

**BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
BEAR DAU B-17
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
41, 411, 42, 421, 52, 521, 53, 63 & 64**

Prepared for:
Colorado Division of Wildlife
West Region

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DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

This DAU is in west central Colorado, and includes portions of Mesa, Garfield, Delta, Montrose and Gunnison Counties. This DAU has the 3rd highest harvest in the state, 3rd highest cumulative damage payments, and 13th highest number of bear complaints.

TOTAL BEAR HARVEST OBJECTIVE: From 1988 to 1998, this DAU averaged 62 bears harvested per year, with a range of 43-105. During the last 3-year period the harvest has averaged 88 per year. During the last 10 years, the proportion of females in the harvest averaged 35%, and ranged from 27-43%. Sport harvest accounted for 91 % of the total harvest, while non-sport harvest has ranged from 0-13 per year.

The objective total harvest for this DAU should be a maximum of 110 as a 3-year average, with a sport harvest objective of 105 as a 3-year average. When these maximum harvests are exceeded for a 3-year period, action should be taken to limit the harvest, or the population re-evaluated to maintain a sport harvest of 9-12% of the total population.

TOTAL BEAR DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: From FY 1988-1998, this DAU averaged \$9,370 per year in game damage claims paid, with a range of \$689 to \$28,183. In the last 10 years there have been claims submitted to CDOW for reimbursement in all years. Domestic sheep claims have averaged \$4,849, cattle claims averaged \$484, bee hives \$3,195, and about \$200 per year for damage to vehicles, tents, fruit trees, RV's and pigs.

This DAU should be managed to keep damage payments below \$10,000 on a 3-year average on a DAU-wide basis. Game damage objectives are based on allowable levels, when the threshold level is reached; remedial actions can be used to ameliorate problems. Remedial actions include; 1) employment of a temporary employee to trap and move problem bear; 2) initiation of control of offending animal(s) by Wildlife Services; 3) employ an investigator to look into and document predator losses; and 4) utilize the option of immediate euthanasia of the offending bear rather than trap and transplanting to another site (one strike option).

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Prevention efforts should also be considered, such as electric fence for beehives. Established CDOW bear damage guidelines and directives should be followed to address individual bear damage situations.

NUISANCE BEAR COMPLAINTS: Nuisance bear complaints have been monitored for 4 years by CDOW (1995-1998). The number of complaints, type of complaint, and distribution of complaints are highly variable, and the data are not collected consistently from all DWM districts in the state. This DAU has averaged about 8 complaints per year.

Bear complaints should be kept to no more than 40 per year based on a 3-year average. Nuisance objectives are based on allowable levels, when the threshold level is reached; remedial actions can be used to ameliorate problems. Remedial actions include; 1) employment of a temporary employee to trap and move problem bear; 2) add increased education efforts targeted to specific problem areas; and 3) utilize the option of immediate euthanasia of the offending bear rather than trap and transplanting to another site (one strike option). Nuisance bear conflicts/complaints should be addressed according to procedures outlined in Administrative Directive W-2.

On September 10, 1999 the Colorado Wildlife Commission approved a mammalian predator management policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide the Division direction in managing predator populations and to provide guidance when control methods are being considered. The Division, when feasible, will rely on sport hunting as the primary method to take predators. When necessary, as part of this management plan, control programs to reduce predator populations will be applied and authorized according to guidelines outlined in the Division's Predator Management Policy.