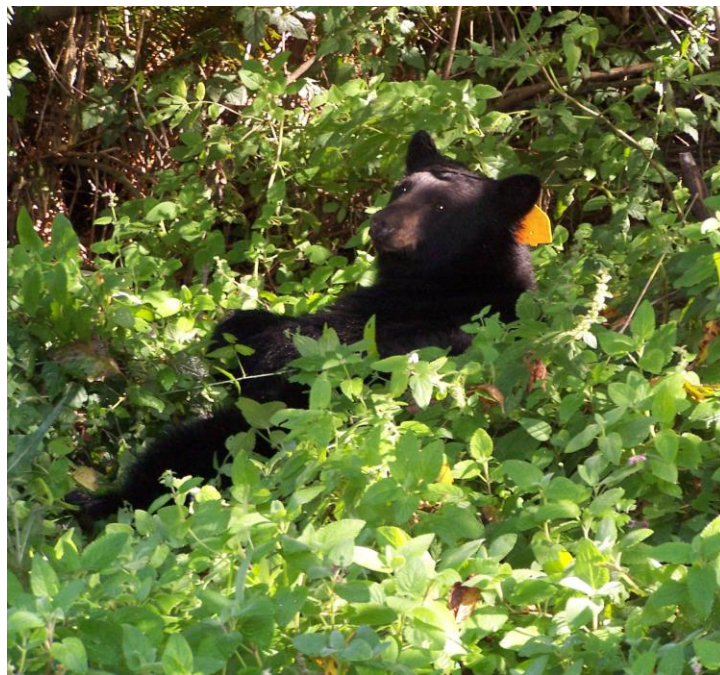


BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT

Annual Report - 2008

January 26, 2009

Prepared by: Kristin Schmidt, Wildlife Biologist



INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes black bear management activities that occurred within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) during 2008. The management section summarizes all important bear sightings and incidents, bear related meetings and education efforts, funding, known mortalities, and fiscal year 2009 priorities for black bear management within RNSP.

BEAR SIGHTINGS AND INCIDENTS

Wildlife Observation Data

There were 62 sightings of 83 black bears reported on RNSP wildlife observation forms during 2008 (Appendix A), not including mortalities (see below). The number of observations in 2008 was closer to the average for the years 2004-2006 (65), versus the much higher number of reported sightings in 2007 (92 sightings of 110 bears).

Predictably, the majority of reported observations were in June, July, and August, coincidental with peak visitor season and peak field season for park staff (Fig. 1). Fifty-five percent of the observations were made during June and July and at least one bear was observed in every month of the year. Seventy-four percent of the sightings were of a single bear, 13% involved 2 bears, 8% were of 3 bears, and there was one instance of four bears grazing in a prairie.

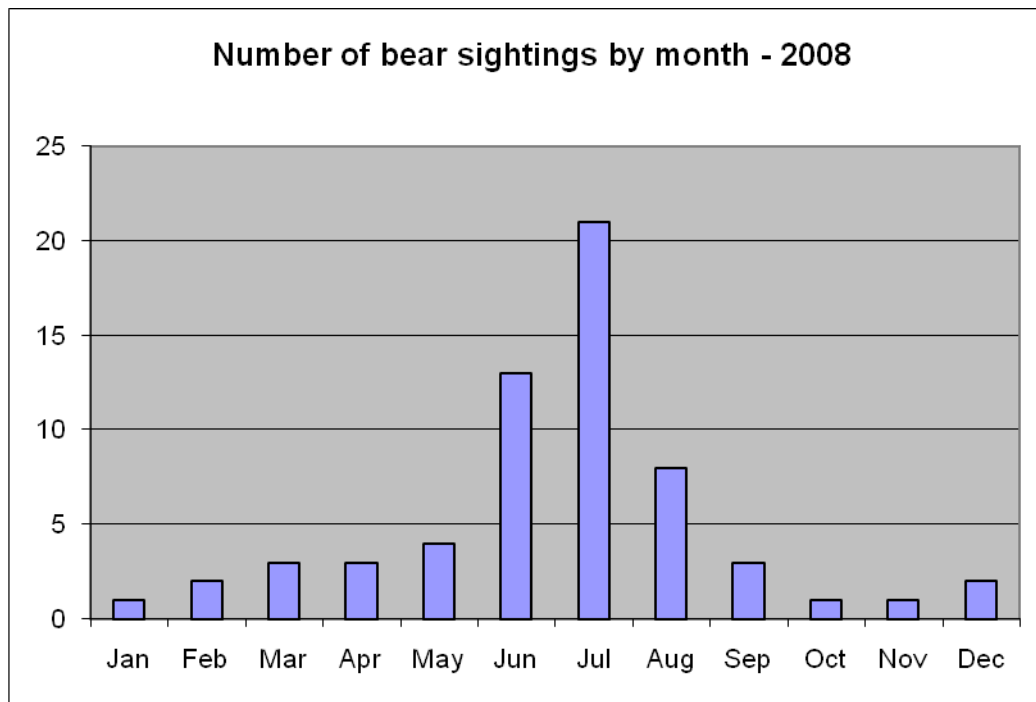


Figure 1. Number of bear sightings reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards, and month that the sighting occurred, during 2008 (total =62).

As in previous years the majority of bear sightings in RNSP were in the southern part of the park, in the Prairie/ Lost Man/ Redwood Creek area, along the West Side Access Road, and in the Bald Hills Prairies. Twelve sightings (19%) were either along trails or the Redwood Creek gravel bar, and one bear with a cub was reported at “Blakes Riffle” on the Klamath River.

Incidents

CBEC: A bear continued to be a problem at Crescent Beach Education Center, continuing the tradition of breaking into the dumpster similar to what occurred there in 2007. On November 14 the bear broke the clip and chain on the dumpster and made off with it. Prior to that the bear was able to get inside the dumpster and strewed garbage on one occasion, and made an unsuccessful attempt on another occasion, pushing the dumpster around and clawing it.

Tracy Residence, Pacamo Road: Occupants of the ranger residence in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park were concerned about a bear approaching the home on multiple occasions, walking around on the deck, etc. This bear also chewed on the rubber sealing on a window of a ranger vehicle and damaged a truck canopy.

Requa: Last, but potentially not least, on July 29 a bear bit a fuel line. Apparently this has happened before.

Confrontations – With the exception of the bear at the ranger residence, which seemed unafraid of humans, there were no known instances of a bear approaching, or showing aggression towards, humans. Most often the comments associated with observations were “running away”. There was an instance near the Redwood Creek Trailhead where a bear was seen walking on the trail and “wasn’t shy” but disappeared after the hikers made noise.

MEETINGS

The RNSP Bear Panel members met during June and November 2008 (see Appendix B for meeting notes).

EDUCATION

Bear safety and reporting orientations were given to seasonal RNSP interpretation staff, Youth Conservation Corps crews, Student Conservation Association members, and volunteer trail crews. Numerous informal contacts were made with RNSP personnel regarding bear-garbage and bear-human issues. The RNSP Interpretation Division also informed visitors about basic bear safety during campfire programs and at the beginning of various interpretive programs and walks at RNSP.

FUNDING

The North Coast Redwoods Interpretive Association (NCRIA) continued selling bear related merchandise (stuffed Beanie Bears) in the Prairie Creek Visitor Center during 2008, and \$250 was raised to be used for purchasing more picnic and campground table sign materials. In 2008 bear-proof garbage cans were installed at the Mill Creek Acquisition; no additional bear proofing equipment was needed in 2008. Oil spill settlement money may be used if needed to purchase or maintain food lockers, dumpsters, etc. in the future.

MORTALITIES

There were three reported bear mortalities during 2008. The first was reported on June 20 by a CDPR crew from the mouth of Damnation Creek. Their comment was “possibly poached” but without explanation given as to why they might have thought that. Sometime between the June and November bear panel meetings a bear was struck and killed on Hwy 101 near the Valley Green office. On September 29 a young bear was killed on the Hwy 101 bypass just south of the Newton Drury Parkway interchange. The bear that was a nuisance at the ranger resident was dispatched by a law enforcement ranger.

FY 2009 PRIORITIES

- ❖ Haze nuisance bears immediately and frequently.
- ❖ The RNSP Intranet (InsideREDW) will continue to be used for effective communication regarding bear management issues.
- ❖ All employees, contractors, etc., will be encouraged to turn in bear observations immediately.
- ❖ Fish and Wildlife staff will continue to work on consistent bear information for bulletin boards and information brochures around the park.
- ❖ Metal picnic table signs will be constructed, and sign inventories will occur and signs replaced as needed.
- ❖ NCRIA partnership for funding (Beanie Bears) will be continued.
- ❖ The bear panel will become the “bear and lion panel” beginning in 2009.
- ❖ We will work with interpreters to create bear/lion double sided (maybe murrelet on one side) bookmark to be given out with every book sold at one of the visitor centers.

Appendix A. Date, number, activity, and general location of bear sightings reported to RNSP during 2008.

Date	#	Activity	Location
1/1/2008	1	RUNNING ACROSS THE ROAD	1/2 MILE FROM TRAILHEAD ON THE TALL TREES ACCESS ROAD
2/6/2008	1		NEAR REDW CRK TRL HEAD
2/17/2008	0		TALL TREES
2/28/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY FROM CAR	WSA RD
3/18/2008	1	SITTING ON SIDE OF ROAD	WSA RD RIGHT B/F GATE
3/18/2008	1	BEGAN TO CLIMB MED SIZE REDWOOD	WSA RD
3/27/2008	1	RUNNING ALONG RD AND INTO FOREST	BALD HILLS RD JUST AFTER TIMBER MILL
4/5/2008	1	RUNNING FROM VEHICLE	WEST SIDE ACCESS RD
4/12/2008	2	STANDING BY REDWOOD CREEK	TALL TREES LOOP
4/15/2008	1	COMING IN FOR DEER CARCASS	EAST SIDE OF ELK PRAIRIE
5/10/2008	1	RUNNING	WEST SIDE ACCESS
5/12/2008	4	FEEDING ON GRASSES	MEADOW WEST OF COYOTE ROCK
5/23/2008	2	RUNNING OFF RD	BALD HILLS RD
5/23/2008	0		GOLD BLUFFS BEACH COASTAL TRAIL 1 MILE N OF FERN
5/25/2008	1	SCAMPERING OFF RD TOWARDS CREEK	MILL CREEK AQ. CHILDS HILL RD
6/1/2008	1	DARTING OUT OF RD	ROCK CREEK RD MILL C. AQ.
6/1/2008	1	SCAMPERING OFF RD	ROCK CREEK RD
6/2/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY	W. SIDE ACCESS RD
6/2/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY	FORK RD.
6/5/2008	2	AT EDGE OF ROAD	HAMILTON ROAD - MILL CREEK ACQUISITION
6/8/2008	1	CROSSING THE CREEK ALONE	REDWOOD CREEK 1/3 MILE N OF TALL TREES GROVE
6/16/2008	1	25 FT UP A TREE	UNKNOWN
6/20/2008	0	DEAD - POSSIBLY POACHED	DAMNATION CREEK AT OCEAN
6/24/2008	1	SCRAMBLING INTO WOODS AWAY FROM STINKY HUMANS	TALL TREES ACCESS RD
6/24/2008	2	DAMAGED MOTHER IN LAWS TRUCK CANOPY	TRACY PROPERTY, CDPR HOUSING ON SE CORNER OF JSSP
6/25/2008	1	RAN ACROSS RD	MILL CREEK CAMP - NEAR KIOSK
6/26/2008	1		SMITH RIVER BY STOUT GROVE
6/27/2008	1	RUNNING	HOLTER RIDGE RD
7/1/2008	1	LOOKED AT VEHICLE AND RAN AWAY; NO CONFRONTATION	BALD HILLS ROAD TWO MILES UP FROM TALL TREES TRAILHEAD
7/7/2008	3	RUNNING AWAY FROM VEHICLE	RANCH RD NEAR INTERSECTION W/ LYONS
7/8/2008	1	CROSSING CREEK	REDWOOD CREEK NEAR TALL TRESS GROVE
7/8/2008	1	TRUNK	BALD HILLS RD
7/9/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY FROM OBSERVERS	100 YDS UPHILL FROM RANCH RD GATE
7/11/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY FROM TRUCK	SOUTH OF COYOTE CREEK LINE CABIN
7/12/2008	2	NO AGGRESSION, ANXIOUS TO BE FAR FROM THE STINKY HUMANS	1 MI. UP REDWOOD CREEK TRAIL
7/13/2008	3	RUNNING AWAY FROM TRUCK ONE CLIMBED A TREE	ROCK FORK RD NEAR COYOTE ROCK
7/15/2008	1	WALKING DOWNHILL TO THE SW	ROCK FORK RD
7/15/2008	1	COMMUTING ACROSS THE RD	STOUT GROVE ON HOWLAND HILL RD
7/15/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY FROM TRUCK	ROCK FORK RD SOUTH OF THE LINE CABIN
7/18/2008	1	EATING BERRIES?	UPPER COYOTE CREEK DOWNHILL FROM LASSEN FIRE CREW CAMP
7/18/2008	3	WALKING DOWNHILL SAW OBSERVERS THEN RAN UPHILL	41 DEGREES 08. 233' - 123 DEGREES 52. 316'
7/19/2008	1	SNIFFING RD RUNNING AWAY FROM CAR	REDWOOD CREEK TRAILHEAD
7/22/2008	3		MID-BASIN EAST NEAR UPPER COYOTE CREEK (ON ROAD)
7/22/2008	2		REDWOOD CREEK TRAILHEAD ABOUT 1/4 MILE DOWN TRAIL
7/22/2008	2	HIGH UP IN DOUG FIR	UPPER COYOTE CREEK NEAR MID-BASIN EAST
7/24/2008	1	RUNNING AWAY FROM OBSERVER	MINER'S RIDGE TRAIL
7/25/2008	1	CROSSING ROAD	SMALL PRAIRIE WITH FIR CLOSE
7/25/2008	1	RUNNING FULL SPEED	WEST TO EAST ACROSS 101, 100 FT N. OF KVC ENTRANCE.
7/28/2008	1	RUNNING ACROSS ROAD	BALD HILLS RD.
8/1/2008	1	FORAGING	PRAIRIE ABOVE LBJ GANS PRAIRIE
8/3/2008	1	RUNNING ACROSS RD INTO TREES	DAVISON RD UP 2 MILES
8/3/2008	1	IN MEADOW AND APPEARED TO BE EATING A DEER OR ELK	PRAIRIE CREEK STATE PARK - MEADOW
8/10/2008	3	CROSSING RD	MILL CRK WATERSHED
8/11/2008	1	RAN TO TREE AND STOPPED STAYED AND WATCHED VISITORS LEAVE	ABOVE ELK MEADOW
8/15/2008	1	RAN AWAY FROM CAR, LOOKED AT VISITOR	NICKERSON RANCH TRAILHEAD
8/15/2008	1	NOISE	REDWOOD CREEK TRAILHEAD
8/19/2008	1		NICKERSON RANCH TRAIL
8/30/2008	2	MOM AND CUB WALKING AROUND RIVER AND DRANK	BLAKE'S RIFFLE KLAMATH RIVER
9/4/2008	1	WALKING ON GRAVEL BAR	REDW CRK AT ELAM CRK JUNCTION
9/7/2008	1	SITTING ON SIDE OF ROAD AND THEN RAN OFF	1/4MI UP HILL FROM LADY BIRD
9/14/2008	1	WALKING ACROSS RD	BALD HILLS AND REDW CRK TRL
10/30/2008	1	WANDERING IN PRAIRIE	COYOTE CRK
11/29/2008	2	CUB IN TREE, SOW IN BUSHES	COASTAL TRL, NORTH OF KLAMATH OVERLOOKS
12/28/2008	1	CROSSING ROAD TOWARDS REDWOOD CREEK, DOWNHILL.	BALD HILLS ROAD, MILE 4.
12/28/2008	1	FRESHWATER LAGOON.	OLD STATE HIGHWAY NEAR "LAGOON COMMUNITY"

Appendix B. Minutes of the Spring and Fall 2008 Bear Panel meetings.

Spring Meeting

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Division Chiefs
From: Wildlife Biologist (Greg Holm)
Subject: Spring Bear Panel Minutes – June 4, 2008

Attending:

Bear sightings, incidents, and reporting: To date, there have been 11 bear sightings reported, and there have been no black bear “incidents”, as defined in the RNSP Bear Management Plan, yet. The bear management information posted on InsideREDW has not changed since the fall meeting.

Funding: RNSP received \$5,000 funding from the Stuyvesant oil spill settlement for purchasing wildlife (bear) proof equipment on an as needed basis. The Stuyvesant funding will be used primarily to maintain and replace equipment over the next 10-15 years. Currently, CDPR and the NPS are not submitting any more funding requests from their respective organizations for bear proof equipment. The NCRIA will continue to sell “beanie bears” during 2008, and we have approximately \$300 in the fund from NCRIA.

Bear-proofing equipment and maintenance: C. Shay of NPS maintenance has requested this years Stuyvesant funding to meet some bear proof equipment needs. Maintenance, interpretation, law enforcement, and wildlife staff will continue to work together to completely update our equipment inventory and needs.

Signs, Bulletins, and Education: An inventory of signs for lockers, garbage cans, and tables was completed by M. Goss and south district interpretive staff. The Panel has not contacted any local entities about displaying the “Bear Facts” posters.

Next meeting: Tentative date for the next bear panel meeting is Wednesday, November 3, 2009, 9:00-12:00, at South Operations Center.

Fall Meeting

November 12, 2008

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Division Chiefs

From: Wildlife Biologist (Kristin Schmidt)

Subject: Fall Bear Panel Minutes – Nov 8, 2008

Attending: Chris Butz, Lance Twombly, Phil Rovai, Valerie Gizinski, Terry Hofstra, Kristin Schmidt

Bear sightings, incidents, and reporting: Between 1/1/2008 and 10/30/2008 (the last time data were entered) there were 64 observations of 84 bears reported, including 1 bear killed on the bypass (collected by branch staff and given to the Yurok Tribe for the vulture study), one killed on Hwy 101 near the Valley Green office, and one reported dead by CDPR employees near the ocean at Damnation Creek on 6/20 with the note “possibly poached”. Black bear “incidents”, as defined in the RNSP Bear Management Plan, include a problem bear at CBEC that as recently as 11/14 broke the clip and chain on the dumpster and made off with it. Prior to that the bear was able to get inside the dumpster and strewed garbage on one occasion, and made an unsuccessful attempt on another occasion, pushing the dumpster around and clawing it. The Tracy House continued to be plagued by a bear that in addition to scaring people chewed rubber around a window of a ranger vehicle. This bear apparently was dispatched by a ranger. And on 7/29 a bear bit a fuel line at Requa.

The kiosk and visitor center reporting information (for park staff) posted on InsideREDW was changed to reflect Kristin as the wildlife biologist contact for bear and lion sightings/incidents for the parks.

Funding: Stuyvesant oil spill settlement money is available on an ongoing basis for purchasing wildlife (bear) proof equipment. The NCRIA will continue to sell Beanie Bears in 2009; we have received the check for \$250 for this year and now have \$1,104.58 in the beanie (“Donations”) fund.

Bear-proofing equipment and maintenance: At present everything seems perfect with the bear proofing (food lockers and trash receptacles). McLintocks that haven’t been installed are the ones to be placed in the closed campsites at Jed Smith CG. Bear-proof garbage cans were installed at Mill Creek Acq. We need to find out how many back-packing canisters and bear pouches we have at Kuchel, and refresh our memories with the check out process for these items, as there seems to be a return policy problem.

Signs, Bulletins, and Education: Last spring’s meeting notes, and paperwork in the file, indicate an inventory of signs for lockers, garbage cans, and tables was completed by M. Goss and south district interpretive staff earlier this year. However, it is unclear if the entire park was inventoried and if the needed signs were replaced. There was quite a bit of discussion regarding how a sign inventory gets accomplished and by whom. After the meeting Kristin sent slightly revised sign inventory forms to Chris, Phil, and Lance but still needs to send them to Lynn Levi and Dick

Mayle. Mary Read will be contacted by Kristin to find out how long it takes to make a batch of signs and how much notice she needs. If necessary we will conduct a park-wide inventory this coming February- March. [Note after this meeting Terry Hines showed Kristin many vinyl signs for campground picnic tables but we're down to two metal signs for non-CG tables.]

Kristin found small rectangular "Bear Bill of Rights" (8 to a page) in the file and assumed they were bookmarks, however, they are tags for the Beanie Bears. BUT this engendered discussion about creating bookmarks with a bear/wildlife, "don't feed them", message to be given out with every book sold at a visitor center. Lynn Mager will be contacted about assisting with this idea.

Other: A decision was made to consolidate the bear panel into a bear and lion panel from now on. There is much overlap in subject matter with these two animals so it seems to make sense.

Next meeting: Date for next meeting is April 8, 2009 (April 15 a back up date), 0900-12:00 South Operations Center.