



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

BLACK BEAR MORTALITY SUMMARY

Harvest Years 2020 - 2022



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
LIST OF APPENDICES	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
BLACK BEAR MORTALITY ANALYSIS	2
2022 Black Bear Statewide Mortality	2
License Sales and Harvest	6
Jackson BMU (101)	7
Greys River BMU (102)	11
Absaroka BMU (201)	17
Bighorns BMU (301)	23
Sierra Madres BMU (401)	31
Uinta BMU (402)	35
Laramie Peak BMU (501)	37
Snowy Range BMU (502)	43
Wind River BMU (601)	47
Statewide Hunt Area 35	55
<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Wyoming black bear hunting season dates and seasonal female mortality limits by BMU and hunt area, 2020-2022	56

INTRODUCTION

This document contains a summary of Wyoming's black bear mortalities for 2020 through spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons, some harvest data are included from the fall of 2022 when possible. Mortalities are categorized by cause, including: legal and illegal harvest, damage removals, road-kills, and other miscellaneous causes of death (i.e., natural mortalities). Throughout this document the term "total mortalities" refers to a combination of all causes of death while the term "harvest", when not prefaced by "legal" or "illegal," refers to legal and illegal kills combined.

Since 1994, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) has used a female mortality limit system to regulate black bear harvest. Mortality limits and hunting seasons are assigned to either individual or grouped hunt areas (Appendix I). Bear Management Unit (BMU) or hunt area harvest levels are monitored and regulated by requiring all successful black bear hunters to present the skull and pelt of their harvested bear to WGFD personnel within 72 hours of taking the animal. Harvested female bears are counted against the female mortality limit for the hunt area(s) in which they were killed. Upon meeting its seasonal female mortality limit, a hunt area is closed to harvest for the remainder of that season. To more effectively distribute hunting pressure and allocate harvest opportunities among spring and fall seasons, female mortality limits are split into spring and fall components. Harvest in excess of a spring mortality limit is subtracted from the fall mortality limit for the same BMU/hunt area. Conversely, the remainder of unfilled spring mortality limits is transferred to the area's fall mortality limit. An up-to-date, running tally of harvested female black bears and BMU/hunt area closures is maintained by WGFD and made available to hunters via a telephone hotline and Department website.

The Large Carnivore Section of the WGFD reviews Wyoming's black bear harvest and other causes of black bear mortality. Mortality statistics are compiled and compared to past trends and established management criteria. Hunting seasons and mortality limits are set for 3-year periods to better determine effects of the mortality limit on the black bear population in that area. At the end of the 3-year period, adjustments may be made to more effectively manage local bear populations. Throughout this process, changes have been made to WGFD's black bear management. BMU/hunt area boundaries have been revised and new hunt areas have been created. Additionally, changes have been made to hunting season opening and closing dates, female mortality limits, and total season length. These changes are made through analysis and interpretation of harvest data and the public input process in an adaptive management framework.

Tooth age data for this report are reported through the spring 2022 season. Some harvest data have not been received by the Large Carnivore Section as of this date. However, as much fall 2022 data are included in this report as possible to provide relevant comparisons to previous years. Mortality data for years prior to 2022 may vary from previous reports. These differences reflect mortalities reported too late to be included in the previous annual report. The figures in this document supersede those presented in previously published annual mortality reports.

BLACK BEAR MORTALITY ANALYSIS

2020 - 2022 Statewide Mortality

This report will evaluate the effects of harvest and other mortality sources on Wyoming black bear populations by BMU and grouped hunt areas for the 3-year harvest cycle 2020-2022 (Figure 1). Annual data are presented and compared to past data to provide perspective on longer-term mortality and harvest criteria trends.

Total statewide mortalities for the 2020-2020 cycle increased from the previous three years, 2017-2019 (Figure 2). Mean total mortality for 2020-2022 increased 14% to 577 from the 2017-2019 average of 499. As is typical, spring mortalities for the years 2020-2022 were higher than fall mortalities (Figure 3). Non-harvest mortalities were in line with previous years, although 2022 data could increase before bears den for the winter (Figure 4).

Due to geographic separation of black bear populations, variations in habitat quality bear density, and an uneven distribution of hunting pressure, caution is warranted when interpreting statewide harvest statistics. Therefore, more specific harvest criteria are presented by BMU and by groups of hunt areas with shared female mortality limits in each of the following sections of this report. In BMUs or hunt areas with low harvest, interpreting harvest statistics based on subsets of sex, age class, or season can result in extremely variable results that are difficult to interpret due to small sample sizes.

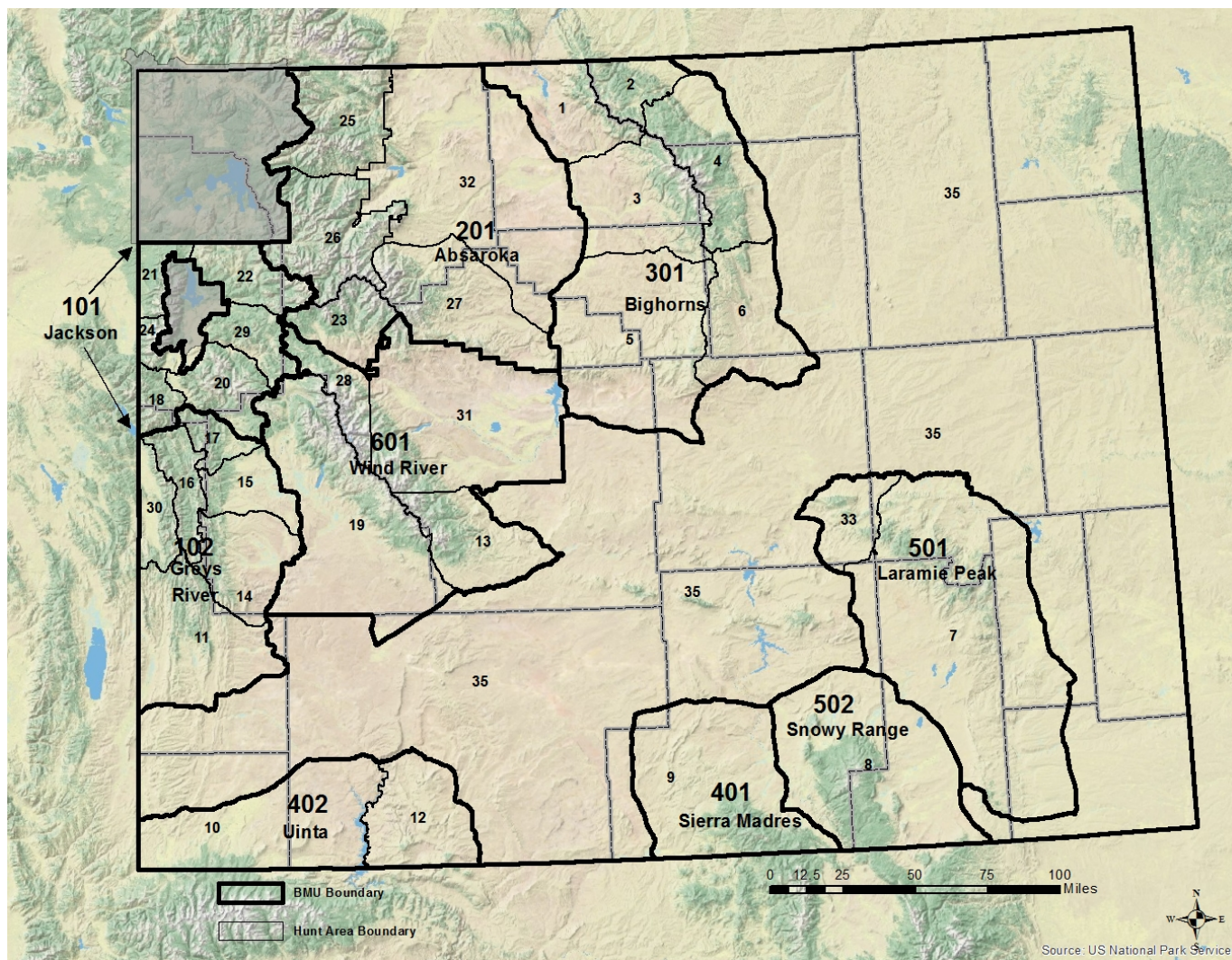


Figure 1. Wyoming black bear management units (BMUs) and hunt areas, 2022.

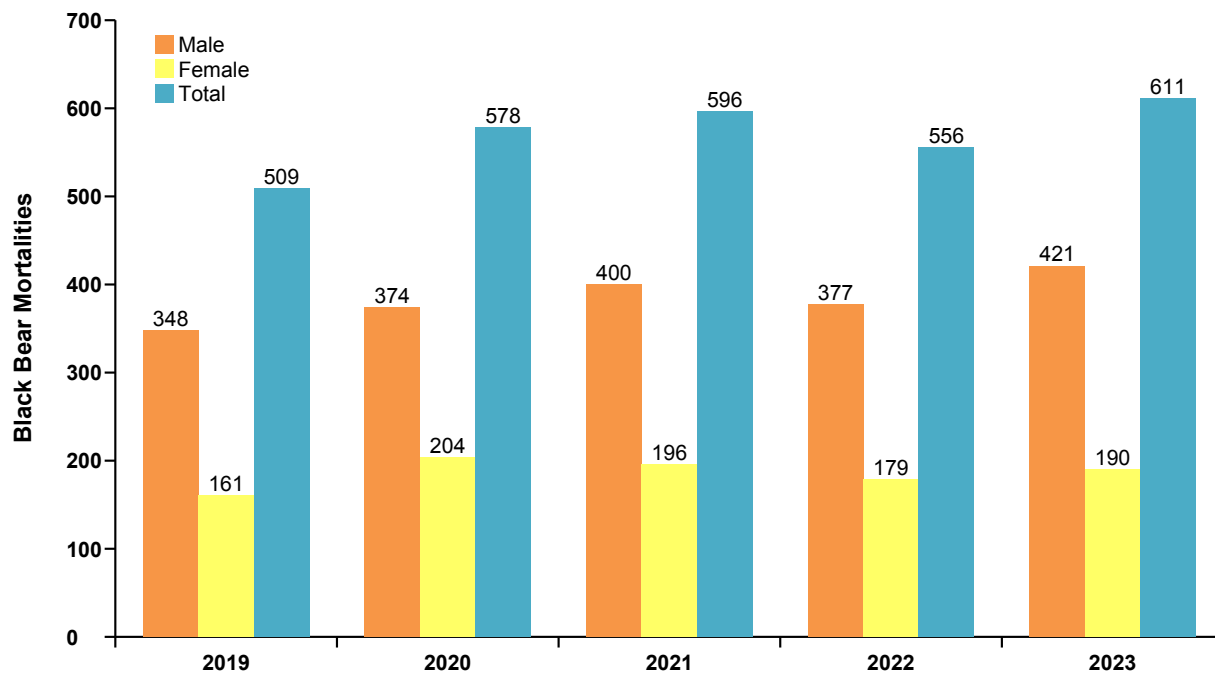


Figure 2. Annual statewide black bear mortalities (all causes) by sex, 2018-2023.

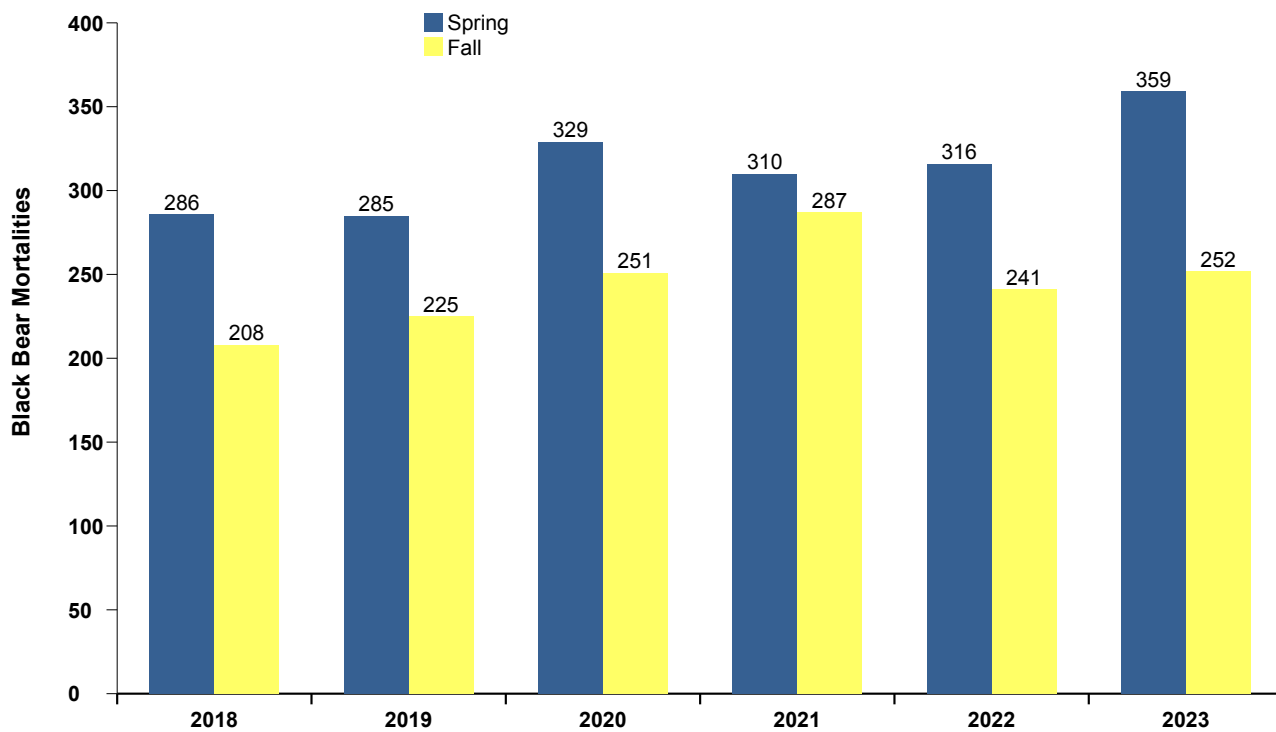


Figure 3. Annual statewide black bear mortalities (all causes) by season, 2018-spring 2023.

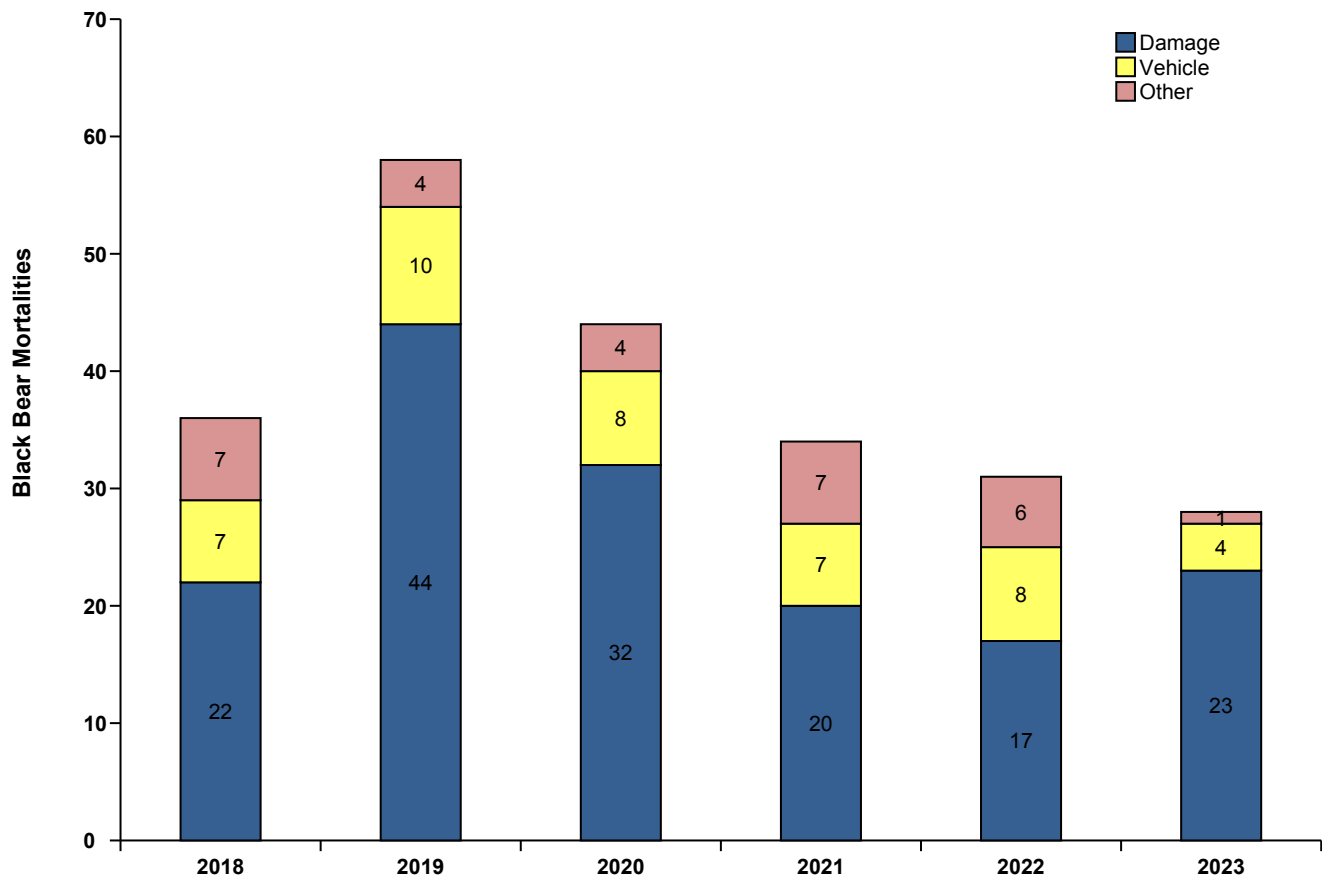


Figure 4. Annual statewide non-harvest black bear mortalities by year, 2018-2023.

License Sale and Harvest

Black bear harvest in Wyoming has increased steadily since the implementation of female mortality limits in the mid 1990s (Figure 5). However, during this period hunter success has changed little. When plotted against legal hunter harvest, increased license sales are strongly correlated with the increase in hunter harvest ($r^2=0.93$). During this period the percentage of licensed black bear hunters successfully harvesting a bear averaged 10%, ranging from 9% to 13%.

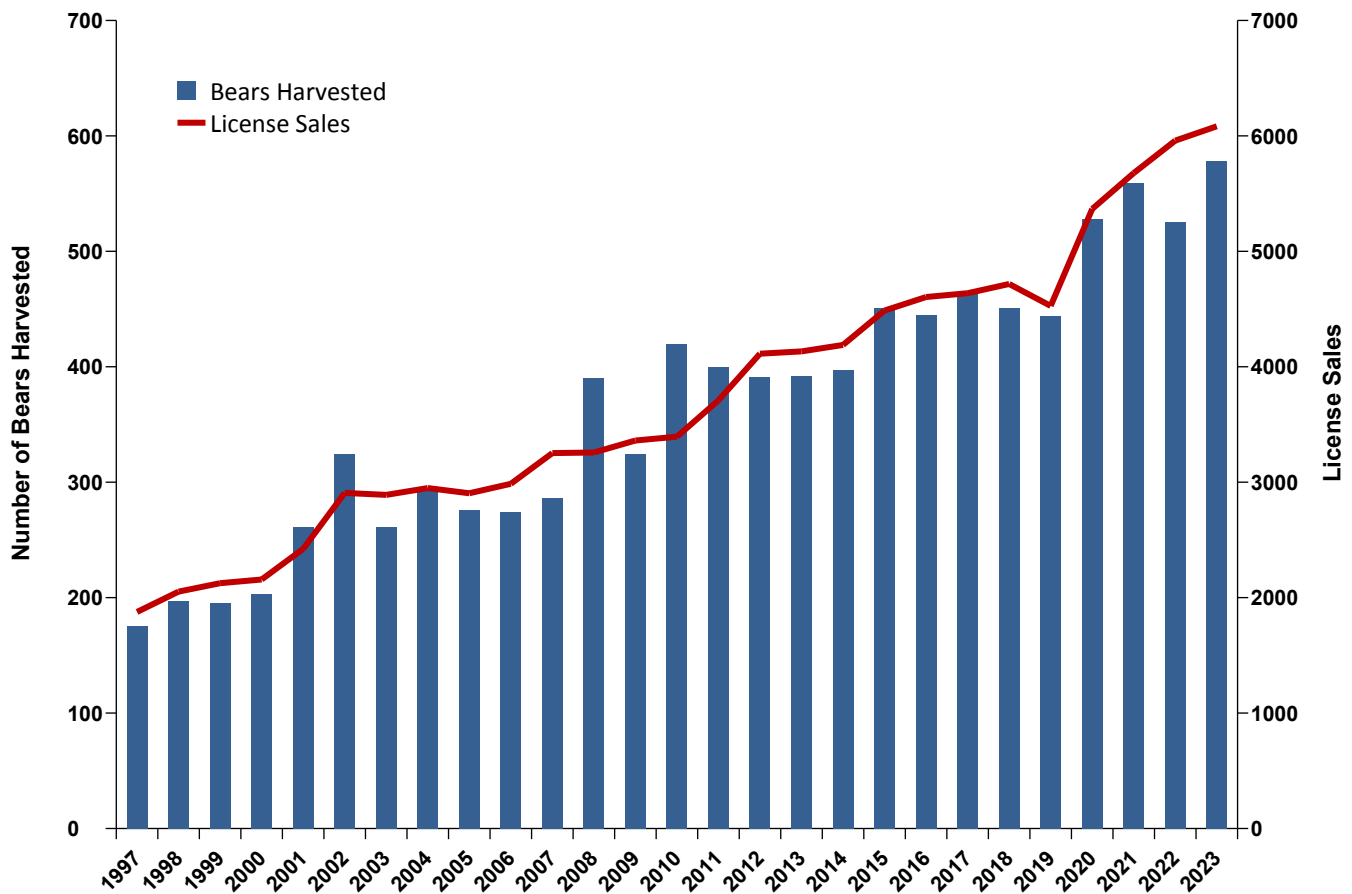


Figure 5. Total legal black bear harvest and license sales in Wyoming, 1997-2023.

JACKSON BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (101)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

Female mortality limits for the Jackson BMU remained unchanged for the 2020 – 2022 season cycle from the previous three years (Table 1). During this period, total and harvest mortalities for BMU 101 increased from the previous 3 years (2017-2019) due to an increase in the number of males harvested (Figures 6 and 7). Spring 2020-2022 harvest averaged 40.0 bears per year compared to 31.7 for fall seasons 2020-2022 (Table 1). The percent of adult males continues to trend upward (Figure 8). The percent of females in the harvest continues to remain in the stable range through the spring of 2022 (Figure 9), indicating harvest is having a relatively small influence on the black bear population in the BMU. The percent of adults in the female harvest (Figure 10) also remains in the stable range. The overall pattern of mortalities and harvest criteria (Table 2) in the Jackson BMU continue to indicate that the black bear population in BMU 101 experienced light to moderate harvest.

Table 1. Jackson BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	JACKSON	18, 20, 21, 22, 24 & 29	13	20	27	14	17	9	6/13/20	10/31/20
2021	JACKSON	18, 20, 21, 22, 24 & 29	13	20	27	14	28	6	6/11/21	10/31/21
2022	JACKSON	18, 20, 21, 22, 24 & 29	13	20	30	8	21	14	6/15/22	10/31/22
2023	JACKSON	18, 20, 21, 22, 24 & 29	13	20	30	12	15	13	6/15/22	10/31/22

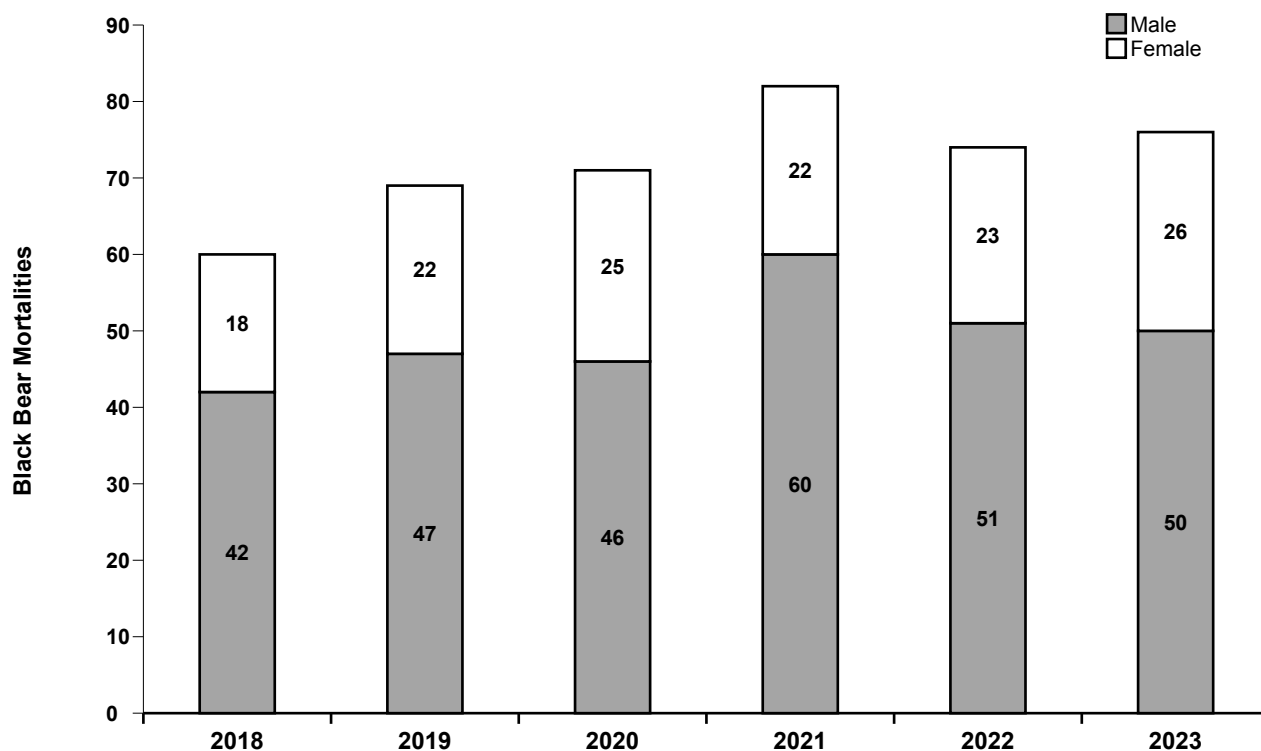


Figure 6. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Jackson BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

Table 2. Harvest criteria for Jackson BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020 through spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		39.9	27.3	47.6

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

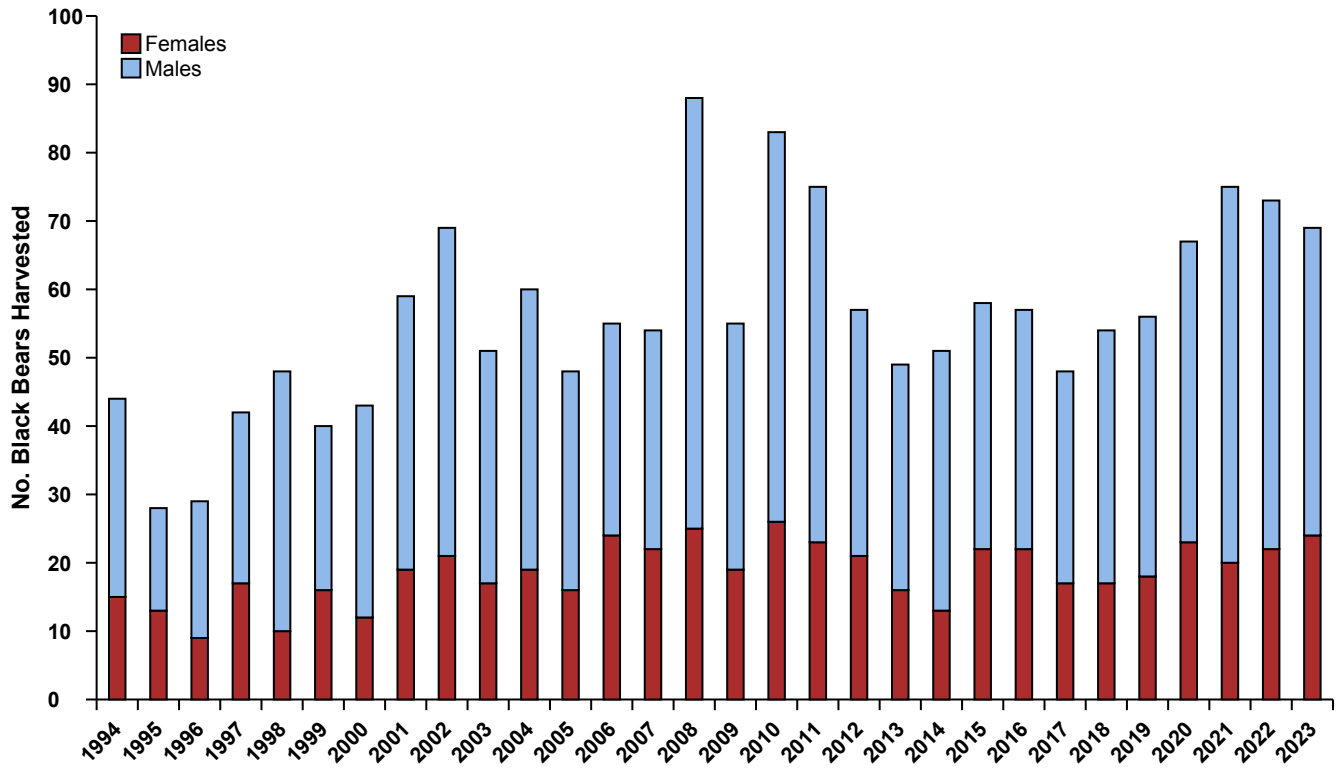


Figure 7. Legal harvest of black bears in Jackson BMU, 1994-2023.

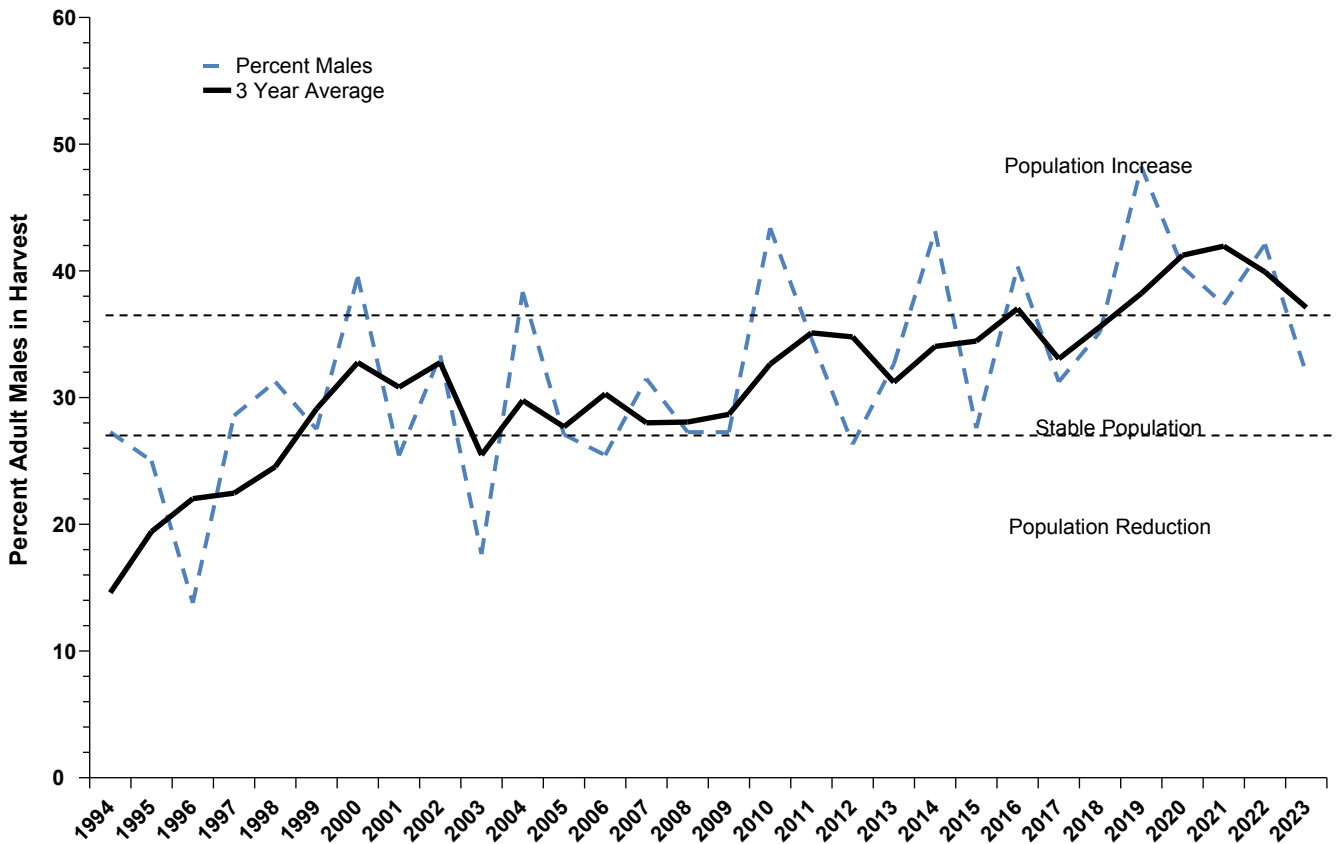


Figure 8. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Jackson BMU, 1994-2023.

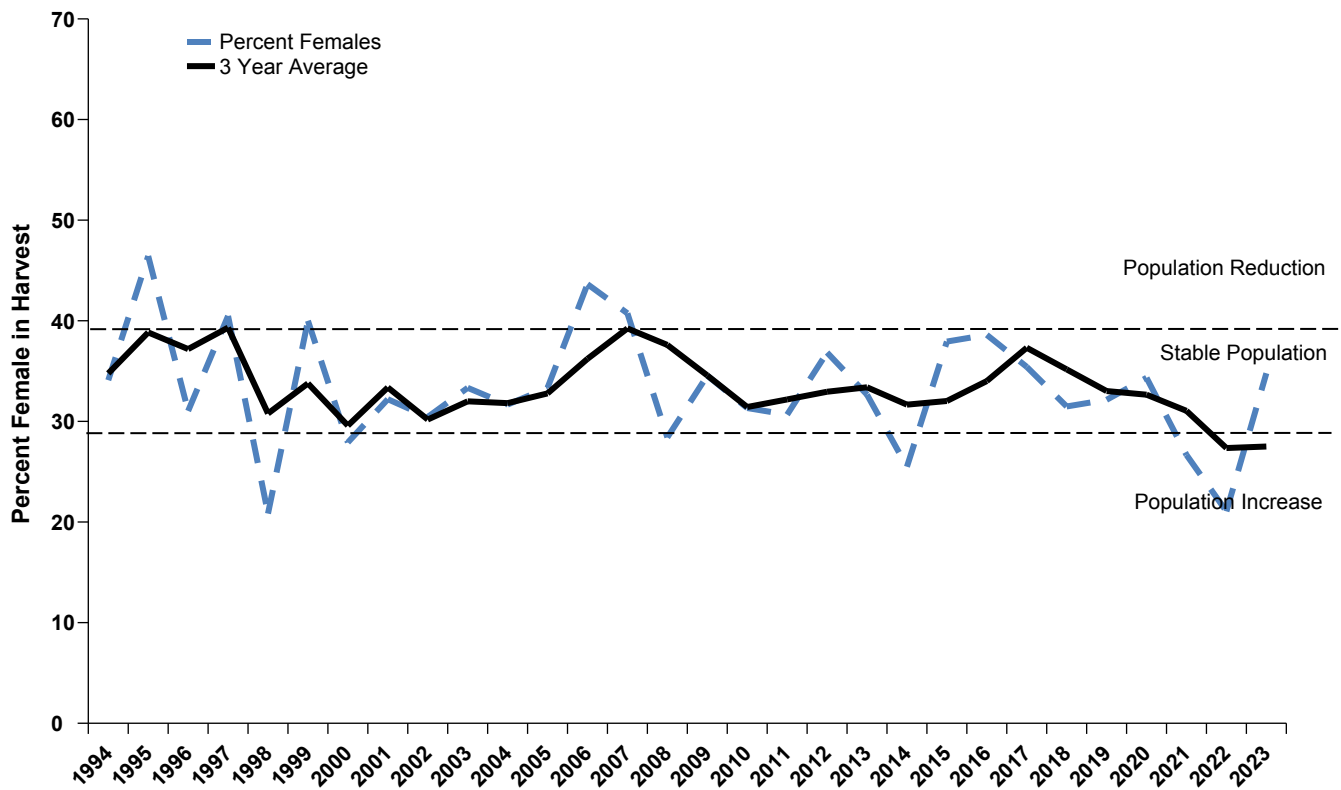


Figure 9. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Jackson BMU, 1994-2023.

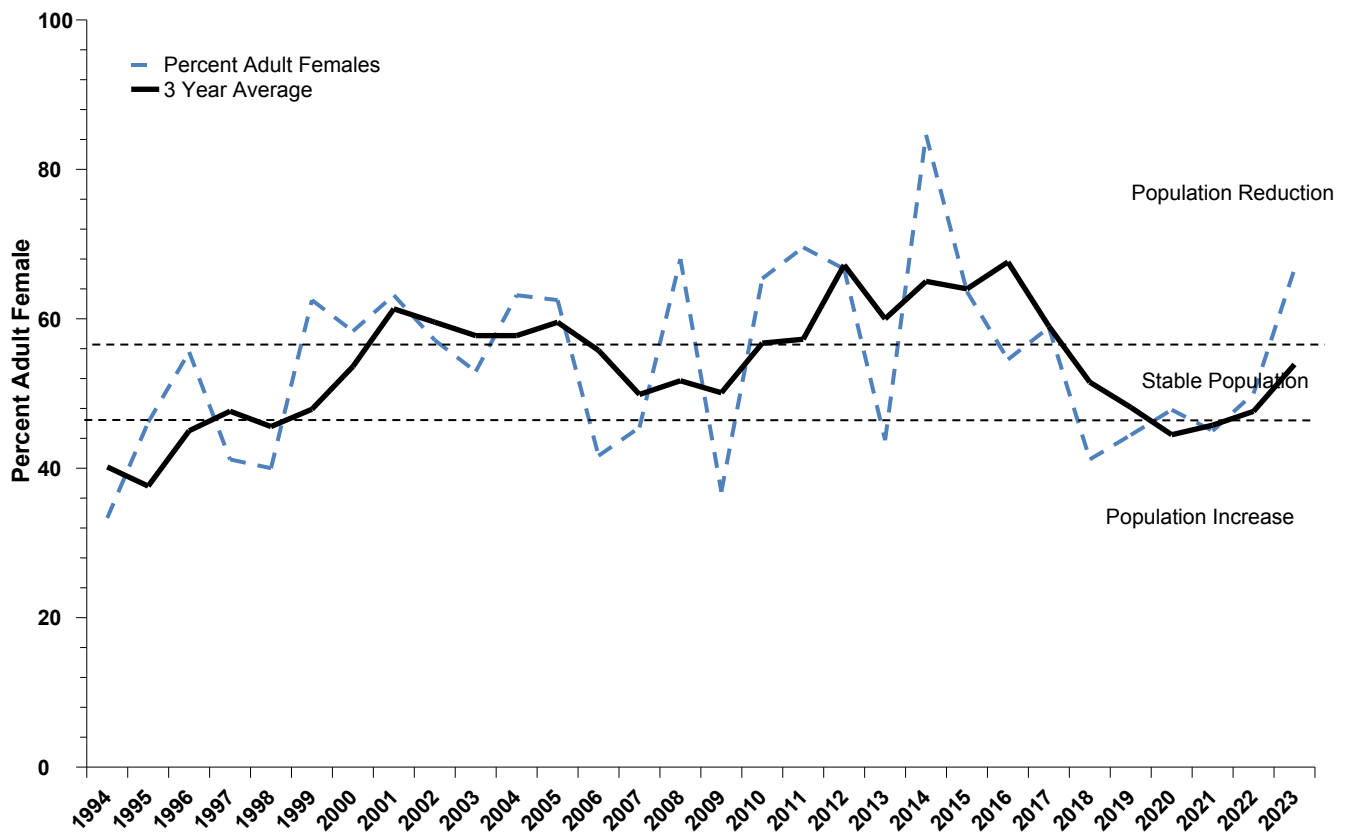


Figure 10. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Jackson BMU, 1994-2023.

GREYS RIVER BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (102)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

Female mortality limits were decreased by 6 females in the spring and fall for hunt areas 14-17 and 30 for the 2020-2022 season cycle in response to LCS population monitoring in 2015-2016 due to low densities of black bears for the area. Female mortality limits for areas 14-17 and 30 were reached near the end of the season for spring 2020, 12 days before the closure in the spring of 2021, and 3 weeks before the closure for the fall of 2020. Hunt area 11 reached quotas in the same seasons at the same time or later than areas 14-17 and 30. Mortality limits for hunt area 11 remained unchanged (Table 3). Total black bear mortalities in BMU 102 remained relatively steady through 2022 (Figure 11), tracking legal harvest (Figures 12 and 16). At the BMU level, harvest criteria continue to indicate constraint of the adult male cohort of the black bear population (Figure 13). The percent of females in the harvest increased slightly from the 2017-2019 season cycle just outside of the stable population indicator (Table 4, Figure 14).

Work to assess the population status using DNA hair snares took place in the summers of 2015 and 2016. Results were analyzed and provided in a separate Department report *Black Bear Population Monitoring in the Greys River, Wyoming Using Clustered Hair Snare Corrals and Spatially-Explicit Capture/Recapture Models*. This report estimates mortality rates for the Greys River ranging from 25-35%, whereas sustainable mortality is estimated at approximately 18%. The report and analysis of harvest data suggest harvest pressure is having a constraining effect on the Greys River black bear population and high harvest levels are likely supported to a large extent by dispersing subadult males from adjacent source populations (Figure 17).

Table 3. Greys River BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020 - spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	GREYS RIVER	11	5	5	7	6	7	5	6/13/20	10/7/20
		14, 15, 16, 17 & 30	24	18	28	25	18	18	6/9/20	10/7/20
2021	GREYS RIVER	11	5	5	3	6	6	3	6/11/21	10/31/21
		14, 15, 16, 17 & 30	24	18	28	28	25	13	6/3/21	10/31/21
2022	GREYS RIVER	11	5	5	10	5	3	3	6/6/22	10/31/22
		14, 15, 16, 17 & 30	24	18	45	17	26	15	6/15/22	10/31/22
2023	GREYS RIVER	11	8	5	8	6	9	4	6/15/23	11/15/23
		14, 15, 16, 17 & 30	24	18	31	14	17	7	6/15/23	10/31/23

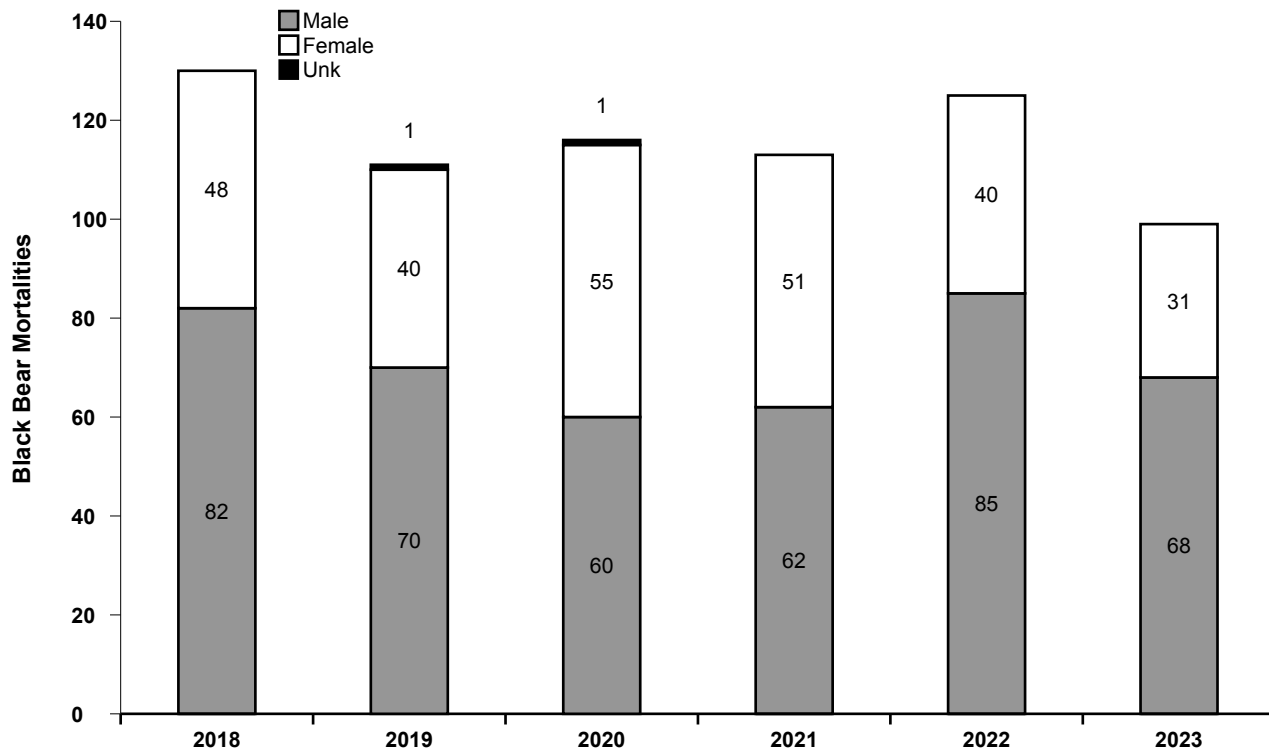


Figure 11. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Greys River BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

Table 4. Harvest criteria for Greys River BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		19.1	41.1	31.6

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

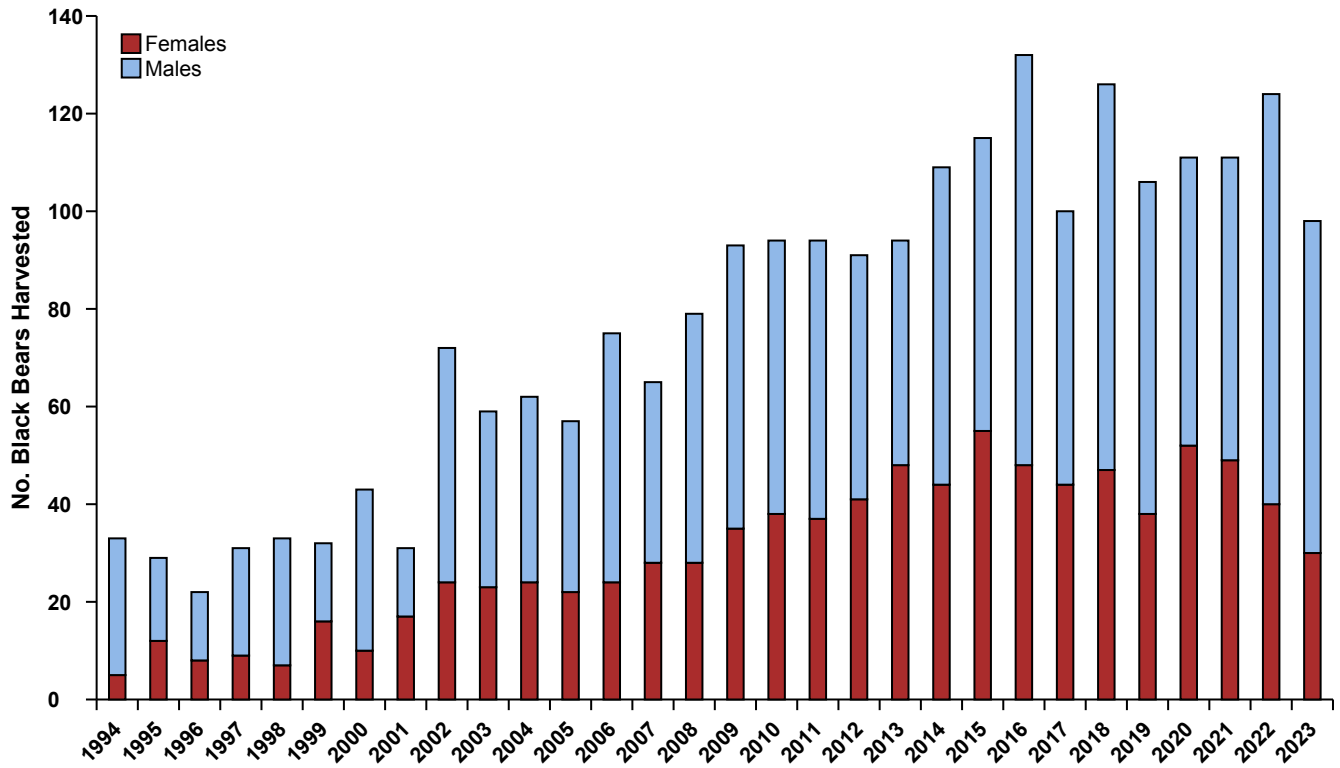


Figure 12. Legal harvest of black bears in Greys River BMU, 1994-2023.

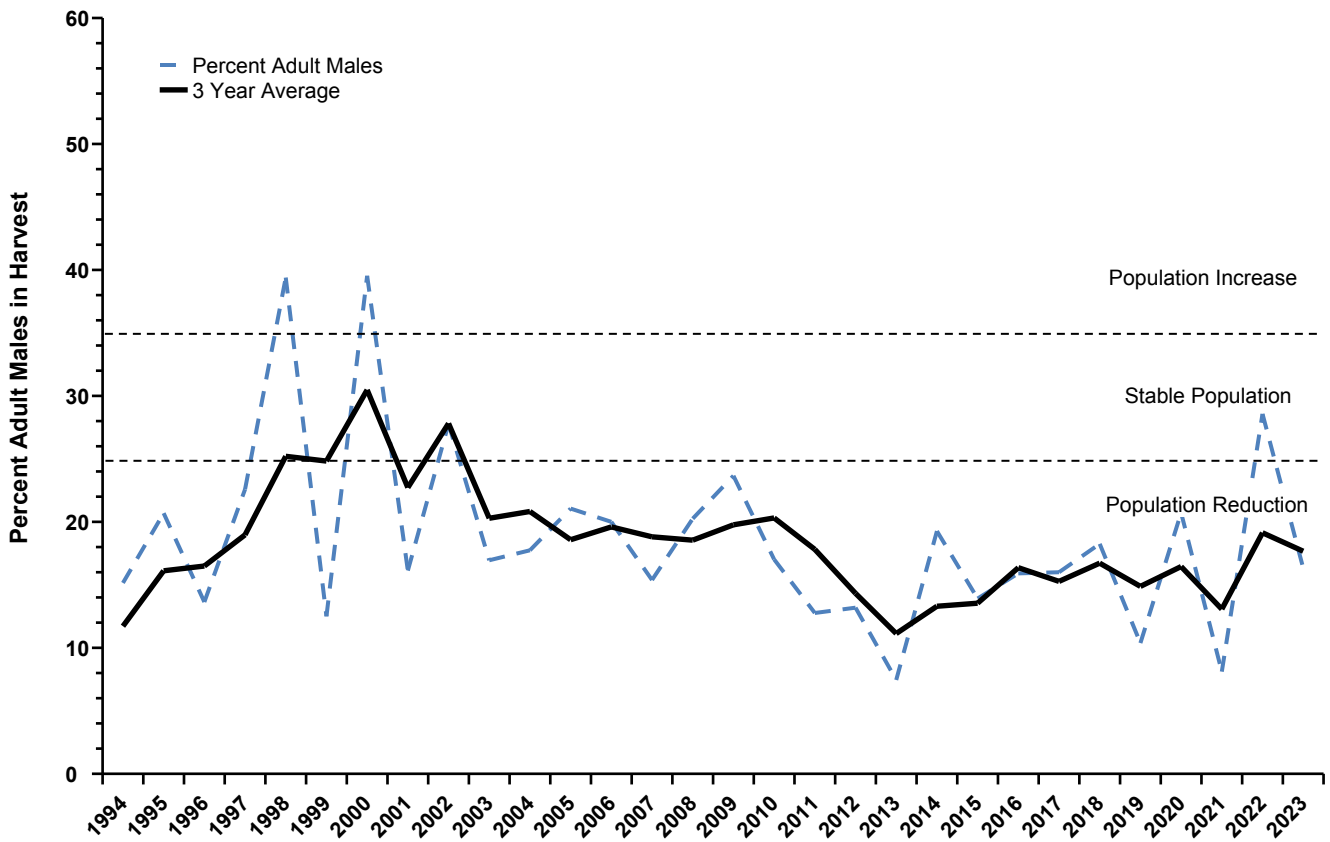


Figure 13. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Greys River BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

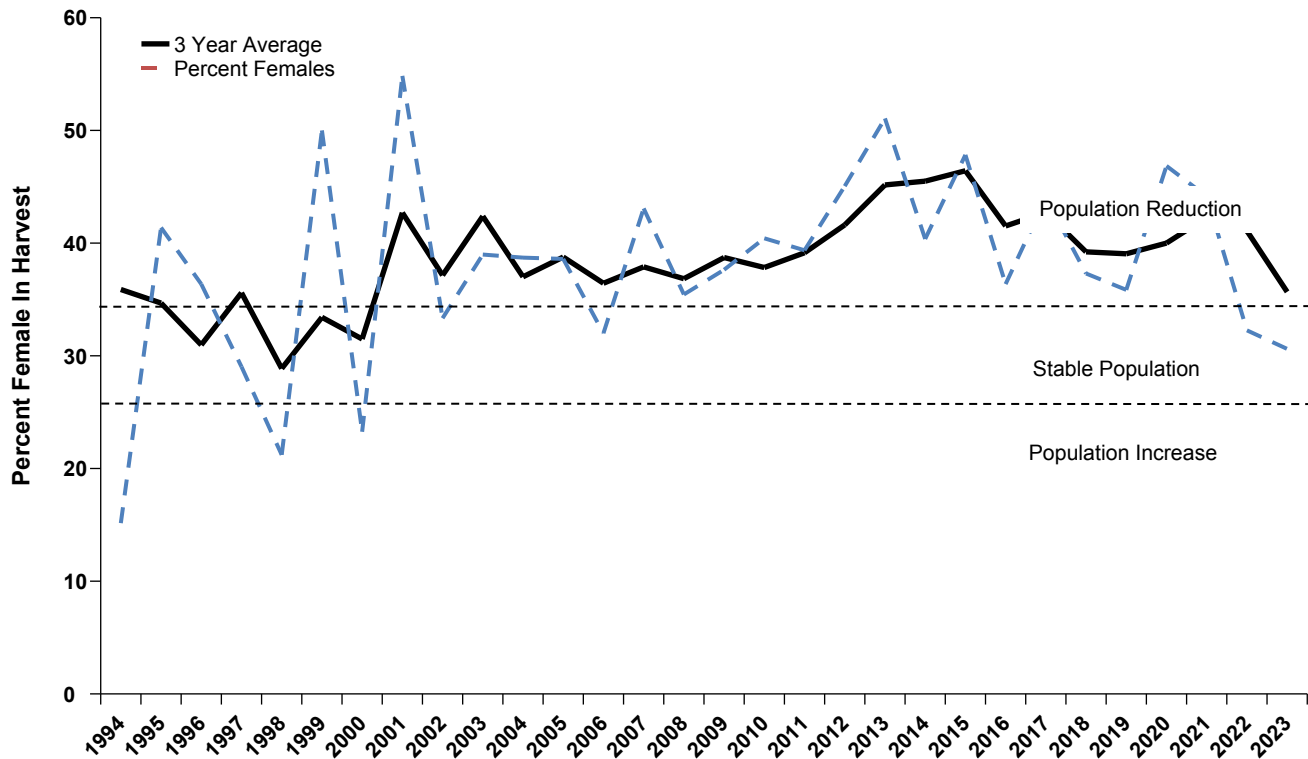


Figure 14. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Greys River BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

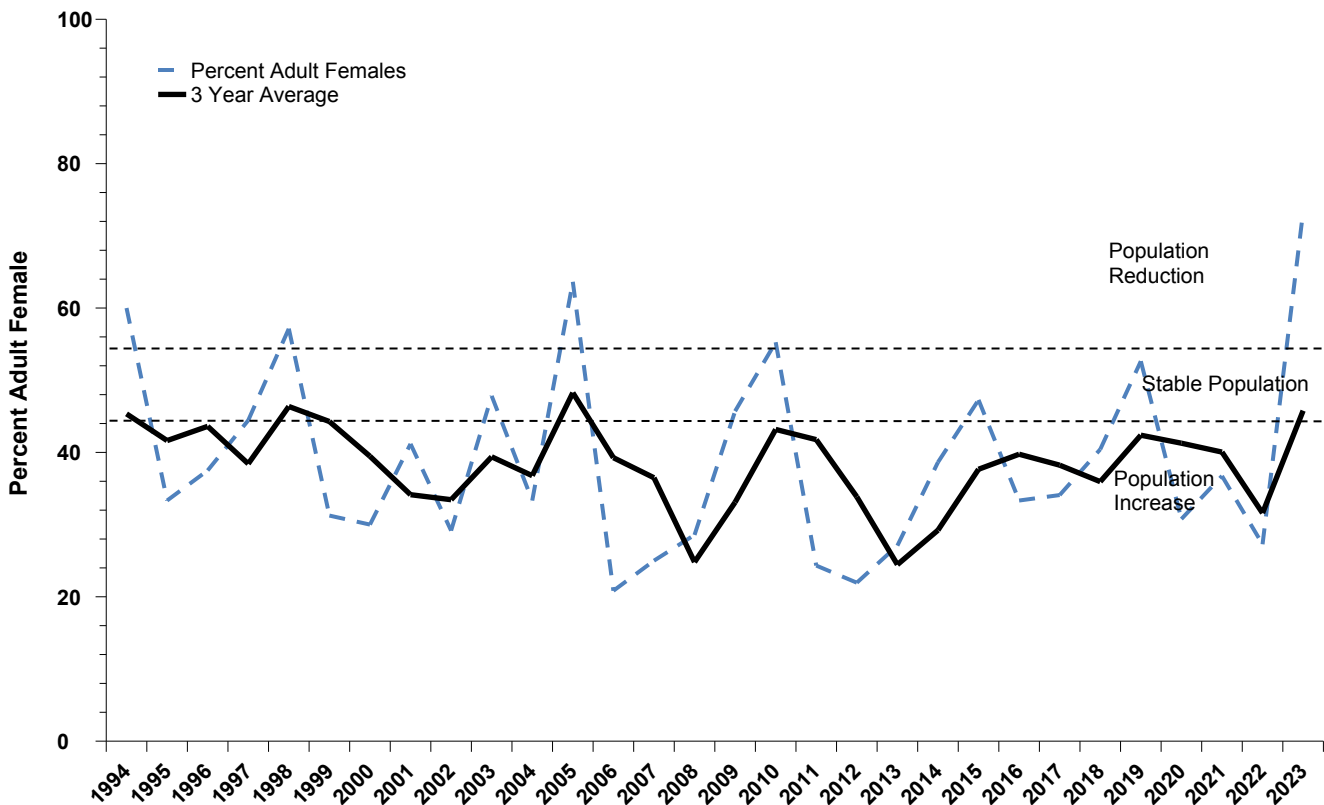


Figure 15. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Greys River BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

Harvest Criteria by Mortality limit – Hunt Areas 14, 15, 16, 17, and 30

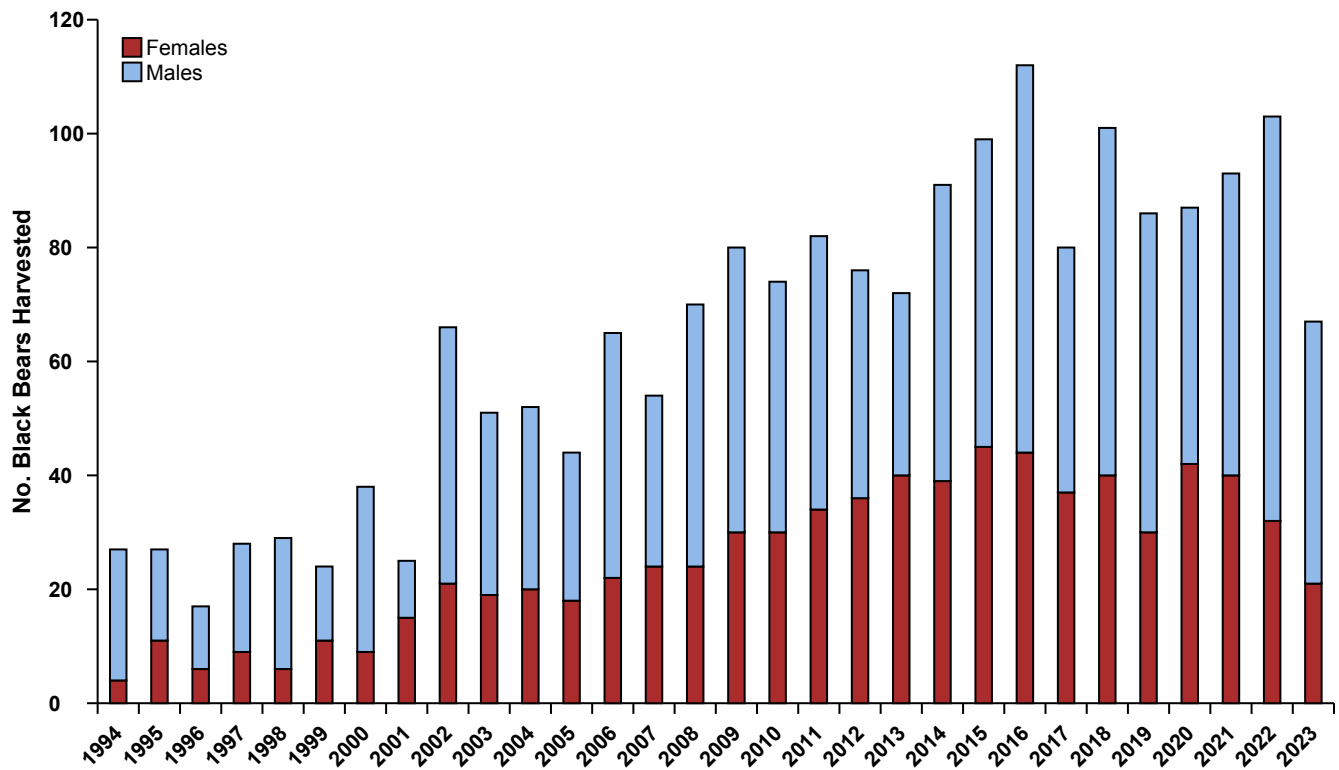


Figure 16. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt areas 14, 15, 16, 17, and 30 of Greys River BMU, 1994-2023.

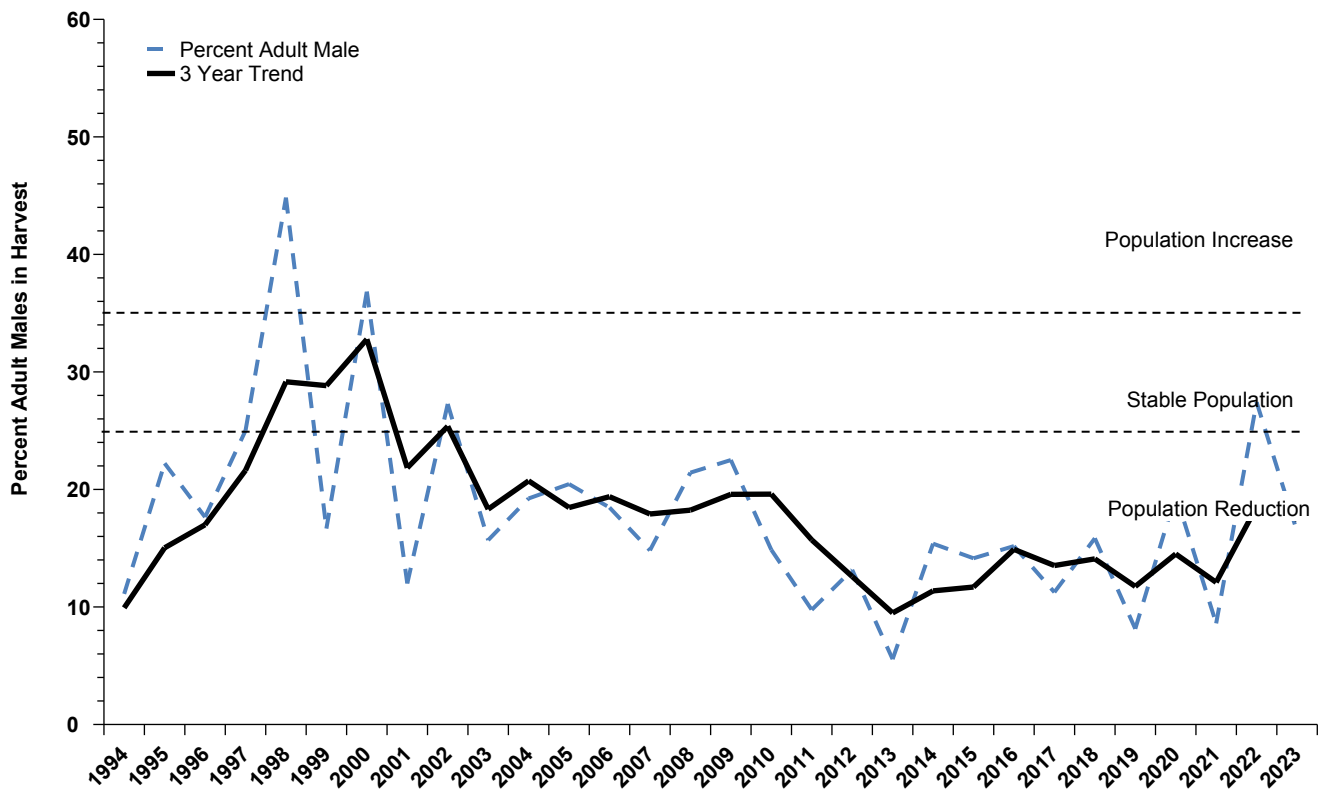


Figure 17. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 14, 15, 16, 17, and 30 of Greys River BMU, 1994-2023.

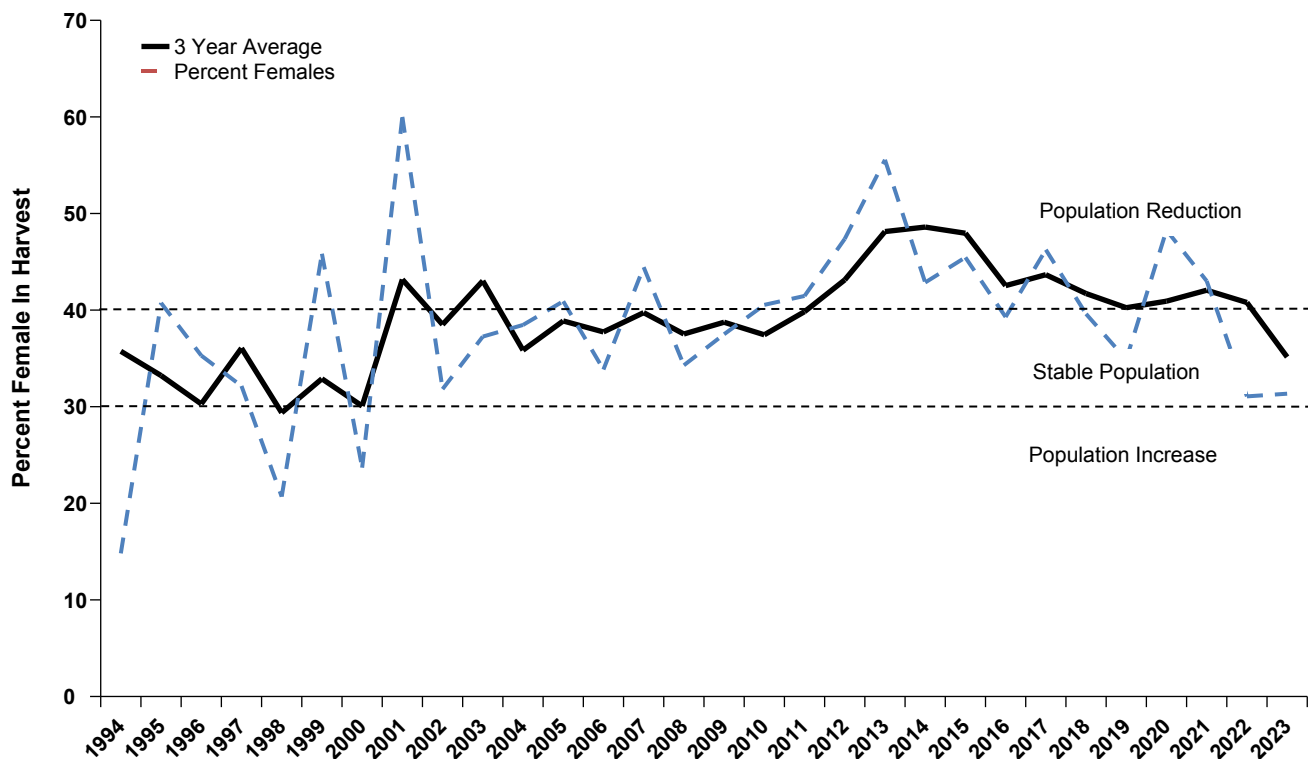


Figure 18. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 14, 15, 16, 17, and 30 of Greys River BMU, 1994-2023.

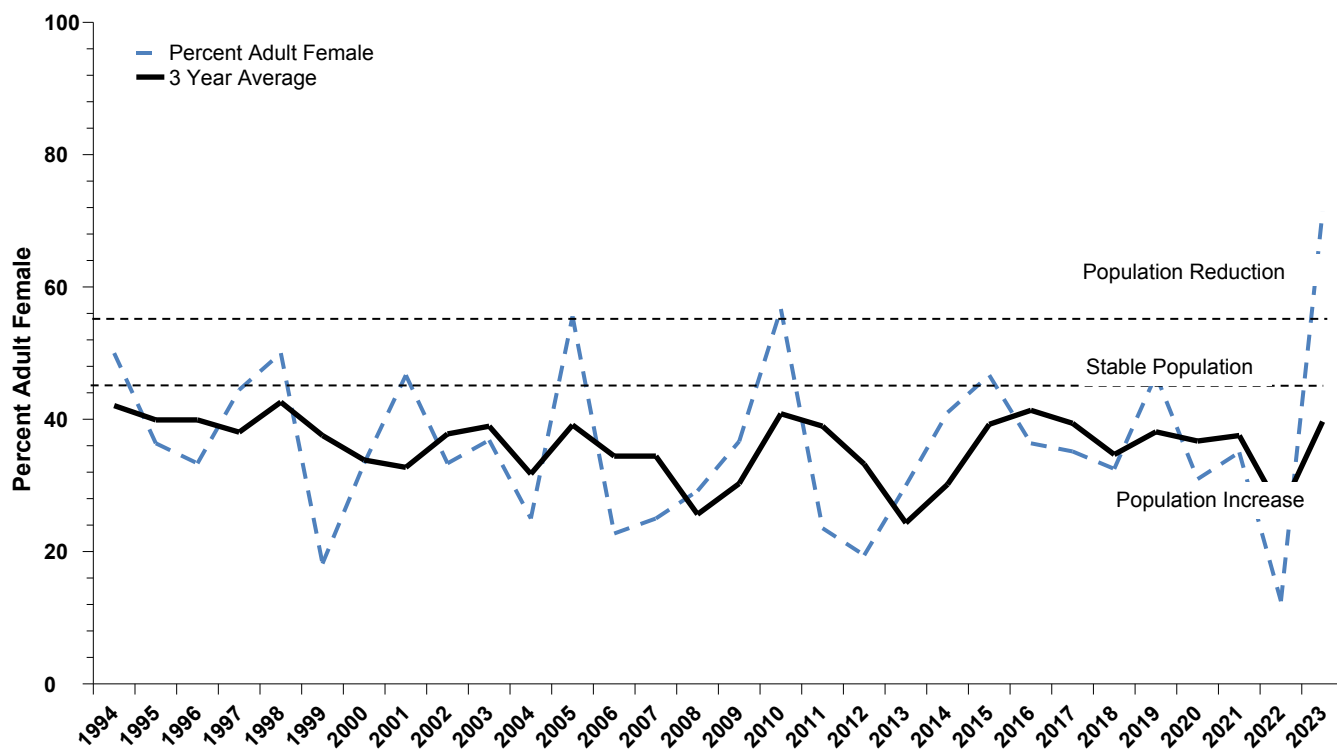


Figure 19. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt areas 14, 15, 16, 17, and 30 of Greys River BMU, 1994-2023.

ABSAROKA BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (201)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

Female mortality limits for the Absaroka BMU remained unchanged from the 2017-2019 season cycle (Table 5). Overall, mortalities and harvest have increased from the previous three years (Figures 21 and 22). The percent of adult males in the harvest remains high, except for 2021 and continued to trend upward in recent years, indicating relatively low harvest pressure. Likewise, the percent of females in the harvest has been trending downward (Figure 24). The percent of adults in the female harvest remains high except for a low in 2021 (Table 6 and Figures 22-25). However, similar to the Jackson BMU, the significant amount of refuge habitat surrounding this BMU provides a source population. The prohibition of baiting in a majority of the unit reduces hunter selectivity, resulting in harvest proportional to availability in the population, not by their vulnerability to harvest. This criterion likely reflects an abundance of older-age females in the standing population of the BMU and not a deficit of males and subadult females. Analyzed separately, hunt areas 23, 25, 26, and 27 make up the vast majority of harvest for this BMU and show the same trends (Figures 26-29).

Overall, a continued high percent of adult males in the harvest and the relatively low percent of females in the harvest indicate a healthy and stable black bear population experiencing moderate to low harvest pressure.

Table 5. Absaroka BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. All seasons for this BMU closed on the final date of the season as listed in regulation (Appendix I) pending area 32 in 2022.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	Spring		Fall		Spring	Fall
2020	ABSAROKA	23, 25, 26 & 27	8	12	31	4	10	6	6/15/20	10/31/20
		32	NA	NA	2	1	2	0	6/15/20	11/15/20
2021	ABSAROKA	23, 25, 26 & 27	8	12	15	5	15	10	6/15/21	10/31/21
		32	NA	NA	0	0	3	3	6/15/21	11/15/21
2022	ABSAROKA	23, 25, 26 & 27	8	12	23	4	11	8	6/15/22	10/31/22
		32	NA	NA	2	0	4	0	6/15/22	11/15/22
2023	ABSAROKA	23, 25, 26 & 27	8	12	18	7	9	6	6/15/22	10/31/22
		32	NA	NA	0	0	3	1	6/15/22	11/15/23

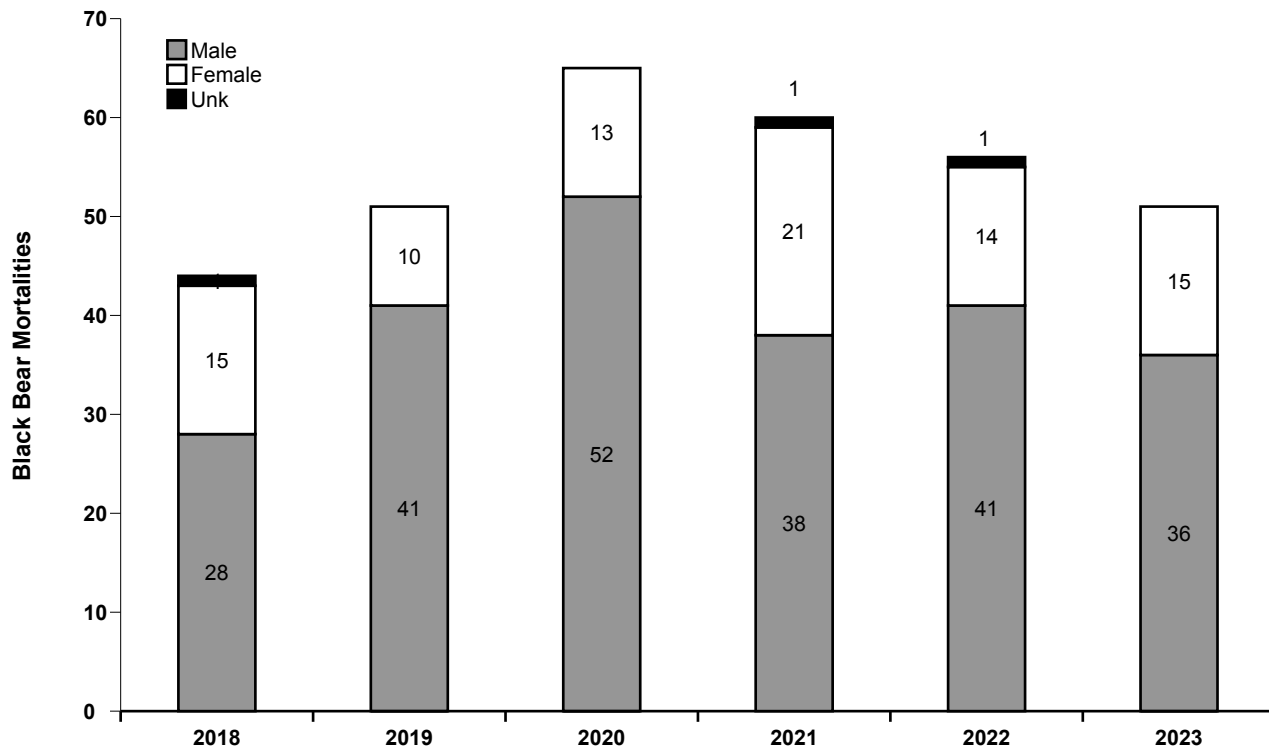


Figure 21. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Absaroka BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

Table 6. Harvest criteria for Absaroka BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		46.1	23.7	65.7

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

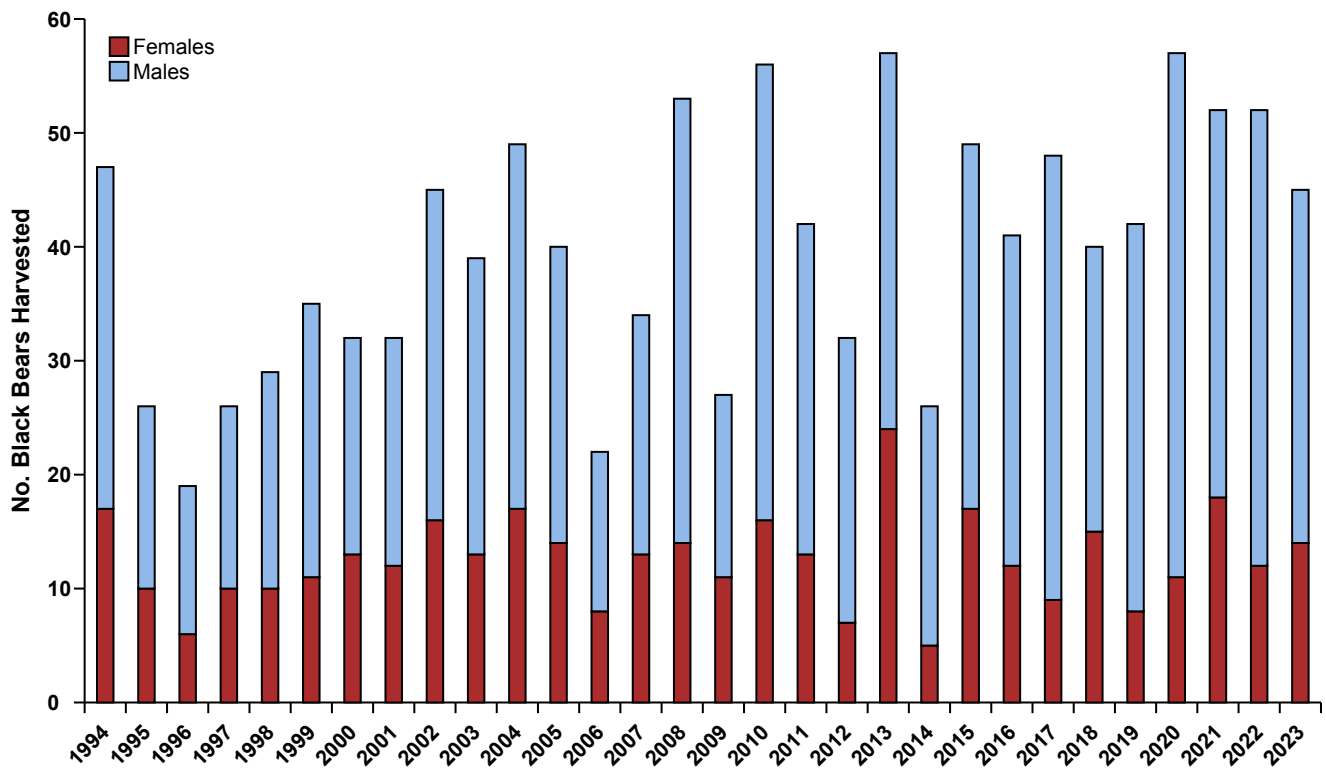


Figure 22. Legal harvest of black bears in Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

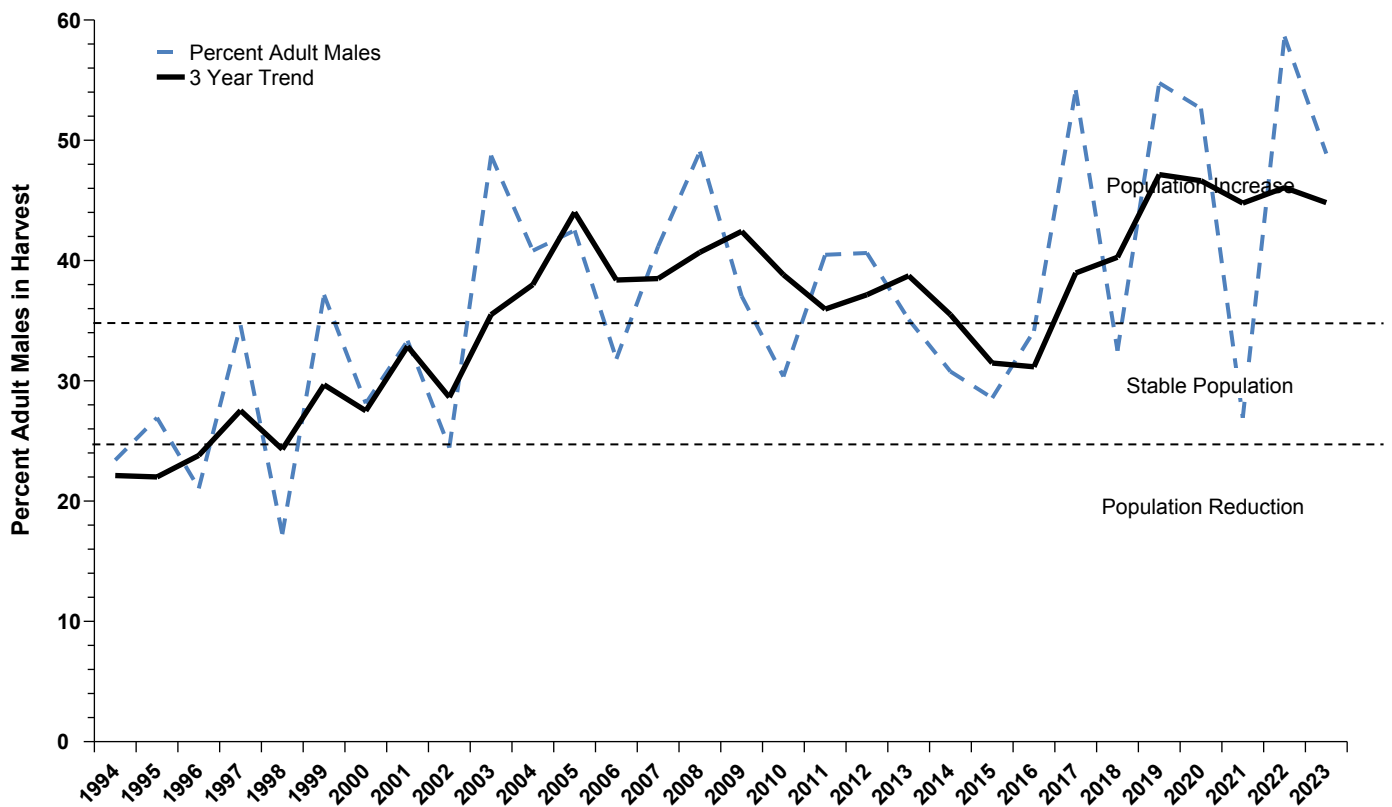


Figure 23. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

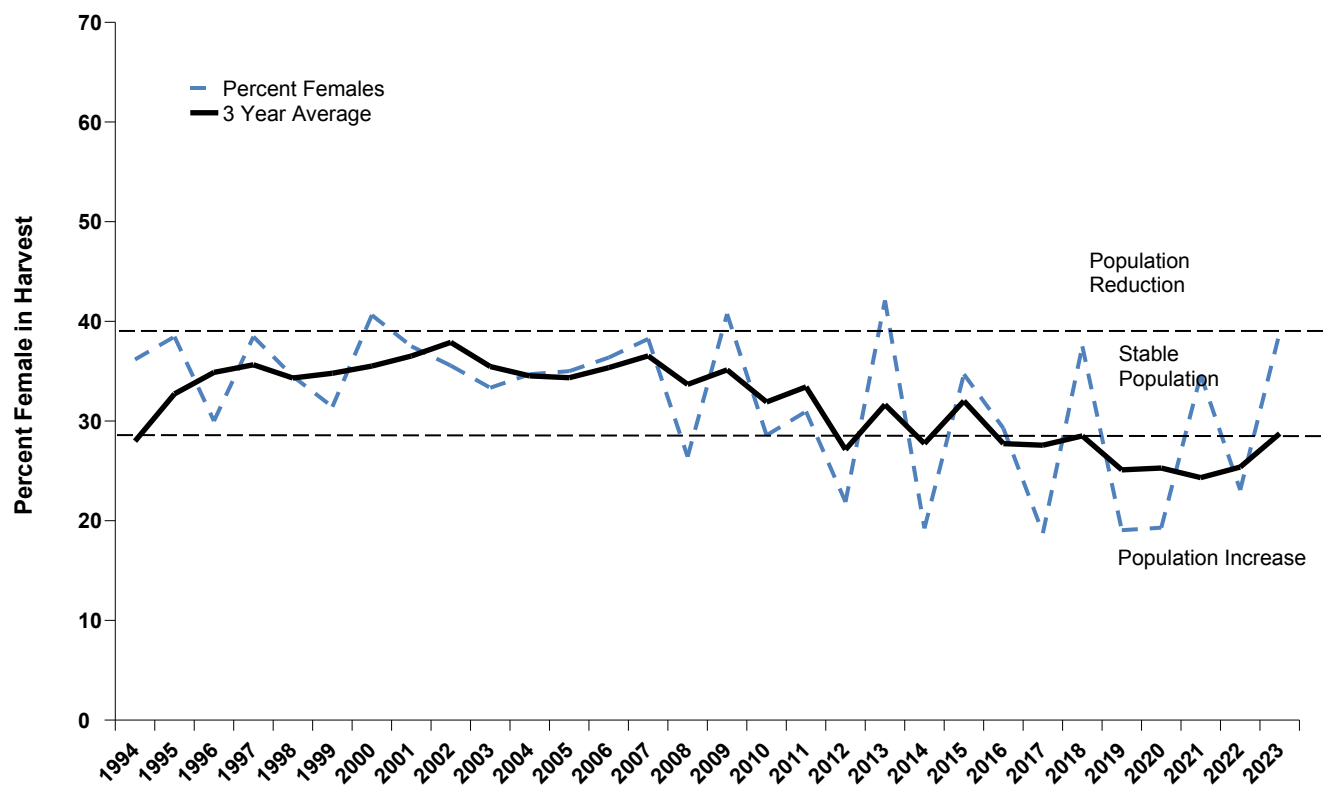


Figure 24. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

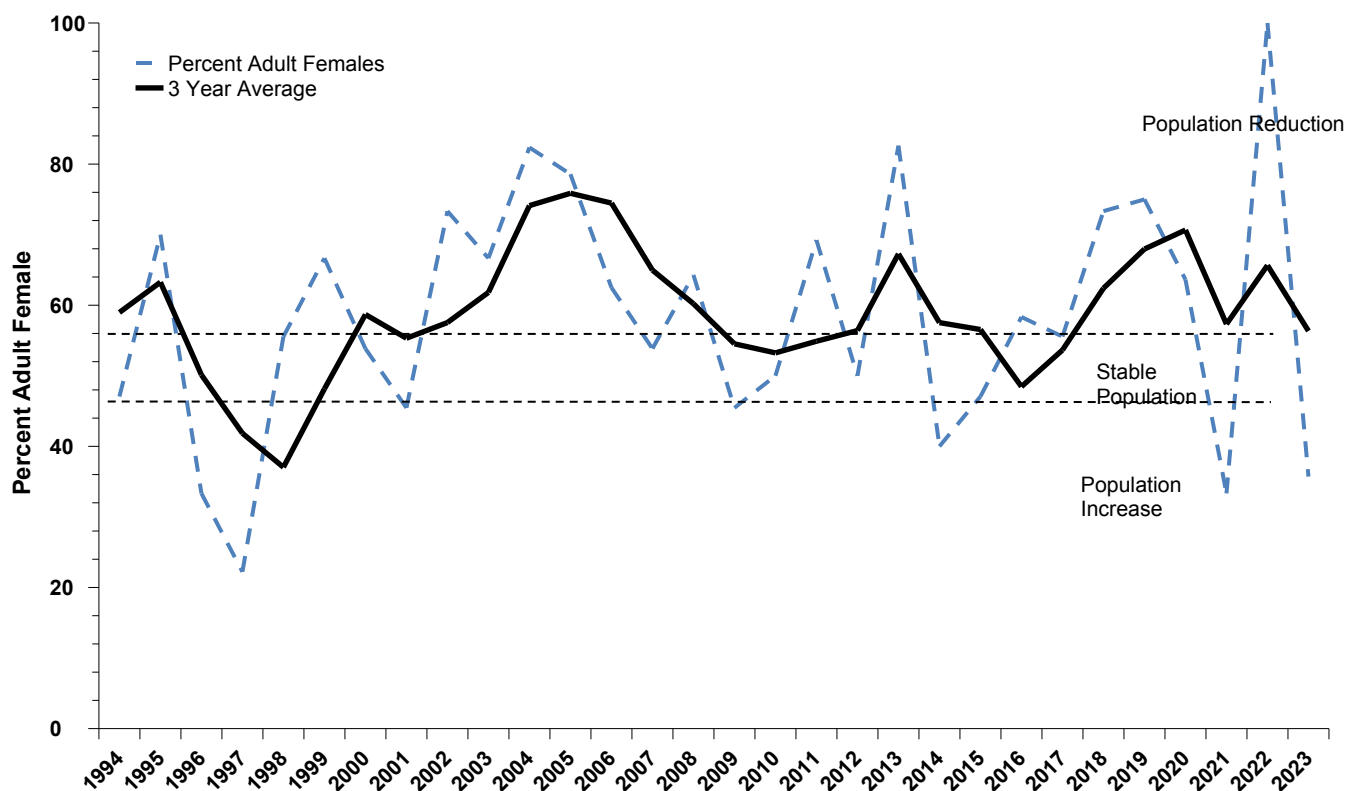


Figure 25. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

Harvest Criteria by Harvest Limit – Hunt Areas 23, 25, 26, and 27

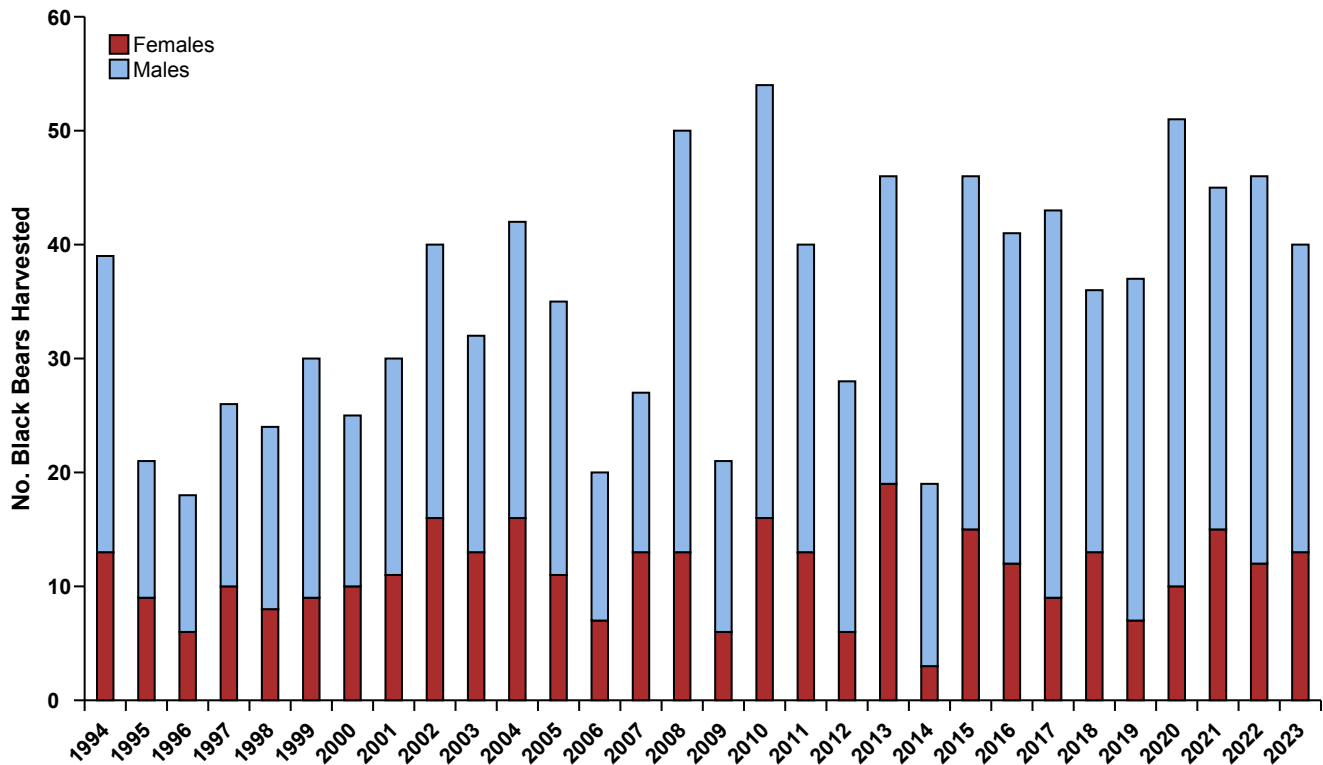


Figure 26. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt areas 23, 25, 26, and 27 of Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

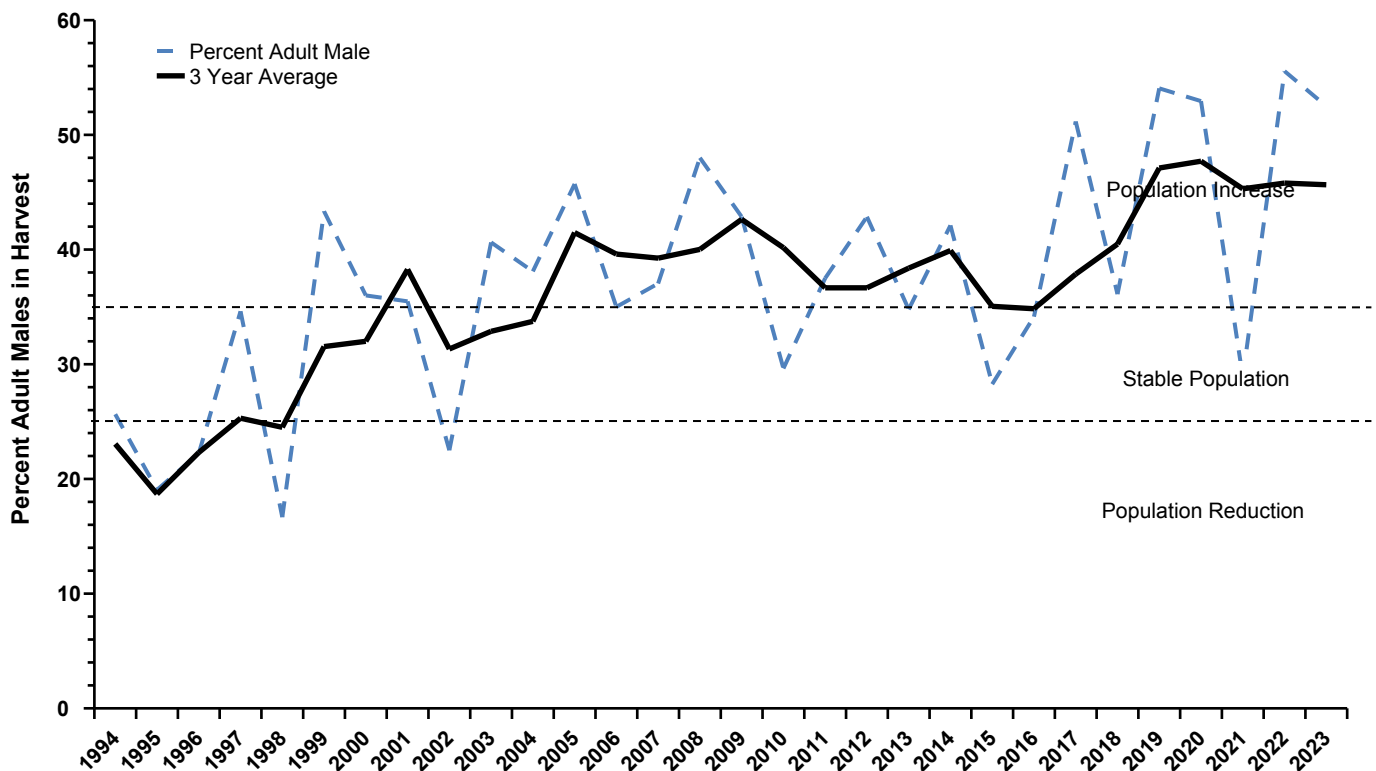


Figure 27. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 23, 25, 26, and 27 of Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

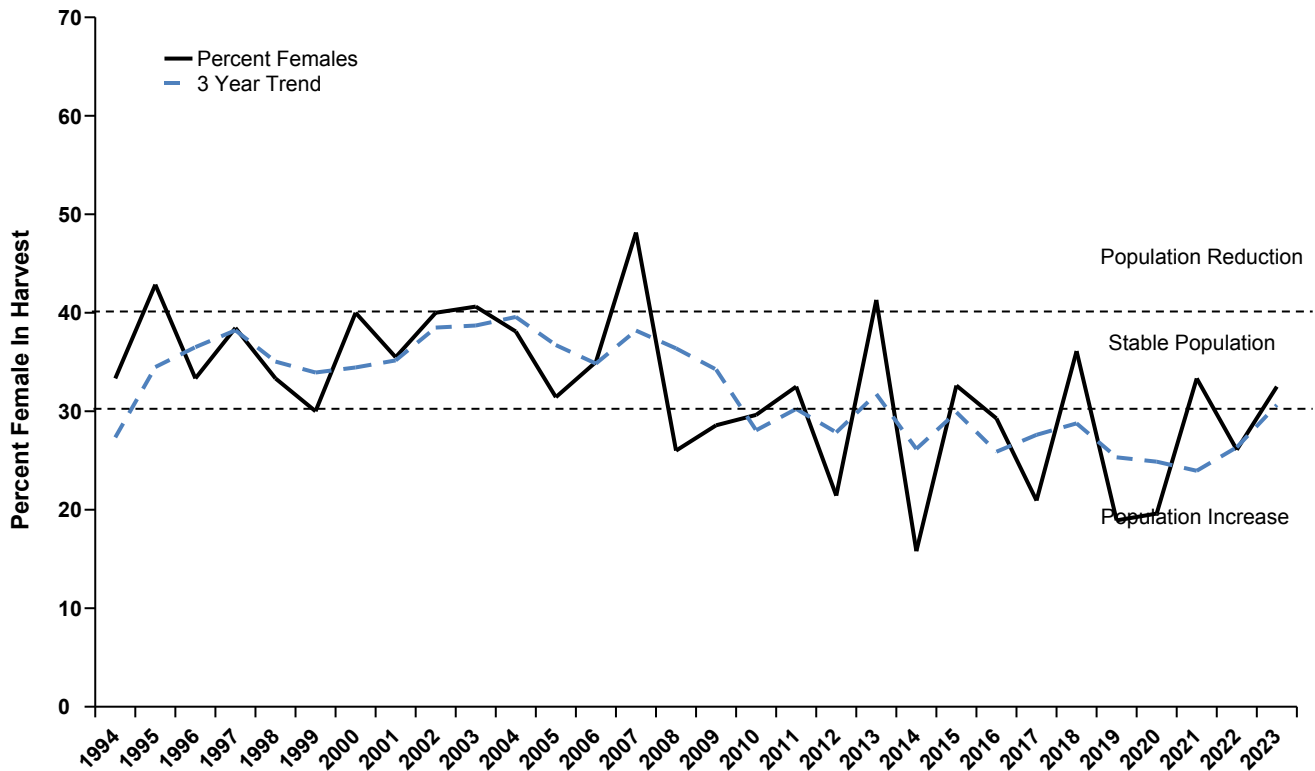


Figure 28. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 23, 25, 26, and 27 of Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

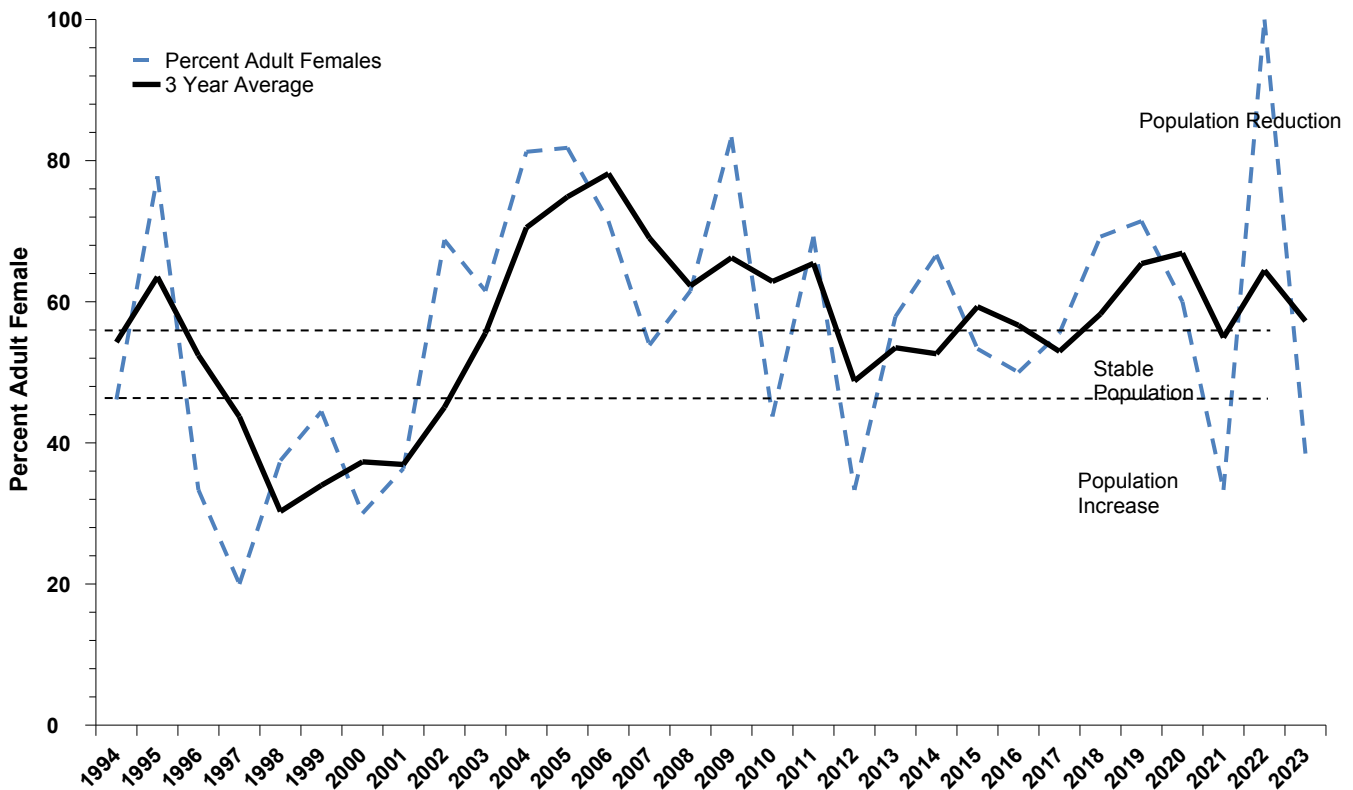


Figure 29. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt areas 23, 25, 26, and 27 of Absaroka BMU, 1994-2023.

BIGHORNS BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (301)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

The fall female mortality limit for hunt areas 1 and 2 was increased to 8 for 2020-2022 season cycle. All other mortality limits for the Bighorns BMU remained unchanged for this period, as well (Table 7). Total mortalities and legal black bear harvest in BMU 301 were slightly higher than the previous season cycle (Figures 30 and 31). The percentage of adult males in the harvest has increased each year of this season cycle to levels not seen since the late 1990's (Figure 32). The percent of females in the harvest peaked in 2019 and has, along with adults in the female harvest both remain in the stable range (Table 8, Figures 33 and 34). Analyzed as groups of areas with a shared female mortality limit, hunt areas 1 and 2 (Figures 35-38) and hunt areas 3 and 4 (Figures 39-42) show trends similar to the overall BMU. The percent of adults in the female harvest in hunt areas 3 and 4 has decreased into the stable range and hunt areas 1 and 2 has decreased to increase population range in this season cycle (Figure 42). Harvest in areas 5 and 6 is too low to provide meaningful data for analysis (Table 7).

Harvest criteria suggest effects of hunter harvest in areas 1, 2 and 3, 4 have decreased and both are within the stable range with more adult males in the population.

Table 7. Bighorns BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020- 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	BIGHORNS	1, 2	8	8	9	9	10	8	5/20/20	9/5/20
		3, 4	6	4	8	5	9	4	5/24/20	9/13/20
		5, 6	2	2	9	1	2	1	6/15/20	11/15/20
2021	BIGHORNS	1, 2	8	8	26	7	11	9	6/15/21	9/13/21
		3, 4	6	4	13	7	5	3	6/1/21	9/3/21
		5, 6	2	2	4	0	2	0	6/15/21	11/15/21
2022	BIGHORNS	1, 2	8	8	21	7	16	10	6/15/22	9/14/22
		3, 4	6	4	16	5	4	7	6/15/22	9/6/22
		5, 6	2	2	2	2	2	0	6/9/22	11/15/22
2023		1	4	4	9	1	2	6	6/15/23	10/31/23
		2	6	6	13	6	11	6	5/31/23	9/11/23
		3	2	2	5	1	4	0	6/15/23	10/31/23
		4	8	6	13	9	7	5	6/14/23	9/21/23
		5, 6	6	6	0	2	2	1	6/15/23	10/31/23

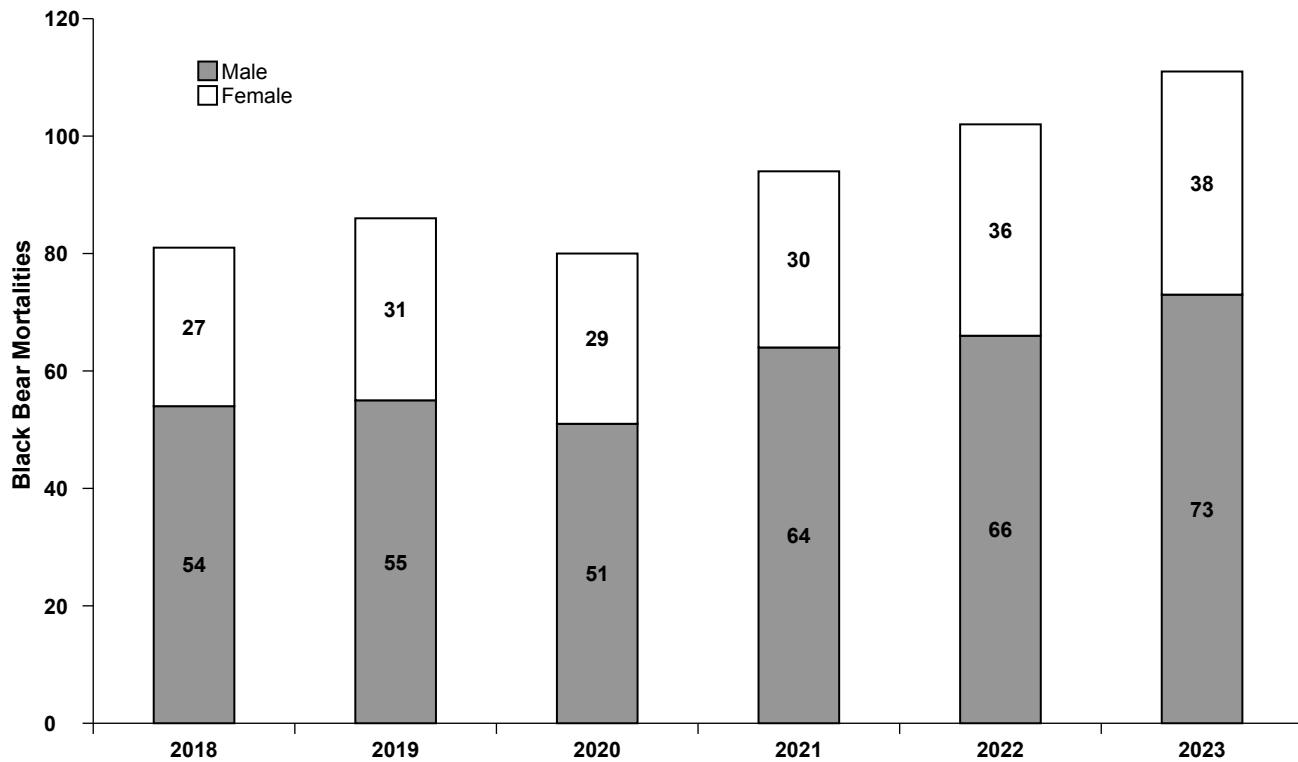


Figure 30. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Bighorns BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

Table 8. Harvest criteria for Bighorns BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		30.7	33.9	47.4

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

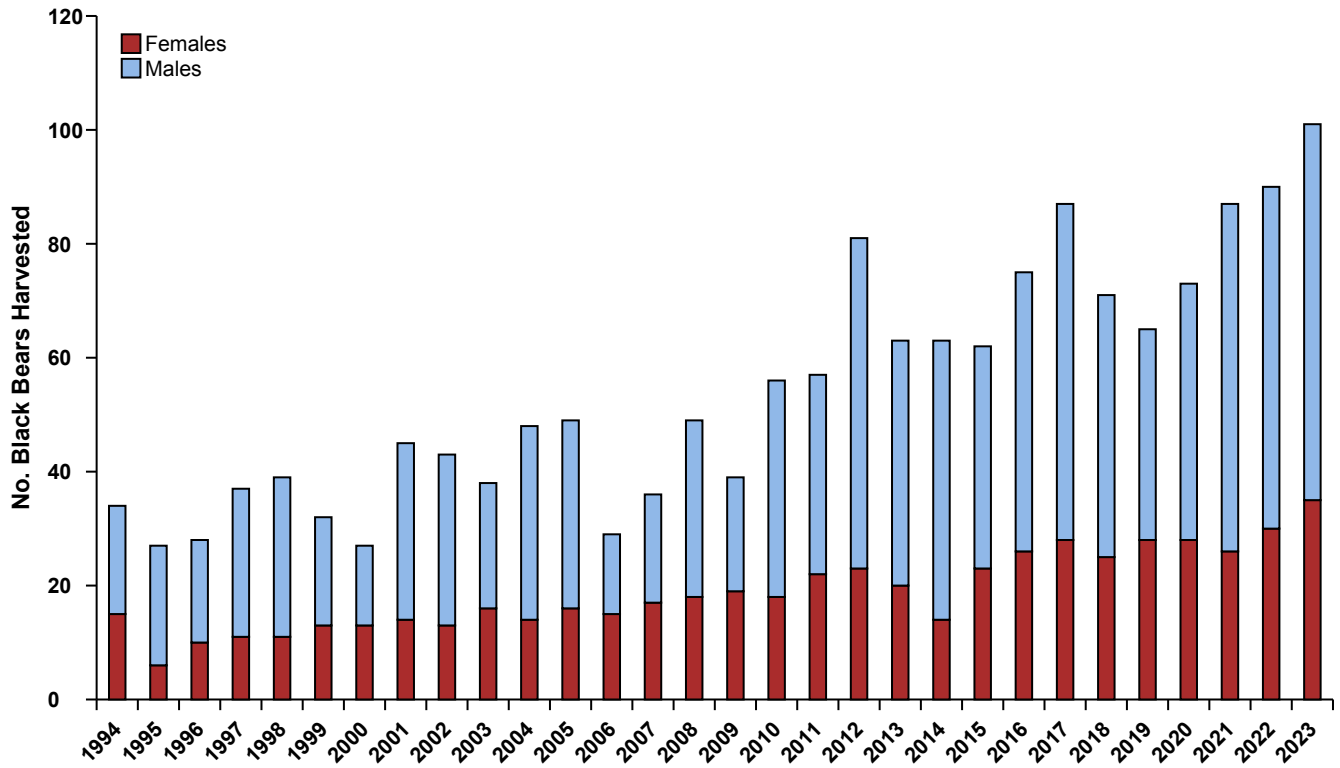


Figure 31. Legal harvest of black bears in Bighorns BMU, 1994-2023.

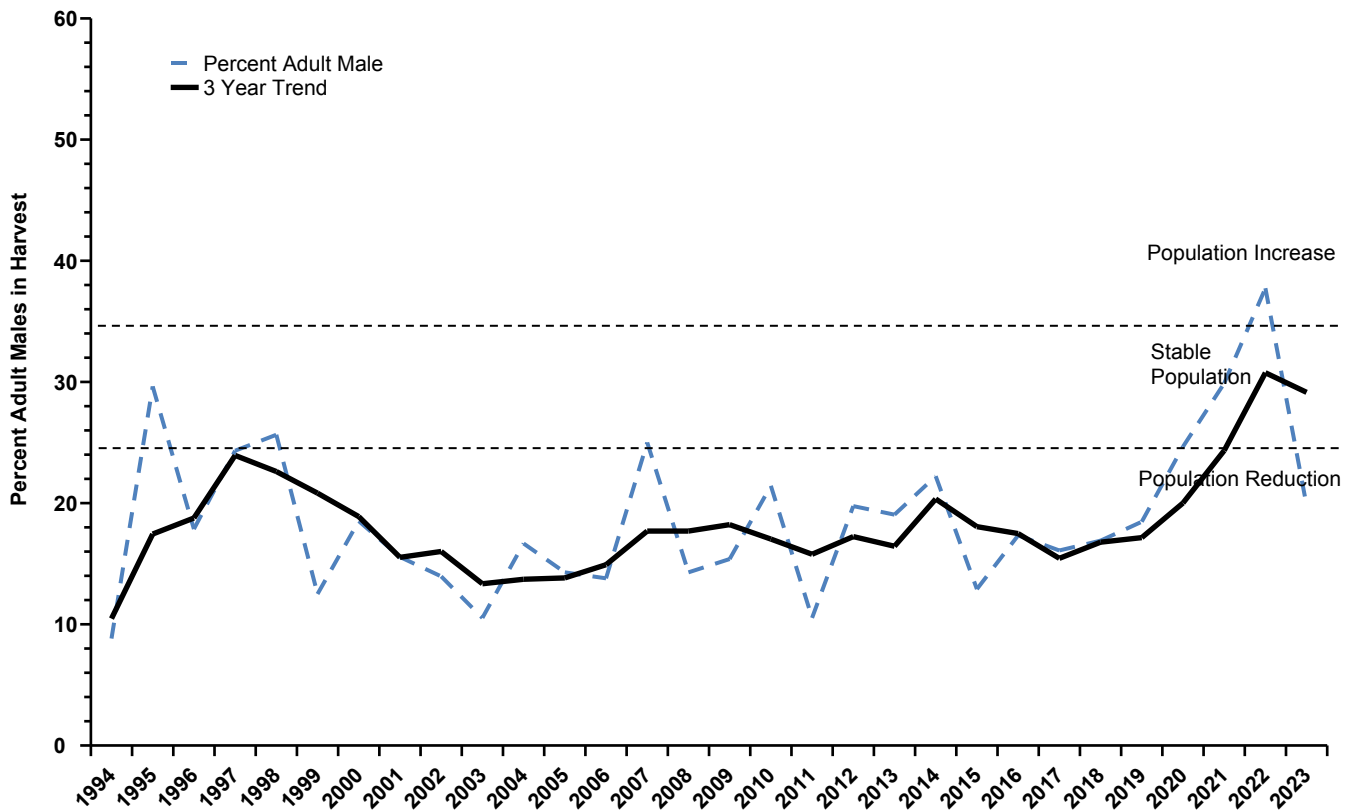


Figure 32. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Bighorns BMU, 1994-2023.

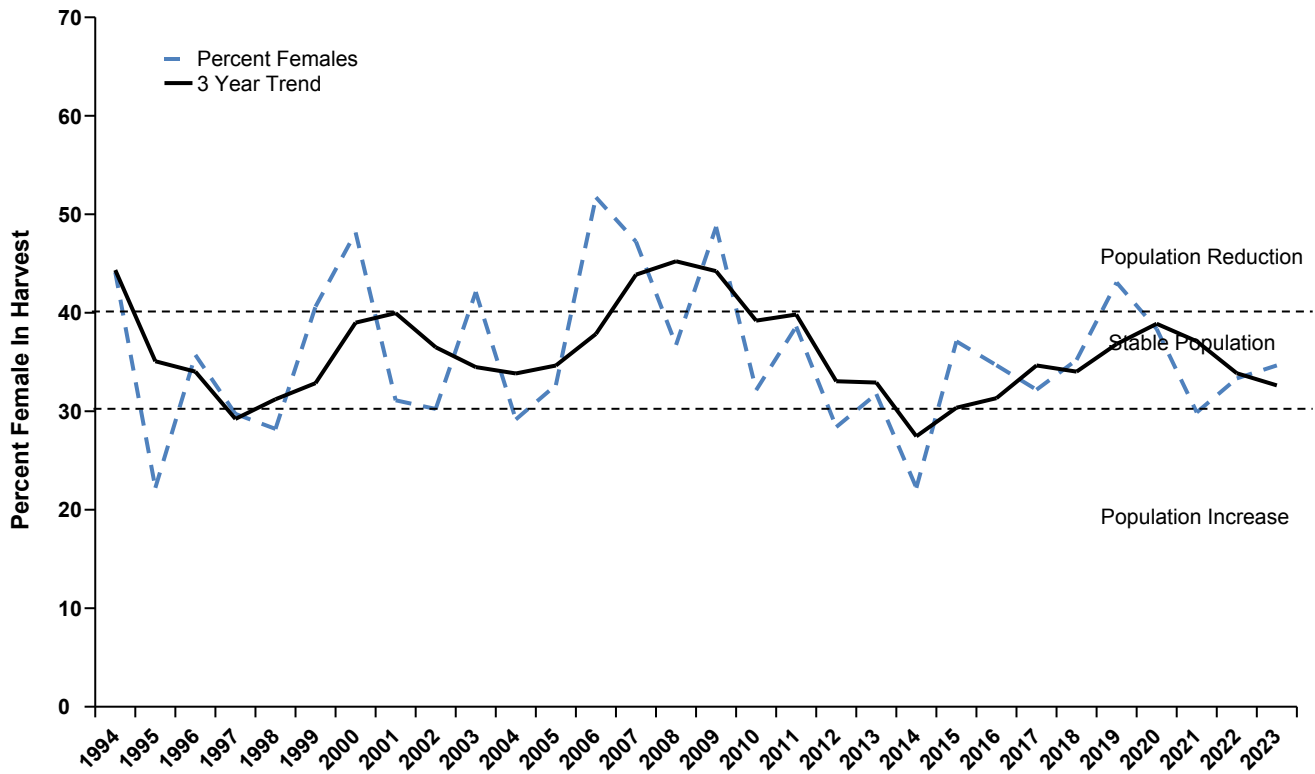


Figure 33. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Bighorns BMU, 1994-2023.

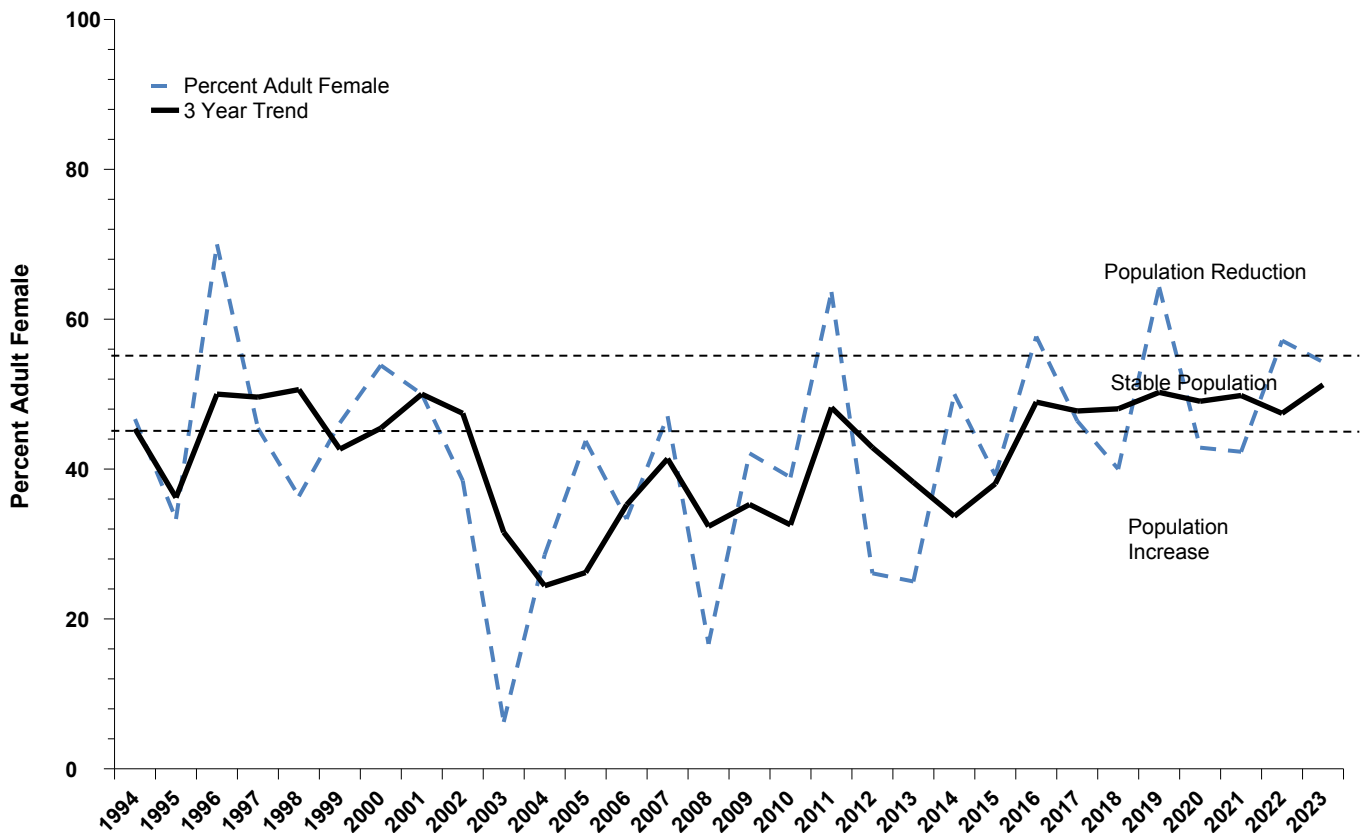


Figure 34. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Bighorns BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

Harvest Criteria by Harvest Limit – Hunt Areas 1 and 2

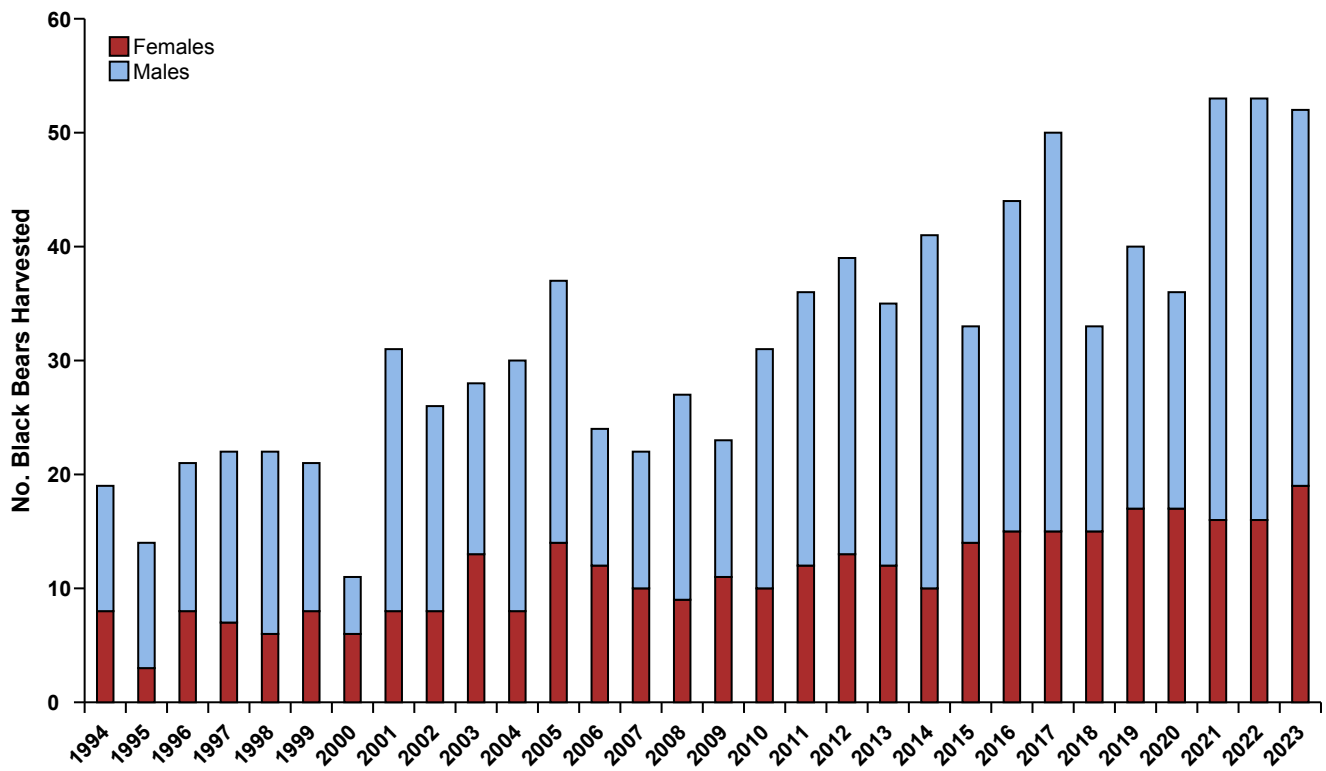


Figure 35. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt areas 1 and 2 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-2023.

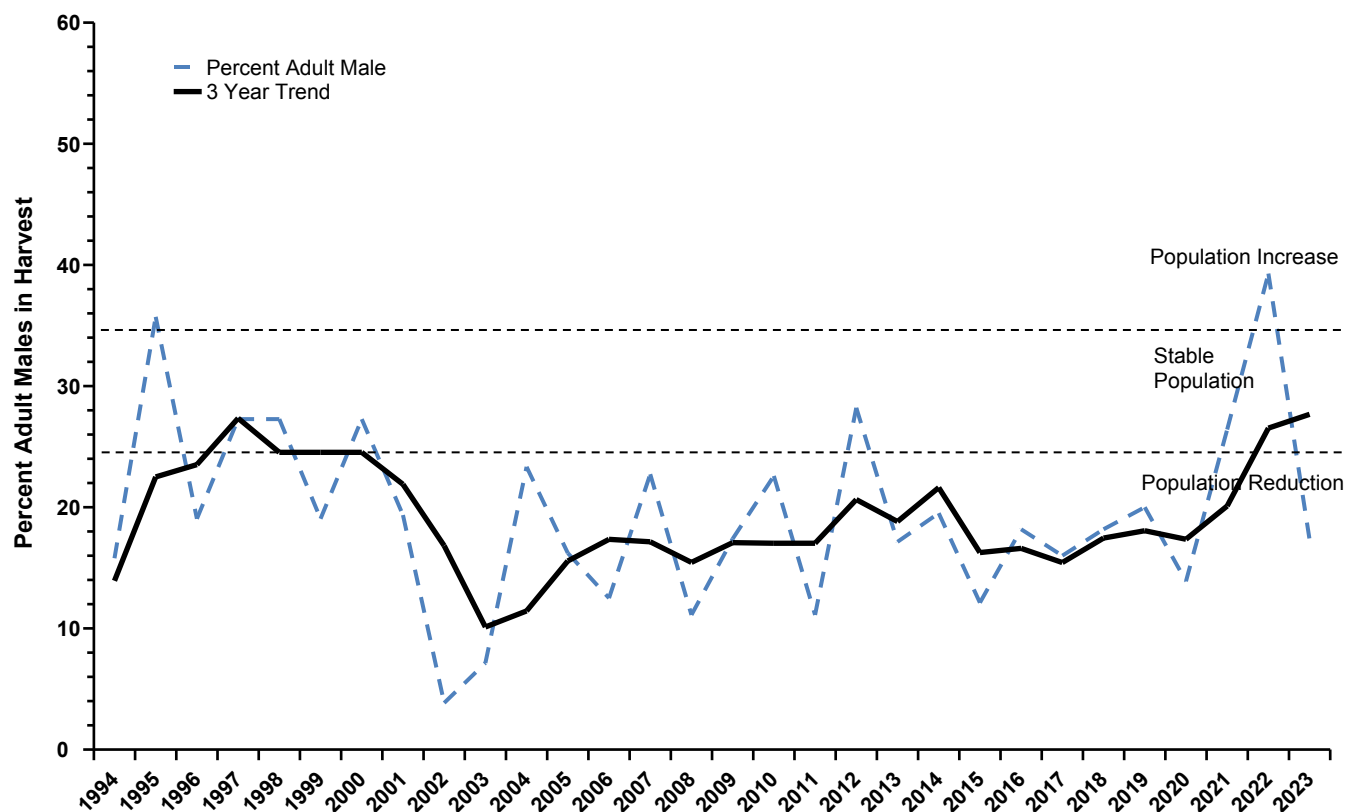


Figure 36. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 1 and 2 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-2023.

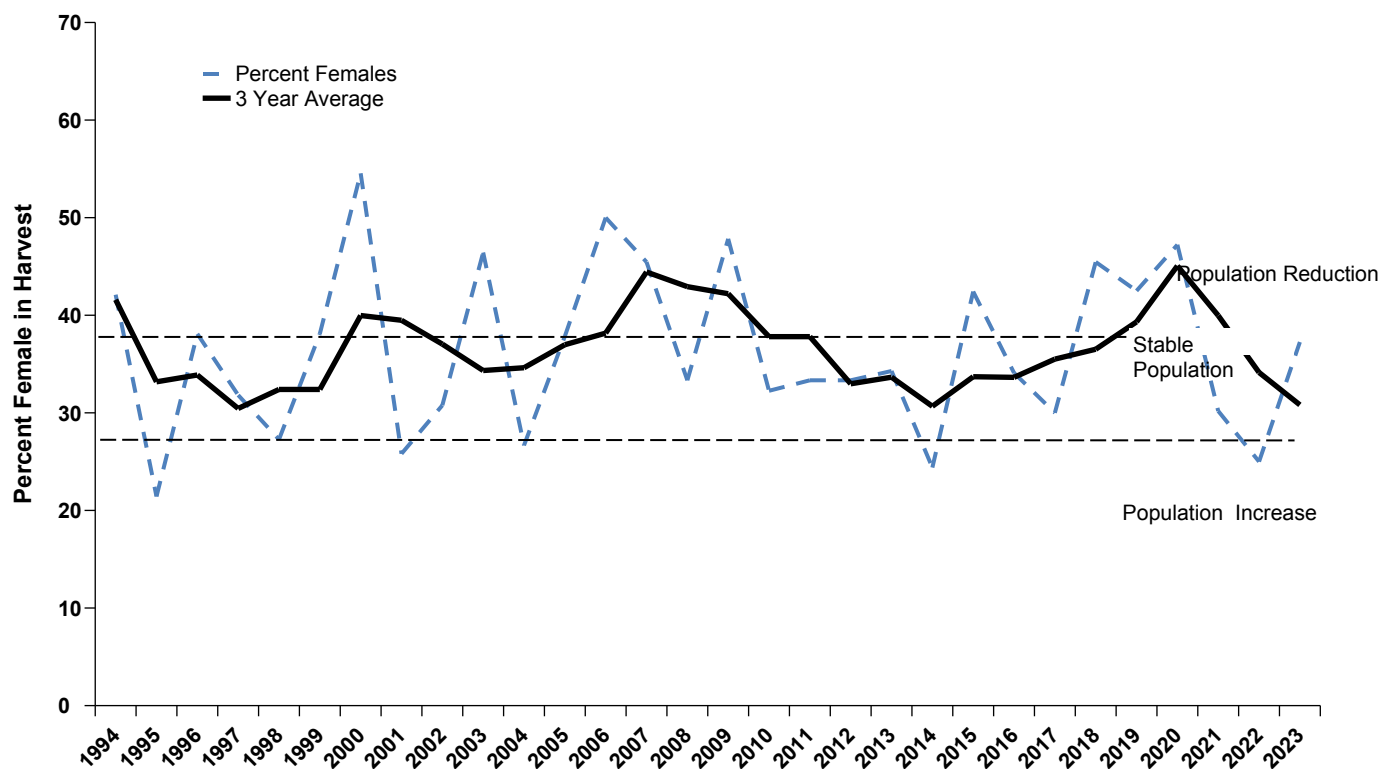


Figure 37. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 1 and 2 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

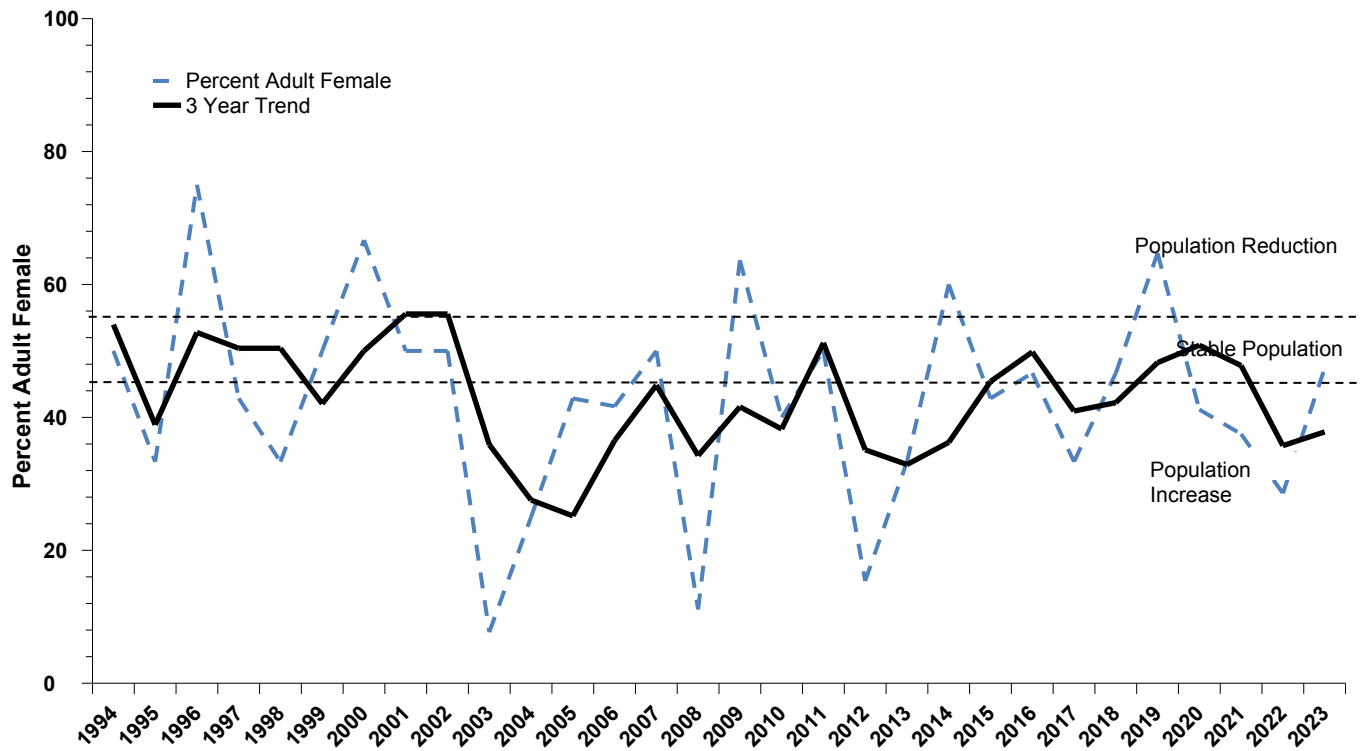


Figure 38. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt areas 1 and 2 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

Harvest Criteria by Harvest Limit – Hunt Areas 3 and 4

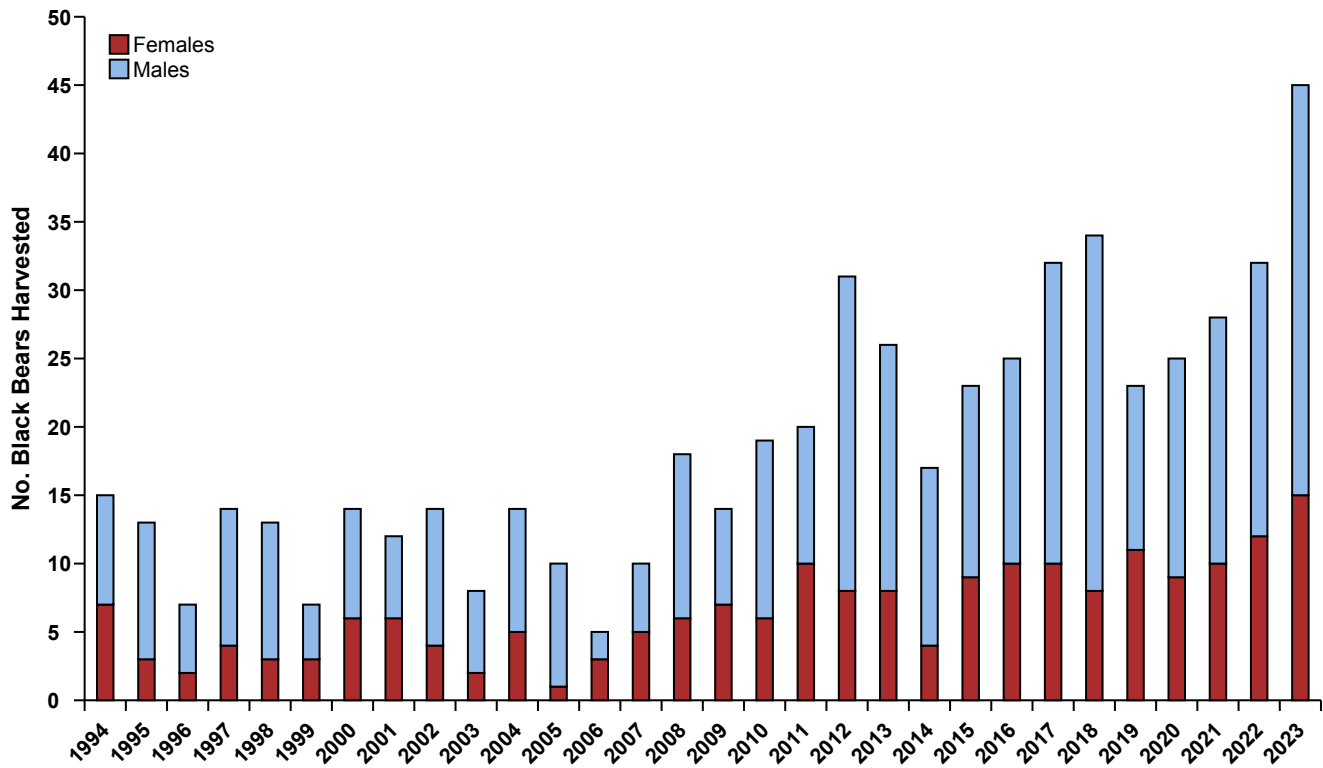


Figure 39. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt areas 3 and 4 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-2023.

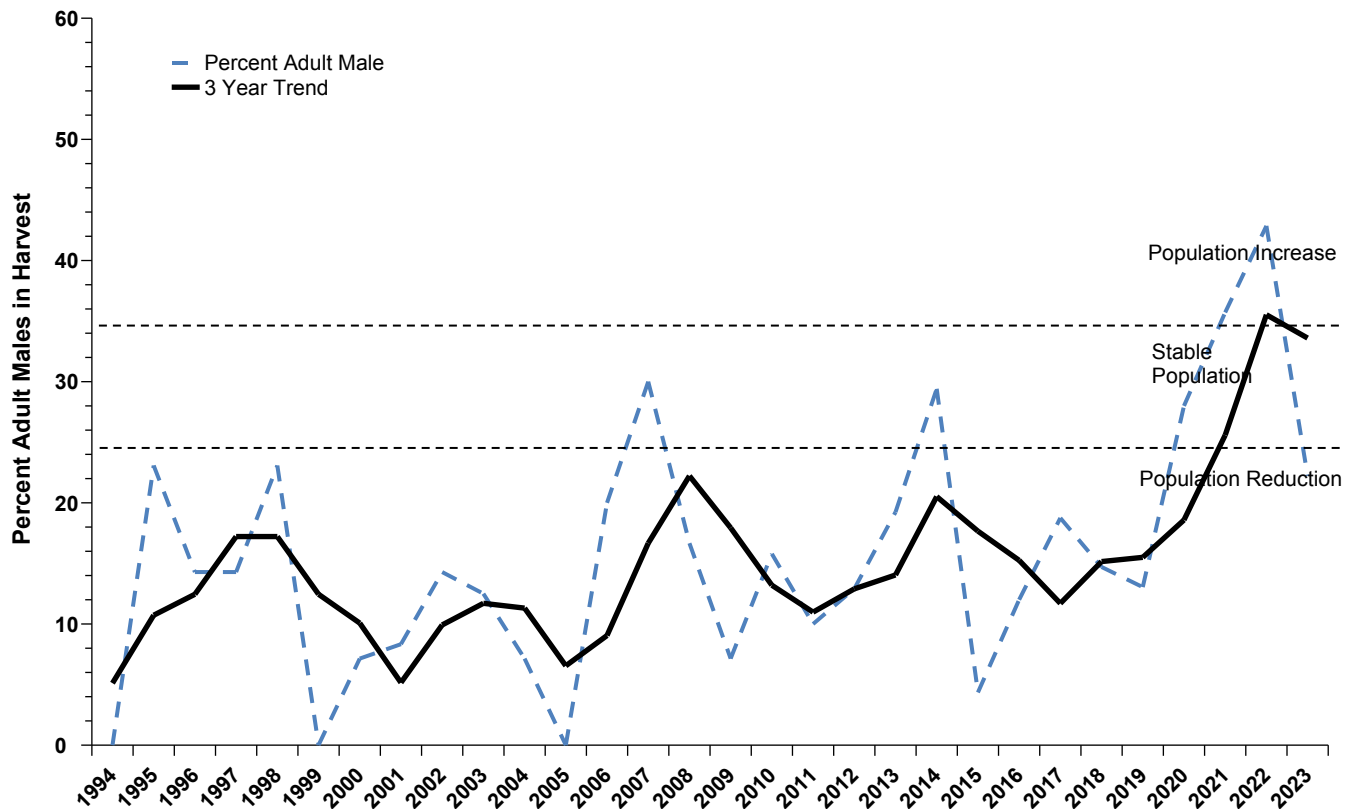


Figure 40. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 3 and 4 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

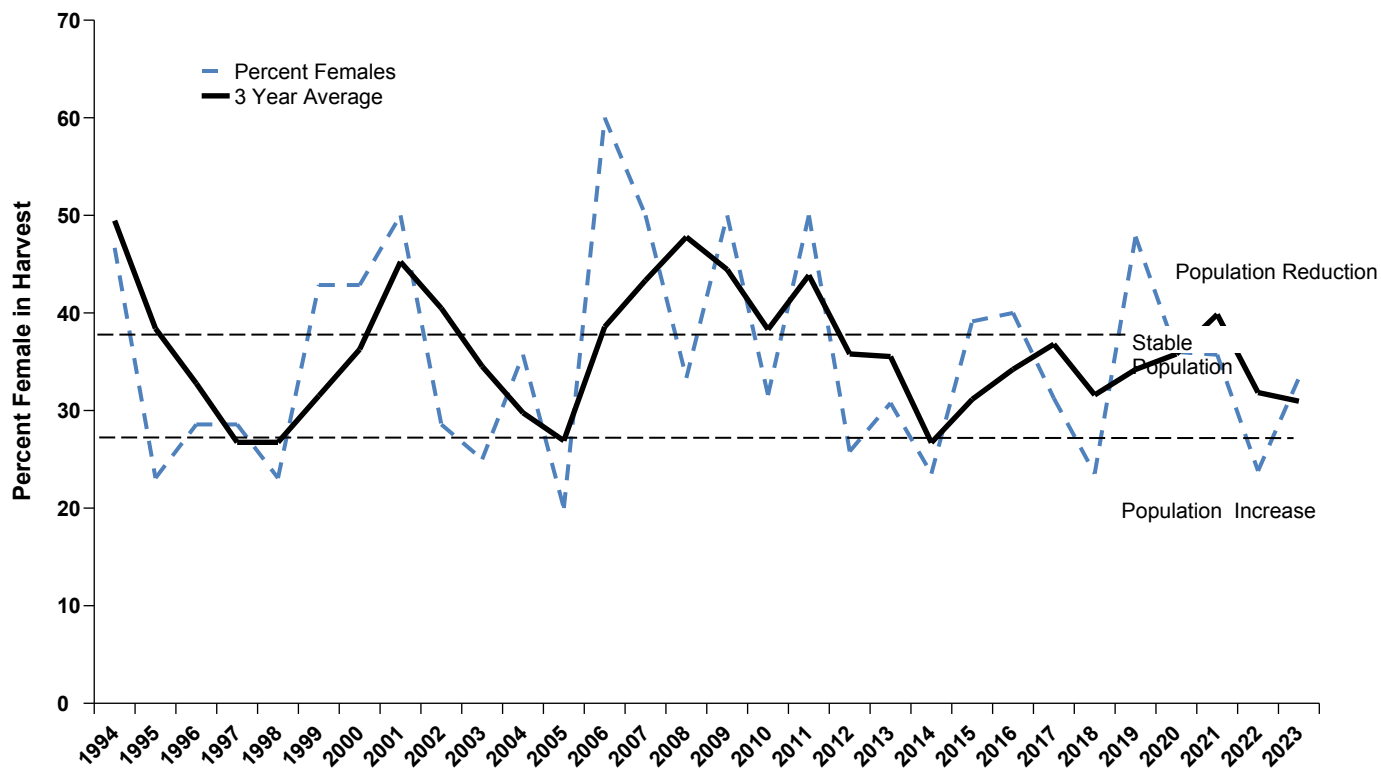


Figure 41. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt areas 3 and 4 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

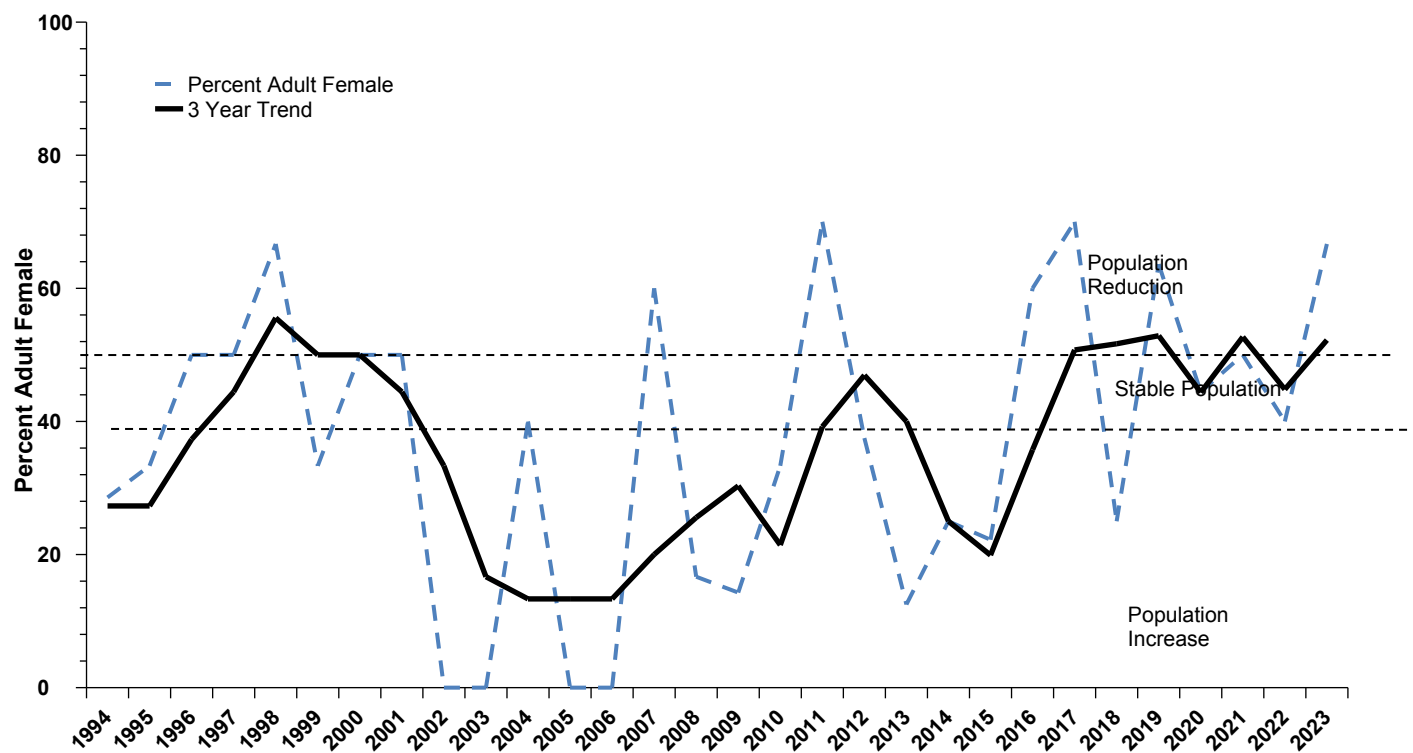


Figure 42. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt areas 3 and 4 of Bighorns BMU, 1994-spring 2023.

SIERRA MADRES BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (401)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

The female mortality limit for the Sierra Madres BMU increased to 10 in the spring and 9 in the fall for the 2020-2022 harvest cycle (Table 9). The overall mortalities and legal harvest for this cycle were similar to those of 2017-2019 except for a spike of males harvested in 2021 (Figures 43 and 44). The proportion of adult males in the harvest increased this cycle though still in the reduction percentage (Figure 45). However, the percent of females in the harvest and adults in the female harvest remain stable (Figure 46 and 47).

Work to assess the population status of the Sierra Madres black bear population using DNA hair snares took place in the summers of 2017 and 2018. Results were analyzed and provided in a separate Department report *Black Bear Population Monitoring in the Sierra Madres, Wyoming Using Clustered Hair Snares and Spatially-Explicit Capture/Recapture Models*. This report estimates mortality rates for the Sierra Madres ranging from 8% for females to 28% for males and 16% for both sexes combined. Sustainable mortality for this population is estimated at approximately 21-22% for both sexes. The report and analysis of harvest data suggest the Sierra Madres black bear population is experiencing moderate harvest pressure, resulting in a low proportion of adult males in the harvest.

Table 9. Sierra Madres BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	SIERRA MADRES	9	10	9	18	11	11	9	5/29/20	10/19/20
2021	SIERRA MADRES	9	10	9	28	10	26	8	5/25/21	10/31/21
2022	SIERRA MADRES	9	10	9	14	10	17	9	5/31/22	10/9/22
2023	SIERRA MADRES	9	13	11	33	13	21	13	6/10/23	10/13/23

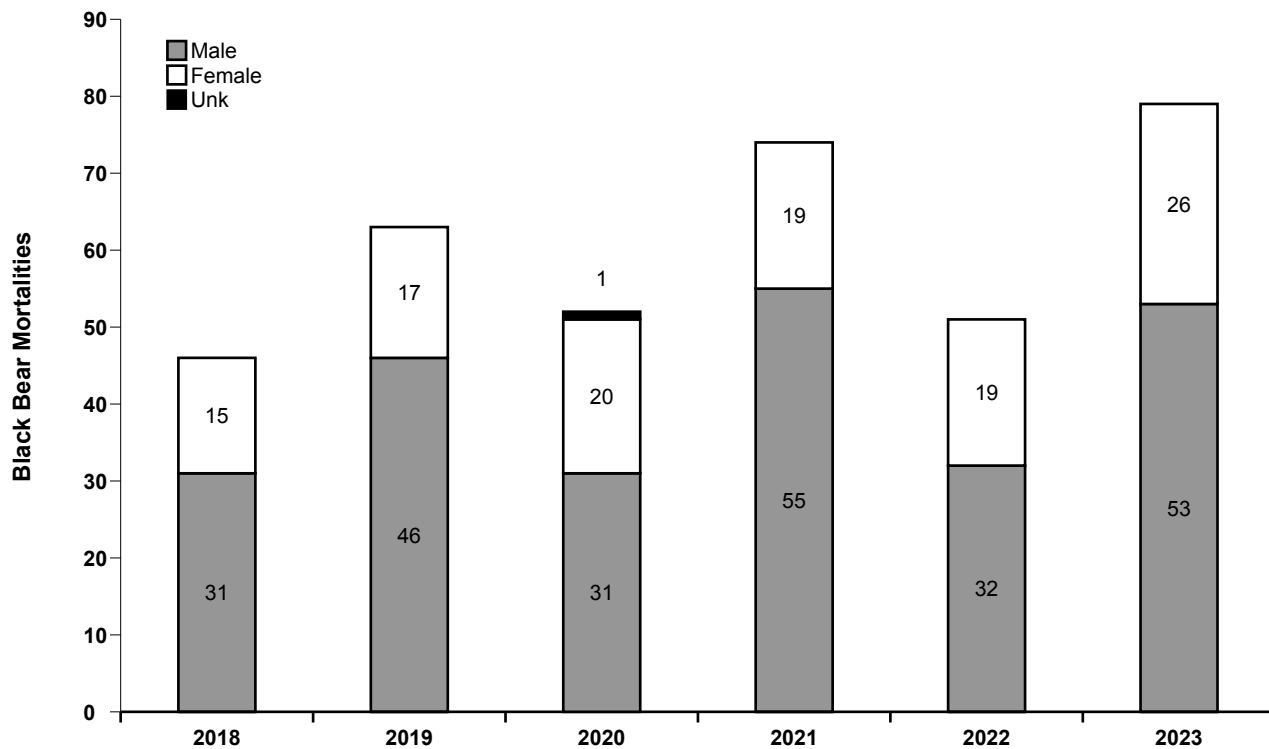


Figure 43. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Sierra Madres BMU by sex, 2017-2023.

Table 10. Harvest criteria for Sierra Madres BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		17.8	34.7	40.1

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

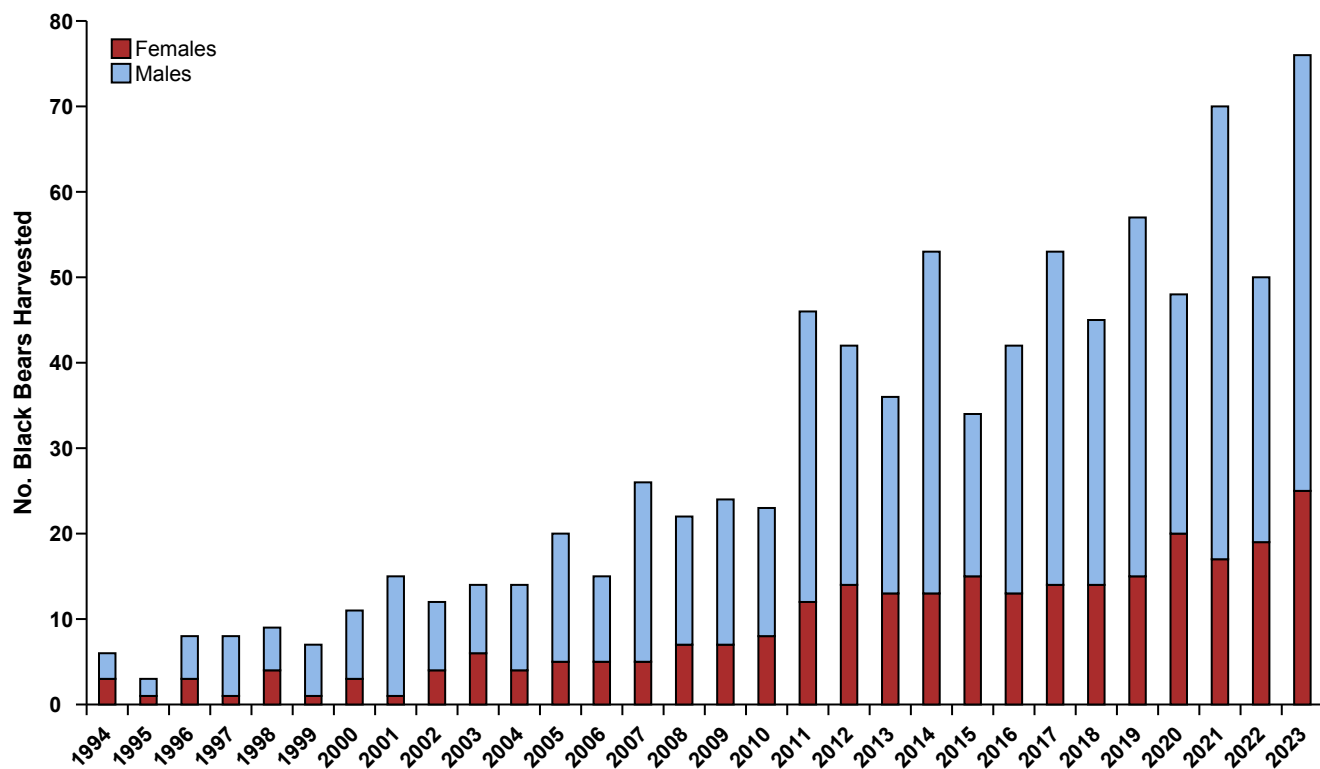


Figure 44. Legal harvest of black bears in Sierra Madres BMU, 1994-2023.

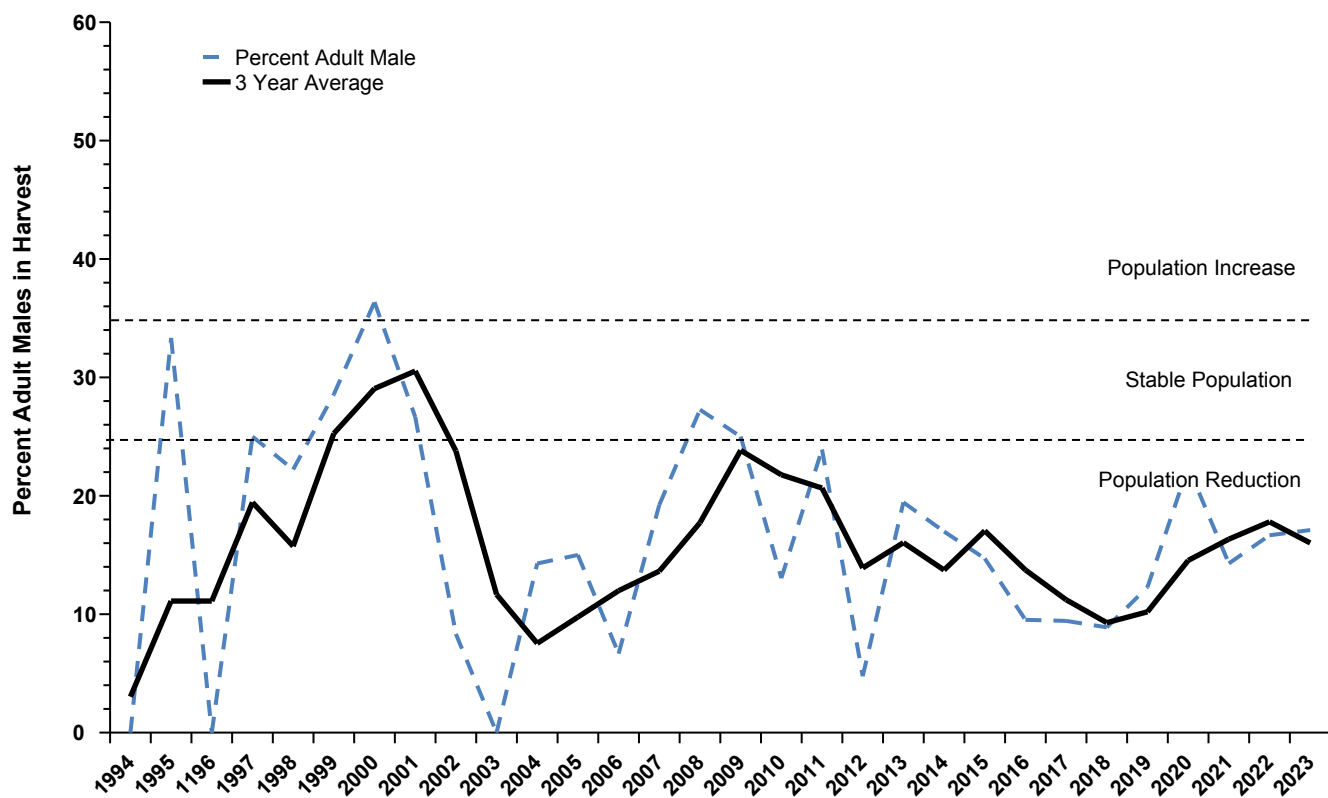


Figure 45. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Sierra Madres BMU, 1994-2023.

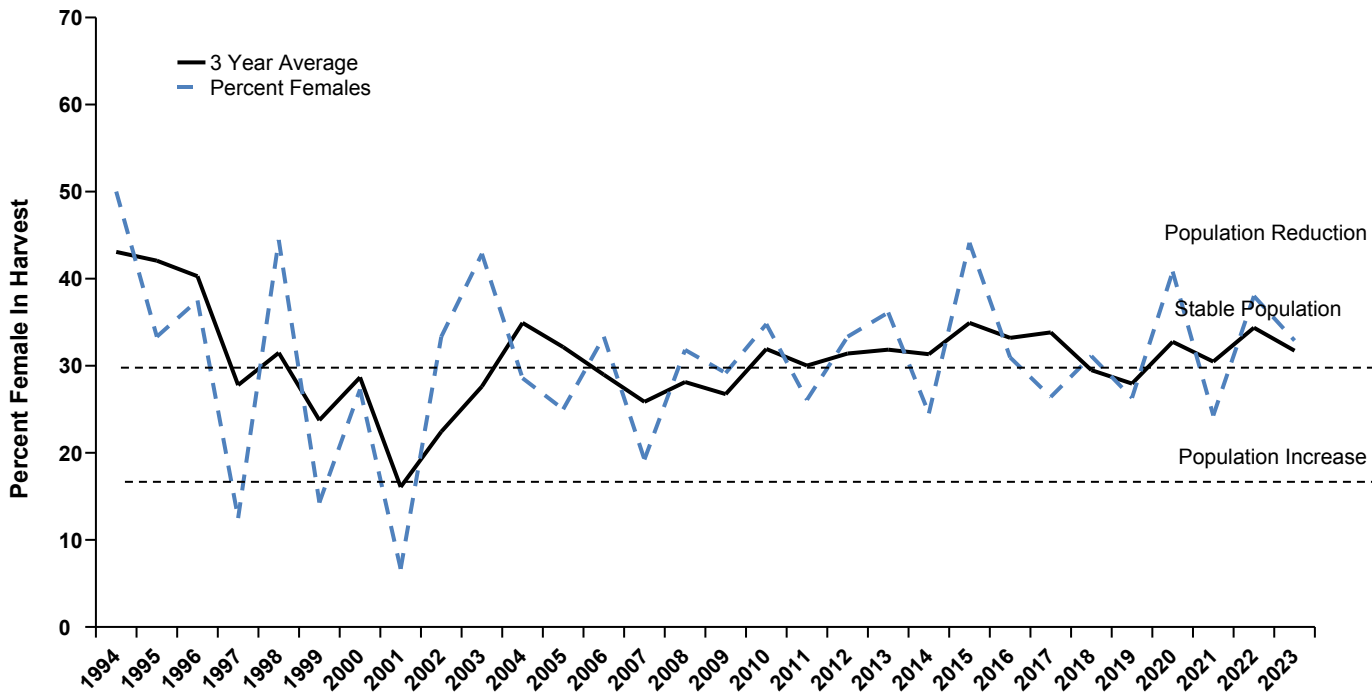


Figure 46. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Sierra Madres BMU, 1994-2023.

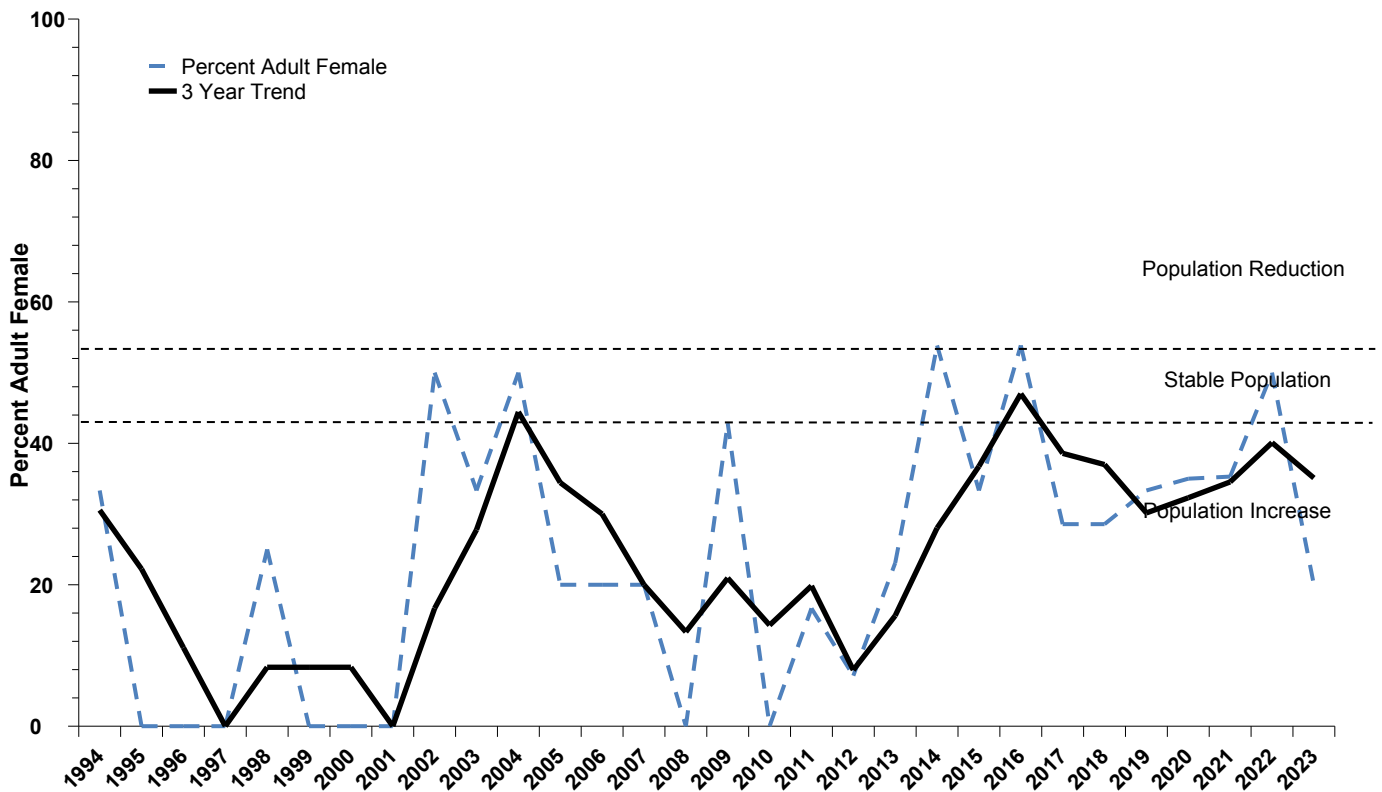


Figure 47. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Sierra Madres BMU, 1994-2023.

UINTA BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (402)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

For the 2014-2016 harvest cycle, a new hunt area (Hunt Area 12) was created from the eastern portion of BMU 402 (Figure 1). A mortality limit of 2 females (1 spring, 1 fall) was allocated to this area. Hunt area boundaries for this BMU remained unchanged for the 2020-2022 cycle. The female mortality limit for the portion of BMU 402 west of Flaming Gorge Reservoir remained at 4 females (2 spring, 2 fall) for the 2020-2022 seasons. Overall mortalities decreased in this BMU to levels closer to the 2014-2016 cycle (Table 11, Figure 48). Most harvest for this BMU took place in the spring season and the female mortality limit for area 12 was reached in late May in 2020 and 2021 and in September 2020 (Table 11). In addition to harvest mortality, 2 damage mortalities occurred in 2020. Small sample sizes prevent interpretation of harvest data and their relationship to the harvest criteria for BMU 402. However, this relatively low level of harvest is unlikely to be adversely affecting the black bear population in this BMU. It is advisable to monitor the harvest in area 12 for future changes in levels and composition since the relatively small amount of black bear habitat in this area could make the black bear population susceptible to harvest impacts.

Table 11. Uinta BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	UINTA	10	2	2	5	0	2	1	6/15/20	10/31/20
		12	1	1	0	1	0	1	5/21/20	9/10/20
2021	UINTA	10	2	2	3	0	2	0	6/15/21	10/31/21
		12	1	1	0	1	0	0	5/26/21	10/31/21
2022	UINTA	10	2	2	4	0	1	1	6/15/22	10/31/22
		12	1	1	0	0	1	0	6/15/22	10/31/22
2023	UINTA	10	2	2	3	0	0	0	6/15/22	10/31/22
		12	1	1	1	0	0	0	6/15/22	10/31/22

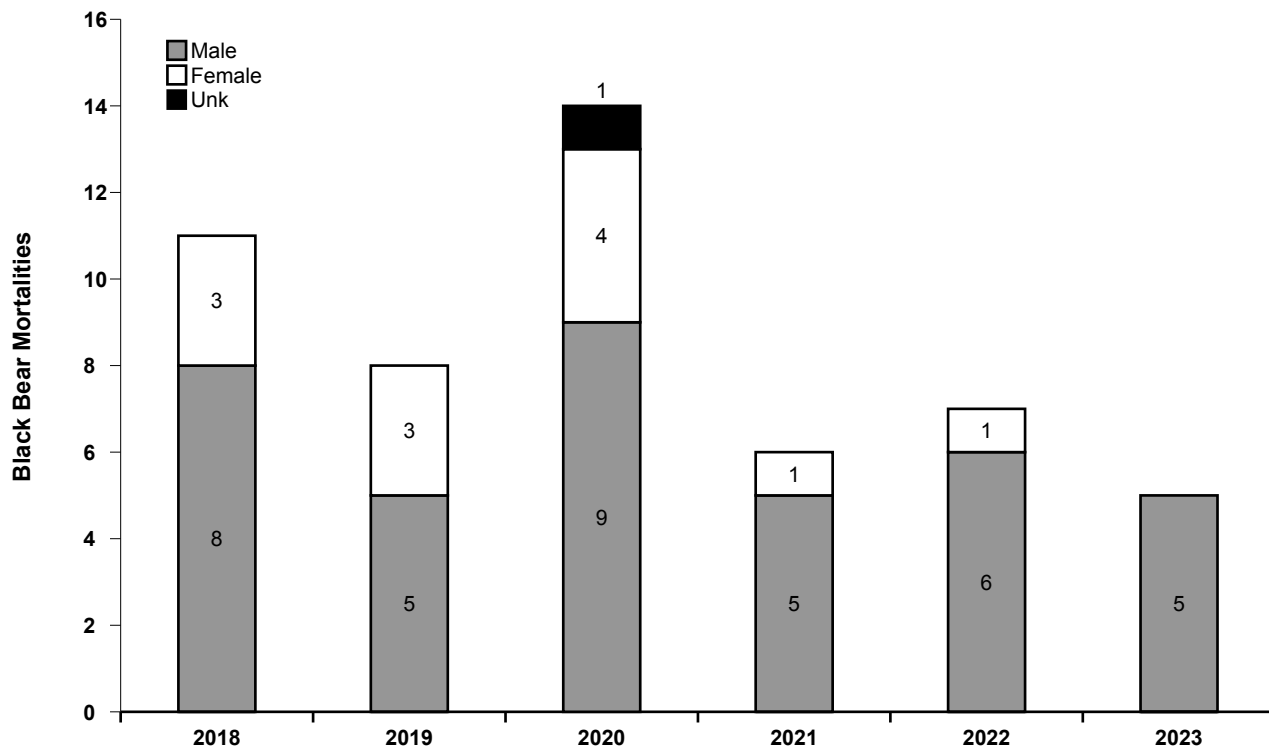


Figure 48. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Uinta BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

LARAMIE PEAK BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (501)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

The fall female mortality limit for hunt area 7 was adjusted to decrease the spring limit by one which was added to fall limit for the 2020-2022 harvest cycle, while the female mortality limits for hunt area 33 remained unchanged (Table 12). Black bear mortalities and harvest in BMU 501 increased considerably from 2017-2019 (Figures 48 and 49). The percent of adult males in the harvest increased slightly in 2020-2021 to 23-24% with a low percentage in the spring of 2022 which could be due to small sample size (Figure 51). The percentage of females in the harvest continues to remain in the stable range (Table 13, Figure 52). The proportion of adults in the female harvest has continued to fluctuate between the stable and increase range (Figure 53). Because hunt area 7 makes up the majority of harvest for this BMU, separate analysis of hunt area 7 shows similar trends (Figures 54-57).

The long-term trend of the percent of adult males in the harvest, decreasing since 1998, appears to have leveled off in this cycle and harvest continues to have less effect on females.

Work has been completed to evaluate the black bear population in the Laramie Peak BMU with DNA hair snares in the summer of 2022. The resulting density and abundance estimates will be used to assess the mortality rates for this BMU and inform future management once these data are analyzed by the lab.

Table 12. Laramie Peak BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	LARAMIE PEAK	7	5	5	10	5	7	8	5/30/20	9/12/20
		33	3	2	1	0	6	1	5/31/20	10/31/20
2021	LARAMIE PEAK	7	5	5	6	1	18	9	5/31/21	9/15/21
		33	3	2	1	0	3	0	5/31/21	10/31/21
2022	LARAMIE PEAK	7	5	5	13	6	13	4	5/27/22	9/6/22
		33	3	2	1	0	1	5	5/31/22	9/25/22
2023	LARAMIE PEAK	7	7	7	22	6	8	9	6/15/23	9/9/23
		33	4	4	0	2	7	1	6/15/23	10/31/23

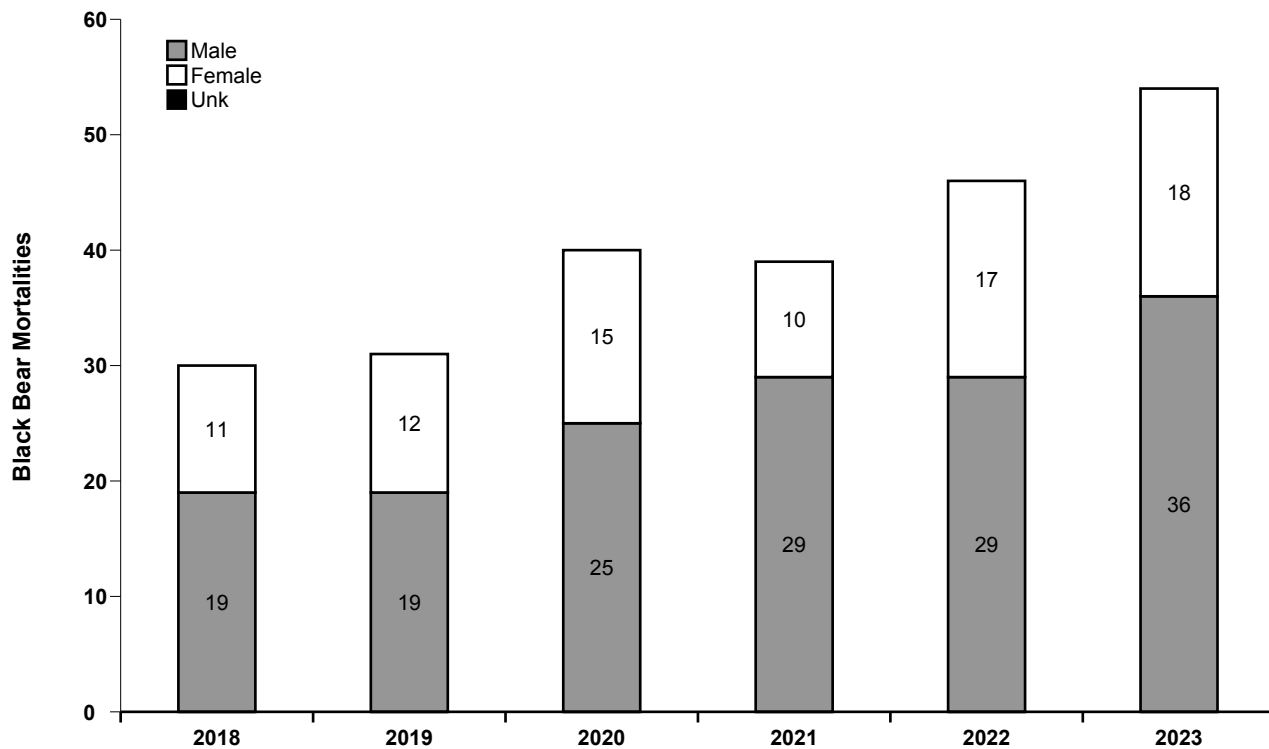


Figure 49. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Laramie Peak BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

Table 13. Harvest criteria for Laramie Peak BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		21.1	33.7	40.0

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

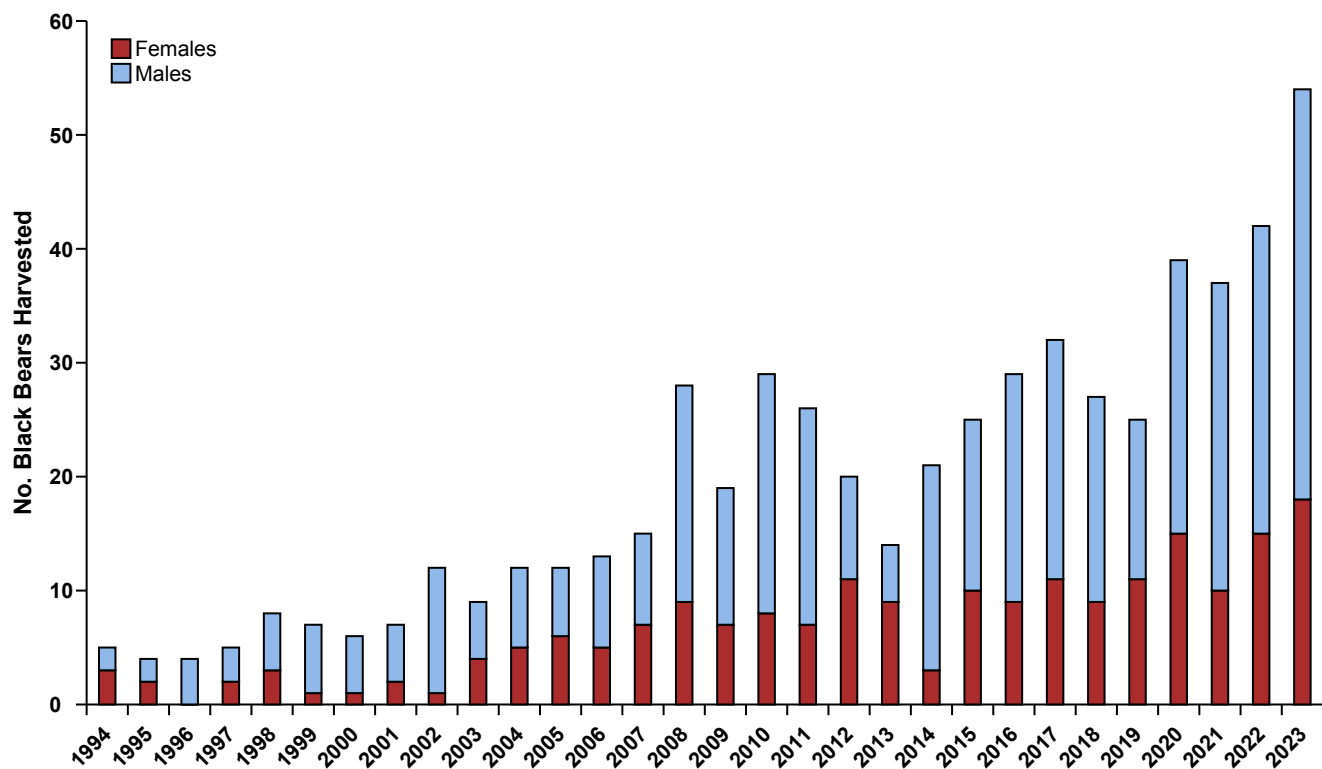


Figure 50. Legal harvest of black bears in Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

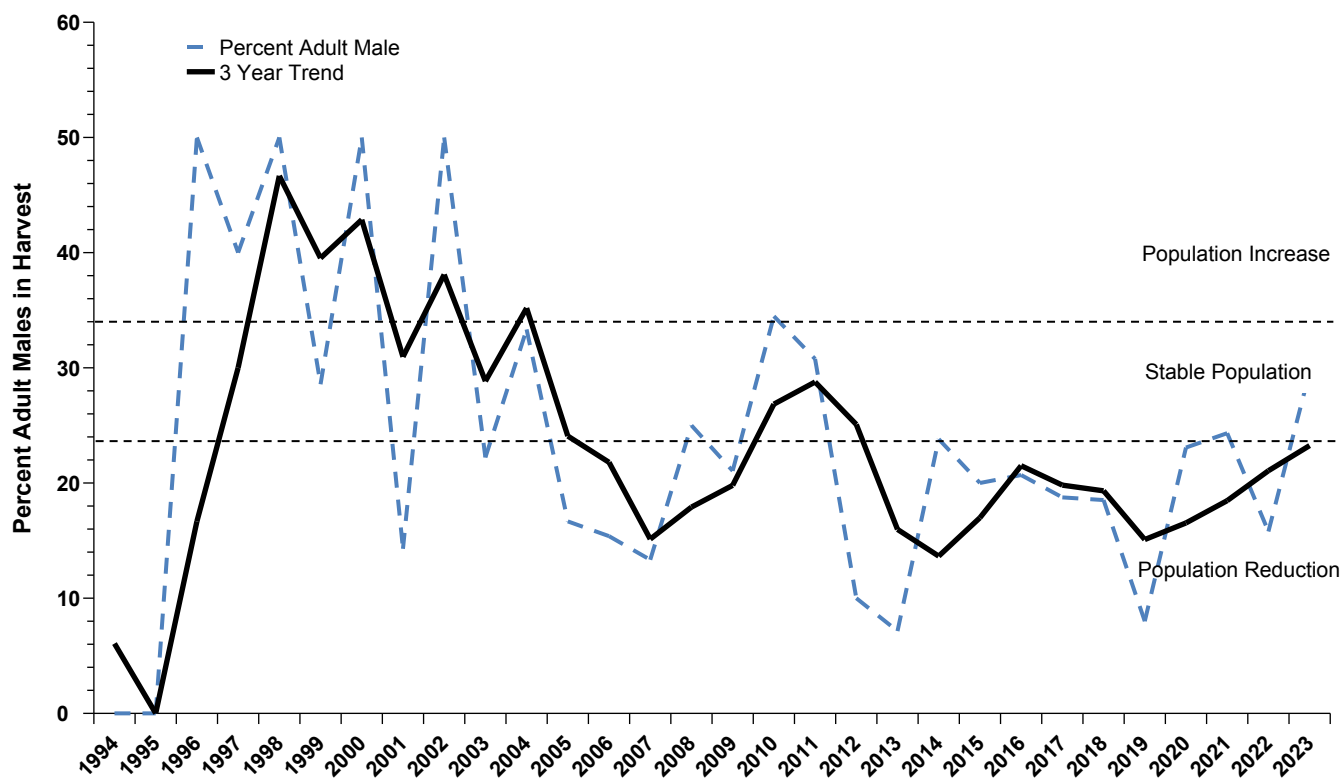


Figure 51. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

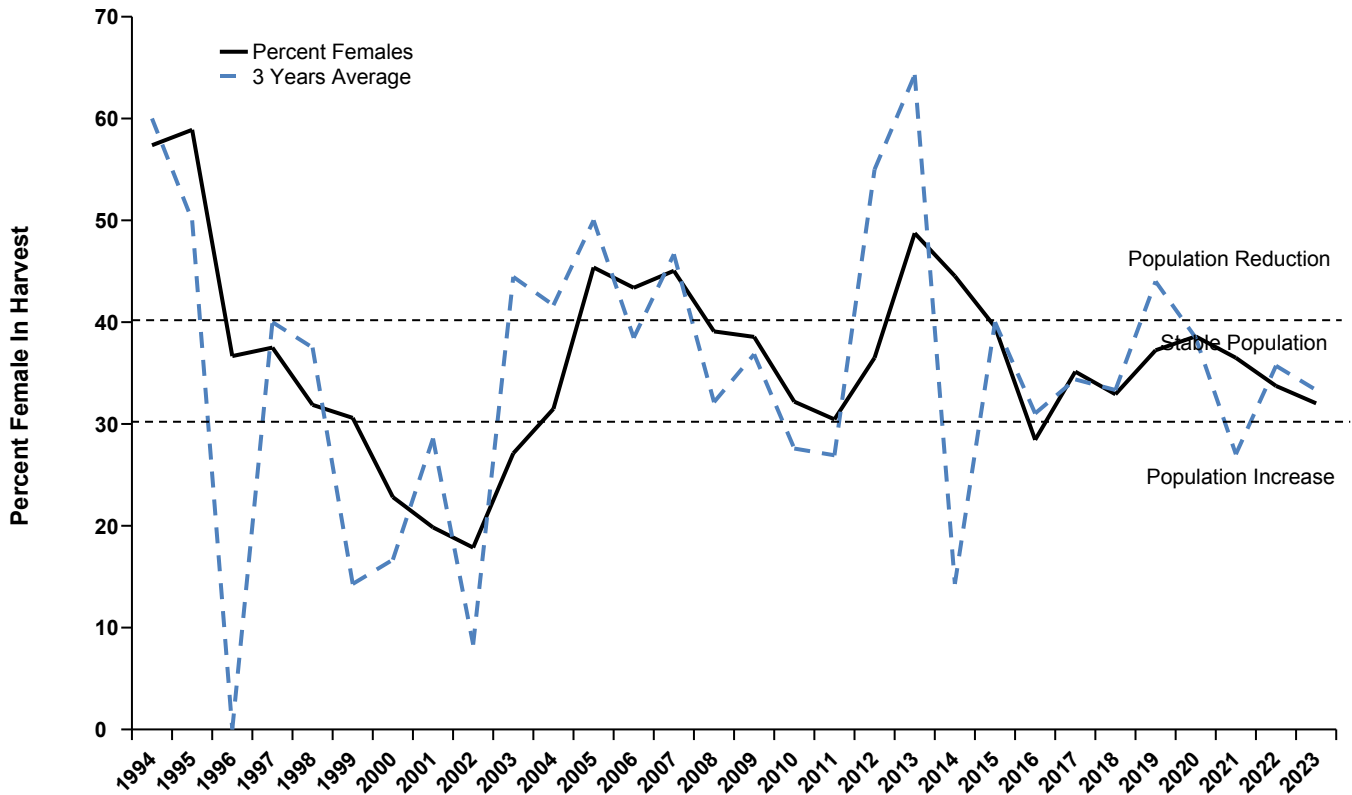


Figure 52. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

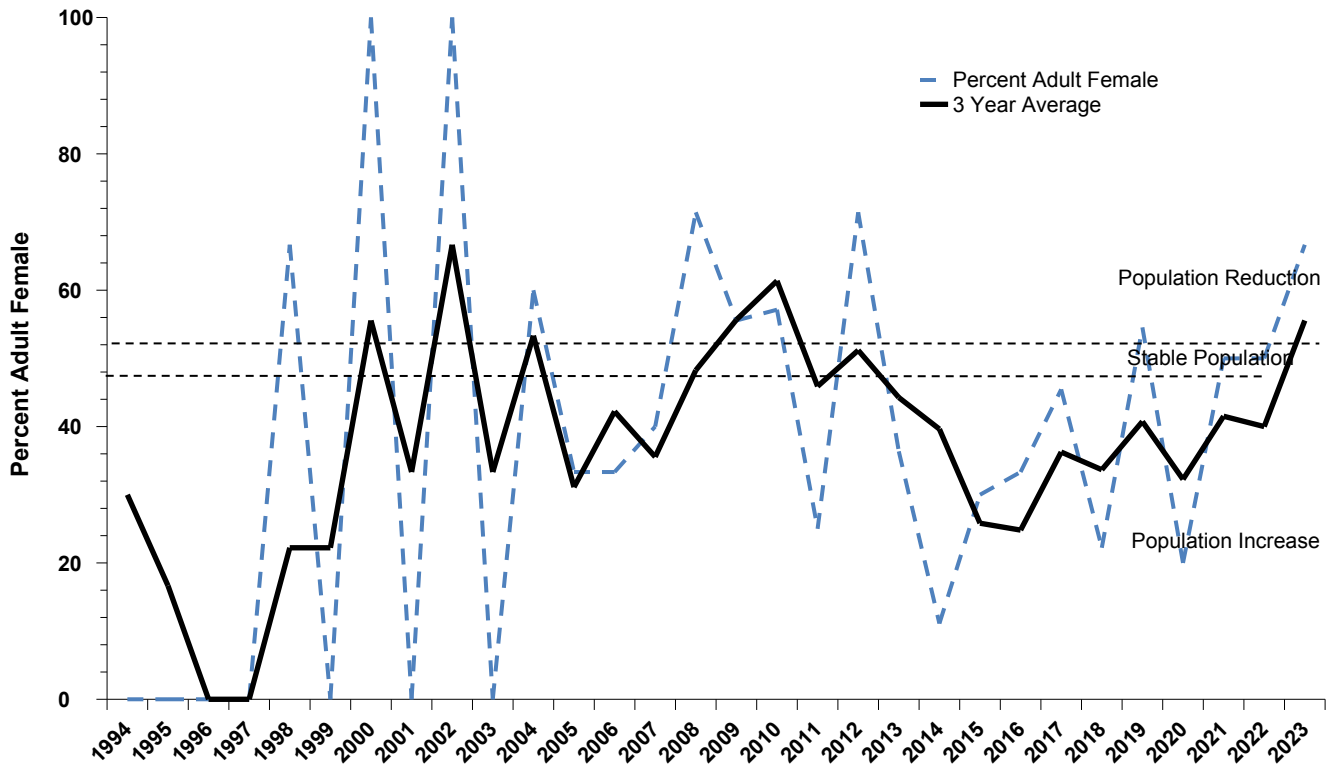


Figure 53. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

Harvest Criteria by Harvest Limit – Hunt Area 7

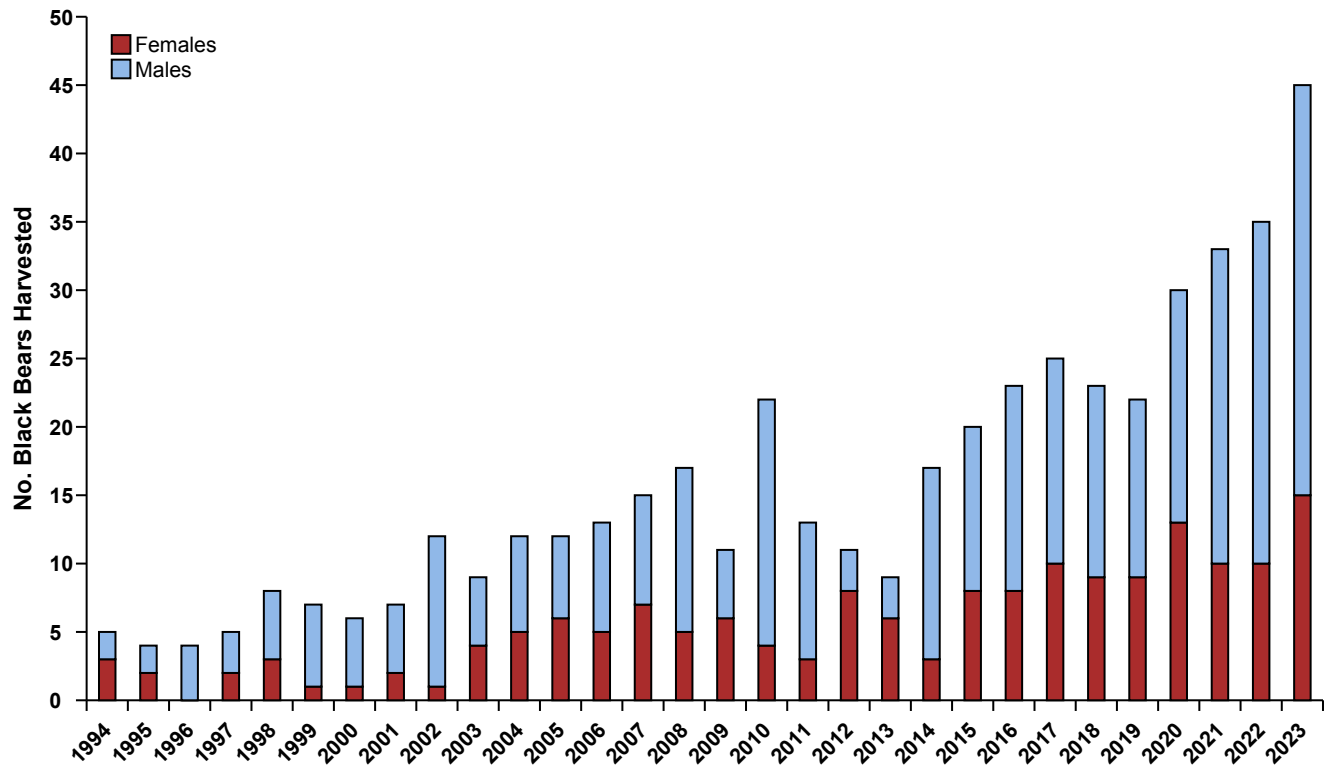


Figure 54. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt area 7 of Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

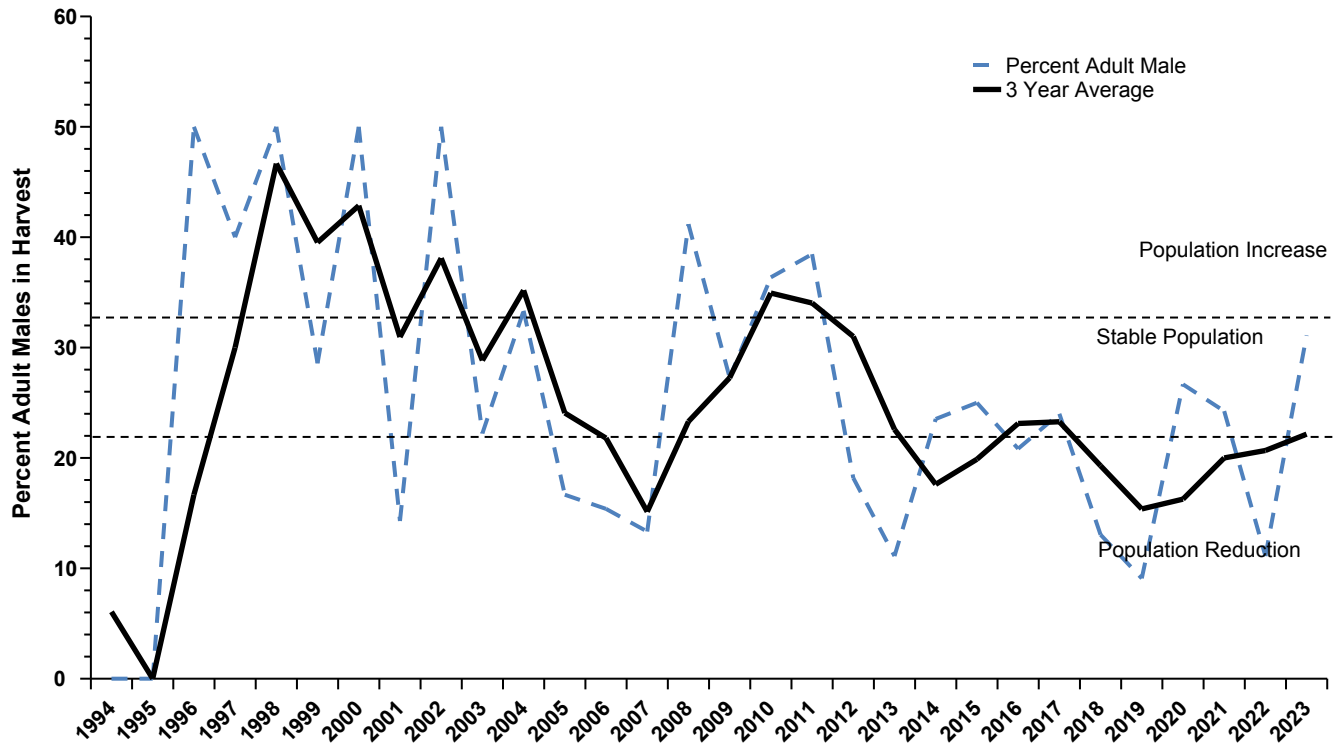


Figure 55. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt area 7 of Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

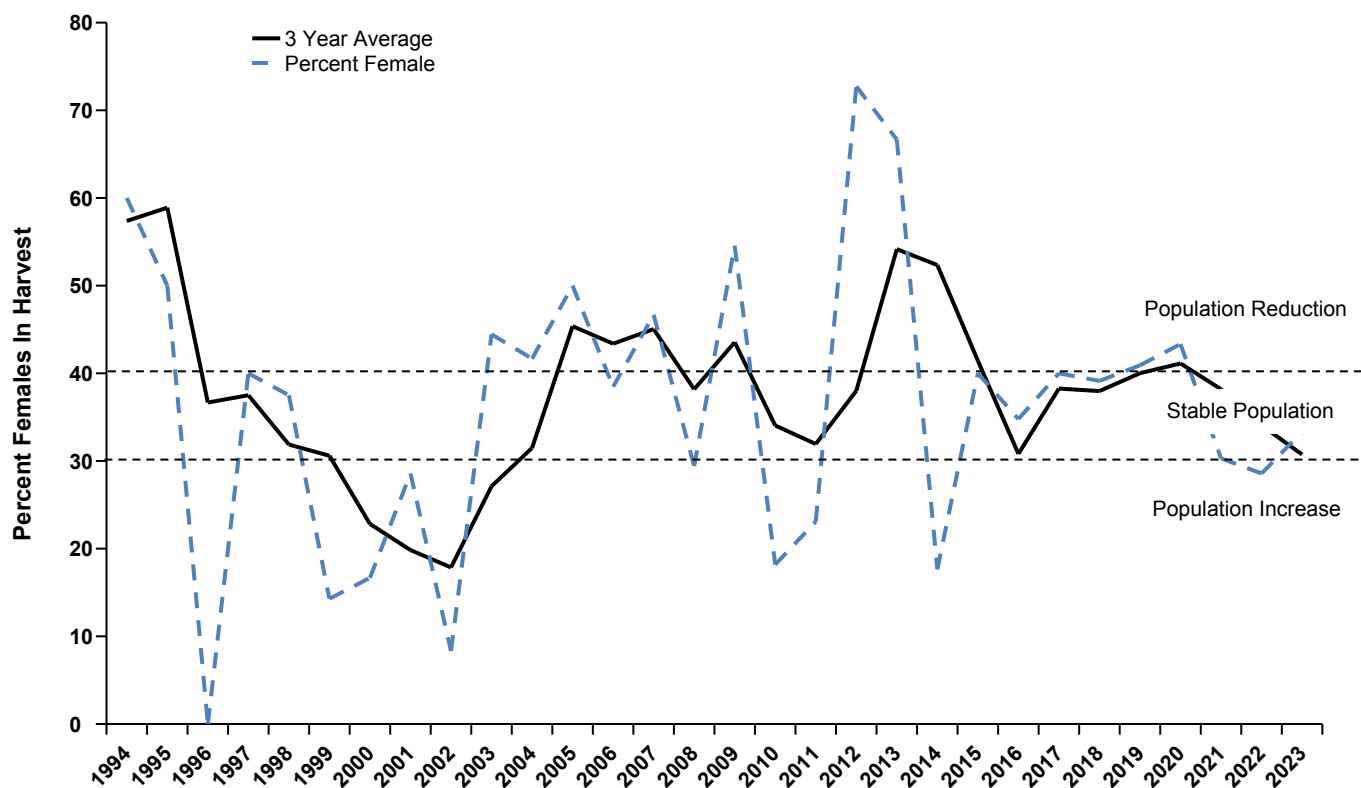


Figure 56. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt area 7 of Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

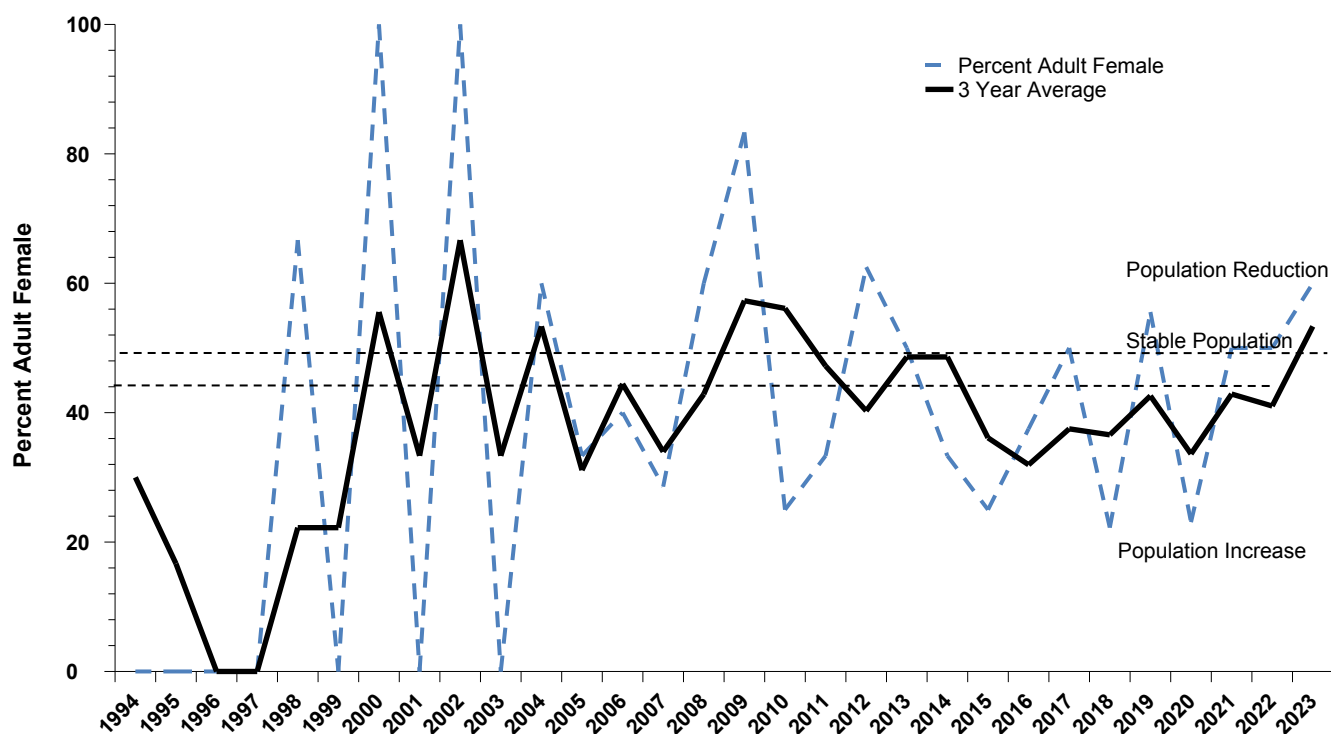


Figure 57. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt area 7 of Laramie Peak BMU, 1994-2023.

SNOWY RANGE BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (502)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

Female mortality limits for the Snowy Range BMU were increased for the 2020-2022 harvest cycle from 5 in the spring to 9 and from 6 in the fall to 8 (Table 14). A dramatic increase in males harvested occurred in the spring of 2020. The spring and fall season female harvest limits were met in 2020 but not after (Table 14). Though a large spike in harvest occurred in 2020, total mortalities and harvest increased slightly from the 2017-2019 cycle overall (Figures 58 and 59). The percent adult males harvested decreased but remains in the stable category and appears steady. Percent female and adult female continue to fluctuate around the stable range, indicating the increased harvest due to increased mortality limits are still moderate harvest pressure for this BMU (Table 15, Figures 60-62).

The increase to the female harvest limit appears to be a good fit for the population currently as all metrics remain in the stable range.

Table 14. Snowy Range BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	SNOWY RANGE	8	9	8	30	8	8	9	6/5/20	10/19/20
2021	SNOWY RANGE	8	9	8	11	8	7	8	6/7/21	10/31/21
2022	SNOWY RANGE	8	9	8	14	7	5	7	6/7/22	10/31/22
2023	SNOWY RANGE	8	9	8	23	10	19	8	6/5/20	10/22/23

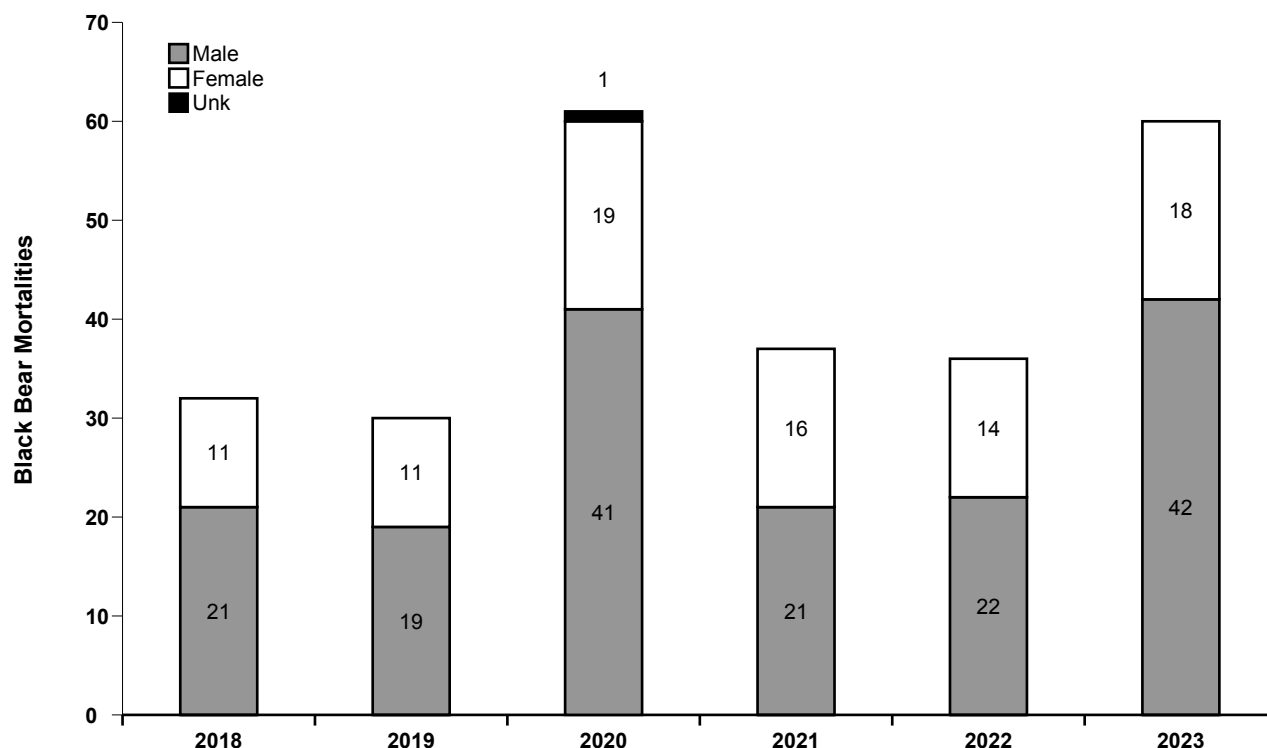


Figure 58. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Snowy Range BMU by sex, 2012018-2023.

Table 15. Harvest criteria for Snowy Range BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		24.3	40.1	46.5

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

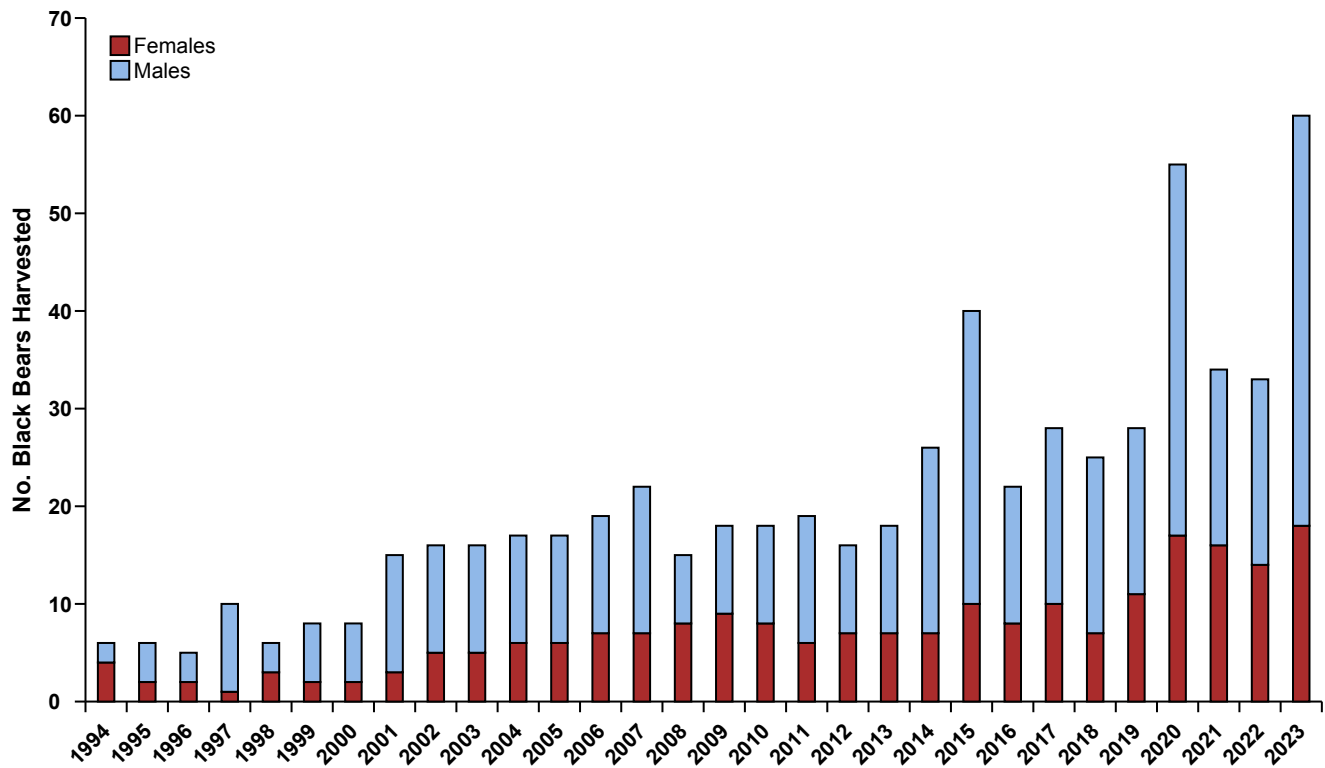


Figure 59. Legal harvest of black bears in Snowy Range BMU, 1994-2023.

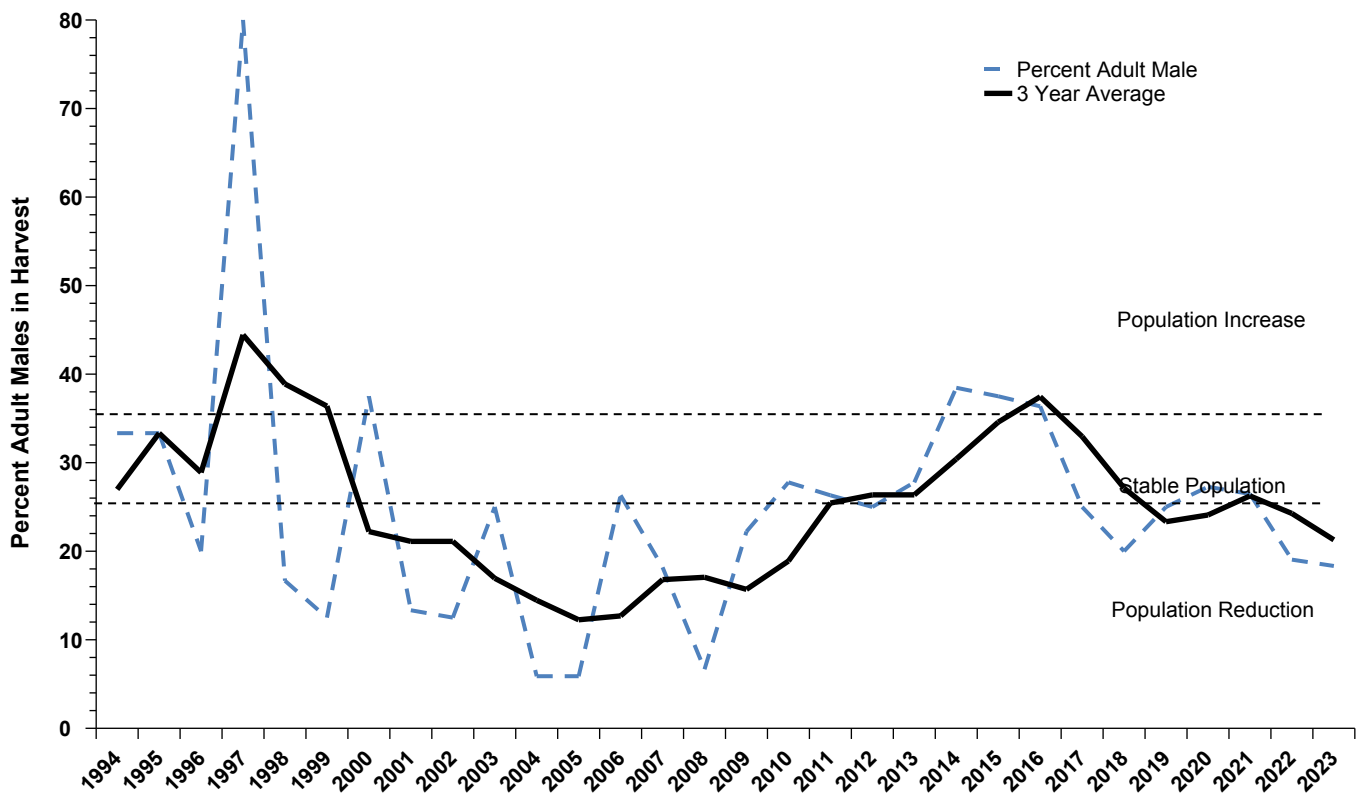


Figure 60. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Snowy Range BMU, 1994-2023.

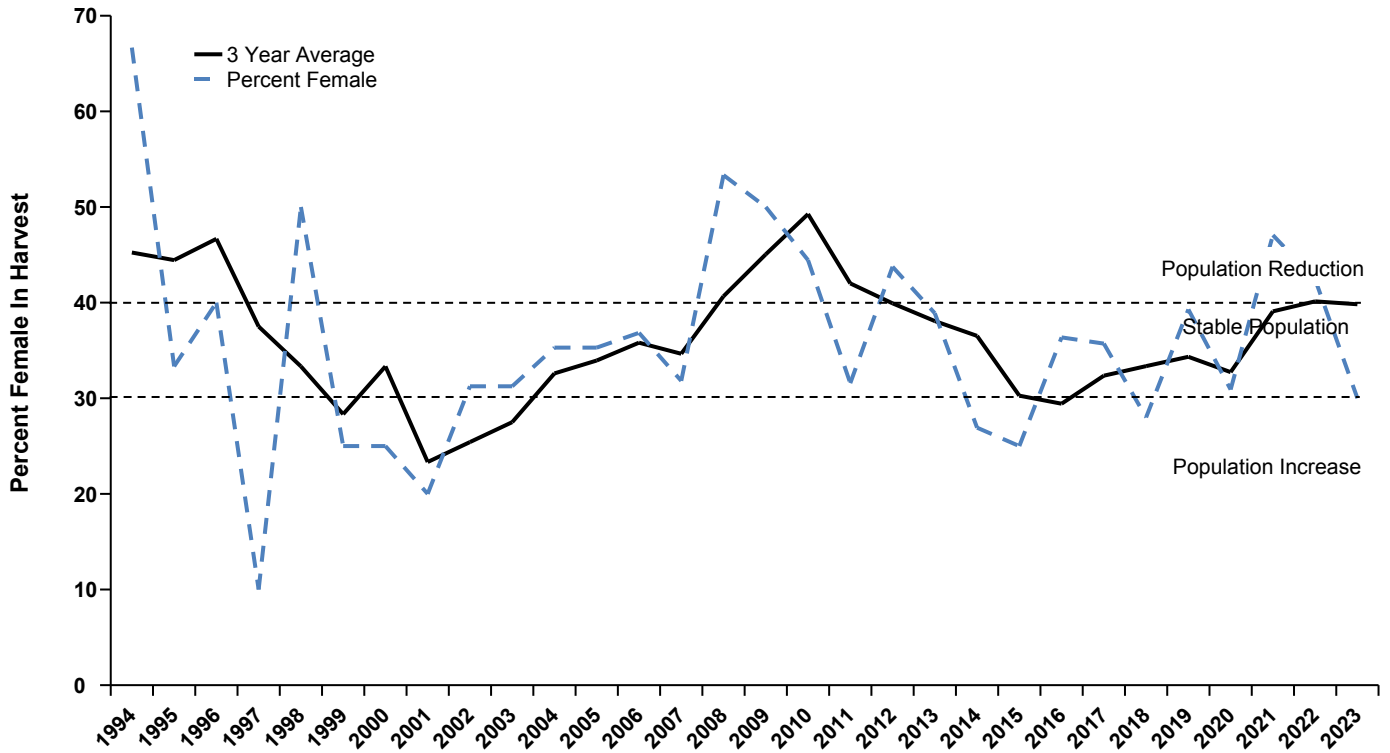


Figure 61. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Snowy Range BMU, 1994-2023.

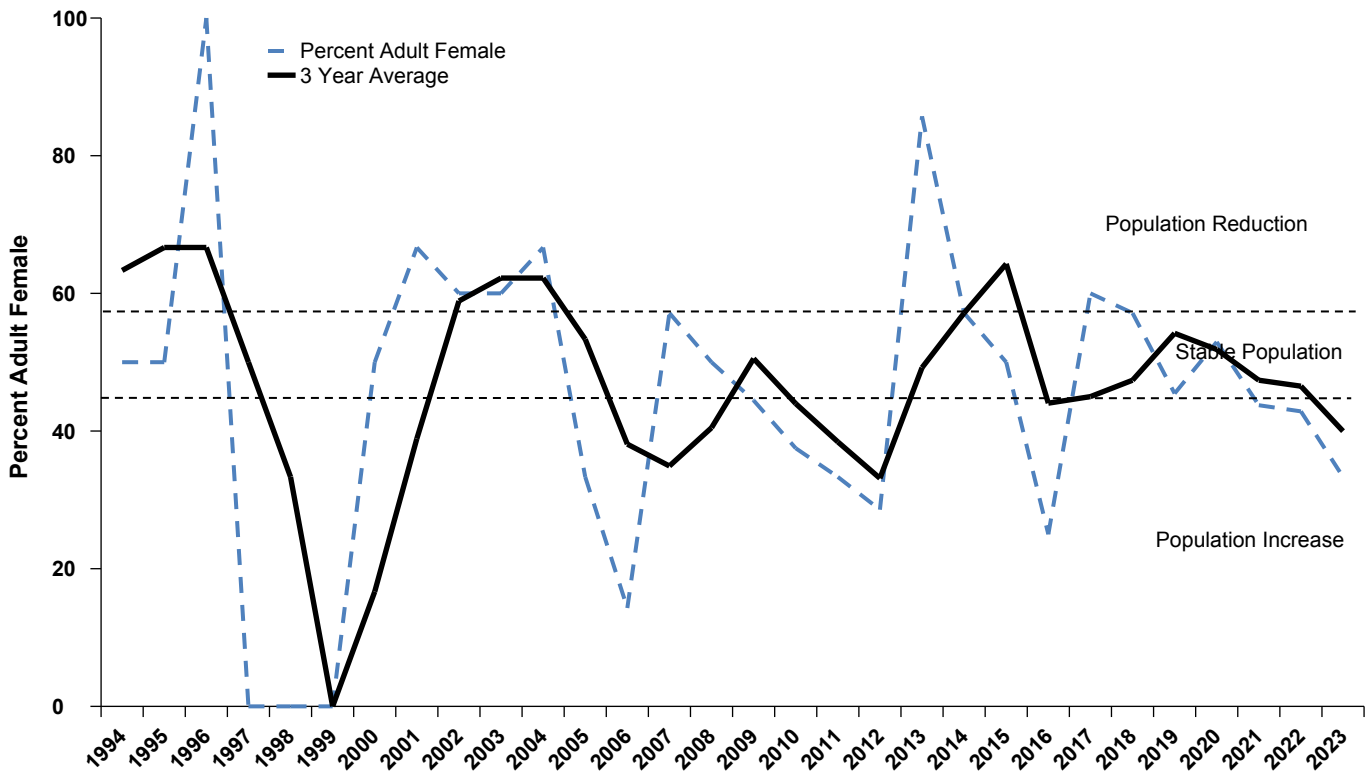


Figure 62. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Snowy Range BMU, 1994-2023.

WIND RIVER RANGE BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (601)

2020 - 2022 Black Bear Mortality

Female mortality limits were unchanged in the Wind River BMU for the 2020-2022 harvest cycle. The spring 2020 female harvest limit in area 13 was the only seasonal limit reached before the final day of the season in any area of the BMU during this harvest cycle (Table 16). At the BMU level, total black bear mortalities and legal harvest in BMU 601 were comparable to that of previous 15+ years (Figures 63 and 64). All 3 harvest criteria remained in the stable to increase range (Table 17; Figures 65-67).

Overall, the black bear population in the Wind River BMU appears to be generally stable and experiencing light to moderate harvest effects.

Table 16. Wind River BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-spring 2022 black bear hunting seasons. Yellow cells indicate season closure prior to the closing date listed in regulation (Appendix I) after reaching the female mortality limit.

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	WIND RIVER	13	5	5	6	5	3	3	6/7/20	10/31/20
		19	10	8	15	4	3	3	6/15/20	11/15/20
		28	4	4	2	0	4	2	6/15/20	10/31/20
		31	2	2	0	0	3	0	6/15/20	10/31/20
2021	WIND RIVER	13	5	5	16	4	7	5	6/15/21	10/31/21
		19	10	8	14	6	5	4	6/15/21	11/15/21
		28	4	4	0	0	2	1	6/15/21	10/31/21
		31	2	2	0	0	0	0	6/15/21	10/31/21
2022	WIND RIVER	13	5	5	10	4	2	1	6/15/22	10/31/22
		19	10	8	10	6	3	1	6/15/22	11/15/22
		28	4	4	0	0	0	0	6/15/22	10/31/22
		31	2	2	0	0	0	0	6/15/22	10/31/22
2023	WIND RIVER	13	5	5	6	4	8	3	6/15/22	10/31/22
		19	10	8	18	0	6	2	6/15/22	11/15/22
		28	4	4	0	0	2	0	6/15/22	10/31/22
		31	2	2	0	0	0	1	6/15/22	10/31/22

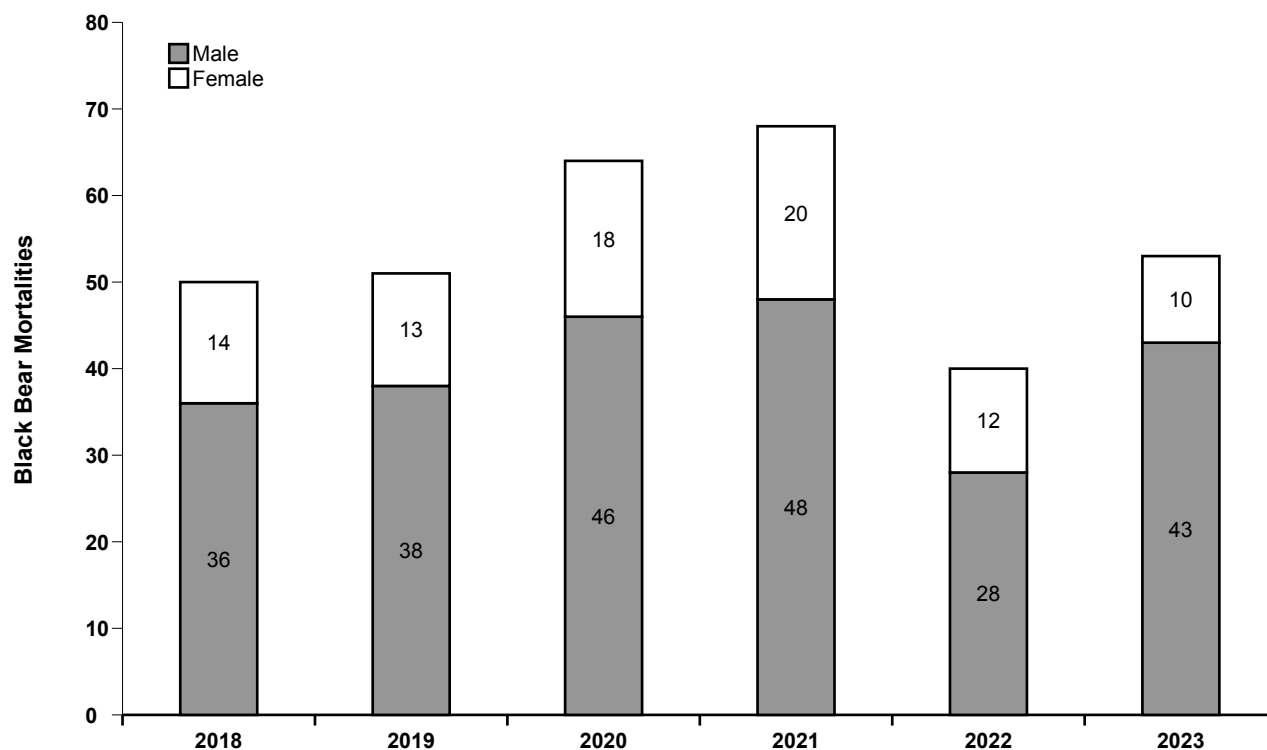


Figure 63. Number of black bear mortalities of all causes in Wind River BMU by sex, 2018-2023.

Table 17. Harvest criteria for Wind River BMU legal black bear harvest, 2020-spring 2022. Criteria are presented by objective as 3-year averages of percent adult males in the total harvest, percent females in the total harvest, and percent adult females in the female harvest.

Year	Objective	Harvest Criteria		
		% Adult ^a Males in Total Harvest	% Females in Total Harvest	% Adult ^a Females in Female Harvest
	Population Reduction	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%
	Stable Population	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%
	Population Increase	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%
2020-spring 2022		31.4	31.5	45.0

^a Adults classified as males and females ≥ 5 years of age based on tooth cementum annuli.

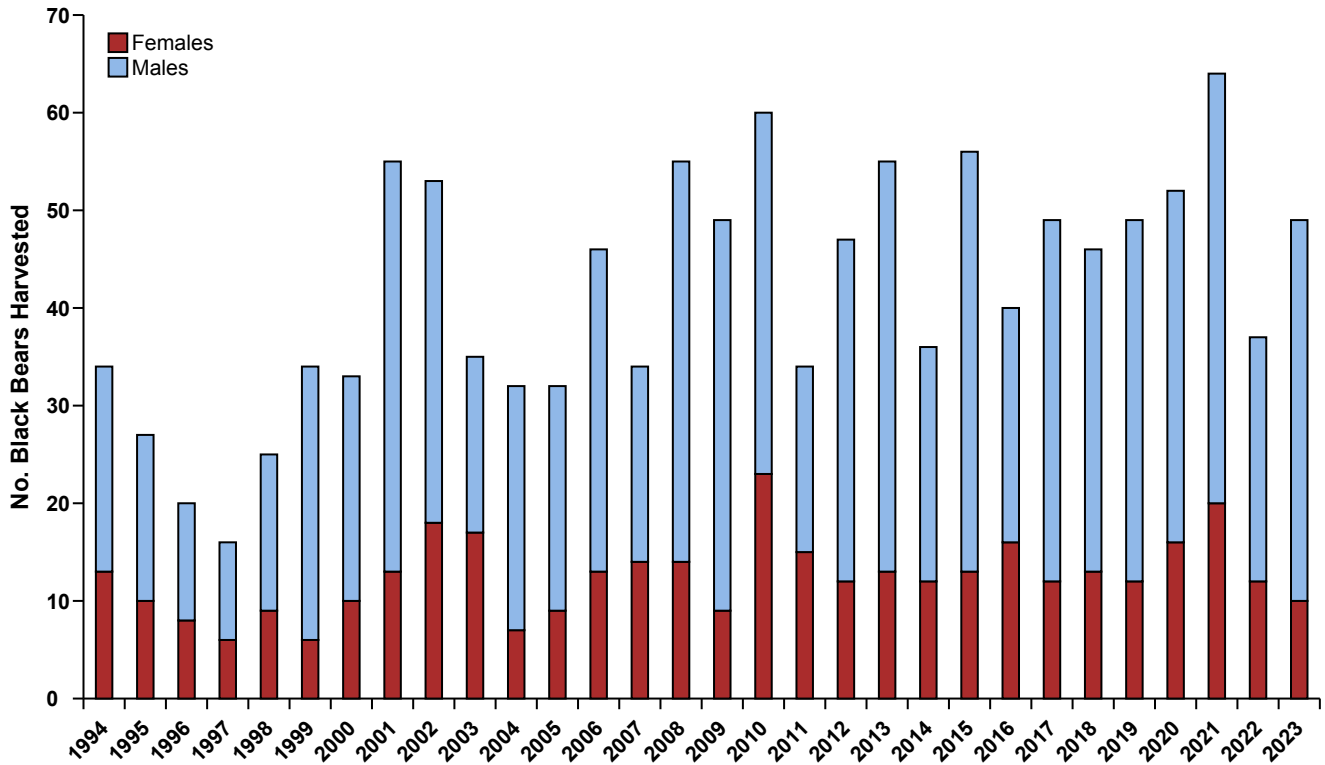


Figure 64. Legal harvest of black bears in Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

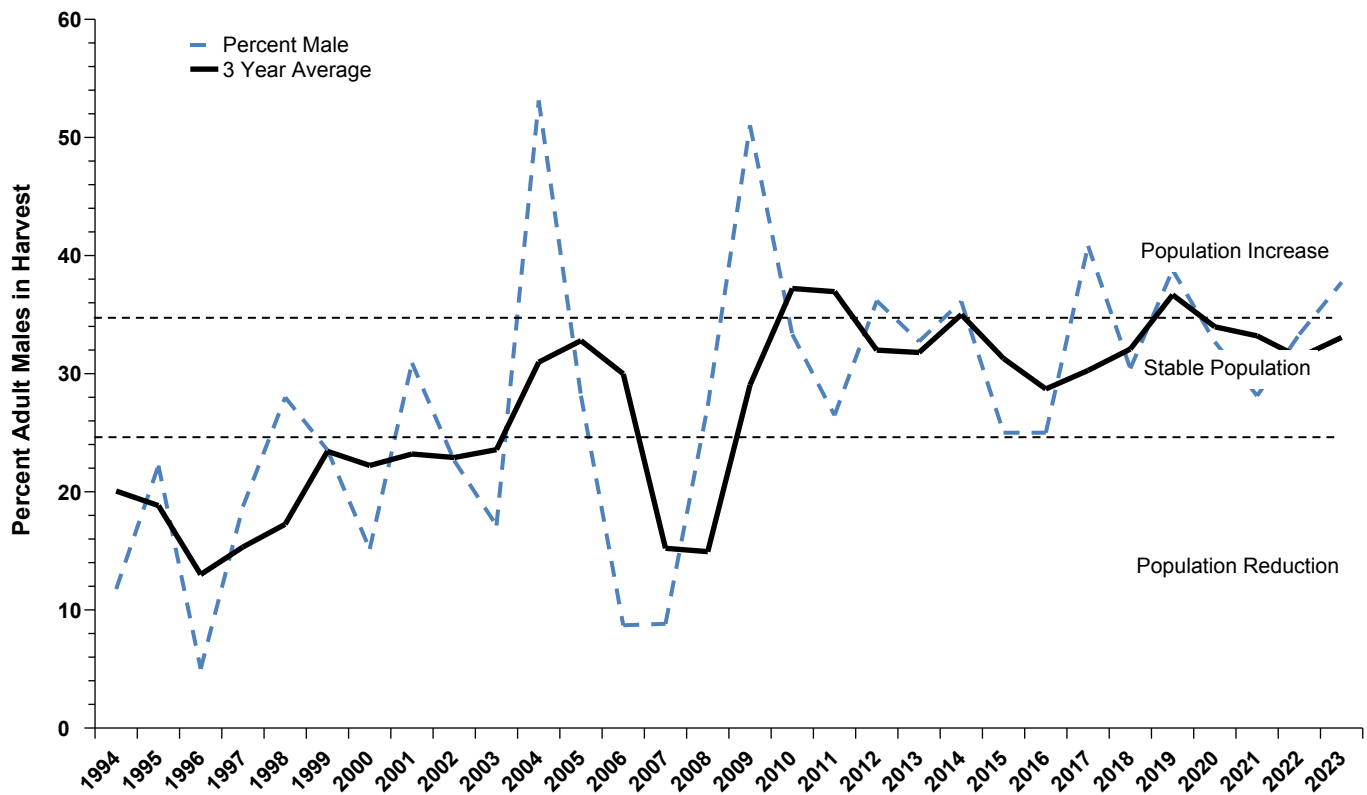


Figure 65. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

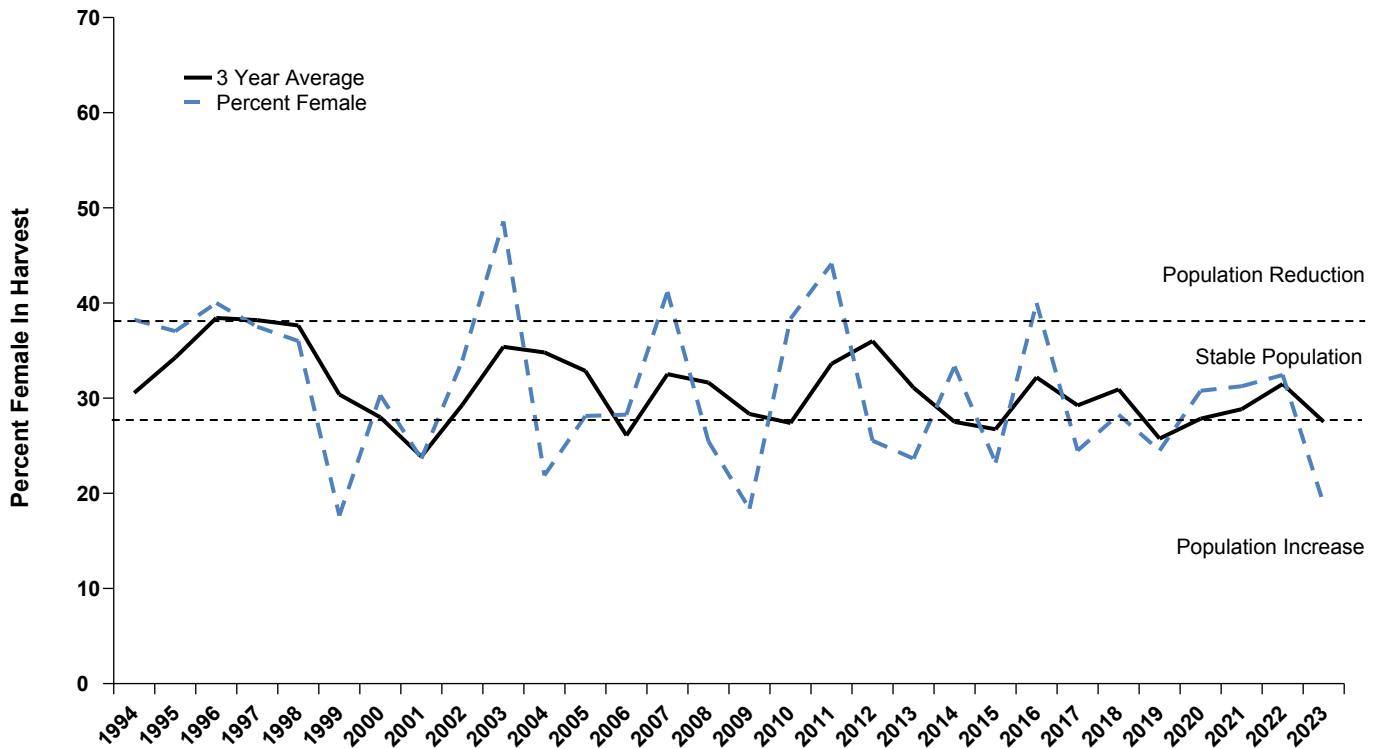


Figure 66. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

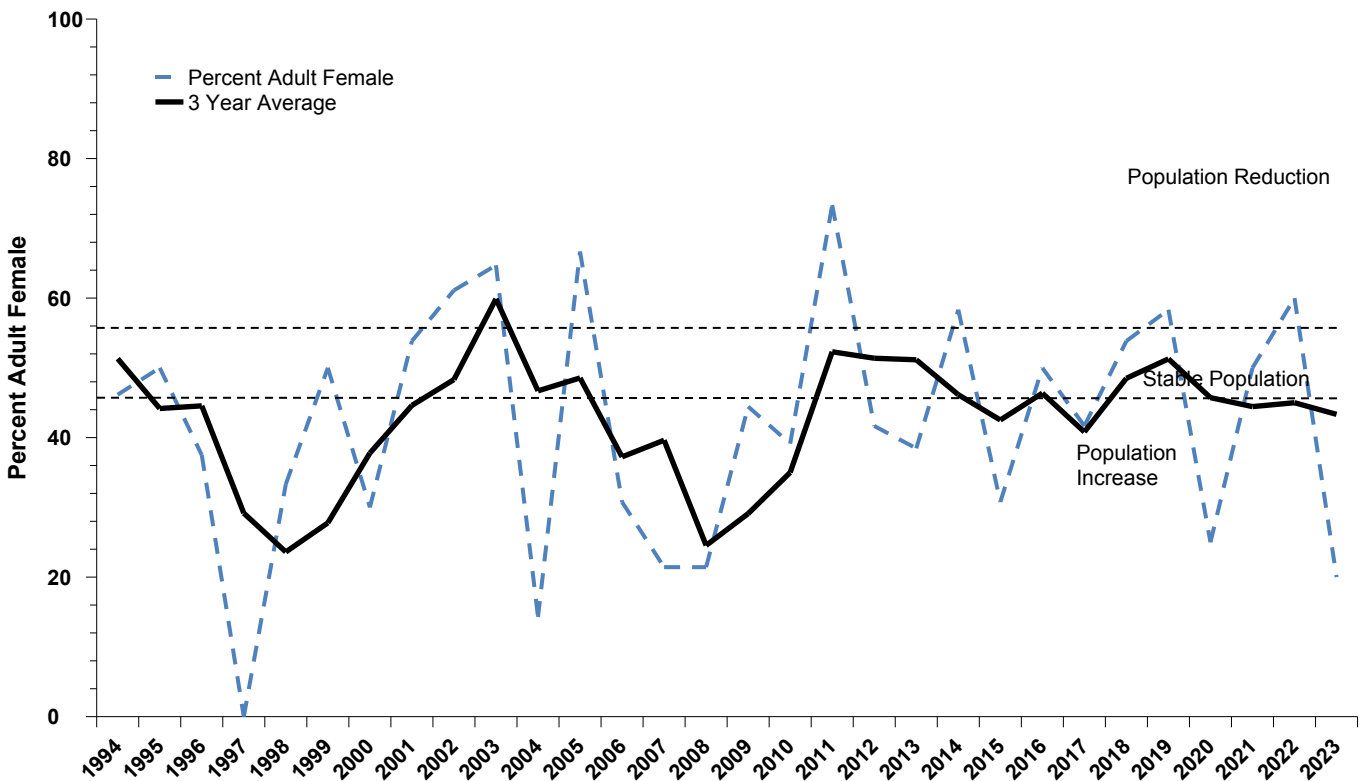


Figure 67. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

Harvest Criteria by Harvest Limit – Hunt Area 13

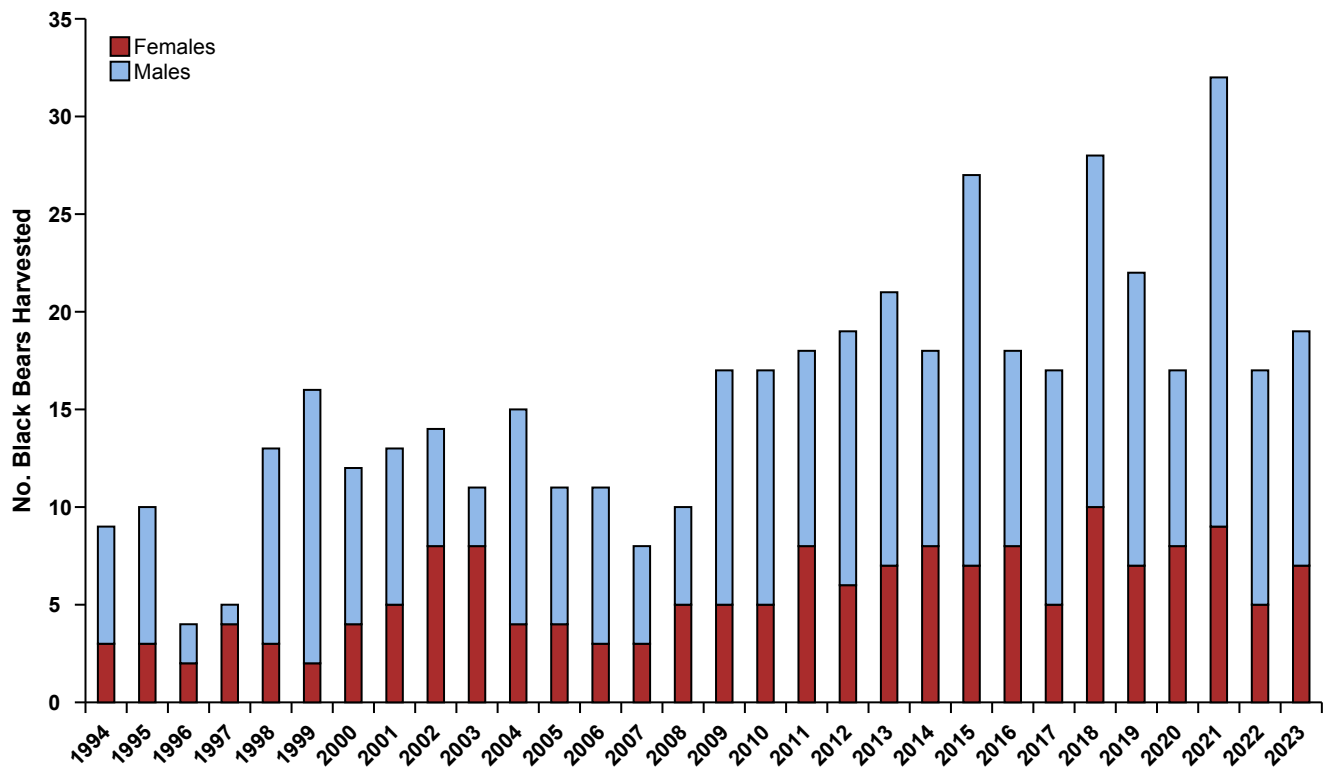


Figure 68. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt area 13 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

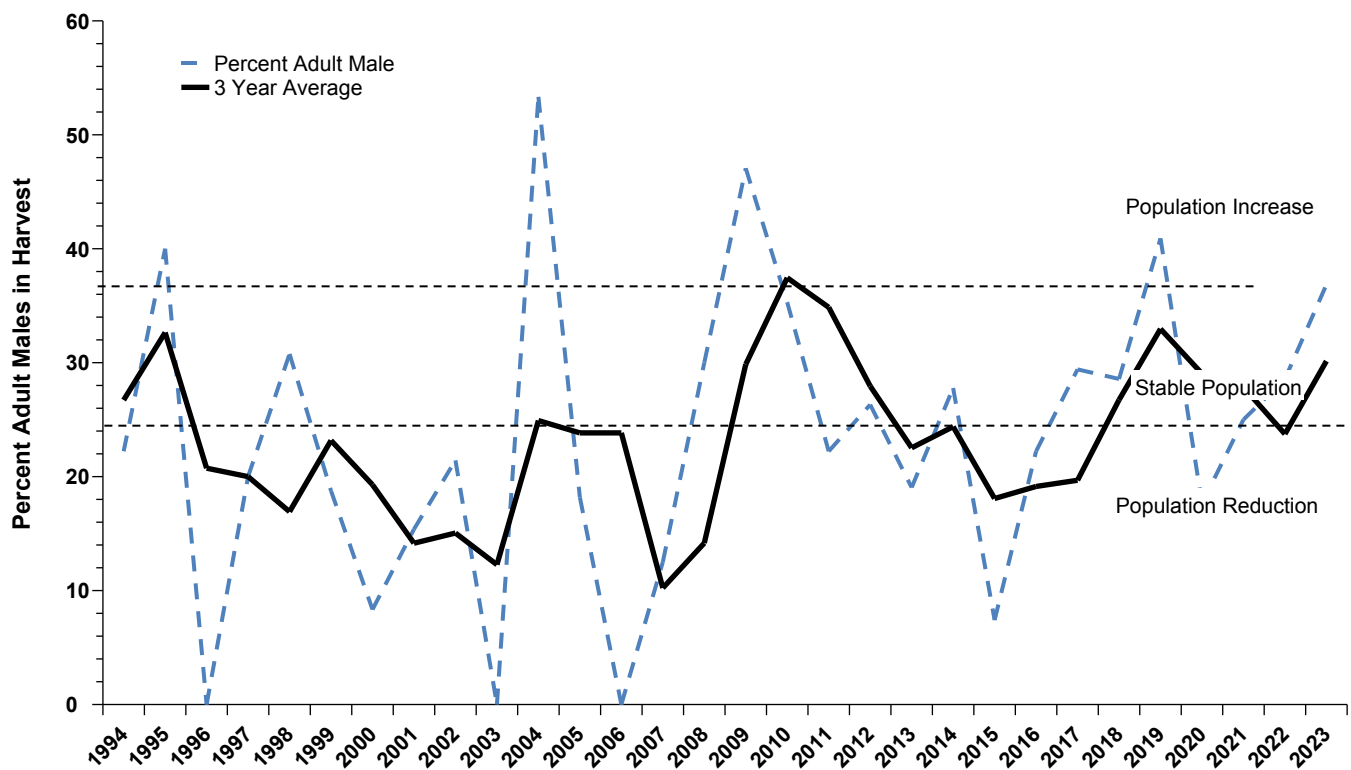


Figure 69. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt area 13 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

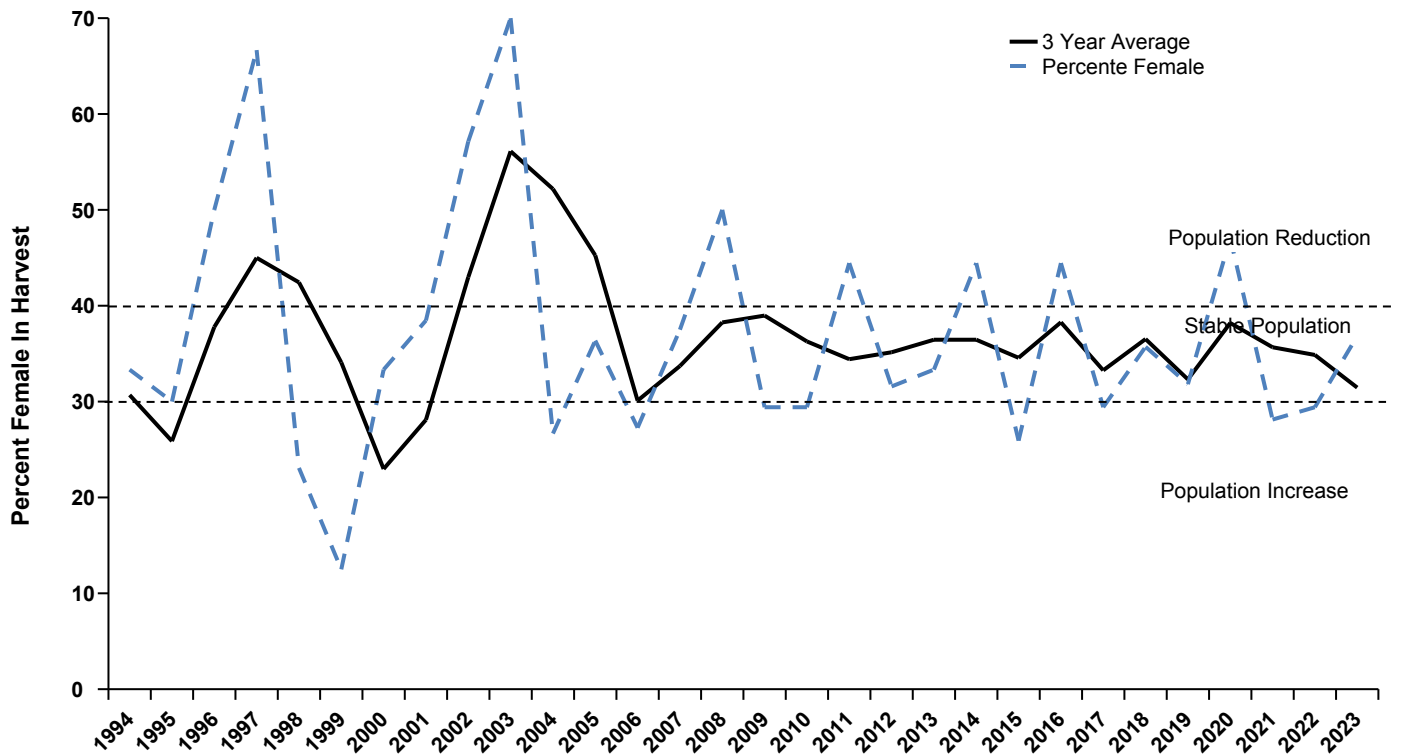


Figure 70. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt area 13 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

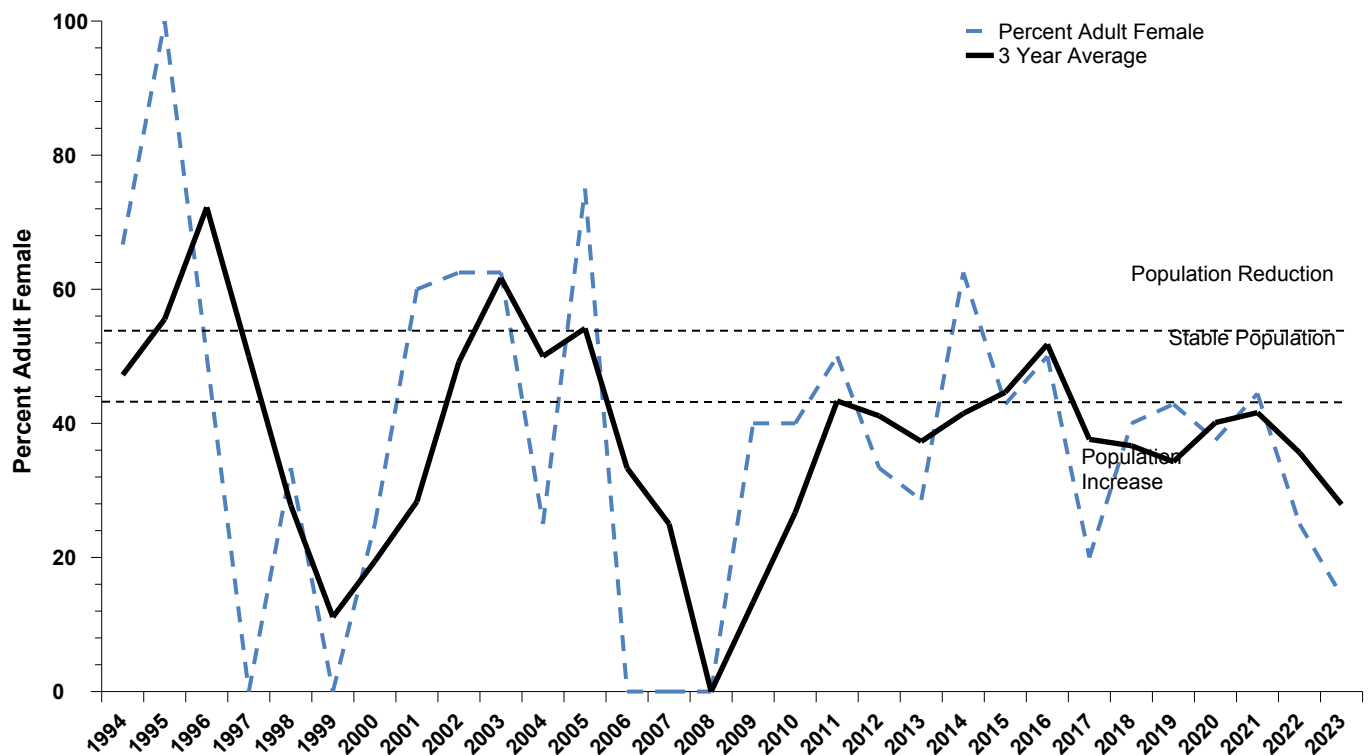


Figure 71. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt area 13 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

Harvest Criteria by Harvest Limit – Hunt Area 19

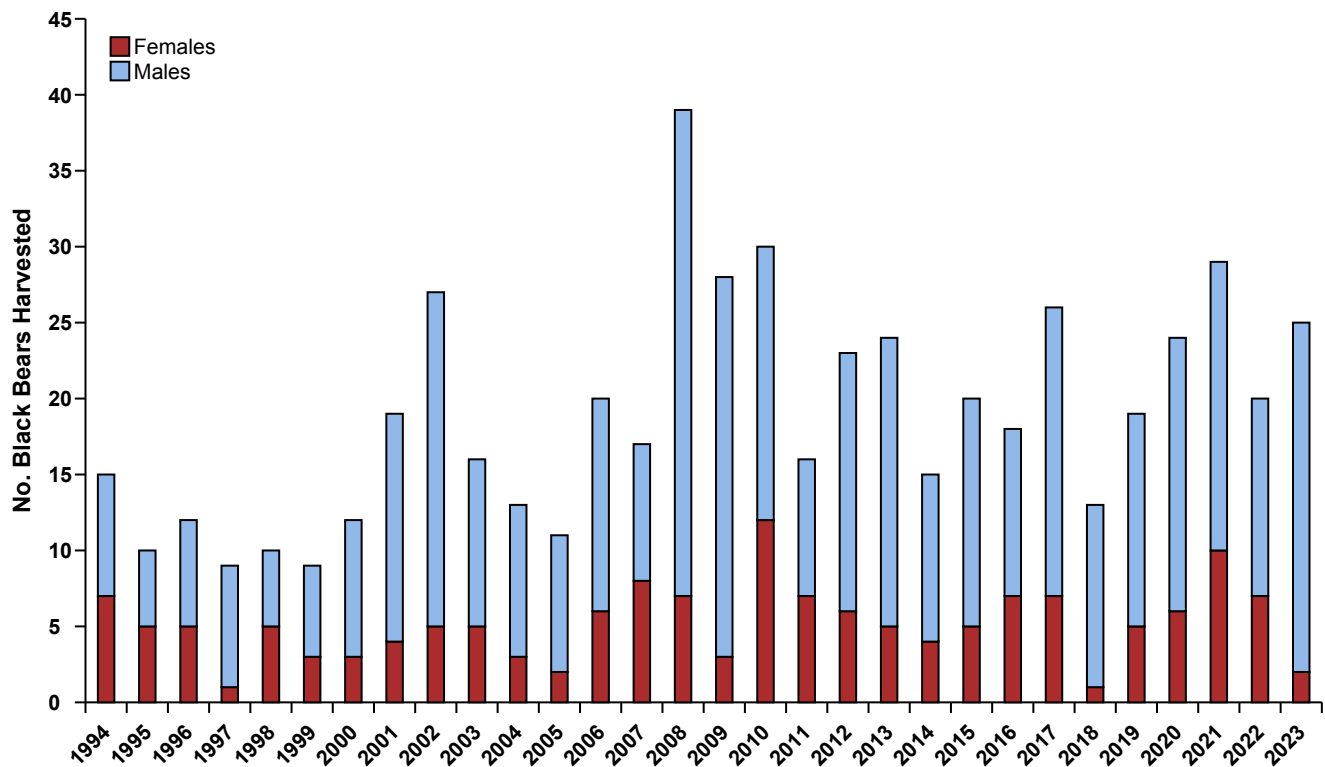


Figure 72. Legal harvest of black bears in hunt area 19 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

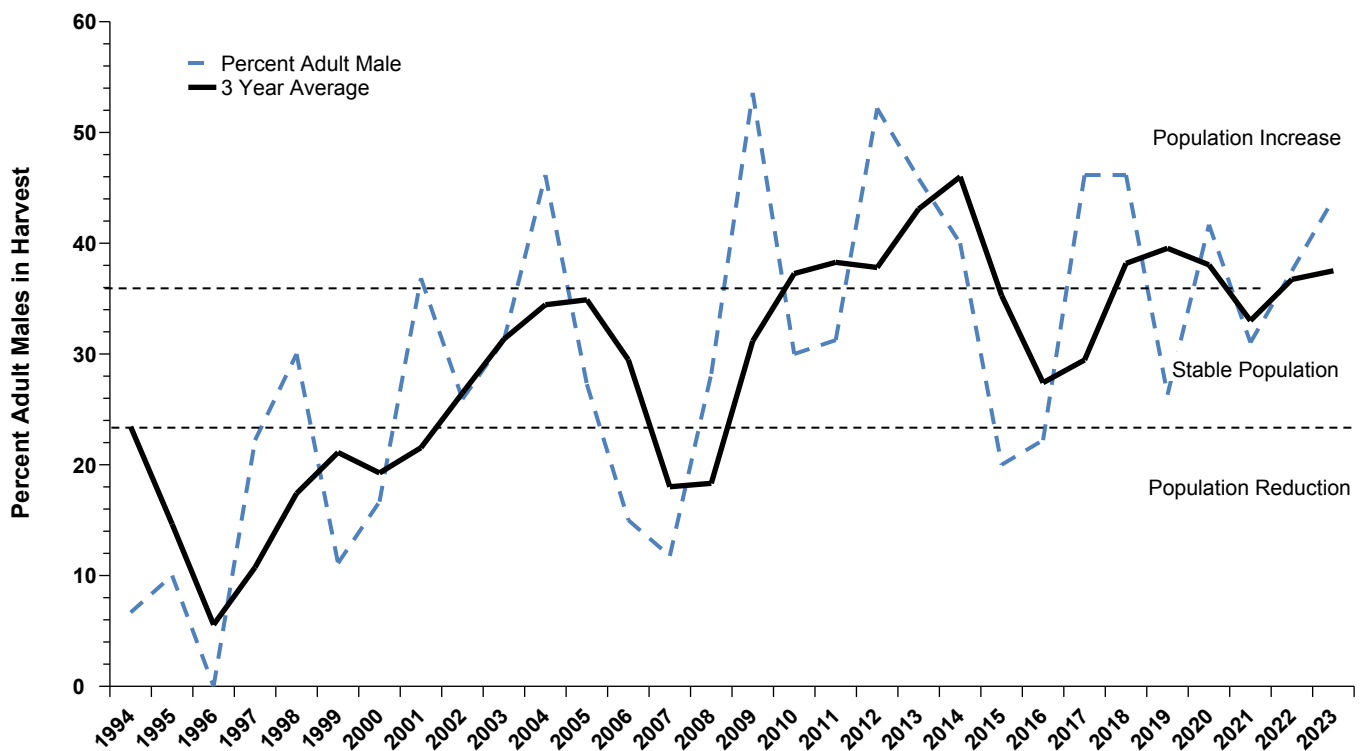


Figure 73. Percent adult males in the total legal black bear harvest in hunt area 19 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

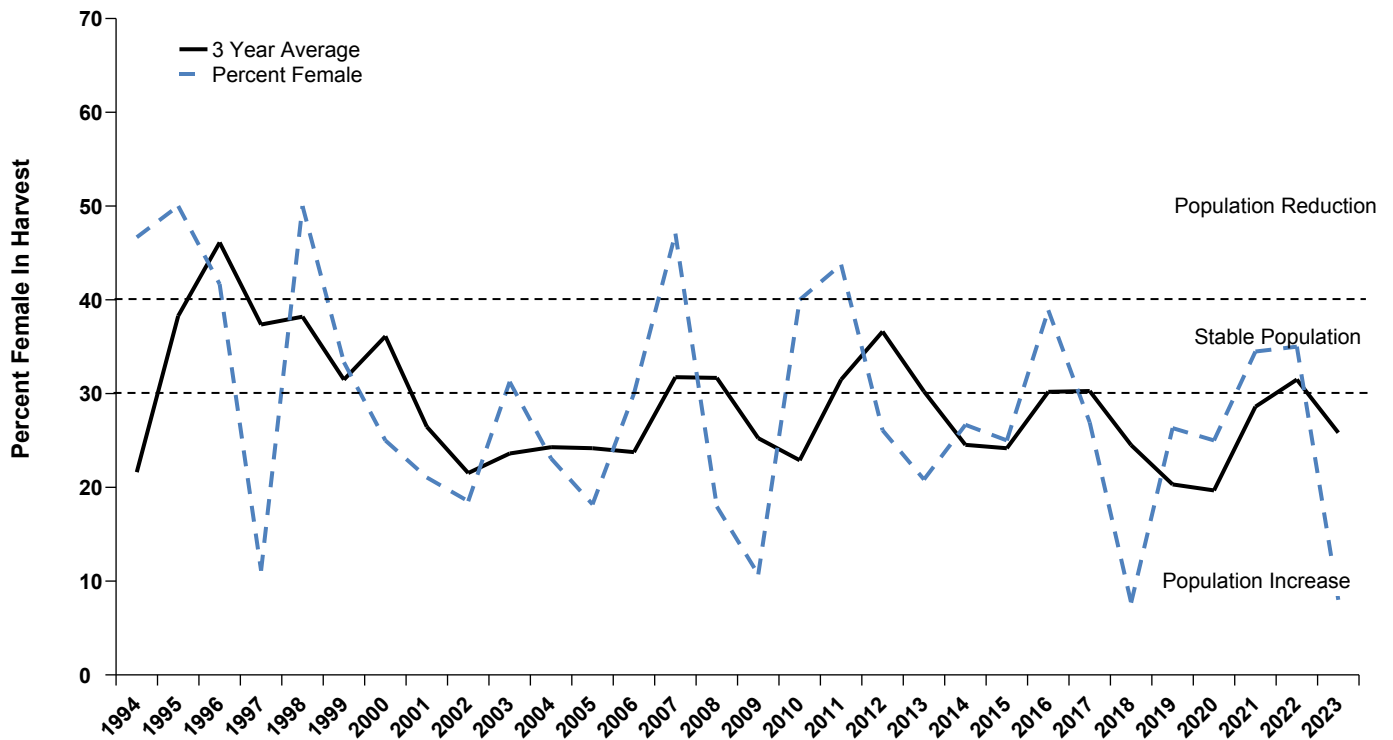


Figure 74. Percent females of the total legal black bear harvest in hunt area 19 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

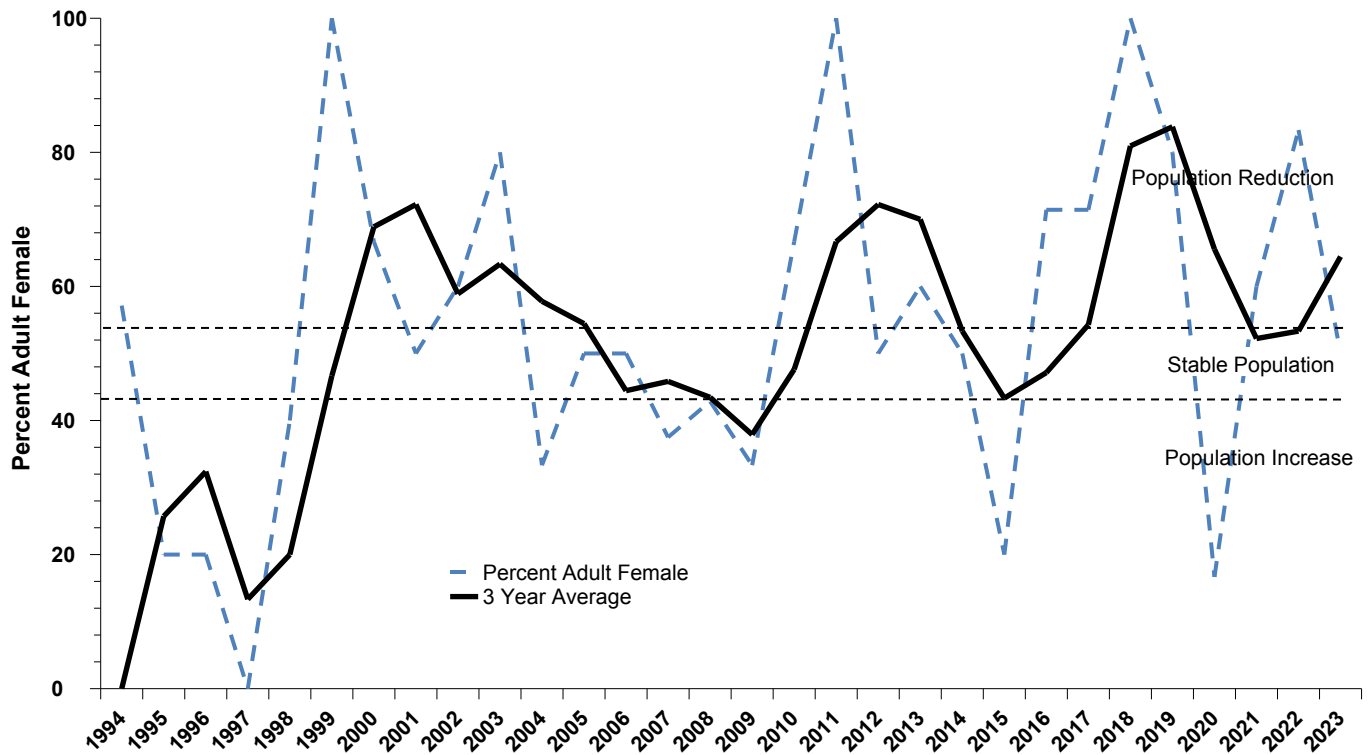


Figure 75. Percent adult females of the total female legal harvest in hunt area 19 of Wind River BMU, 1994-2023.

STATEWIDE HUNT AREA 35

During the season-setting process prior to the 2011-2013 cycle, hunt area 35 was created to include all areas of Wyoming that previously did not fall within established hunt areas. Although there are pockets of suitable habitat, this area is not considered quality black bear habitat and contains relatively few black bears. However, black bears, especially subadult males dispersing from higher quality habitats, may move through and occasionally take up residence in some of the smaller, more isolated mountain ranges and riparian habitats of the state. Hunt area 35 was created to provide hunting opportunity for these ranges. The hunt area has no female mortality limit and the season runs from April 15 to June 15 and August 1 to October 31 (Table 18).

Through the early fall of 2022, there were 63 total black bear mortalities in hunt area 35 during the 2020-2022 harvest cycle, 27 during the spring season and 36 during the fall. These mortalities included 55 legal harvests, 3 damage removal, 4 vehicle-related, and 1 incidental human-caused mortality. The number of legally harvested black bears was 15 in 2020, 23 in 2021, and 17 so far in 2022 (Table 18). Twenty five of the 44 (56.8%) lab aged mortalities were subadult males, which is expected given this cohort's tendency to disperse long distances in search of new areas to establish home ranges.

Table 18. Statewide BMU female mortality limits, harvest (legal/illegal harvest) by sex and season, and season closure dates for the 2020-2022 black bear hunting seasons. Because there is no female harvest limit, all seasons for this BMU closed on the final date of the season as listed in regulation (Appendix I).

			Female Mortality Limit		Harvest				Season Closure Dates	
					Spring		Fall			
YEAR	MGMT UNIT	HUNT AREA	Spring	Fall	M	F	M	F	Spring	Fall
2020	STATEWIDE	35	NA	NA	4	2	7	2	6/15/20	10/31/20
2021	STATEWIDE	35	NA	NA	7	1	10	5	6/15/21	10/31/21
2022	STATEWIDE	35	NA	NA	8	1	6	2	6/15/22	10/31/22
2023	STATEWIDE	35	NA	NA	9	4	4	4	6/15/23	10/31/23

Appendix I. Wyoming black bear hunting season dates and seasonal female mortality limits by management unit and hunt area, 2020 – 2022.

Black Bear Management Units	Hunt Areas	Season Dates		Female Mortality Limits
		Archery	General	
Bighorns (301)	1, 2	May 1-14	May 15-June 15 Sept.1-Oct. 31	8 Spring 8 Fall
	3, 4	May 1-14	May 15-June 15 Sept. 1-Oct. 31	6 Spring 4 Fall
	5, 6		May 1-June 15 Aug. 15-Nov. 15	2 Spring 2 Fall
Laramie Peak (501)	7		April 15-May 31 Sept. 1-Oct. 31	5 Spring 5 Fall
	33		April 15-May 31 Sept 1-Oct 31	3 Spring 2 Fall
Snowy Range (502)	8	Sept. 15-30	April 15-June 7 Oct. 1-31	9 Spring 8 Fall
Sierra Madres (401)	9	April 15-30 Sept. 1-30	May 1-June15 Oct. 1-31	10 Spring 9 Fall
Uinta (402)	10	April 15-30 Aug.1-Sept. 30	May 1-June15 Oct. 1-31	2 Spring 2 Fall
	12	April 15-30 Sept. 1-30	May 1-June15 Oct. 1-31	1 Spring 1 Fall
Greys River (102)	11	April 15-30 Aug. 15-31	May 1-June15 Sept. 1- Oct. 31	5 Spring 5 Fall
	14, 15, 16 17, 30	April 15-30 Aug. 15-31	May 1-June 15 Sept. 1-Oct 31	24 Spring 18 Fall
Wind River (601)	13	April 15-30	May 1-June 15 Aug. 1-31-valid only in that portion of Hunt Area 13 within the Popo Agie Wilderness Sept 1-Oct. 31	5 Spring 5 Fall
	19	April 15-30 Aug. 15-31	May 1-June 15 Sept. 1-Nov. 15	10 Spring 8 Fall
	28	April 15-30 Aug. 1-14	May 1-June 15 Aug. 15-Oct. 31	4 Spring 4 Fall
	31	April 15-30 Aug. 1-14	May 1-June 15 Aug. 15-Oct. 31	2 Spring 2 Fall
Jackson (101)	18, 20, 21 22, 24, 29	April 15-30 Aug. 15-31	May 1-June 15 Sept. 1-Oct. 31	13 Spring 20 Fall
Absaroka (201)	23	April 15-30 Aug. 1-14	May 1-June 15 Aug. 15-Oct. 31	8 Spring* 12 Fall*
	25, 26, 27	April 15-30 Aug. 15-31	May 1-June 15 Sept. 1- Oct. 31	
	32	April 15-30	May 1 – June 15 Aug. 1 – Oct. 31	Unlimited
Statewide	35		April 15-June 15 August 1-Oct. 31	Unlimited

*Annual female mortality limit applies to areas 23, 25, 26, and 27 in combination.