

**BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
BEAR DAU B-7
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
69, 84, & 691**

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 Wet Mountain Valley management area. 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 population regulation of deer. Where there may be isolated geographical areas of high bear densities in early summer that may be a significant factor in fawn predation; these isolated areas do not contribute to significant population regulation for the entire deer DAU. Elk populations are currently at population objective in this DAU. 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 Wet Mountain Valley of southeast Colorado. It is composed of three Game Management Units (GMU) that include GMUs 69, 84, and 691. The CDOW designation of this bear Data Analysis Unit (DAU) is B-7. It is bounded on the north by US Highway 50; on the east by I-25; on the south and west by Colo. 69. Drainages include portions of the Arkansas River, Grape Creek, St. Charles River, and Texas Creek.

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Large portions of this unit are considered to be good to excellent bear habitat and this DAU generally supports one of the highest bear harvests in Southern Colorado. The vegetation varies in relation to elevation and aspect, but is typical mountain shrub land, montane conifer, mountain meadow, tundra, and plains grassland. Some piñon-juniper woodland occurs in lower elevations but does not dominate. Gambel's Oak is the predominant shrub species below 8,500 feet and provides a large quantity of fall food supply for bears.

Agriculture is the predominant land use in B-7, primarily as cattle grazing on private and public lands and growing hay and alfalfa. Significant housing development continues throughout the DAU with large blocks of oakbrush and other nut/berry producing plants being lost.

SPORT HARVEST OBJECTIVE: The sport harvest should not exceed 40 animals on a 3-year floating average basis.

Harvest Summary

<u>Year</u>	<u>Boars</u>	<u>Sows</u>	<u>Total</u>
1997	16	16	32
1998	12	5	17
1999	23	12	35
3-yr. Avg.	17	11	28

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 DAUs where there is a need to increase harvest.

DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Damage caused by bears should not exceed \$4,000 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: There has been an average of 100 human/bear conflicts reported in this DAU over the past 4 years. Reporting has been very good in B-7 and an objective of no more than 75 reports per year is recommended.

PRESCRIPTIONS:

- Continue to provide workshops for the public, land use agencies, and law enforcement agencies.
- Use temporary employees to conduct public relations efforts.
- Continue to cooperate with USFS on campground presentations to visitors.
- Adjust seasonal priorities of employees. Form teams to resolve concentrated problems.
- Push for better disclosure of potential wildlife conflict areas by county planners, Realtors, and developers. Provide the necessary information to these entities.
- Conduct site inspections of affected properties; offer professional advice.