while conducting field work associated with other research and management activities.

- Collect data, determine sex, and extract a tooth for aging from black bears presented for sealing by hunters or because of other human-caused mortality.

Three hundred and nine black bears were sealed from Region IV during this reporting period. Teeth were extracted for aging from 113 bears (39 females, 73 males, and 1 unknown).

**OBJECTIVE 3: Black Bear Management with Public Participation and Outreach.** Manage each black bear population with an emphasis on engaging the public through public meetings, working groups, educational materials, and incentive programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Respond to issues and public reports involving black bears associated with nuisance behavior, injuries, habituation, and bear-vehicle collisions (BVCs).

Region IV responded to 3 black bear related issues. There was one reported vehicle collision involving black bears this performance period.

- Work with local home and recreational/seasonal cabin owners to reduce bear attractants that may lead to defense of life or property kills (DLP).

An ongoing part of bear management across the region is to work with constituents to address concerns about bears or human-bear conflicts. Staff respond to identify sources of attractants, proper storage of attractants (including proper containment of livestock), loaning out electric fences to thwart bears, and discussing other aversive conditioning techniques with members of the public. We also work with the Alaska State Wildlife Troopers, Alaska State Parks, USFWS, landfills, fish processors as well as communities and tribal councils.

During this reporting period we fielded approximately 24 human-black bear conflict reports and conducted 3 site visits. Staff responded by providing advice and resources on how to best reduce attractants and minimize conflicts. There were 2 bears taken in Defense of Life or Property and 1 agency kills during this reporting period.

- Draft five-year black bear management operational reports and plans.

Region IV is finalizing Black Bear Species Management Reports and Plans (SMRPs) for game management units where black bears occur (i.e., Units 11,13, 14A&B, 16 and 17).

- Provide black bear management information to state and federal regulatory processes.

All information collected is used inform state and federal regulatory processes. Outside of common communication with our federal counterparts there were no federal proposals addressing black bears during this reporting period. Staff compiled and presented biological, population, and hunting information at more than 30 Advisory Committee meetings, 4 Federal Regional Advisory Council meetings, Subsistence Resource Commission meetings, Federal Subsistence Board meetings, numerous local village councils, Native corporations and the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission. There are 3 state Board of Game proposals addressing black bear for the 2022 meeting.

## **II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.**

Summaries of past data trends are published at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=species&sort2=speciesname&speciesname=Black%20Bear>

**III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.**

None during this reporting period.

**IV. PUBLICATIONS**

Black Bear SMRPs are expected to be finalized in FY2021. Project publications for previous years are available at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=species&sort2=speciesname&speciesname=Black%20Bear>

**V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT**

We recommend continued funding for this project in order to effectively manage black bear populations in Central/Southwest Alaska.

**Prepared by:** Todd A. Rinaldi, Regional Management Coordinator

**Date:** 8/16/2021