

Grizzly Bear Recovery Planning



Report

Alberta Grizzly Bears

Grizzly bears are listed as a Species of Special Concern in Canada but have no federal protections under the Species at Risk Act.

Grizzly bears were classified as Threatened in Alberta in 2010, largely due to small population size, high rates of human-caused mortality and deteriorating habitat conditions – at that time there was an estimated 700-800 grizzly bears.

The new plan looks to create new zones that further define recovery areas and priorities.

Grizzlies are found in the foothills, mountain and boreal regions of the province. Their current range includes areas in or near the Rocky Mountains and in some boreal forest areas of north-central and north-western Alberta.

Diet can include berries, fish, mice, carrion and other available food sources based on season and availability.

The spring grizzly bear hunt was suspended in 2006 to allow for a better population assessment and is currently still in force.

Biggest Threats to Grizzly Bears

The four highest sources of mortality for grizzlies are poaching, accidental collisions with highway vehicles or trains, self-defense kills, and black bear hunters misidentifying and accidentally shooting grizzlies.

Grizzly bears searching for food can be attracted to human settlements and agricultural areas greatly increasing the potential for human-grizzly bear conflict. Bears that come into conflict are at increased risk of being killed or trapped and relocated. The annual rate of conflict has been increasing in some areas of the province.

Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan

Recovery plans include an analysis of species' distribution and population trends, threats and conservation actions. It also outlines goals, objectives, associated broader strategies and specific priority actions required to maintain or recover threatened or endangered species.

Implementation of each recovery plan is subject to the availability of resources, from within and from outside government.

Early recovery efforts were guided by the *2008-2013 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan*. Highlights of this plan included:

- strategies for monitoring of grizzly bear populations;
- reducing human-caused mortality, access management;
- reducing food attractants; and
- developing an outreach education program (BearSmart).

The proposed *Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan* builds on the previous plan and the experience gained during the plan implementation.

Updated strategies aim to reduce human-caused grizzly bear mortality and reduce conflicts by:

- managing food attractants;
- maintaining grizzly bear access to secure (low risk of mortality) habitat; and
- supporting the Alberta BearSmart program.

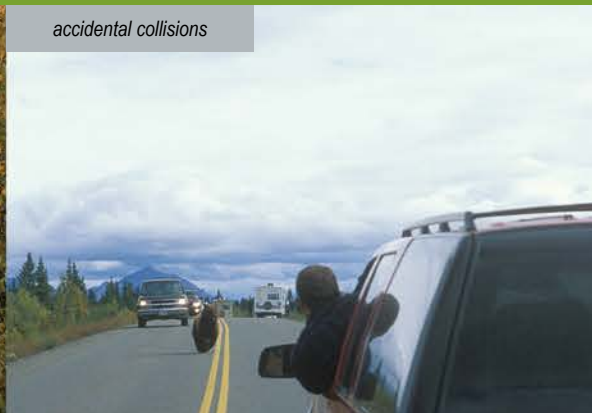
The two key changes proposed in the draft recovery plan are:

- Creating new zones that clearly define where the Government of Alberta intends to recover grizzly bears and what the grizzly bear management priorities are for each zone (e.g., public safety, conflict reduction).
- Setting clear thresholds for the concentration of roads open to public motorized access to reduce the level of human-caused grizzly bear mortality in the grizzly bear management areas.

poaching



accidental collisions



human conflicts



Grizzly Bear Consultation

The draft of the *Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan* was developed in consultation with stakeholder groups, including members of Aboriginal groups, agricultural producers, municipalities, conservation groups, industry, the hunting community and recreational users.

This draft plan will now be posted online until July 15 with a stakeholder survey, to gather additional feedback and input. The *Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan* survey is open for comment and can be accessed at <http://aep.alberta.ca/about-us/public-engagement/surveys>.

Once the consultation process has been completed, results can be found at <http://aep.alberta.ca/about-us/public-engagement/surveys/survey-results.aspx>. A finalized copy of the plan, when ready, can be found at <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/grizzly-bear-recovery-plan>.

Steps for Recovery Plan Approvals

- Consultation with stakeholders is done by the Ministry of Environment and Parks about the species of concern.
- A draft recovery plan is created based on data analysis and stakeholder input.
- The draft plan is posted online for public comment for 30-60 days.
- Alberta's Endangered Species Conservation Committee reviews draft plans and provides recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Parks.
- Once the plan has been accepted and approved for implementation by the Minister, it is published as a government recovery plan.

Funding Grizzly Recovery Work

The Alberta government has provided \$475,000 in funding support to fRI Research to improve understanding of grizzly bear populations and an additional support of \$150,000 to the Waterton Biosphere to reduce potential conflict between people and grizzly bears.

These funds support research, analysis, tools and actions related to grizzly bear recovery efforts and directly assists in achieving key elements of the grizzly bear recovery plan, such as education and awareness.



mistaken for black bear



human settlements

Grizzly Bear Management Areas

There are seven Grizzly Bear Management Areas (BMA) in Alberta. The areas are identified based on a combination of social and ecological requirements. The new plan looks to create new zones that further define recovery areas and priorities.

Ongoing recovery efforts within BMAs include:

- reducing human-caused mortality;
- maintaining closure on hunting;
- controlling access development and use;
- determining population size and trends;
- creating grizzly bear priority areas;
- reducing the number of human/bear conflicts;
- maintaining current grizzly bear distribution;
- developing and enhancing education programs; and
- establishing regional implementation teams.

BearSmart

Human activities have become more frequent in bear territory. As a result, bear habitats have become more fragmented and encounters between bears and humans more common.

Alberta BearSmart is a public awareness program for people visiting, living or working in bear territory.

The goals of the BearSmart program are to:

- empower Albertans with information to make safe decisions when in bear territory;
- help bear populations survive by educating people on how to prevent encounters and how to respond appropriately in a bear encounter; and
- reduce property damage caused by bears.

Grizzly Bear Management Areas



Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan Zones

Habitat Linkage

Recovery (see below for Type)

Support

Recovery Zone Type

Protected Areas

Core

Secondary

