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Black Bear Problems and Strategies, 2001

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BLACK BEAR PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

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Problem 1: The proposed population management goal of stabilizing bear population size requires accurate monitoring of bear numbers statewide. Currently, the Department only monitors bear numbers on a few small areas that are believed to be representative of large geographic regions. This assumption creates the potential for large management errors. Additional, broad-scale monitoring methods are needed to assess management actions.

Strategy 1.1: Develop methods to monitor the bear population on a statewide basis.

Strategy 1.2: Incorporate statewide monitoring into annual assessment of bear population status.

Problem 2: Lack of knowledge on the forest management practices needed to retain adequate nut-producing beech trees on the landscape, in order to maintain bear habitat quality.

Strategy 2.1: Assess the characteristics of beechnut-producing hardwood stands associated with bear use in the fall and early spring, and the forest management practices that created them.

Strategy 2.2: Conduct research to increase understanding of the relationships between the quantity and distribution of stands containing mature beech trees and the productivity of bears.

Strategy 2.3: Cooperate with forest industry to implement research to develop forest practices to regenerate nut-producing beech trees.

Strategy 2.4: Develop policies that will encourage forest landowners to maintain nut-bearing beech trees on the landscape.

Problem 3: Lack of public acceptance of bear hunting and trapping as valid recreational activities and important components of bear management programs.

Strategy 3.1: Develop public outreach programs to explain the practices of hunting and trapping bears (particularly hunting over bait and with hounds), and discuss hunting and trapping in the context of bear management.

Problem 4: Concern about the affects of bear predation on deer and moose population dynamics in portions of Maine.

Strategy 4.1: Conduct research to assess the affects of bear predation on deer and moose.

Strategy 4.2: If and where appropriate, implement bear management practices to minimize conflicts between bear population goals and deer and moose management goals.

Problem 5: Monitoring of bear/human interactions, particularly conflicts, is inadequate, and bear/human conflict resolution is not incorporated into the bear management system.

Strategy 5.1: Conduct research to quantify and describe interactions, and develop/identify the best management practices to minimize conflicts.

Strategy 5.2: Develop a program to monitor bear conflicts, and develop criteria for incorporating conflict resolution into the bear management system to ensure that bear conflicts will remain within tolerable levels.

Strategy 5.3: Develop public outreach programs to increase understanding of bear-human interactions and reduce conflicts.

Problem 6: Lack of funding and staffing to address research (data gathering) and management needs.

Strategy 6.1: Actively seek support for sufficient additional staff and financial resources to address research (data gathering) and management needs. Reallocating existing staff and financial resources is not feasible, as it would prevent achieving management goals and objectives for other species.