

2017 Rocky Mountain Front Grizzly Bear Conflict Management Summary

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Region Four

The RMF grizzly bear management program implemented in 1988 with a primary goal to reduce conflicts between bears and people living and recreating on the Front.

In 2017, R4 bear management personnel responded to a record 81 bear incident and observation calls and *confirmed* a total of 46 grizzly bear conflicts.

2017 RMF Grizzly Bear Conflict Summary

As December 2017, a total of 46 *confirmed* grizzly bear-conflicts with people, property, or livestock:

- 21 *Livestock Depredation Incidents* (2 cattle, 31 calves, 6 sheep,
- 5 goats) = monetary losses reported by livestock operators for compensation program (\$90,795)
- 9 *Residential Incidents* (bears in proximity of homes or ranch buildings)
- 6 *Property Damage Incidents*
- 3 *Encounters* (2 hunting related, resulting in 4 bear mortalities)
- 1 *Beehive Damage Incidents*
- 4 *Crop Foraging Incidents* (grain and apple trees)
- 2 *Other*

In 2017, a total of 8 grizzly bears were captured, marked, relocated or removed from the RMF-NCDE, during management control actions by USDA Wildlife Services and MFWP.

- 5 subadult male grizzly bears (refer to Table 1, page 2, for specific bear capture information)
- 1 adult male
- 1 adult female grizzly with 3 cubs
- 1 subadult female



Capture Date	Bear No.	ID Name	Microchip Number	Sex	Age (yrs)	Wt (lbs)	Zool. Length (in)	% Body Fat	Collar Freq.	Capture Type	Conflict Type	Drainage Location	Relocation or Removal
5/8/2017	666	Boone	041*512*378	M	e 3.5	357	72	24.8	165.142	mgmt/trap	cattle depredation	Dupuyer Cr	GNP Anaconda Cr.
5/17/2017	667	TeeBee	041*554*381	F	e 2.5	203	58.7	5.8	165.791	mgmt/snare	calf depredation	Elk Cr.	Skyland Cr., Flathead NF
6/25/2017	n/a	Surprise 1	none	M	e 2.5	296	69	13.3	none	mgmt/snare	calf depredation	5 mi west of Stanford	mgmt removal
6/25/2017	n/a	Surprise 2	none	M	e 2.5	285	68.7	15.3	none	mgmt/helicopter immobil	calf depredation	5 mi west of Stanford	mgmt removal
8/4/2017	668	Quigley	039*036*887	M	1.5	51	58.3	20.2	165.360	mgmt/snare	goat depredation	Deep Cr.	Puzzle Cr., Flathead NF
9/30/2017	669	Salan	039*068*585	M	e 8.5	575	77	37.2	none	mgmt/snare	calf depredation	S. Fk. Dupuyer Cr	mgmt removal
10/3/2017	670	Lotsa	039*081*555	M	e 2.5	399	72	30.8	165.370	mgmt/trap	residential	Choteau, Teton River	Pike Cr Road L&C NF
10/18/2017	671	Triplet	039*086*301	F	e 8.5	359	69.8	35.6	165.222	mgmt/snare	incidental capture	Dupuyer Cr.	On-site release Dupuyer Cr.
10/24/2017 Recapture	666	Boone	041*512*378	M	e 3.5	538	76.3	39.5	none	mgmt/snare	calf depredation	N. Fk. Sheep Cr.	mgmt removal

Table 1. Grizzly bears captured and marked in 2017 in the R4 Rocky Mountain Front Grizzly Bear Management Area.

2017 RMF Grizzly Bear Mortality

A record high of 12 recorded grizzly bear deaths:

- 5 self-defense shootings
- 4 bear mgmt removals
- 1 illegal shooting
- 1 train-collision
- 1 natural drowning
- (9 of the grizzly bear deaths occurred in the RMF East-Prairie Mgmt Unit)



2017 RMF Bear Conflict Prevention Management

- Completed and cost-share into 4 additional permanent high-tensile electric fence projects with livestock operators and farms; installation of 8 temporary electric fences to deter bear access to domestic goat bedding grounds, grain bins, fruit trees, and poultry pens.



- RMF grizzly bear conflict prevention projects in 2017 involved fund-raising over \$15,000 from federal and state agencies and conservation groups, (Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, USFWS, and MFWP).
- In addition, the RMF-R4 grizzly bear management program cost-shared approximately \$4500 in materials, mileage, and man-hours towards grizzly bear conflict prevention projects in 2017 on ranches, colony farms, and for home-owners.
- 95 gall bear refuse bins were provided to 6 rural home owners.
- 30 cracker shells were provided to ranchers.
- 8 sound deterrent critter-gitters were installed on fruit trees and decks.
- 52 cans of bear spray with holsters were handed out to ranch and farm owners.
- Numerous bear aware signs were posted at public use and recreational sites.
- In 2017 a total of 22 *livestock carcasses* were removed from bear conflict sites and redistributed on the RMF.



- The MFWP grizzly bear management team cooperatively worked with and informed ranchers, sheep operators, beekeepers, and rural landowners on methods to minimize or prevent grizzly bear conflicts with small livestock, bears accessing unnatural food resources, and causing property damage.
- MFWP conducted over 645 landowner/homeowner contacts along the RMF. Disseminated information on grizzly bear activity and conflict avoidance through numerous newspaper releases, magazine articles, television and radio news programs, and presentations to communities and school groups, reaching thousands of resident listeners, hunters, anglers, and other outdoor recreationists.

- The R4-MFWP bear management team designed and implemented the second RMF community area bear aware neighbor network phone tree in the greater Choteau area in May 2017, following local public input and the positive support of the Greater Valier area network.

Know what to do if there's a bear in your yard.

Report all bear sightings and incidents on your property to your local area coordinator or MFWP.

If you feel comfortable and are near your front door or in a vehicle, make loud noises, bang pots and pans, honk your horn. Air horns can work. The more stressful a bear's experience near human areas is, the less likely it is to come back.

If you encounter a bear in your yard, do not run. Back away slowly toward your house or vehicle. If the bear doesn't see you, do not make any noise or get the bears attention until you are safe by a vehicle or your house door. If the bear see's you, do not run, back away slowly, don't make direct eye contact. If the bear charges, stand your ground. If a grizzly continues to charge at you, play dead. Lay flat on the ground, face down with your arms behind your neck.

Be prepared for close encounters with bears by carrying bear spray. It works. Keep a canister of spray on your belt and near the front and back doors of your house. Bear spray is proven effective at deterring an aggressive or charging bear. Read the directions and practice drawing the canister and removing the safety clip before you start carrying it. For more information on bear spray or if you are a landowner in need of bear spray, contact FWP bear management.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Bear Management
 Rocky Mountain Front Field Office
 4470 U.S. Hwy 89
 Choteau, MT 59422
 Phone: (406) 466-5100

If you have small livestock such as chickens, pigs, or sheep and are interested in preventive options such as electric fencing, contact our office.

Livestock Carcass Redistribution Program If you have livestock carcasses that need removed and do not have a location to dispose of them at, contact our office for more information on our livestock carcass redistribution program.

Interested in Bear Spray – If you are a landowner living in the greater Choteau area and are interested in bear spray, contact our office.



**BEAR AWARE
 CHOTEAU AREA
 NEIGHBOR
 NETWORK**

Phone Tree



Prepared by: Mike Madel

MFWP Grizzly Bear Management Specialist

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