



# WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT CAPTURES, RELOCATIONS, AND REMOVALS IN NORTHWEST WYOMING

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## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



*Tooth photo of adult male grizzly bear captured about 2.3 miles from the Town of Cody, 10-18-2021.*

Submitted to the Wyoming Legislature's Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Interim Committee. This report is available to the public at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Headquarters Office, Regional Offices and on the Department website at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov>. This report is in fulfillment of the requirements in Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001(c). Questions about this report or its content can be directed to Brian DeBolt, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, 260 Buena Vista, Lander, WY 82520, (307) 332-2688, [brian.debolt@wyo.gov](mailto:brian.debolt@wyo.gov)

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Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
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## Introduction

In Wyoming, *grizzly bear conflicts* are defined as “interactions between grizzly bears, people and their property, resulting in damage to pets, livestock or bees, non-natural food rewards, animal caused human injury or death, and human caused injury or death to an animal other than legal hunting or a management action.” Human-grizzly bear interactions and conflicts in Wyoming are a result of an abundance of bears seeking unnatural foods in association with people and property, close encounters with humans, or when bears kill livestock. Proactive prevention is the goal of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) in minimizing conflicts. However, the number and location of human-grizzly bear conflicts is influenced by the availability of unsecured unnatural attractants (e.g. human foods and garbage), seasonal distribution and abundance of natural foods, grizzly bear density and distribution, and human and livestock use patterns on the landscape. For purposes of this report, we will be referring directly to grizzly bears in regards to any management actions and numbers provided therein.

Management techniques utilized to reduce human-grizzly bear conflicts globally are employed by the Department, including the capture and relocation of problem individuals. Relocation achieves several social and conservation functions: (a) it reduces the chance of property damage, livestock damage, or human interactions in areas where the potential for conflict is high; (b) it reduces the potential for grizzly bears to become food conditioned and/or human habituated which often results in destructive and/or dangerous behaviors; (c) it allows grizzly bears the opportunity to forage on natural foods and remain wary of people; and (d) it could prevent removing grizzly bears from the population which may be beneficial in maintaining recovery criteria and population management objectives.

In addition to capture and relocation, the Department also removes grizzly bears (lethally or by live placement in a zoo or other facility) in response to human-grizzly bear conflicts, when necessary, as part of routine management operations. All grizzly bear management actions were conducted in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The decision to relocate or remove a grizzly bear is made after considering a number of factors including the age and sex of the animal, behavioral traits, health status, physical injuries or abnormalities, type of conflict, severity of conflict, known history of the animal, human safety concerns, availability of suitable relocation sites, and population management objectives. Grizzly bears are relocated or removed in accordance with Federal and State law, regulation, and policy.

In 2005, the Wyoming Legislature enacted House Bill 203, which created Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001 which requires the Department to:

- (a) Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the Department shall provide notification to the county sheriff of the county to which the grizzly bear is relocated within five (5) days of each grizzly bear relocation and shall issue a press release to the media and sheriff in the county where each grizzly bear is relocated;
- (b) The notice and press release shall provide the following information:
  - (i) The date of the grizzly bear relocation;
  - (ii) The number of grizzly bears relocated; and
  - (iii) The location of the grizzly bear relocation, as provided by commission rule and regulation;

(c) No later than January 15 of each year the Department shall submit an annual report to the Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Interim committee. The annual report shall include the total number and relocation area of each grizzly bear relocated during the previous calendar year. The Department shall also make available the annual report to the public.

Subsequently, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission promulgated Chapter 58 Notification of Grizzly Bear Relocation Regulation (Appendix I) to further direct the implementation of Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001.

This report satisfies the requirements set forth in Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001(c) and provides additional information on grizzly bear captures, relocations, and removals by the Department in Wyoming during 2021.

### **Grizzly Bear Management Captures, Relocations, and Removals**

During 2021, the Department captured 45 individual grizzly bears in 49 capture events in an attempt to prevent or resolve conflicts; four bears (1022, 1041, 1043, and 1048) were each captured twice (Figure 1 and Table 1). Of the 45 individual captures, 17 were female and 32 were male grizzly bears. Most captures were adult males ( $n = 19$ ).

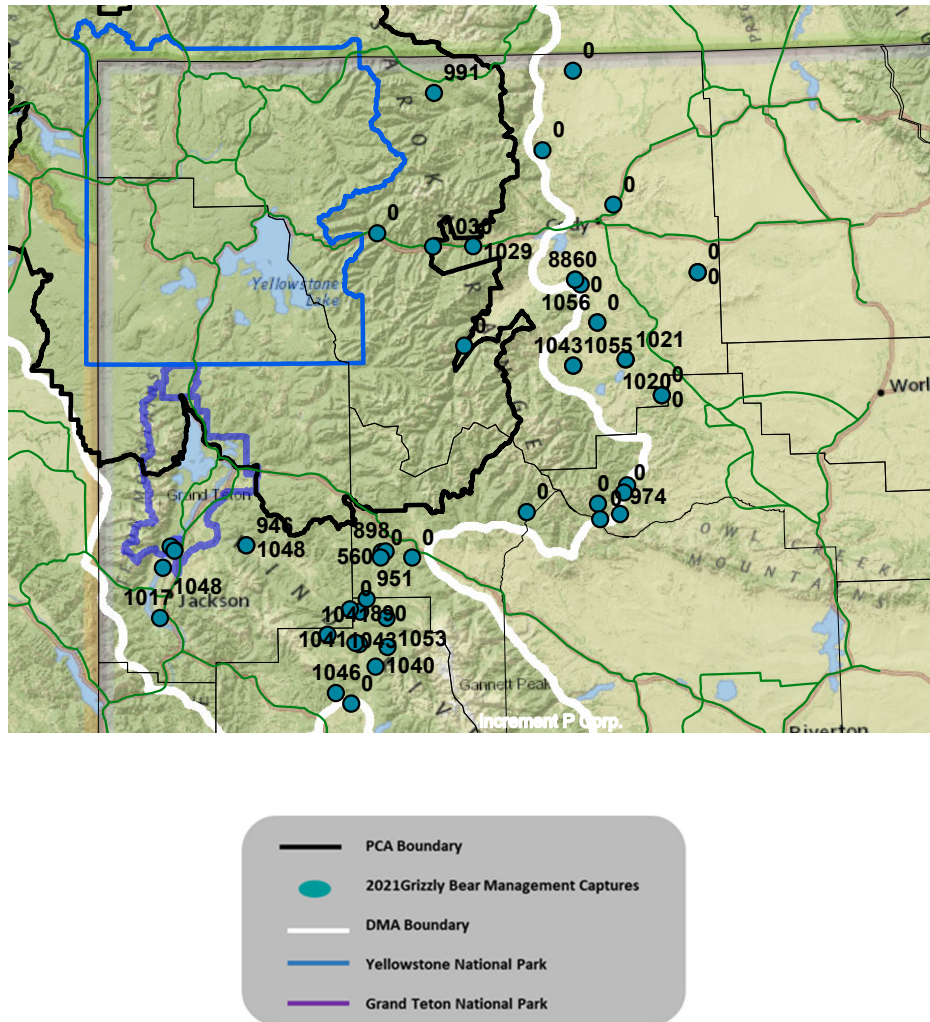
Of the 49 capture events, 23 captures were a result of grizzly bears killing livestock (primarily cattle), 17 were captures involving bears that obtained food rewards (pet, livestock food, garbage, fruit trees), or were frequenting developed sites or human populated areas unsuitable for grizzly bear occupancy. Two grizzly bears were captured for damaging corn fields, one bear was captured because it was extremely sick/emaciated, and was humanely euthanized. Six grizzly bears were captured that were not implicated in the specific conflict (labeled “non-target” captures). Some non-target grizzly bears are relocated in order to focus trapping efforts toward the “target” individual or for human safety, and some are released on site. Of the 49 capture events, 21 (43%) were in Park County, 10 (21%) were in Sublette County, 6 (12%) were in Fremont County, 7 (14%) were in Teton County, and 5 (10%) were in Hot Springs County (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Of the 49 capture events, there were 19 relocation events (Figure 2 and Table 1). All relocated grizzly bears were released on U.S. Forest Service lands in or adjacent to the Primary Conservation Area/Recovery Zone (Figure 2). Of the 19 relocation events, 11 were conducted in Park County (58%), 6 (32%) in Teton County, 1 (5%) in Sublette County, and 1 (5%) in Fremont County (Figure 2 and Table 1). The Sublette County relocation was a non-target grizzly bear (2-year old female #1041) relocated a short distance instead of on site to focus capture efforts towards the target bear involved in the conflict.

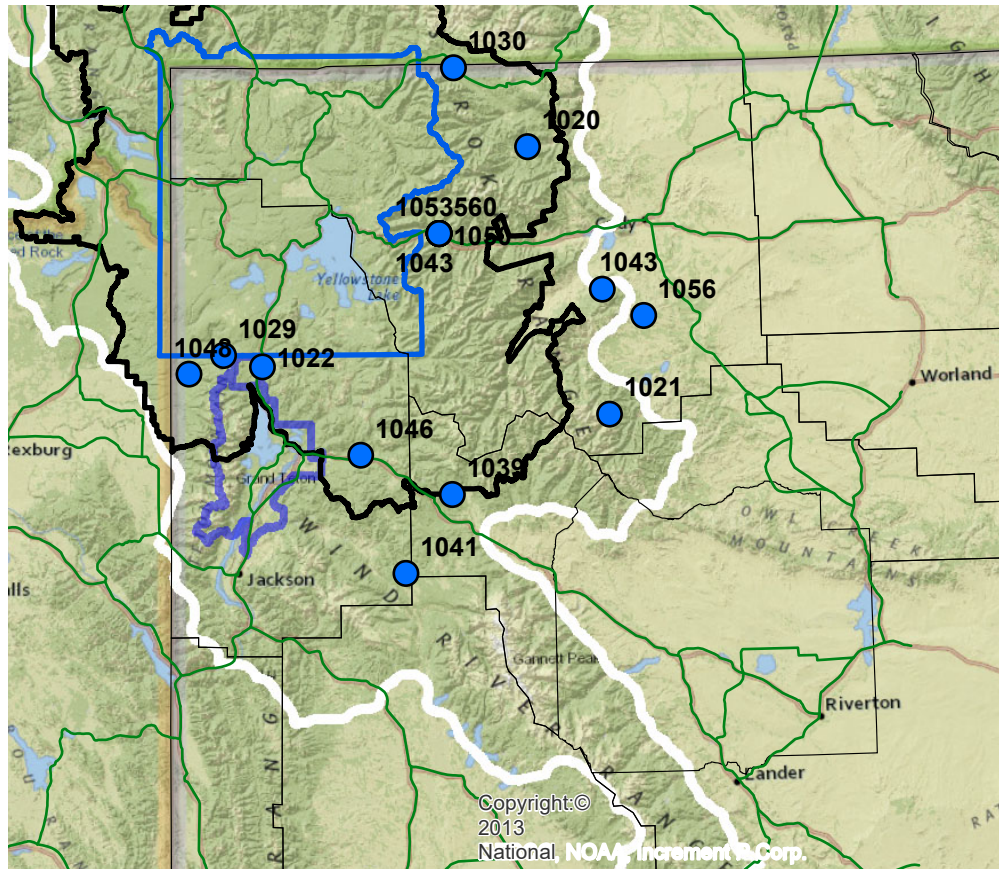
Grizzly bears are removed from the population due to a history of previous conflicts, a known history of close association with humans, or if they are deemed unsuitable for release into the wild (e.g. orphaned cubs, poor physical condition, or human safety concern). Of the 45 grizzly bears captured, 30 bears were removed from the population. Of these 30, 17 (57%) were outside of the Demographic Monitoring Area, which is the area considered suitable for the long term viability of grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Removal of grizzly bears in Wyoming is dependent upon authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after careful and thorough deliberation taking into account multiple factors unique to each conflict situation.

## Notification to the County Sheriff and the Media

Within 5-days of releasing a grizzly bear, the county sheriff was notified by e-mail and a press release was distributed to all local media contacts in the county where the grizzly bear was released. The media release contained: the date of the relocation, the number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation, the reason the grizzly bear was relocated, and additional bear safety and conflict avoidance information.



**Figure 1.** Management capture locations ( $n = 49$ ) for grizzly bears in 2021. Grizzly bears with “G” in front of their number were marked but not fitted with radio collars (typically because they were too young to be collared). Grizzly bears identified with “0” were grizzly bears removed from the population without being given an identification number. Primary Conservation Area/Recovery Zone (PCA) is depicted as defined in the 2016 Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. Demographic Monitoring Area (DMA) is depicted as defined in “Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team. 2012. Updating and Evaluating Approaches to estimate population size and sustainable mortality limits for grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Bozeman, MT, USA. Please note that the mapping software combines some locations at this scale. Therefore, locations/grizzly bear numbers at or very near the same coordinates are not always distinct on the map, but are listed in Table 1.



**Figure 2.** Release locations ( $n = 19$ ) for grizzly bears captured and relocated in conflict management efforts for 2021. Grizzly bears with “G” in front of their number were marked but not fitted with radio collars (typically because they were too young to be collared). The Primary Conservation Area is depicted as defined in the 2016 Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. The Demographic Monitoring Area is depicted as defined in “Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team. 2012. Updating and Evaluating Approaches to estimate population size and sustainable mortality limits for grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Bozeman, MT, USA. Please note that the mapping software combines some locations at this scale. Therefore, locations/grizzly bear numbers at or very near the same coordinates are not always distinct on the map, but are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Capture date, grizzly bear identification number (ID), capture county, relocation site, release county, and reason for capture for all 2021 grizzly bear conflict management captures ( $n = 49$ ) in Wyoming. Grizzly bear ID labeled as “N/A” were grizzly bears removed from the population without being given a chronological capture number.

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
4/6/2021	N/A	PARK			HUMANE REMOVAL- NO CONFLICT. CALLED IN AS A SICK BEAR HANGING AROUND A RANCH HOUSING AREA
4/11/2021	1020	PARK	SUNLIGHT CREEK	PARK	NON-TARGET CAPTURE AT THE SITE OF A CATTLE DEPREDATION
4/26/2021	1021	PARK	JOJO CREEK	PARK	NON-TARGET CAPTURE NEAR AREA OF CATTLE DEPREDATION
5/5/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
5/5/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
5/7/2021	1022	TETON	SHEFFIELD CREEK	TETON	CAPTURED AND RELOCATED AFTER THREE ATTEMPTS TO HAZE FROM RESIDENTIAL AREAS, DISPLAYING HABITUATED BEHAVIOR AND RECEIVING FOOD REWARDS
5/22/2021	1022	TETON			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND RECEIVING FOOD REWARDS. BEAR WAS RELOCATED 5/7/21 AND RETURNED 5/21/21
6/5/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR BOLD BEHAVIOR AROUND GUEST LODGES AND TRAILHEADS , INCLUDING FOLLOWING HORSEBACK RIDERS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS
6/15/2021	1029	PARK	GRASSY LAKE	TETON	RELOCATED FOR FREQUENTING A GUEST LODGE AND EATING HAY IN THE FEED BUNKS WITH HORSES
6/21/2021	1030	PARK	FOX CREEK	PARK	RELOCATED FOR FREQUENTING DEVELOPED SITE AND CHASING A DOG THROUGH A GROUP OF PEOPLE
7/10/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/11/2021	1039	SUBLETTE	LONG CREEK	FREMONT	NON-TARGET CAPTURE WHILE TRYING TO MITIGATE CATTLE DEPREDATION

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
7/13/2021	1040	SUBLETTE	FIVEMILE CREEK	PARK	CAPTURED AND RELOCATED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/17/2021	1041	SUBLETTE	BUFFALO MEADOW	SUBLETTE	NON-TARGET CAPTURE WHILE TRYING TO MITIGATE CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/21/2021	G272	PARK	BAILEY CREEK	TETON	NON-TARGET CAPTURE WHILE TRYING TO MITIGATE CATTLE DEPREDATION. RELOCATED WITH MOTHER (886)
7/21/2021	886	PARK	BAILEY CREEK	TETON	NON-TARGET CAPTURE WHILE TRYING TO MITIGATE CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/23/2021	1043	FREMONT	FIVEMILE CR	PARK	CAPTURED AND RELOCATED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/25/2021	N/A	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR MULTIPLE CATTLE DEPREDATIONS ON PRIVATE LAND. KILLED 6 YEARLING CATTLE IN 14 DAYS
7/28/2021	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING AGRICULTURAL AREAS INCLUDING A CORN FIELD AND A CATTLE FEEDLOT
7/28/2021	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING AGRICULTURAL AREAS INCLUDING A CORN FIELD AND CATTLE FEEDLOT
7/30/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR MULTIPLE CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
7/31/2021	1046	SUBLETTE	BUFFALO FORK	TETON	NON-TARGET CAPTURE WHILE TRYING TO MITIGATE CATTLE DEPREDATION, RELOCATED BECAUSE NEAR HOUSE/PROPERTY
8/2/2021	946	TETON			REMOVED FOR BREAKING INTO STRUCTURES AND OBTAINING FOOD REWARDS (GRAIN, GARBAGE). PREVIOUSLY CAPTURED/RELOCATED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/6/2021	898	FREMONT			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATIONS, AT LEAST SIX CALVES IN 11 DAYS
8/7/2021	1048	TETON	BOONE CREEK	TETON	RELOCATED FOR OBTAINING UNSECURED GRAIN FOR SEVERAL NIGHTS AT RANCH
8/8/2021	N/A	HOT SPRINGS			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR MULTIPLE SHEEP DEPREDATIONS
8/11/2021	N/A	HOT SPRINGS			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR SHEEP DEPREDATIONS

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
8/15/2021	1050	HOT SPRINGS	FIVEMILE CREEK	PARK	RELOCATED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/16/2021	890	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/20/2021	N/A	FREMONT			REMOVED FOR SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY DAMAGE AND FOOD REWARDS. REMOVED WITH SIBLING MALE
8/20/2021	N/A	FREMONT			REMOVED WITH MALE SIBLING FOR NUMEROUS, REPEATED FOOD REWARDS AND PROPERTY DAMAGE
8/21/2021	G269	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/24/2021	951	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/25/2021	1041	SUBLETTE	FIVEMILE CREEK	PARK	RELOCATED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/26/2021	560	FREMONT	FIVEMILE CREEK	PARK	RELOCATED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/28/2021	1048	TETON			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CONFLICTS INVOLVING PROPERTY DAMAGE, LIVESTOCK FEED AND GARBAGE. PREVIOUSLY RELOCATED FOR ACCESSING LIVESTOCK FEED
9/1/2021	N/A	HOT SPRINGS			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
9/4/2021	974	HOT SPRINGS			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR SHEEP DEPREDATIONS
9/11/2021	1053	SUBLETTE	FIVEMILE CREEK	PARK	CAPTURED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION, RELOCATED
9/15/2021	N/A	PARK			FREQUENTING HOUSING AREAS, FEEDING IN PUMPKIN PATCH, ALSO CLOSE TO CATTLE FEEDYARD. BEAR REMOVED
9/21/2021	1028	TETON			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CONFLICTS INVOLVING PROPERTY DAMAGE, LIVESTOCK FEED AND GARBAGE. PREVIOUSLY CAPTURED AND RELOCATED BY GTNP FOR OBTAINING HUMAN FOOD AT CAMPSITE



Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
9/27/2021	N/A	FREMONT			CAPTURED NEAR TRAILHEAD, NUMEROUS CONFLICTS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAKING INTO TRAILERS, TRUCKS VISITING CAMPS, ATTEMPTED ENTRY INTO OCCUPIED TENT. REMOVED FOR HUMAN SAFETY AND MULTIPLE FOOD REWARDS
10/1/2021	1017	TETON			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR REPEATED CONFLICTS INVOLVING GARBAGE, COMPOST AND LIVESTOCK FEED AND DAMAGE. PREVIOUSLY CAPTURED AND RELOCATED FOR HABITUATED BEHAVIOR IN CAMPGROUND
10/10/2021	1055	PARK	CARTER MOUNTAIN	PARK	NON-TARGET CAPTURE WHILE TRAPPING FOR 1043
10/10/2021	1043	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND OBTAINING FOOD REWARDS OF LIVESTOCK FEED
10/18/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING DEVELOPED AREAS NEAR AND IN THE TOWN OF CODY, POOR CONDITION, AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR TOWARDS PEOPLE RAFTING THE RIVER
10/22/2021	991	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR BREAKING INTO A BARN THROUGH THE WALL
10/26/2021	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATIONS. THIS BEAR HAD TWO YEARLINGS. ONE YEARLING (1056) CAPTURED AND RELEASED ONE SITE
10/26/2021	1056	PARK	MEETEETSE CREEK	PARK	CAPTURED WITH MOTHER FOR CATTLE DEPREDATIONS. RELEASED ON SITE

**Appendix I. Wyoming Game and Fish Commission's Notification of Grizzly Bear Relocation Regulation**

WYOMING GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

CHAPTER 58

NOTIFICATION OF GRIZZLY BEAR RELOCATION REGULATION

Section 1. Authority. This regulation is promulgated by authority of W.S. §23-1-1001.

Section 2. Definitions. Definitions shall be as set forth in Title 23, Wyoming Statutes, Commission regulations, and the Commission also adopts the following definitions:


(a) "County Sheriff" means the County Sheriff's Office in the county where a grizzly bear is relocated.

(b) "Location of the grizzly bear relocation" means the proper name of the drainage in which a grizzly bear is relocated and the estimated number of miles from the relocation site to the nearest municipality, topographical feature or geographic location.

(c) "Provide a press release" means the Department shall provide to the County Sheriff and the media in the county in which a grizzly bear is relocated, a press release including the location of the grizzly bear relocation, number of grizzly bears relocated, date of the relocation and the reason the grizzly bear was relocated.

Section 3. Notification of relocation. Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the Department shall notify the County Sheriff of the date, number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation and the reason of the relocation via direct telephone conversation, written or electronic correspondence, or personal contact within five (5) days of the date of the relocation. The Department shall provide a press release to the County Sheriff and the media in the county where a grizzly bear is relocated of the date, number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation and the reason of the relocation within five (5) days of the date of relocation of any grizzly bear.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

By:   
Mike Healy, President

Dated: January 22, 2014