

GRIZZLY BEAR

INITIAL CONSERVATION ACTION STATEMENT

Recommended to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development

By the Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee

February 2002

Description of Species

Scientific Name: *Ursus arctos*

Common Name: Grizzly Bear

Range: considered a subspecies of Brown Bear, which occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. Found in the mountains, foothills and boreal mixedwood regions of western Alberta. Elsewhere in North America, found in Alaska, the territories, B.C., and relatively unsettled areas of the northwestern US, where it persists in 6 separate populations. Formerly extended into Mexico.

Alberta Status as Assessed by the Scientific Subcommittee of the ESCC:¹

- Threatened

Rationale for Status:

- Very small population size (fewer than 1000).
- Dispersal and exchange with adjacent populations limited.

Status Elsewhere

- Existing Canadian population listed as Special Concern by COSEWIC; Prairie population is Extirpated.
- On Blue list (vulnerable/sensitive) in BC.
- Included on CITES Appendix II
- Globally ranked G4T3 (species secure, subspecies vulnerable)
- Listed as Threatened in the contiguous United States
- Endangered in Washington, Threatened in Idaho, Secure in Alaska, S2 in Wyoming, S1S2 in Montana; Extirpated from a number of other states.

Initial Conservation Responses Recommended by the ESCC:

1. The legal designation of this species should be changed from "Big Game" to "Threatened" in the Alberta Wildlife Regulation (AR 143/97). Detailed assessment of current data by the ESCC's Scientific Subcommittee supports this designation.
2. Within the next 24 months, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) should prepare a Provincial Recovery Plan to set goals, objectives, strategies and

¹ For additional detail see SSC report: Status Evaluation for Grizzly Bear in Alberta, January 2002

management actions needed to guide recovery for this species over the next 5 years. SRD should ensure that this planning exercise is appropriately integrated with conservation and management programs in Alberta's National Parks and adjacent jurisdictions.

3. **The Recovery Plan should be prepared by an Alberta Recovery Team. This Team will be promptly convened, with representation from the broad diversity of affected stakeholders. The following agencies/groups should be invited to participate: SRD – Public Lands Division, Land and Forest Division, Alberta Energy, a representative from Alberta's Universities, conservation groups (the Alberta Fish and Game Association, the Federation of Alberta Naturalists), the Western Stock Growers' Association, National Parks, and representatives from associations representing the forest industry, oil and gas industry. These initial participants may identify other agencies, groups, or individuals that should be invited to participate. The Recovery Plan should address the needs of the species at both the provincial and regional levels, and the Recovery Team should consider and incorporate appropriate information and expertise available through current conservation and management committees and projects.**
4. **Alberta Sustainable Resource Development should enhance programs to collect information on the population size, distribution, trends, and habitat availability for Grizzly Bears in Alberta, and the status of the species should be reassessed within 5 years. The current population estimation model should be refined to improve both its precision and accuracy, with a focus on improved delineation of trends in habitats and populations.**
5. **Pending development of an Alberta Recovery Plan, sufficient new resources (funding and personnel) should be secured to support the following conservation actions:**
 - **Population monitoring and assessment.....\$80,000/yr**
 - **SRD should initiate an immediate review of conservation and management strategies for Grizzly Bears in Alberta, with particular attention to problem bear management.**
 - **The ESCC recommends that the Minister close the hunting season on Grizzly Bears.**
 - **Co-operative programs, with other government departments and industrial land users, to develop and implement methods to manage (limit) human access in Grizzly habitat.**

Stakeholders should continue to be encouraged to assist in planning, implementation, and co-funding of these activities