



Black Bear

Management in Maine



2000 Black Bear Plan



Goal: Provide hunting, trapping & viewing opportunity

Objectives

- Stabilize population by 2005 at no less than current levels through annual hunting and trapping harvest.

Create I&E by 2002 targeting specific audience promoting:

- Traditional hunting and trapping methods
- Public tolerance of bears

Population Objective



Stabilize population by 2005
at no less than current levels
through annual harvest

Measuring ability to meet objective



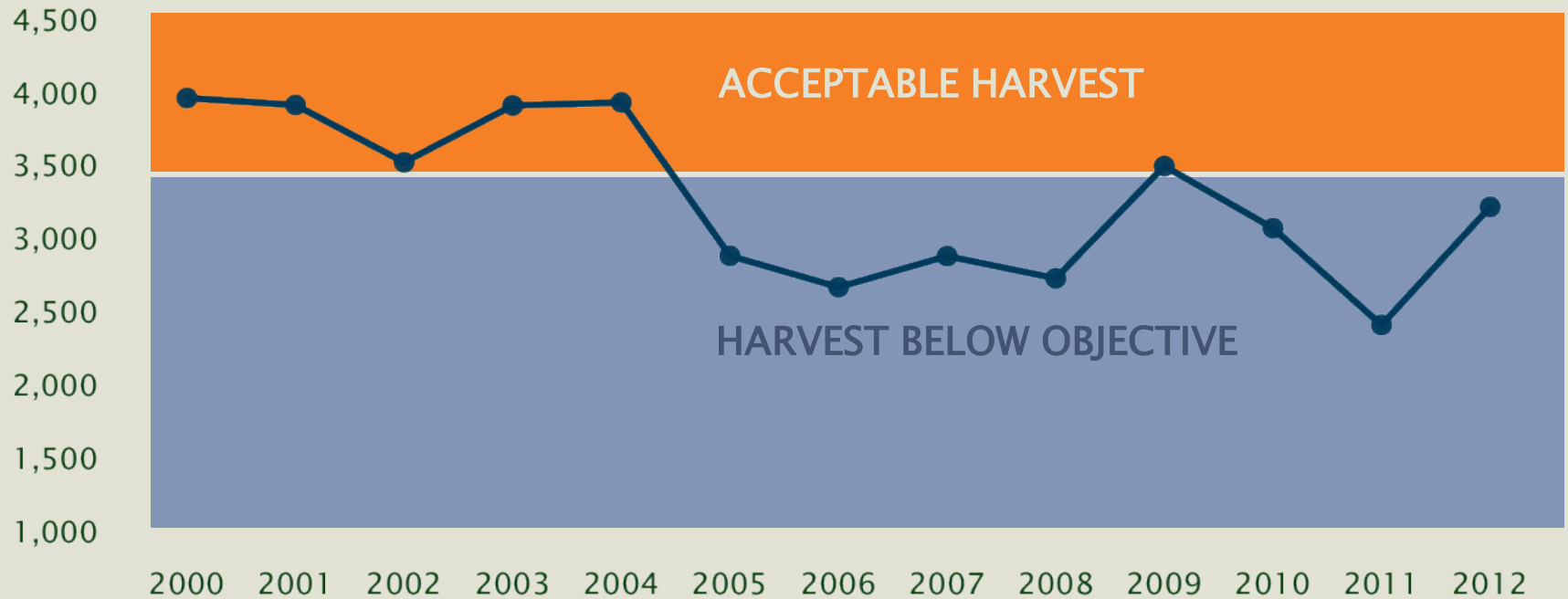
Harvest

- McLaughlin 1998
 - 15% harvest rate is sustainable
 - Harvest of 3,500–4,000 bears annually

Bear Management Goals



Population Goal: 23,000 bears



What does a declining harvest mean?



Possible explanations

- Not sufficient to stabilize growth = pop ↑

OR

- Population declining ?

Available data



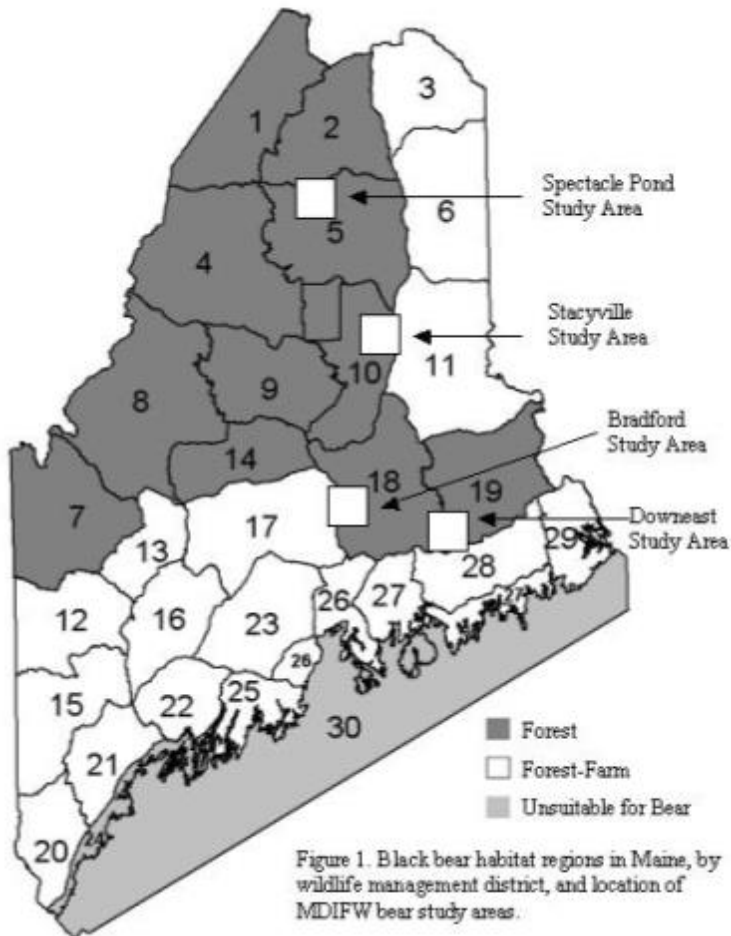
- Harvest
- Hunter Numbers
- Success rates = $\frac{\text{Harvest}}{\text{Hunters}}$

Period	Goal	# Harvest	# Hunters	Success
1999-2005	Meeting	3,650	12,650	29%
2006-2014	Below	2,850	9,700	30%

Maine Black Bear Study 1975 to present



- Survival and productivity



Monitoring indicates an increasing pop



Since 2005, we have seen

- Increased recruitment – more cubs surviving to independence
- Slightly higher productivity (loss of synchrony)
- Healthier yearlings

Maine's forest has changed providing more natural foods for Black Bears



1980s

TODAY

**SPRUCE
BUDWORM
OUTBREAK**



**MATURE
SPRUCE/FIR**

**INCREASE OF
HARDWOODS &
SHRUBS PRODUCING
BERRIES & NUTS**

**GREATER
ABUNDANCE &
DIVERSITY OF
BEAR FOODS**

The population is growing in response to improved habitat and low hunter harvests



Modify Harvest to Meet Objectives



1989

Bear population
declined to
18,000



1990

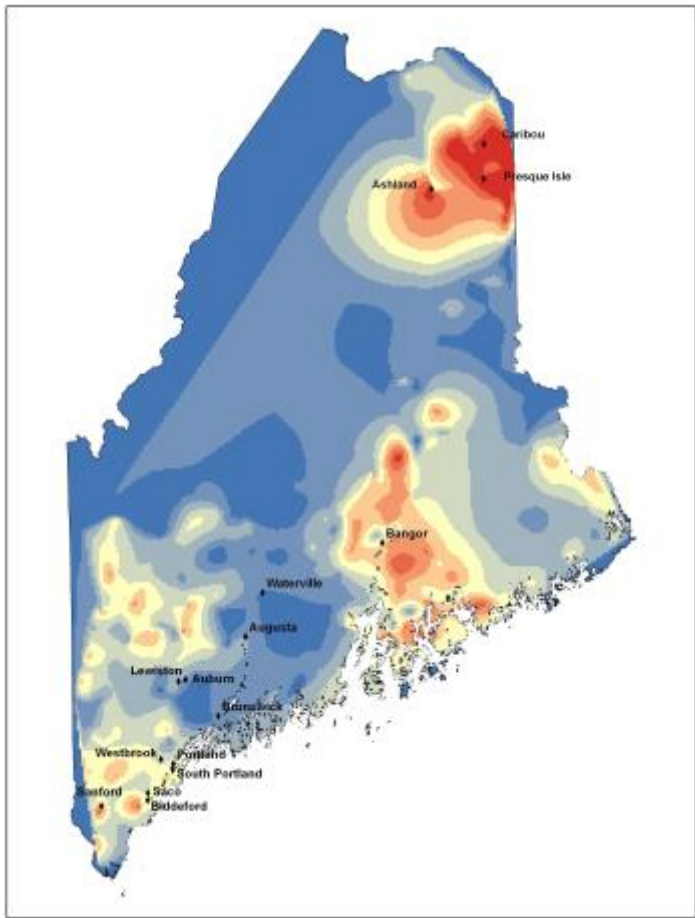
IFW shortened
the bear hunting
season to
reduce the
harvest

1997

Population
recovered

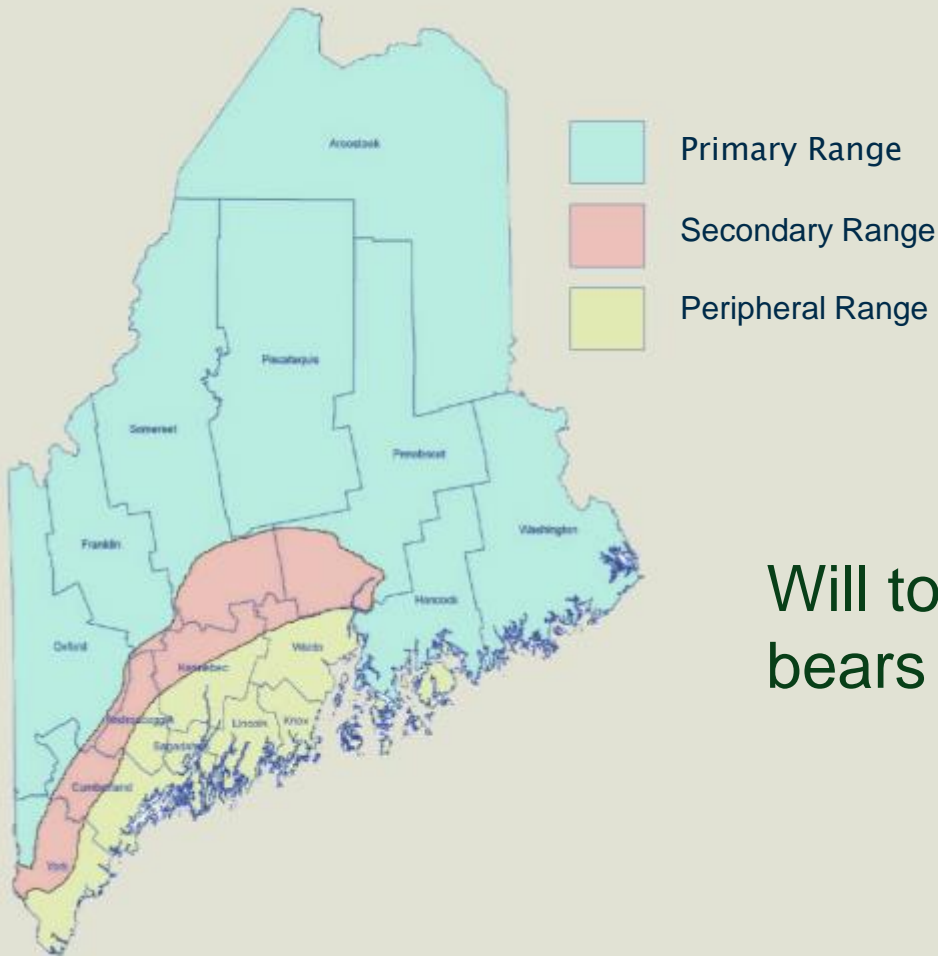
Seasons
extended

Not Meeting Objectives



- Increased bag limit – 2011
 - 1 bear by hunt
 - 1 bear by trap
- Public Tolerance High
 - Hunter Satisfaction
 - Few Conflicts

Bears more common in rural areas



Will tolerance change with more bears in urban areas?

At a crossroad



- Do we:
 1. Stabilize growth at current levels
 2. Return to 1999 levels
 3. Allow population to continue to increase

What are the consequences?

BIG GAME PLANNING PROCESS

Objective 3: I&E promoting increased tolerance of black bears



Currently relatively few conflicts in Maine



- 500 complaints annually
 - Varies with berry/nut crops
- Most are at birdfeeders, garbage
- Home entries & bear attacks currently uncommon
- Expect conflicts to rise with an increase in the bear populations



Objective 3: I&E promoting increased tolerance of black bears



- Brochures
- Website
- Social Media
- Press Releases

Objective 3: I&E promoting increased tolerance of black bears



- Brochures





- Wildlife Conservation
- Species Information
- Endangered and Threatened Wildlife
- Wildlife-Human Issues
 - Living with Wildlife
 - Wildlife Rehabilitation
 - Wildlife Diseases
 - Oil Spills
 - Wildlife in Captivity
- Environmental Review
- Lands
- Reports & Publications
- Support Wildlife

Living with Black Bears

Maine is home to the largest population of black bears in the lower 48 states. Our bears are most active between April 1 and November 1.

When natural foods are scarce, especially in the spring or dry summers, bears will venture into backyards and fields in search of easily accessible food such as bird feeders, garbage, grills and pet foods.

While hundreds of conflicts between bears and people are reported each year in Maine, many can be prevented by simply removing or securing common bear attractants. Removing these food sources will also limit other backyard visitors (raccoons, skunks, etc.).

Avoiding bear conflicts and protecting your property from damage

AVOIDING BLACK BEAR CONFLICTS

While hundreds of bear conflicts are reported each year, many can be prevented by simply removing or securing common bear attractants each spring.

1 REMOVE & STORE INSIDE BETWEEN APRIL 1 AND NOVEMBER 1

2 SECURE & CLEAN

BIRD SEED



- Take bird feeders down
- Store seed and feeders indoors (you can still feed birds in the winter)

- Rake up bird seed from the ground

GARBAGE



- Store garbage cans in a building or enclosed by electric fence
- Take to curb on morning of pick-up

- Keep outbuilding and garage doors closed at all times
- Dumpster lids and doors should be kept closed and latched
- Use bear-resistant dumpsters or garbage cans

GRILLS



- Store grill inside when not in use
- If you are having bear conflicts, stop grilling until bear move on

- Burn off food residue
- Dispose of food wrappers and grease cups

LIVESTOCK & PET FOOD



- Store livestock and pet food inside
- Feed pets inside

- If you feed your pets or livestock outside
- Clean dishes daily
- Remove leftover food daily



If you have an issue with a bear and need assistance, contact the Wildlife Service dispatch center closest to you:

- Augusta 1800-485-6664
- Dover-Foxcroft 1800-452-3527
- Gray 1800-282-9837
- Houlton 1800-324-2361
- Bangor 1800-452-3561



A bear was sighted several times on walking trails in Bucksport.

To Avoid Bears:

- Hike in Groups
- Always Stay Together
- Keeps Dogs at Home or Leashed
- Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Report Aggressive Bears by Calling 911



mefishwildlife.com

A bear was sighted several times on walking trails in Bucksport.

If You Encounter A Bear:

- Don't Approach The Bear
- Back Away and Leave the Area

Report Aggressive Bears by Calling 911



mefishwildlife.com

A bear was sighted several times on walking trails in Bucksport.

If a Bear Approaches or Follows You:

- Wave Your Arms
- Back Away Shouting "Hey Bear"
- Always Stay Together

Report Aggressive Bears by Calling 911



mefishwildlife.com

A bear was sighted several times on walking trails in Bucksport.

If a Bear Charges You:

- Stand Your Ground
- Stay Calm

If a Bear Attacks You:

- Fight Back

Report Aggressive Bears by Calling 911



mefishwildlife.com

Objective 2: I&E promoting traditional hunting and trapping by 2002



- Two ballot measures to limit hunting methods

Objective 2: I&E promoting traditional hunting and trapping by 2002



- Social Media – Facebook, twitter,
- YouTube videos
- Handouts – fact sheet, faq
- Public Speaking Engagements & Debates
- TV, Radio, Newspaper
- Press Releases
- Website

Objective 2: I&E promoting traditional hunting and trapping by 2002



Still-hunting alone will not control Maine's black bear population.



STILL-HUNTING
7% OF CURRENT HARVEST
3% SUCCESS RATE



IFW Biologists and Game Wardens are opposed to the 2014 Bear Referendum

ON AVERAGE, WITH BAITING, HUNTING WITH DOGS, AND TRAPPING:

ONLY 1 IN 4 HUNTERS IS SUCCESSFUL



HUNTERS SPEND 15 DAYS TO HARVEST ONE BEAR



IFW Biologists and Game Wardens are opposed to the 2014 Bear Referendum

Objective 2: I&E promoting traditional hunting and trapping by 2002



IFW Biologists and Game Wardens are opposed to the 2014 Bear Referendum



Maine is the most heavily wooded state in the nation making still-hunting an ineffective management tool



STILL-HUNTING

7%	3%
OF CURRENT HARVEST	SUCCESS RATE



IFW Biologists and Game Wardens are opposed to the 2014 Bear Referendum

Objective 2: I&E promoting traditional hunting and trapping by 2002



- Two ballot measures to limit hunting methods
 - Does the public understand hunting methods in Maine
 - Surveys

Issues to address in new plan



- Benefits/Impacts of Increasing Population
 - Other wildlife
 - Agriculture/livestock
 - Public
 - Hunters
 - Department
- Support of hunting & hunting methods
- Options to meet goals
- Outreach & Education Needs



Questions?

