



## Newsletter

Featuring updates on grizzly bear conservation activities  
and the latest *Grizzly Times* Blog  
from Louisa Willcox, Executive Director of *Grizzly Times*.

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Greetings Friends of Grizzly Bears,

Here is my latest blog: *Obesity in Bears: Vital and Beautiful*...Phil Juliano had fun with the cartoon.  
<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2017/11/16/Obesity-In-Bears-Vital-and-Beautiful>

The dead bear count in Yellowstone is mounting, and limits on grizzly bear mortality have almost certainly been breached this year – although we won't know until IGBST releases the data on the tally of females with cubs, which is used to estimate the total population and establish allowable mortality limits. This data is usually released at the Yellowstone subcommittee meetings, which will be on Nov. 30 at Chico.

Below is a graph that David just did that shows trends in mortality in the past few years. (He needs to update it to reflect the last 4 bears that were killed and posted by IGBST yesterday, but you get the idea.)

To make sense of the mortality problem, I just wrote this for a newspaper which hopefully will be published on Sunday. Thought you might find it helpful:

*"In Yellowstone, as elsewhere in the lower-48 states, government scientists have found that most grizzly bears die from human causes. This year is no exception. Only 3 of the 51 recorded grizzly bear deaths may be from natural causes.*

*And the rate of killing is shocking -- one bear roughly every 2 days since hunting season began in October. Never have so many bear deaths been investigated for possible foul play in one year -- 26 bears and counting, more than half of all known deaths.*

*Applying an official estimator that accounts for unknown mortality, about 77 bears are dead, or more than 11% of the Yellowstone grizzly bear population of roughly 690 grizzlies occupying the Demographic Monitoring Area (DMA), the core of grizzly habitat.*

*Government officials have shrugged off the problem, claiming that population estimates are biased low, while failing to admit that, by their own reckoning, bear mortalities are also underestimated.*

*This year's deaths call into question the wisdom of delisting and legalizing a bear trophy hunt. In fact, managers in the states of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming seem to be acting as if it is already open season on grizzly bears. Indeed, if just three more grizzlies are killed inside the DMA, this year will surpass the record number of bear deaths that occurred during 2015. That year, grizzly bear deaths by all causes were far higher than any year since 1959, when data on mortalities started to be compiled...*

*The government's own data puts the lie to claims by state managers that Yellowstone's grizzly bear population can absorb the high levels of mortality that we've seen during recent years. The population is no longer growing, and more likely has been declining since at least 2007, and more precipitously since 2015. This trend has been driven by drought and the loss of two formerly important native grizzly bear foods - cutthroat trout and whitebark pine..."*

On the topic of grizzly bear mortality, the Don't Delistors just posted an online petition to get the Forest Service and state game agencies to require hunters to use bear spray, and receive training in how to avoid conflicts. Makes a lot of sense...And, this has been an ask, on and off, over many years – maybe its time has come. They say they are having issues with the share button, and this: "please share BEFORE signing. Seems easier to find the share buttons that way."

<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/233/778/725/>

In other news, conservation groups are suing Agricultural Research Service to prevent the Sheep Experiment Station from grazing sheep in the high-elevation pastures of the Centennials, the best corridor that could link Yellowstone to the vast habitat in the Selway Bitterroot Ecosystem. Notably, privately owned sheep have been eliminated from the Primary Conservation Area through an assiduous effort to retire allotments – but the Sheep Experiment Station, run by the government, but supported by the industry, has resisted all efforts to make them graze elsewhere. Hence another round of litigation:

[https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/groups-sue-sheep-experiment-station-to-prevent-grazing-on-centennial/article\\_1f1cc226-461d-5902-aa00-ff4bb23cbb98.html](https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/groups-sue-sheep-experiment-station-to-prevent-grazing-on-centennial/article_1f1cc226-461d-5902-aa00-ff4bb23cbb98.html)

And, the Daily Interlake ran a front page story on USGS' berry research in the NCDE, and the possibility that FWS could move on delisting there next year. Good quotes from Andrea at CBD on the problems with delisting:

[http://www.dailyinterlake.com/front\\_page\\_slider/20171111/if\\_threatened\\_status\\_goes\\_do\\_grizzlies\\_gain](http://www.dailyinterlake.com/front_page_slider/20171111/if_threatened_status_goes_do_grizzlies_gain)

And finally, Huffington Post did an interesting story on the stuffed animals, including a grizzly bear, in Interior Sec. Zinke's office, and his efforts to get a bigger flag for DOI...I mean, this is the kind of stuff that the Sec. spends time on?

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/interior-department-ryan-zinke-flags-stuffed-animals\\_us\\_5a0369d7e4b0937b510f5554](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/interior-department-ryan-zinke-flags-stuffed-animals_us_5a0369d7e4b0937b510f5554)

Zinke also tweeted that he wants a name for his stuffed grizzly – what will be next...

<https://twitter.com/SecretaryZinke/status/844671529963175936/photo/1>

For the bears,

*Louisa*

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GRAPH: Trends in Grizzly Bear Mortality, 2013-2017 (partial)

