

Redwood

National and State Parks

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior

Department of Parks and Recreation
State of California

BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT

2012 Annual Report



Photo: Redwood National Park

April 16, 2013

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes black bear management activities that occurred within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP or “parks”) during 2012. The report also summarizes all important bear observations and incidents, bear- related education efforts, funding, known mortalities, and 2013 priorities for black bear management within RNSP.

Redwood National and State Parks is a partnership between Redwood National Park and three California State Parks, (Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park). Though these parks are cooperatively managed under a MOU, each agency maintains management authority for their lands based on their respective regulations, policies, and guidelines.

BEAR OBSERVATIONS AND INCIDENTS

Wildlife Observation Data

There were 115 observations of 133 black bears reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards or bear observation logs during 2012 (see Appendix A), a substantial increase over the previous year when there were 73 observations of 88 black bears reported. Numbers of observations were less than those reported in 2010 (136 observations of 162 bears), but higher than the averages reported in the period from 2004-2009 (average 72.5 ± 12.7 observations of 90.3 ± 12.3 bears). Bear observation numbers have not approached the record high average of 195 reported from 1996 to 2000. All but four observations were from within the parks; the four not within the parks were in close proximity to a park boundary in all cases (see Fig. 3 at the end of the document).

The majority of reported observations were of single bears with 2 bears reported together on occasion. Most of the reports were in June and July (54%) followed by August (Fig. 1). There were no observations in March, April, November, or December.

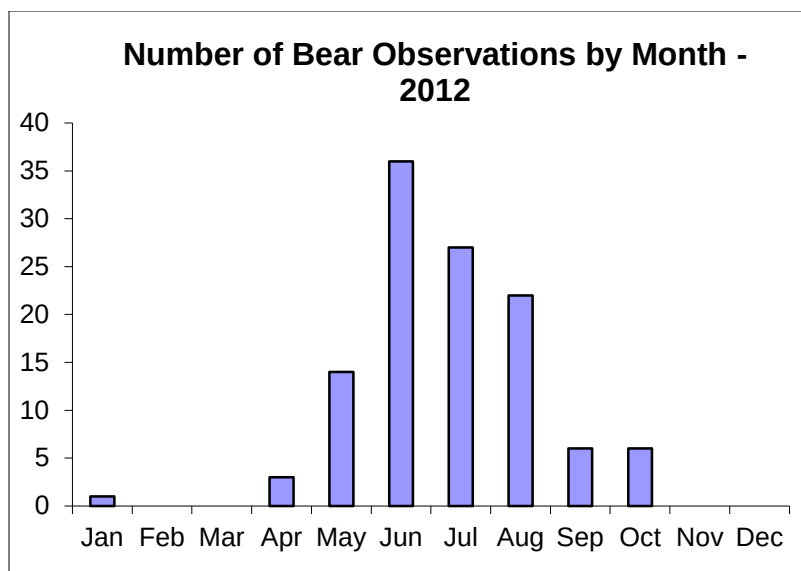


Figure 1. Number of bear observations reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards and by park employees, and month that the observations occurred, during 2012 (total =115).

Seventy-nine percent of the observations were south of the Klamath River. Not surprisingly, most of the reports (63%) were of bears crossing a road, or sitting on the side of a road. It is important to note, that the number of observations does not indicate the number of unique individuals. One young bear was reported on 11 separate occasions over the summer, as it stayed on the side of Bald Hills Road near Lady Bird Johnson Grove. Another bear was reported repeatedly over a number of days near a pond visible from US Highway 101.

There were 18 bear reports from people hiking on trails or along Redwood Creek; staff observed a bear on 3 occasions in the Bald Hills prairies; bears were in Mill Creek and Elk Prairie Campgrounds, and in the Flint Ridge back-country camp. As in previous years, there were one or 2 bears at the Gold Bluffs Beach Residence facility. Bears showed up at the Wolf Creek Fire Cache, old South Operations Center, and North Operations Center. A bear was observed on Gold Bluffs Beach north of the Ossagon back-country camp. And a bear entertained motorists for a number of days when it decided to stay at the ephemeral pond (mentioned above) across the road from Kuchel Visitor Center.

An interesting observation took place at North Operations Center, when an employee observed a bear approach a herd of bull elk. An elk charged at the bear that then fled up a tree. The elk proceeded to charge the bear in the tree and “attempted to impale [it] with its antlers”.

Incidents

North Slough, Redwood Creek Estuary: On February 1, a park employee reported approximately 20 lbs-worth of dog or cat food dumped behind the gate at the north slough. He could see places where a bear had poked its nose into the pile and there was

bear scat around the pile. It's believed this was bait put out for bears in a poaching attempt. Two protection rangers cleaned up the food.

Mill Creek Campground, Site 88: On May 29, after Memorial Weekend, a bear entered site 88, where people were camping, and wouldn't leave. They waived their arms and shouted and the bear left, but returned some number of times before leaving for good. They were cooking hamburgers at the time the bear came- sometime between 17:00 and 18:00 hours. The bear was estimated to weigh 125-150 lbs.

Mill Creek Campground, Site 91: On June 5, a cub (estimated weight of 25 lbs) was in a tree above site 91, which is just across the road from site 88. Nothing occurred; this cub possibly belonged to the bear at site 88 (?).

Flint Ridge Back-country Camp: On June 29 a call came in from staff at KVC stating that a woman who had a permit to camp at Flint Ridge came back and reported a bear in the campground that was not showing any fear of humans. She did not feel safe and left. Signs informing campers of the presence of bears in the campground were posted. On July 1, staff visited the campground and saw the bear, which they estimated to be the size of a last year's cub. Photos were taken of the bear, and campsites 2 and 4 where food was left in the fire pits, and belongings were stuffed into an open food locker including blankets, plastic bags with "stuff", and liquor bottles. The bear showed no fear of the 2 park staff, even when they yelled, waived their arms, etc. It did not run away, but was not showing signs of aggression. A protection ranger went to the campground and hazed the bear, which apparently solved the problem.

Jedediah Smith Redwoods Campground Site 33: On August 16, a bear was lurking around the campsite and wouldn't leave, it was hazed with paintballs by protection rangers. This seemed to have solved the problem.

Hiouchi Visitor Center: On August 16, visitors were eating at a picnic table when a bear approached within 15-20 feet. When they yelled at it, it ran across the highway into a neighborhood.

Wolf Creek Education Center: On October 1, a report was received from Center staff that sometime between Sunday night and Monday morning a bear had tipped over the large dumpster at the school and scattered a lot of trash all over including into the woods. It also left large piles of scat that contained trash. It was learned that during this same period a bear had tipped over a double barrel trash/recycling "bear proof" container at the Wolf Creek housing. Someone brought the trash container to the housing and instead of anchoring it properly left it on its wood pallet with only the front legs bolted down. The residents that moved out had over-filled the bins and the bear was able to tip the bin forward and get the trash (see Fig.2). The dumpster at the outdoor school belongs to Humboldt Sanitation, and the locking mechanism (a bar) was not working. Humboldt Sanitation was contacted and went out and fixed the dumpster.



Figure 2. Unbolted “bear proof” trash can tipped over by a bear at Wolf Creek housing.

Confrontations

Mill Creek Campground, Alder Basin Trail: On August 10, a bear “huffed” at some hikers, then disappeared into the brush, circled the visitors, and reappeared on the trail. It followed the hikers for approximately 0.25 mi, even though the people clapped their hands and yelled. Despite this, they did not sense aggression from the bear, possibly curiosity. On that same day, on the “Alder Trail” behind sites 99 and 102 a bear again followed hikers on the trail. It also reportedly was not aggressive but did not run away.

Emerald Ridge Trail: On August 26, a bear “growled” at some visitors, they backed away without incident.

Ten Teypo/ Hope Creek Trail: On September 23, a cub was observed in a tree next to the trail and a larger bear was in the bushes stomping and vocalizing at the hikers as they passed by on the trail.

Bark Stripping

For the second time in recent years, there was a direct observation of a bear in the process of stripping bark from a second growth redwood, approximately 50 feet up. The bear was near the Orick Horse Trail, 3-hour Loop. This bear was seen on July 3. Last year along Davison Road one or two bears were observed stripping bark on 3 separate occasions in June.

MEETINGS

The Bear/Lion Panel meeting did not take place in 2012. The meeting was not held in part due to dwindling attendance in the past few years, and an apparent lack of interest. Parks staff will assess whether or not this panel needs to resume meeting. The panel was originally established under the *Bear Management Guidelines* (RNSP 1997), prior to bear-proofing the parks, and at a time with more problem bears, etc. It needs to be determined whether this group's purpose is still relevant.

EDUCATION

Bear safety and reporting orientations were given to seasonal RNSP interpreters, Youth Conservation Corps crews, and Native American youth work crews. Numerous informal contacts were made with RNSP personnel regarding bear-garbage and bear-human issues. The RNSP Interpretation staff also informed visitors about basic bear safety during campfire programs and at the beginning of various interpretive programs and walks at RNSP.

FUNDING

Oil spill mitigation funds were again made available to replace worn out animal-proof garbage cans and campground food storage lockers. Six additional trash and recycling receptacles and 12 additional food storage lockers were purchased.

MORTALITIES

There was one known bear killed by a vehicle collision, between Orick and the Kuchel Visitor Center, on Hwy 101 in late July. In August a dead bear was reported at the mouth of Wilson Creek with paws, gall bladder, etc. removed.

FY 2013 PRIORITIES

- ❖ Investigate all reports of “nuisance” bears immediately.
- ❖ Continue use of the RNSP Intranet (InsideREDW) for effective communication regarding bear management issues.
- ❖ All employees, contractors, etc., will be encouraged to turn in bear observations immediately.
- ❖ **Natural Resource staff will complete work with Interpretation staff on consistent bear information for bulletin boards throughout the parks.**
- ❖ Install new bear-proof food storage lockers at the Little Bald Hills Horse Camp and assess the condition of lockers and trash receptacles at other back-country camps, front-country campgrounds, and picnic areas.

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Reference: Redwood National and State Parks. 1997. Bear management guidelines. 26 pp. + appendices.

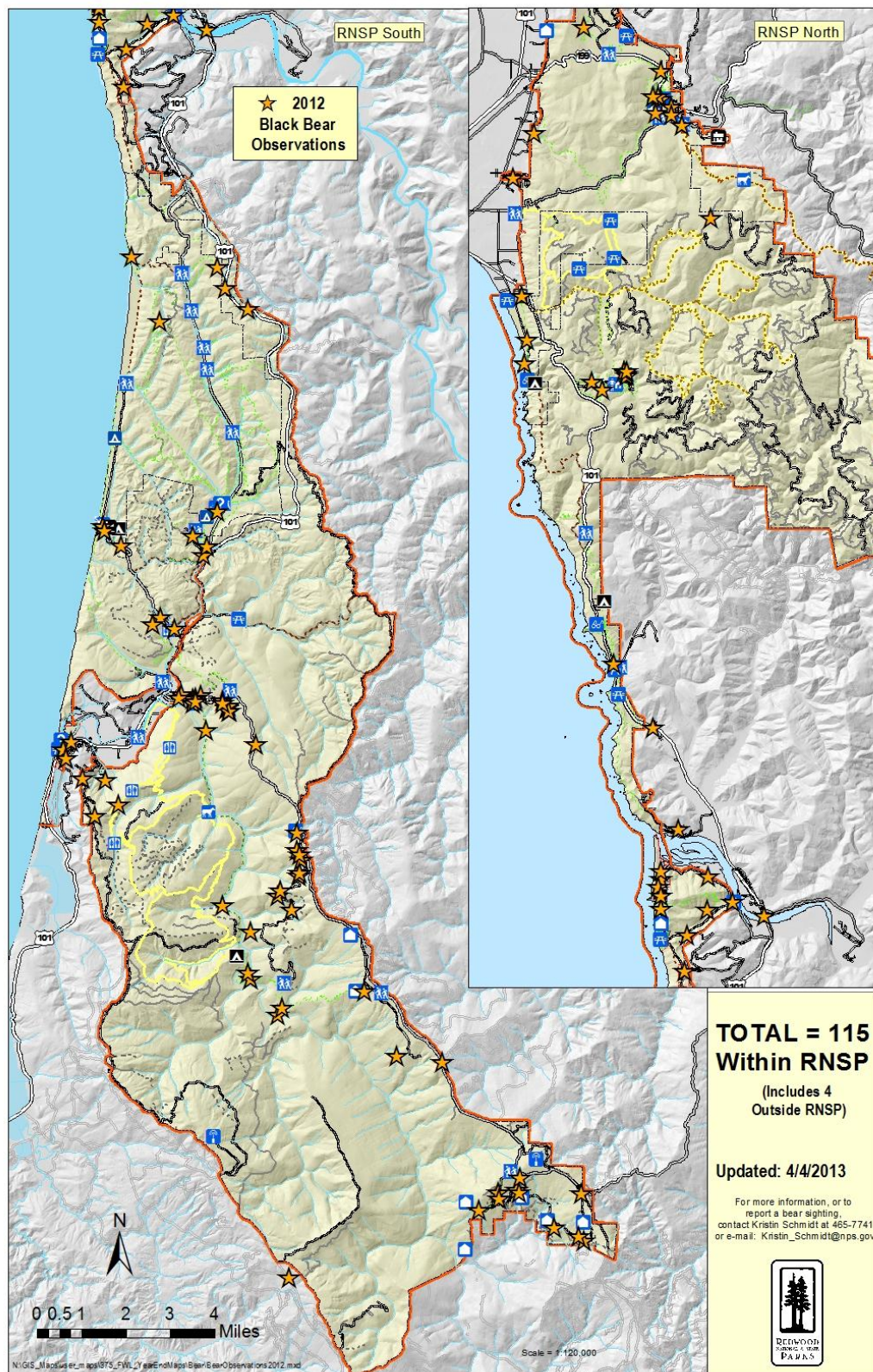


Figure 3. 2012 black bear observation locations in Redwood National and State Parks.

Appendix A. Date, number of bears, activity, and general location of bears reported to RNSP during 2012.

Obs Date	#	Activity	Location
1/30/2012	1	On road.	West Side Access Road
4/11/2012	1	Walking.	Counts Prairie
4/19/2012	2	Foraging.	Highway 101 Bypass, mile-marker 134.
4/28/2012	1	Evading car.	Tall Trees Access Road
5/1/2012	1	Bear grunted.	Redwood Creek at Tall Trees Trail, point 11 per trail guide
5/7/2012	1	Running away.	Coyote Rock
5/9/2012	2	Ambling off Bald Hills Road slowly.	Bald Hills Road
5/9/2012	1	Running across road.	Tall Trees Access Road, 1/2 mile past gate
5/9/2012	1	Running across road.	Tall Trees Access Road, 1/4 mile past gate
5/17/2012	1	Ran across road as we were hiking up.	Bald Hills, Rock Fork Road
5/23/2012	2	Crossing road.	Bald Hills Road, below Lady Bird Johnson parking lot
5/25/2012	1	Crossing road.	Tall Trees Access Road
5/26/2012	1	Roaring at observer.	Tall Trees Grove Trail
5/27/2012	1	Walking on trail.	Emerald Ridge Trail
5/27/2012	1	Blocking road.	Tall Trees Access Road
5/27/2012	1	Foraging in prairie.	Lyons Ranch Road
5/28/2012	1	Running upslope from road.	Tall Trees Access Road
5/29/2012	1	Entered campground sites. Wouldn't leave.	Mill Creek Campground
6/2/2012	1	Crossing road.	Bald Hills Road 2 miles from Hwy 101
6/2/2012	1	Running across road.	Tall Trees Access Road
6/5/2012	1	Fled from road, up into tree, then scampered down hillside.	Alder Camp Road
6/5/2012	1	In tree.	Mill Creek Campground, site 91
6/8/2012	1	Running across road.	Tall Trees Access Road
6/9/2012	2	Eating berries.	West Ridge Trail, 0.5 miles south of Friendship Ridge Junction
6/11/2012	1	Walking across road.	Prairie Creek Campground, between kiosk and road
6/12/2012	1	None given.	Bald Hills Road, below Lady Bird Johnson Grove
6/12/2012	1	Sitting on side of road.	Bald Hills Road, 1/2 mile below Lady Bird Johnson Grove
6/12/2012	1	Running across road.	Bald Hills Road, near Lady Bird Johnson Trailhead
6/12/2012	1	On side of road. Disappeared into brush.	Bald Hills Road, above Redwood Creek Trailhead turnoff
6/13/2012	1	Ran into bushes when it saw hiker.	Redwood Creek Trail 1 mile from trailhead
6/14/2012	1	None given.	Hiouchi Trail, 500 ft. from the bridge.

Obs Date	#	Activity	Location
6/14/2012	1	Running on road.	Mill Creek Acquisition, First Gulch Road
6/15/2012	1	Munching grass on side of road.	Bald Hills Road near Lady Bird Johnson Grove
6/20/2012	1	Crossing the river.	Redwood Creek at Tall Trees Grove
6/23/2012	2	Playing near the water.	Klamath, Alder Camp Road at mouth of Klamath River
6/24/2012	1	Watching from trailhead, then walking down road.	Flint Ridge Trailhead, Coastal Drive
6/24/2012	1	Looking for food next to road.	Coastal Drive west of Klamath view
6/24/2012	1	Walking up hillside, eating berries.	Kuchel Visitor Center, across Hwy 101
6/24/2012	1	Walking down road.	Coastal Drive, between WWII Radar Station and Flint Ridge Trail
6/24/2012	1	None given.	Bald Hills Road, 4 miles from Hwy 101.
6/25/2012	1	Crossing highway.	Hwy 101 near Trees of Mystery
6/25/2012	1	Ran into woods.	Tall Trees Access Road, 1 mile in
6/26/2012	2	Eating marsh grass, algae.	Pond across from Kuchel Visitor Center
6/26/2012	2	Feeding.	Pond across from Kuchel Visitor Center
6/27/2012	1	In road.	Coastal Drive
6/28/2012	1	Running after vehicle.	Tall Trees Road, 1 mile from gate
6/29/2012	1	Lingering in campground, took off when he saw me.	Flint Ridge Campground
6/29/2012	1	Eating grass.	Wetland across Hwy 101 from Kuchel Visitor Center
6/29/2012	1	Wandering on road.	Bald Hills Road, 0.5 mile past Redwood Creek Trailhead turnoff
6/30/2012	1	None given.	Lyons Ranch Trail between Home Place and Ranch Rd
6/30/2012	1	None given.	Ranch Road near Lyons Ranch Trail
6/30/2012	1	On beach.	Gold Bluffs Beach, north of Ossagon Camp
6/30/2012	1	Walking northeast.	Ranch Road between Lyons Ranch Trail and Long Ridge Sheepshed
6/30/2012	1	None given.	Long Ridge Sheepshed
7/1/2012	1	Running uphill next to road.	Tall Trees Road, 2 miles in from gate
7/1/2012	1	On side of road.	Bald Hills Road near Redwood Creek Trail
7/2/2012	1	Hanging out.	Pond across from Kuchel Visitor Center
7/2/2012	1	Ran across road when it saw visitors.	Tall Trees Access Road, 500 m after gate
7/3/2012	1	Walking on private driveway.	Requa Drive near Requa Inn
7/3/2012	1	Walking on Coastal Drive going into Klamath RV park.	Coastal Drive
7/3/2012	1	Eating, then ran away.	Bald Hills Road, before Lady Bird Johnson Grove

Obs Date	#	Activity	Location
7/3/2012	1	Stripping bark off 2nd growth rdwood, 50' up in tree.	Orick Horse Trail 3-hour loop
7/5/2012	1	Approached elk herd. Fled scene after being attacked by elk.	North Operations Center
7/5/2012	2	Eating vegetation.	Bald Hills Road, 0.5 mile up
7/6/2012	1	Walking through brush left of kiosk.	Bhind stop sign
7/7/2012	1	Walking.	Davidson Road, ~ 100 yards from Tsunami sign
7/8/2012	1	Falling out of tree.	Wolf Creek Fire Cache
7/9/2012	1	Running across road.	Enderts Beach Road by Crescent Beach Overlook
7/9/2012	1	Moving off trail.	Dolason Prairie Trail after access road and before barn
7/12/2012	1	Grazing.	Old South Operations Center
7/15/2012	1	Ran across road.	Bald Hills Road, right after turns into gravel
7/16/2012	1	Stood near river then ran up the far bank from our camp. Eating grass.	Redwood Creek, 0.5 miles upstream of Tall Trees Grove
7/18/2012	1	Ran into driveway.	Hwy 199 at large sign across road to campground site
7/20/2012	1	Road kill.	Hwy 101 between Orick & KVC
7/22/2012	1	Thrashing and running around at south side of bridge.	Tall Trees Trail, Summer Bridge
7/22/2012	1	Stepped onto trail in front of visitor, when seen, ran off.	Coastal trail, half way between Crescent Beach Picninc area and Lookout
7/23/2012	1	Crossing road then ran into forest.	Intersection of BL 2000 and BL 1000.
7/24/2012	1	Visitor struck bear with vehicle and bear ran off.	Across from Hiouchi Visitor Center
7/24/2012	1	Ran away down prairie.	Rock Fork Road at gate
7/28/2012	1	Sniffing around, climbed a Sitka spruce 50 ft. up.	Espa Lagoon, Gold Bluffs Beach residence area
7/29/2012	1		Campsite 45
8/3/2012	1	Walking across road.	Mill Creek Campground, 1/2 mile down road
8/7/2012	1	Walking, foraging.	Alder Camp Road, 300 ft on Coastal Drive closed section
8/7/2012	1	Walking.	Near Klamath River overflow on vegetation median
8/8/2012	1	Eating soup bone, moved off slowly.	Redwood Creek Trailhead
8/9/2012	1	Poached.	Wilson Creek, near mouth in tidepools
8/9/2012	1	Digging into a ground beehive.	Gold Bluffs Beach residence area
8/10/2012	1	Huffed, disappeared in brush on trail, then circled visitors and reappeared on trail. Bear followed visitors for approximately 0.25 miles as the visitors yelled and clapped. They reported that the bear was not aggressive but seemed curious.	Mill Creek Campground, on Alder Basin Trail
8/10/2012	1	Followed hikers on trail, was not aggressive, but did not run away.	Mill Creek Campground, Red Alder Trail, behind sites 99, 102
8/12/2012	1	Spooked and ran off.	Jedediah Smith RSP, Leiffer Loop Trail
8/15/2012	1	Ran across Highway 199 toward campground entrance.	Jedediah Smith RSP

Obs Date	#	Activity	Location
8/15/2012	1	Climbing tree then ran away.	Boy Scout Trail, at Fern Falls
8/16/2012	1	Hazed by ranger with paintballs	Campsite 33 at Jedediah Smith RSP
8/16/2012	1	Approached visitors at picnic table within 15-20 ft. They yelled and it ran across Highway 199 into Hiouchi.	Hiouchi Visitor Center
8/18/2012	1	In road, got out of way and retreated.	Davison Road
8/24/2012	1	Ran across redwood creek	0.25 miles downstream of Tall Trees Grove
8/24/2012	1	Lurking around parking lot	LBJ Trailhead parking area
8/26/2012	1		Richardson Creek, 0.5 miles north of bridge
8/26/2012	1	Growled at visitors, they backed away	Emerald Ridge Trail, 50 m down from junction w/ Dolason Trail
8/26/2012	2	Eating berries, then ran	Davidon Barn
8/26/2012	1	Ran from road.	Davison Road
8/29/2012	1	Crossing street running from cars.	Redwood Creek Trailhead parking
8/30/2012	1	Feeding on berries.	Trillium Falls Trail
9/7/2012	1	Llumbering	CBEC
9/11/2012	2	Running from Stout Grove.	Jedediah Smith RSP, by Stout Grove footbridge
9/16/2012	1	Running down road.	Wolf Creek Road, towards Davison Trail
9/23/2012	2	Cub was in tree next to trail, other bear was in bushes stomping and vocalizing.	Ten Taypo/Hope Creek Trail junction
9/25/2012	1	Walking along side of road.	Mill Creek Campground, 1 mile down access road
9/25/2012	1	Ran into brush when it heard car.	Wolf Creek Gate
10/9/2012	1	Climbing down oak tree.	Bald Hills, Lyons Ranch area
10/9/2012	1	Running off road.	Highway 101 Bypass, 1/4 mile north of gravel barn
10/9/2012	1	Running off the side of the road.	Bald Hills, road from Lyons Ranch to Coyote Rock
10/9/2012	1	Scrambling down oak tree trunk as fast as possible.	Bald Hills, Coyote Rock area
10/24/2012	1	Crossing road.	Bald Hills Road, at Redwood Creek Overlook
10/24/2012	1	In tree.	West Side Access Road

