

**BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
BEAR DAU B-12
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
54, 55, 551, & 67**

Prepared for:
Colorado Division of Wildlife
West Region

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DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

DAU B-12 is located in the upper Gunnison River Basin and includes the Ohio Creek, Slate River, East River, Taylor River, Quartz Creek, Tomichi Creek, and Cochetopa Creek drainages. The lower elevation of the DAU is a high mountain valley with the dominant vegetation consisting of sagebrush, which extends into aspen woodland. Spruce-fir and lodgepole pine are found at higher elevations.

The DAU is not considered to be habitat that would contain a high density of black bears. Past research in a similar habitat type has shown the DAU likely supports a density of approximately 1 bear per 5 square miles.

TOTAL BEAR HARVEST OBJECTIVE: The average annual sport bear harvest in the DAU over the last 11 years (1988-1998) is 11 with a range of 1-30. The higher annual bear harvests occurred in 1988 and 1989 (27 and 30, respectively), but since then bear harvests have remained considerably lower. Only 3 bears have been taken because of damage to personal property or livestock in the DAU in the last 11 years.

The annual sport harvest objective for the DAU is 20 bears. This objective should be re-evaluated if damage and human conflict reports increase significantly or if there are some negative biological impacts on the bear population. The Division of Wildlife will rely on sport hunting as the primary method to control black bear populations in the DAU.

In 2003, GMU 66 was moved from DAU B-5 to the Gunnison DAU (B-12). This addition precipitated increasing the B-12 harvest objective from 20 to 25, and the total mortality objective from 25 to 30.

BEAR DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Black bear damage claims in the DAU over the past 9 fiscal years (1987-88 to 1997-98) averaged \$660 per year. In 1993-94 claims totaled \$2,943, but in all other years claims have ranged between \$49 to \$700. Damage claims on livestock have been minimal.

The bear damage objective for the DAU is for claims not to exceed \$2,000 per fiscal year. This will be

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calculated using a 3-year floating average. If the average exceeds the objective, alternatives to the management strategy will be evaluated to lower damage claims. This could include increased educational effort, providing preventative materials and hiring a claims investigator.

HUMAN-BEAR CONFLICT COMPLAINTS: The reported human-bear conflicts in the DAU ranged from 0 to 7 between 1994 and 1997. Information and education should be continued to keep the reported conflicts at low levels. When necessary, individual problem bears will be relocated or destroyed according to DOW policy.

BEAR INTERACTION WITH OTHER GAME SPECIES: Since the Gunnison Basin is rather poor bear habitat and bear densities are lower than some other areas of the state, it is unlikely that bears exert a major influence on deer and elk populations. Sport hunting will be used to harvest bears in this DAU.