

2015 Summer Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Mountains Grizzly Bear Ecosystems Update

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<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/grizzly/cabinetarchive.html>

Cabinet Mountains

In early June our telemetry flights indicated a collar on mortality for augmentation grizzly bear 921 in the West Cabinet Mountains. A check of the site located a dead grizzly bear that was largely decomposed. The bear was a 3 year-old female. Examination of the remains detected several large puncture wounds in the top of the skull suggesting predation as the cause of death. The predator involved is not known. It is also possible the puncture wounds occurred after the animal was dead and was being fed upon. The remote location of the bear in the North fork of Ross Creek and other factors at the site cause us to believe the death was not human related.

Monitoring is continuing on the remaining collared augmentation bear. She has spent most of the spring and early summer in the central portion of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, but recent movements have taken her as far north as Cedar Creek.

A male grizzly bear was captured in the Cabinet Mountains in late June. The bear was about 3 year-old and weighed 175 pounds (pictures of grizzly bear 839 follow). The animal was collared and has moved as far south as Rock Creek and the West Fisher Creek.

Trapping has occurred in the South fork of the Flathead River for another augmentation bear but was halted during some of the recent hot weather. Trapping will commence again when conditions are more favorable.

Yaak River

A young female grizzly was captured in late May in Burnt Creek of the Yaak River drainage. That bear was collared and has been monitored in the same general area. She was 5 years old and weighed 230 pounds. She had been previously captured and monitored as a 1-3 year old before losing her radio collar.

We are monitoring 7 other grizzly bears in the Yaak River (4 males and 3 females) though one of the young males lost the radio collar during June and it was retrieved. The backup cotton spacer in the collar had rotted out and the collar was dropped.

Selkirk Mountains

Trapping in the US and in BC yielded 4 additional grizzly bears for collaring. One of those was a young male captured just north of Upper Priest Lake in Idaho. The bear was about 5 years-old and weighed 215 pounds (pictures of grizzly bear 1001 follow). The other 3 bears were all females captured north of Highway 3 in the British Columbia Selkirk Mountains. One was already radio collared and the collar was replaced. We are currently monitoring 6 bears in the US and 12 bears in British Columbia.

Human Caused Mortality

A young male grizzly bear was killed at the Yaak Falls Campground in late May. The incident is under investigation by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hair Snagging for Genetic Analysis

Previously established rub trees in the Cabinet-Yaak are being checked on a monthly basis and hair is collected for later analysis. Hair snag corrals with remote cameras are also being placed in both recovery areas. Corrals are left for 3-4 weeks before hair collection and removal. Several pictures of grizzly bears follow in this report.

2015 Plans

We expect to continue our efforts with two trap teams in the Cabinet-Yaak and one team in the Selkirk Mountains during July and August as weather and fire conditions allow. Trapping in the Cabinet-Yaak is expected in the Yaak River during May through September and in the Cabinet Mountains during June and July. Trapping in the Selkirks did occur in Washington largely on the Sullivan Lake Ranger District during May and shifted east into Idaho during June. Selkirk trapping will continue around the Priest Lake Basin and north near the international border during July and August. Signs will be posted in areas where trapping is occurring to alert the public to this activity. Personnel will be checking rubs and establishing corral and camera sites in each recovery area to collect hair for genetic analysis.



Figure 1. Male grizzly bear 1001 in the Selkirk Mountains on 6/20/15 with field biologist Alex Welander. The bear was about 5 years old and weighed 215 pounds.



Figure 2. Male grizzly bear 1001 leaving the trap site in the Selkirk Mountains.



Figure 3. Male grizzly bear 839 in the Cabinet Mountains 6/19/15.



Figure 4. Selkirk Mountains trail camera photo of grizzly bear 226 with yearling.



Figure 5. Selkirk Mountains trail camera photo of an unmarked female grizzly bear with 3 yearlings.