

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Ed Schriever, Director

Project F18AF01188

**Selkirk-Cabinet Yaak Ecosystem
Traditional Section 6**

Final Performance Report



Performance Period
13 August 2018 to 30 June 2020

Compiled and edited by: Barb Moore

August 2020
Boise, Idaho

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**ESA TRADITIOANL SECTION 6
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

1. State: Idaho

Grant number: F18AF01188

Grant name: Selkirk-Cabinet/Yaak Ecosystem (Grizzly Bears & Caribou)

2. Report Period: August 13, 2018 – June 30, 2020

Report due date: September 28, 2020

3. Location of work: Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem within Idaho, Boundary and Bonner Counties, Game Management Unit 1.

4. Objectives

Segment 1: Grizzly bear research, management, and education

- a) Establish camera and DNA sites to document Recovery Plan criteria (S12, USFWS 1993).
- b) Provide public outreach, sanitation education, and enforcement presence (S131, S2112, S2113, S62, USFWS 1993).
- c) Provide technical assistance as needed to federal, state, and private entities. This activity is primarily intended to reduce threats to listed species and to provide scientific information as needed.

Segment 2: Monitor and Evaluate Woodland Caribou Population Augmentation and Recovery Effort.

- a) Conduct fixed-wing portion of the winter census. Coordinate with British Columbia for the rotor-wing portion of the census, addressing Recovery Plan objective 321 (USFWS 1994).
- b) Assist in the re-write of the current Woodland Caribou Management Plan by providing scientific information to assess species needs.
- c) Provide technical assistance to federal, state, international, and private land management agencies to benefit recovery objectives 12, 13, 215, 216 and 312 (USFWS 1994) and to provide necessary scientific information.

5. If the work in this grant was part of a larger undertaking with other components and funding, present a brief overview of the larger activity and the role of this project

This work is part of a larger effort to recover grizzly bears in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystems and woodland caribou in the Selkirk ecosystem. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been involved in all aspects of recovery of both species. Significant work and

funding is also provided by the British Columbia Ministry of Environment and the B.C. Columbia Basin Compensation Program. There is a B.C. representative as a member of both the U.S. woodland caribou recovery team and the grizzly bear recovery team. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the USFWS are involved in grizzly bear recovery efforts in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, part of which is in Idaho. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are involved in grizzly bear recovery efforts in the Selkirk ecosystem. Recently the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho and the Kalispel Tribe have been more involved in both grizzly bear and caribou recovery efforts.

6. Describe how the objectives were met

Objective 1a: Remote cameras, in conjunction with DNA hair snare sites (corrals), were deployed in the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Once established, cameras and snare sites were visited every 2 weeks to change memory cards and replace batteries in the cameras. Hairs were collected and barbs were cleaned on the hair snare sites and fresh lure, if used, was placed inside the hair snare site. Additionally, rub trees were identified and barbed wire was placed on these trees in an attempt to obtain grizzly bear hair.

In 2018, 2,738 samples were collected from 373 rub sites and 129 corral sites in the Selkirk ecosystem and 2,576 samples were collected from 782 rub sites and 34 corral sites in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Twenty-eight corral sites produced photos of grizzly bears in the Selkirk Ecosystem and 16 corral sites produced photos of grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Hair samples were submitted to Wildlife Genetics lab in British Columbia. Forty-two grizzly bears (22 female, 20 male) were genetically identified in the Selkirk ecosystem and 49 grizzly bears (18 female, 31 male) were genetically identified in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem.

In 2019, 2,331 samples were collected from 410 rub sites and 122 corral sites in the Selkirk ecosystem and 2,360 samples were collected from 830 rub sites and 29 corral sites in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Twenty-eight corral sites produced photos of grizzly bears in the Selkirk Ecosystem and 8 corral sites produced photos of grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Hair samples were submitted to Wildlife Genetics lab in British Columbia for DNA analysis.

While field efforts are currently underway in 2020, to date crews have visited approximately 380 rub sites and 35 corral sites in the Selkirk ecosystem and 110 rub sites and 12 corral sites in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, field efforts have been reduced in 2020 compared to previous years. Hair samples will be submitted to Wildlife Genetics lab in British Columbia for DNA analysis.

Objective 1b:

In 2018, there were conflicts involving 3 different grizzly bears with depredations on fruit trees, bee hives and unsecured trash. A young male grizzly (865) was trapped near Silverwood Theme Park after numerous reports of the bear roaming low density residential areas. The bear was captured, radio-collared, and relocated to Boulder Creek in the Cabinet Mountains. The grizzly quickly made its way to surrounding areas near Bonners Ferry, roaming widely, and committing numerous depredations on fruit trees at many home sites.

The bear then denned in the Yaak. An augmentation bear, released in the Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem, was trapped south of the Clark Fork River near the Idaho/Montana border after it was reported getting into unsecured trash and dog food in a low-density residential area. The decision was made to relocate the bear back to the Cabinet Mountains. An unmarked grizzly bear north of Bonners Ferry was reported getting into unsecured bee hives and fruit trees. Efforts were not made to trap this bear.

The issues surrounding the 3 grizzly bear conflicts in 2018, provided numerous opportunities for public outreach and sanitation education. Twenty-five bear resistant trash cans and 2 locations of electric fencing components were distributed during 2018.

In June of 2019, grizzly 865 returned from his winter den in the Yaak and killed 5 lambs at 2 different farms near Porthill, Idaho. After the second depredation, the bear was trapped and euthanized. Near Copeland, a grizzly sow with cubs of the year raided a chicken coop twice getting unsecured chicken feed. The coop was secured with electric fencing and the home owners provided with bear proof trash cans for feed storage. In addition, an unmarked adult male entered a barn near Mt. Hall and tore into a large bag of unsecured barley. A total of 20 bear proof trash cans were distributed to home owners in areas of high potential for grizzly bear conflicts in 2019. A permanent electric fence was also built for a landowner in Crossport to protect their orchard against future bear depredations, as they experienced severe damage to their orchard in 2018 from grizzly 865.

In 2020, to date, there have been 8 grizzly bear depredations on fruit trees, pig pens, and chicken coops. All of these complaints occurred on the North Bench area of Boundary County. In addition, numerous reports of grizzly bear sightings occurred in the same area. Bear resistant garbage cans are being distributed to residents living in areas with high potential for grizzly bear conflicts.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions, numerous grizzly bear educational presentations were conducted in the Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint areas. In addition, spring enforcement patrols were conducted focusing effort on locations that receive high grizzly bear use and black bear hunting pressure. Three separate grizzly bear poaching investigations are currently ongoing.

Objective 1c: Technical assistance was provided to federal, state and private land management agencies through comments on timber sales, timing of activities related to logging, including active cutting and hauling activities on an as-needed basis. Technical assistance included participation in forest collaboratives and through comments during the NEPA process. Assistance with private land owners was accomplished primarily through meetings set up by the private companies/individuals themselves.

Objective 2a: No aerial surveys for caribou in the U.S. were conducted in 2019-2020. The most recent woodland caribou survey was conducted in February 2018. A total of 3 cow caribou were detected in 2018, a reduction from the 2017 survey when 11 caribou were detected. All animals were found in the British Columbia portion of the Selkirk ecosystem. The entire Selkirk Woodland caribou recovery area was surveyed, including portions of

Idaho, Washington, and British Columbia. An effort was made to collar the 3 cows observed during the winter survey and relocate them to the Revelstoke maternal pen in British Columbia. In 2018, after release from the maternal pen, one of the collared cows died due to mountain lion predation, one collar malfunctioned, and the remaining cow was alive. To date, one cow died during calving spring 2019, one yearling's collar is malfunctioning and her fate is unknown, and one cow still is alive.

Objective 2b: The South Selkirk Caribou Management Plan was completed October 2018.

Objective 2c: Technical assistance for woodland caribou was conducted primarily through participation in the Selkirk Caribou International Technical Working Group. This group is a collaborative effort, logistically supported by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, that includes federal, state, county, tribal, British Columbian, and private entities that are working together to develop a caribou recovery plan which will be submitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After fall 2018, IDFG did not have a participating member of this working group due to retirement of the Department's woodland caribou biologist.

7. Discuss differences between work anticipated in grant proposal and grant agreement, and that actually carried out with Federal Aid grant funds

The objectives identified in the grant proposal and agreement were achieved, except for caribou related work (*Objective 1c and 2c*) due to translocation of U.S./southern caribou to Revelstoke and the retirement of the IDFG's woodland caribou biologist.

8. List any publications or in-house reports resulting from this work.

DeGroot, Leo. 2018 Caribou Census, South Selkirk Mtns. British Columbia Ministry of Environment. (available on request)

Past and present grizzly bear related project reports are available at:

<https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/grizzlyBear.php>

Name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of people compiling this report:

Barb Moore, Regional Wildlife Biologist, Panhandle Region

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

(208) 769-1414

barb.moore@idfg.idaho.gov

Submitted by:

David Smith

Grants/Contracts Specialist

David.smith@idfg.idaho.gov



Martha Wackenhut

Federal Aid Coordinator

Assistant Chief, Bureau of Wildlife

Approved by:

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME



Toby Boudreau, Chief
Bureau of Wildlife