

**BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
BEAR DAU B-8
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
82, 86, & 861**

Prepared for:
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Southeast Region

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INTRODUCTION

This management plan establishes management objectives for black bear populations in the northeastern San Luis Valley, Wet Mountain Valley, and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Bear hunting and harvest will be adjusted when necessary in an effort to achieve the unit objective.

The goal of the CDOW is to maintain a healthy, self-sustaining population of black bear that is in balance with available habitat, minimize nuisance complaints in the developed areas, minimize game damage complaints and also maintain an environment that supports a rich, vegetative and wildlife community.

Current studies related to deer fawn summer mortality and both fawn and adult winter mortality indicate that black bears are not a major factor in deer population regulation. While there may be isolated geographical areas of high early summer bear densities that have a significant impact on fawn mortality; these isolated areas of mortality do not contribute significantly to population regulation in the entire deer DAU. Elk populations are currently at high levels and, are currently above population objective in the portion of the two elk DAUs in which this bear DAU is located. Survival rates for both adult and calf elk are high.

Sport hunting will be used to harvest the bear population at a level that will allow maximum hunter opportunity and maintain a healthy, viable population of bears. Individual animals that cause excessive damage to livestock, personal property or pose a threat to human health and welfare will be removed as necessary. No control action, other than sport harvest, is anticipated to benefit deer or elk populations.

DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

This bear unit is located in the northeastern San Luis Valley, western Wet Mountain Valley, and Sangre de Cristo Mountains of southern Colorado. It is composed of three Game Management Units (GMU) that include GMUs 82, 86, and 861. The CDOW designation of this bear Data Analysis Unit is B-8. It is bounded on the north by US Highway 50; on the east by Colo. 69 south to its intersection with Pass Creek Road; Pass Creek

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Road to the Sangre de Cristo Divide; on the south by the Sangre de Cristo Divide and the Alamosa-Costilla County line and US Highway 160; on the west by Colo. 17 and US Highway 285. Drainages include the Arkansas River, Huerfano River, Grape Creek, Texas Creek, and San Luis Creek.

The vegetation in this unit varies from alpine tundra, sub-alpine conifer, montane conifer, montane shrub, and mountain meadows. The montane shrub component provides significant berry and nut producing plants that are heavily utilized during the fall feeding period. Increased land development and human activity has reduced the shrub land habitats and/or displaced bears to other habitats.

SPORT HARVEST OBJECTIVE: The sport harvest should not exceed 30 animals on a 3-year floating average basis.

Harvest Summary

Year	Boars	Sows	Total
1997	12	11	23
1998	9	4	13
1999	13	6	19
3-yr. Avg.	12	7	19

PRESCRIPTIONS: If sport harvest exceeds the 3-year floating average:

- Reduce September limited licenses by DAU.
- Reduce the number of Private Land Only licenses.
- Inform the public of DAU's where there is a need to increase harvest; provide successful limited license applicants with the brochure "How to hunt bears in September".

DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Damage caused by bears should not exceed \$3,300 per year on a 3-year floating average basis.

PRESCRIPTIONS: If damage caused by bears exceeds the annual objective:

- Focus on individual bear(s) causing damage.
- Direct Private Land Only harvest if possible.
- Hire a game damage investigator and/or an adjustor.
- Direct Wildlife Services to remove bears in significant livestock depredations.
- Follow Division Directive W-2 to guide decisions on individual cases.
- Consider a 1-strike policy if damage situations fall under the parameters of W-2.

HUMAN BEAR CONFLICT OBJECTIVE: An objective of no more than 30 reported complaints per year is recommended.

PRESCRIPTIONS:

- Continue to provide workshops in local communities, for land use agencies, and law enforcement agencies (including dispatchers, officers, and administrators).

- Continue to cooperate with other agencies on campground presentations to visitors.
- Adjust seasonal priorities of employees, form teams to resolve concentrated problem areas.
- Conduct site inspections; offer professional advice and literature.
- Push for disclosure of potential wildlife conflict areas by county planners, Realtors, and developers. Provide necessary information to these entities.

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