

## BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Procedure 1: Maintain a complete database from all harvest sources, through a mandatory checkout system, including age, sex, kill location, and other relevant information to index population trend. Conduct a hunter questionnaire biannually.

- A. Hunters will continue to be responsible for reporting bear harvest within 48 hours of harvest (as per R12-4-308). All hunter-harvested bears must be physically checked out at a regional or state AGFD office, or with authorized AGFD personnel, within 10 days of harvest. The hunter will present the head and complete hide, with evidence of sex attached, for inspection. A hide tag will be attached upon completion of checkout. Data collected will include: age, sex, reproductive status, hunting method, harvest date, harvest location, biological condition of animal, evidence of disease, hunter effort, presence of biological markers, tattoos, radio transmitters, and other pertinent data as determined. One premolar tooth will be collected for aging. Female teeth >4 years old are examined to determine the number and time (year) of successful litters produced.
- B. An annual questionnaire will be used to collect harvest information, including hunter density and hunter effort.

Procedure 2: Identify important habitats for bear populations and ensure protection, and improvement where possible, through cooperation with land management agencies and landowners.

- A. Update statewide black bear distribution and density maps as more precise habitat data and bear abundance estimates per habitat type are developed.
- B. Document current and potential habitat fragmentation, and develop cooperative agreements with land management agencies and private individuals to mitigate fragmentation.

Procedure 3: Implement hunt structures to direct harvest emphasis toward the male segment of the bear population.

- A. Use season dates and length to direct harvest to the male segment of the bear population.
- B. Use female harvest objectives to protect the female segment of the bear population from over harvest.

Procedure 4: As bear management areas become defined, determine population numbers and characteristics on a management area basis.

- A. Units, or portions of units, containing similar habitat characteristics, climatic conditions, hunter use patterns, and bear densities may be combined to form bear management areas (BMAs).
- B. Relative abundance will be determined from habitat maps, research data, and recent harvest information.
- C. Population characteristics (sex, age, and reproduction data) will be determined from physical examination of harvested bears, research data, non-hunting bear mortalities, and observational data.
- D. Evaluate effects of current habitat management practices on the bear population.
- E. Determine effects of harvest rates on abundance. Obtain annual estimates of hunter density at the unit or BMA level.
- F. Continue to evaluate new remote sensing data and population index methods (hair snare, biomarker mark and recapture techniques, remote cameras) to refine relative abundance estimates.

Procedure 5: Cooperate with land management agencies to reduce conflicts between bears and humans, and increase public awareness of bears and their habitat.

- A. Aggressively pursue management activities designed to reduce nuisance bear problems in identified areas.
- B. Develop joint nuisance bear management strategies with governmental agencies.
- C. Develop and maintain partnerships with local organizations concerned with nuisance bear problems.
- D. Evaluate the effectiveness of nuisance bear translocation operations through research.

Procedure 6: Implement hunt structures to direct harvest emphasis toward areas with high bear populations and where depredation and nuisance complaints are substantiated.

- A. Population Management Hunts or extended spring seasons may be used as appropriate to manage bear populations.
- B. Regional field operations personnel may examine the carcasses of bears taken under depredation, when feasible, and biological data (including tooth collection) will be gathered. These data will be forwarded to Game Branch. Depredation kills reported under ARS 17-302 will be summarized by the Game Branch and included in an annual harvest report. This report will summarize all bears taken by BMA, unit, age, sex, and method of taking. The

report will be prepared and distributed prior to the spring Commission meeting when the regulations are set for Commission Order 9: Bear.

- C. Field operations personnel should contact ranchers in their Regions and provide them with copies and explanations of ARS 17:302.