

ESC America's Top 10

General Information	Please Use this Column to Provide the Requested Information
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Report Questions	
Do you have photos that can be used in the report?	Yes
Will you want printed reports?	Yes
If your species is selected, will you use the opportunity to organize around the species and/or publicize its plight?	Yes
The Species & Its Status Questions	
Common name, genus & species	Grizzly bear, <i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>
Conservation Status	Threatened
Current population size	Approximately 1700 in the lower 48, approximately 1000 in the Northern Continental Divide Population (NCDE). The NCDE population is the population of focus for this nomination.
Has the species been delisted? If yes, when? Was the recovery on time? (Skip questions 17+18.)	No
If no, does the species have a recovery plan?	Yes
If it does have a recovery plan, what is the projected downlisting and/or delisting date?	The US Fish and Wildlife Service has stated it would like to propose delisting of the NCDE in 2014
Background Questions (for the report profile)	
Geographic range	Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington-lower 48, The NCDE population is primarily in Montana with small portion in N. Idaho
Habitat	Variable from forests to subalpine meadows, open plains

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Primary diet (if applicable)	Omnivorous, grasses, sedges, roots, berries, insects, fish, small and large mammals, carrion
Public Engagement Questions (Please explain why the species is interesting, why it matters, why decision-makers + the public should care.)	
Interesting facts about the species	Grizzly bears are an opportunistic omnivore that hibernates 5-8 months of the year. Grizzly bears can gain over 3lbs a day during the late summer and fall months as they enter "hyperphagia" or a period of intense eating to put on weight for winter denning. Cubs stay with their moms for 2-3 years. Female offspring tend choose home ranges close to mom. Grizzly bears are the second slowest reproducing land mammal in North America.
Additional background information to complete the species profile in the report.	
What are the most important messages that should be communicated about this success story?	The Northern Continental Divide (NCDE) Grizzly bear population is an amazing conservation success story. Partnerships between agencies, NGOs and local residents have come a long way in reducing grizzly bear mortalities by securing anthropogenic attractants like garbage, birdseed, fruit trees and livestock and raising awareness about grizzly bears. There are still concerns over long-term habitat protections and human-caused mortalities but community based partnerships aimed at reducing conflicts with bears have garnered an increase in tolerance and come a long way to securing the future for grizzly bears in the NCDE.
Outline and describe the existing threats that might impede its recovery, e.g., new threats to its habitat, etc. Include any potential political threats, e.g., a Congressional delisting before its time. Cite any substantiating scientific studies.	Human related mortality is the single largest threat facing grizzly bears. This includes management removals in response to conflicts with anthropogenic attractants such as: garbage, birdseed, fruit trees and chickens, road related mortalities, mistaken id kills during black bear hunting season, defense of life kills, and illegal mortality. Rapid human development in the west continues to contract potential habitat and climate change could impact important food resources.
Criteria-Specific Questions	

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Detail the ecological and scientific importance of the species. Note if it is a keystone species. Describe its role in the biodiversity of its environment. Cite any substantiating scientific studies.

Grizzly bears are considered a keystone species. Grizzly bears require large amounts of secure habitat with low road densities to thrive. These protections enhance habitat for numerous species. Additionally, grizzly bears spread seeds through their scat, scavenge and have been shown to mitigate ungulate populations in some areas.

Provide information on any additional benefits the species provides, such as economic, medicinal, or ecosystem services.

Each year small towns in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming rely on tourism dollars. Grizzly bears, particularly those associated with Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park are an symbol of wild places and are endeared by people all over the world. Grizzly bears presence on the landscape leads to an economic benefit for many small communities in the west.

Judge's score for importance of species.

What recovery actions have been taken for the species?

ESA protections, habitat protections, population monitoring, trend monitoring, DNA research, non-lethal preventative project implementation, relocation, augmentation of the Cabinet-Yaak population with grizzly bears from the NCDE population, outreach and education

Why were those recovery actions successful?

Grizzly bears in the NCDE are continuing to increase by an estimated 3% per year and are now being seen in places they have not been seen in over 50 years. Additionally, there seems to be an acceptance and tolerance for grizzly bears in places where formally there was resentment and anger. Outreach efforts coupled with adaptive management and projects that minimize conflicts with humans has led to the healthy population we see today. Connecting the NCDE with other more isolated or smaller grizzly bear populations will be critical to the long-term success of grizzly bears in the lower 48.

If there are or have been multi-agency and/or public/private collaboration to protect the species, please describe.

Multiple state, federal and tribal agencies as well as various non-governmental organizations and local residents have work diligently to reduce conflicts between grizzly bears and people. These projects have ranged from electric fencing for calving and lambing pastures to purchasing bear resistant garbage containers and designing and implementing outreach and education materials and programs.

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Please detail the species' recovery. What increases have there been in the size of the population and in the number of populations?

In the early 1800s an estimated 50,000 grizzly bears roamed from Canada to Mexico and from the Pacific to the Great Plains. By 1975 there were less than 1000 grizzly bears in the lower 48. Today an estimated 1700 grizzly bears remain in the lower 48. Population estimates of the NCDE in 1986 were approximately 549-813 bears. Currently this population is estimated at 1000 grizzly bears.

If there is political support for the conservation of the species, please explain.

There is political support for conservation of grizzly bears. However, there is concern that if conflicts between people and grizzly bears increase, political support for grizzly bears will wane.

Are there actions that need to be taken by government officials and/or NGOs to continue the recovery?

Ensure grizzly bears have the habitat protections in place that allow for continued expansion in rapidly developing environment. Local governments can develop ordinances that address garbage and other attractants available to bears. Government officials and NGOs need to work together to develop methods that minimize conflicts between people and bears and increase outreach and awareness.

Are there additional actions that individuals can take to continue the species' recovery?

Urge the public land management agencies to implement and/or maintain habitat protections for grizzly bears. If you live and/or recreate in bear country, secure attractants in a bear-resistant manner and carry bear spray. Be proactive. The largest threat to grizzly bears continues to be human-related mortality. Often, this is entirely avoidable.

Judge's score for recovery.

Final Judge's Score

0