

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gunnison Basin Bear Population (DAU B-12)	GMUs: 54, 55, 66, 67, 551
Landownership: USFS, BLM, Private, State, Other.	
Current Population Objective: Provisional objective to hold bear population stable.	
Current Mortality Objectives: Provisional of 25 bear harvest; 30 total bear mortalities.	
New Strategic Goal (Preferred and Status-quo): Maintain a stable population trend with an adaptive management approach that adjust harvests according to three harvest composition metrics, a minimum harvest success threshold, and a maximum human-caused mortality threshold.	
Objectives (Preferred Alternative):	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % Adult Male Harvest of All Harvest = 25-35% 2. % Total Female Harvest in All Harvest = 30-40% 3. % Adult Female in Total Female harvest = 45-55% 4. 3-year average total human-caused mortality threshold maximum of up to 30 bears 5. 3-year average hunter harvest success rate threshold minimum of 1%. 	

BACKGROUND

Black bear Data Analysis Unit (DAU) B-12 is located in Gunnison, Saguache, and Hinsdale Counties overlapping the Upper Gunnison River Basin. The Game Management Units (GMUs) in B-12 are 54, 55, 66, 67, and 551. Major towns include Gunnison, Crested Butte, and Lake City. B-12 covers approximately 9295 square km (2.30 million acres) of land, of which approximately 82% is public land.

From 2005 to 2020, an average of 17 bears (range: 7-31) were harvested annually. A range of 250 - 600 limited bear licenses were made available each fall in the same period. B-12 hunters experience very low success rates (per license numbers allocated) of ~3.4% annually. License allocations were gradually increased between 2006 and 2020 to meet growing demands for bear hunting opportunities, which contributed to a relatively commensurate increase in the number of bears harvested for the same time period. The B-12 black bear population size is currently estimated to have a relatively low abundance (213 bears) due to the lack of prime habitats in a DAU dominated by a sage-brush ecosystem in the center of the DAU, and relatively low quality bear forage in the primary habitats. Harvest composition metrics indicate that the current population trajectory is relatively stable to slightly decreasing (Exec Summary - Figures 1, 2, and 3).

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

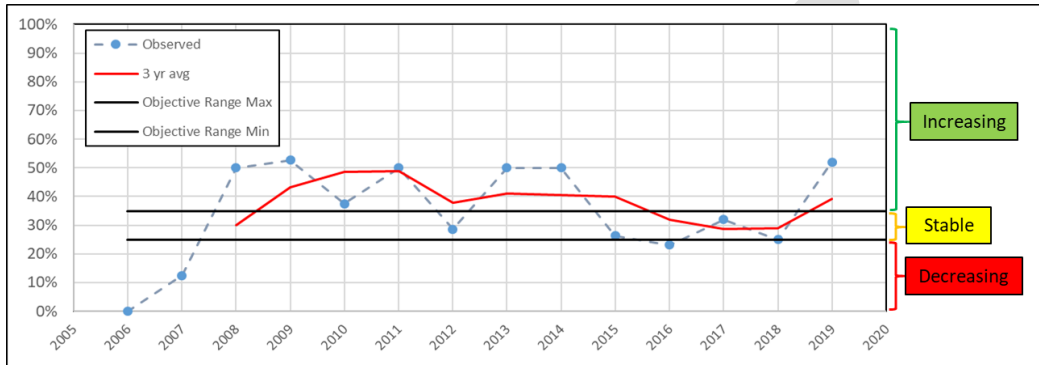
Aside for occasional conflicts between bears and humans in some known developed areas, no significant issues regarding bear management appear to exist in B-12 at this time or over the recorded history of B-12. Relative to the rest of Colorado's bear DAUs, B-12 managers are tasked with few bear-human conflicts. Annual conflict related bear mortalities are usually the lowest in Colorado. Bear-related damage corresponds to an annual average of less than \$1000. An annual average of 2.75 conflict related bear mortalities occurred between 2007 and 2020.

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

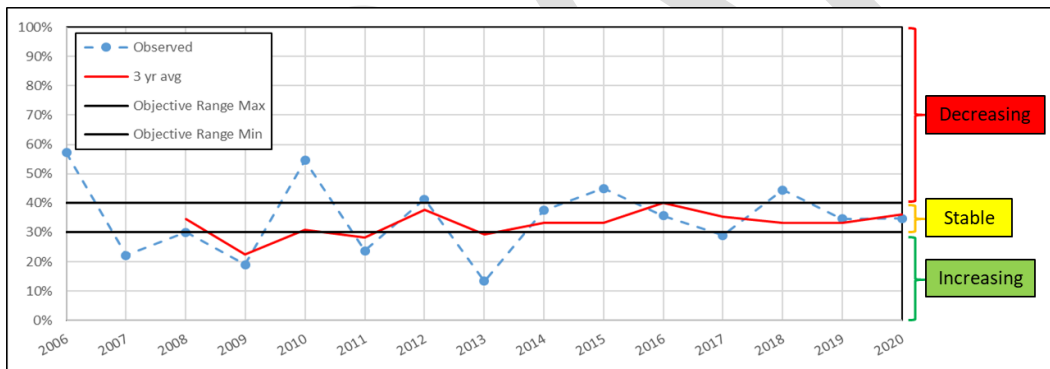
Alternative 1: Stable Population Trend (Preferred). To manage for a stable population trend, bear license numbers will be adjusted annually to maintain the 3-year averages of age/sex composition objective ranges, highlighted in yellow, in Exec Summary Figures 1, 2, and 3 below. A 3-year average total human-caused mortality (harvest, conflict related, and other human caused mortality sources combined) threshold maximum of up to 30 bears will also be incorporated. CPW will re-evaluate this strategy if the control kills (conflict related bear mortalities) exceeds a five year average of 10 bears annually.

Alternative 2: Decreasing Population Trend

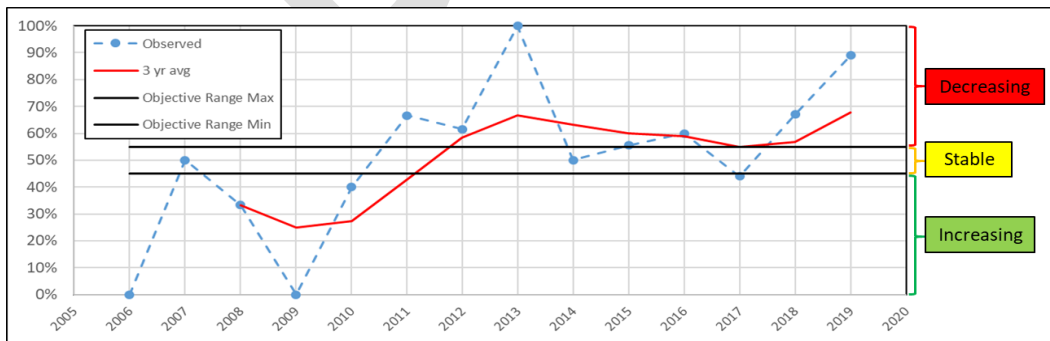
Alternative 3: Increasing Population Trend



Exec Summary - Figure 1. % of adult male harvests in all harvest with respect to stable population, 2007-2019.



Exec Summary - Figure 2. % of total female harvests in all harvest with respect to stable population, 2007-2020.



Exec Summary - Figure 3. % of adult female harvests in total female harvest with respect to stable population, 2007-2019.