



Alberta Fish & Game Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The **Alberta Fish and Game Association** supports the Provincial government in their management of Alberta's grizzly bear population.

Recent discussions in various committees and amongst the public have been reviewing the status of grizzly bears in Alberta. There has been some suggestion that the hunting of these bears should be discontinued due to the status of the population. The government information and that of independent reviewers suggests that over the past 15 years the Alberta Grizzly Bear population has increased from 575 in 1988 to 968 in 2002. During this period of time the number harvested by hunters averaged 13.6 per year.

The decision to continue hunting grizzly bears with some adjustment to the numbers of permits and the length of the season appears to be a compromise that uses the best information on population status.

Ray Makowecki, President of the Alberta Fish and Game Association, said, "the information on population status is critical to the management of such species and the limited number of bears harvested annually for the past 15 years reflects government's precautionary management approach."

The decline in the number of permits and the reduced season in some parts of Alberta, particularly the south, will reduce hunting opportunities in Alberta and this is a concern to the AFGA. Further, the AFGA is concerned that in some parts of Alberta where bear conflicts occur with farmers and ranchers and with unregulated hunts, the opportunity and need to monitor bears may be reduced. This may diminish the government's ability to manage and conserve resources effectively.

“Our Association believes in conservation first and in the case of grizzly bears a small regulated harvest with management controls appears to be effective in maintaining and increasing this natural resource,” said Makowecki, “Our Association supports regulated hunting of such wildlife populations for the purpose of conservation, effective management and recreation.”

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization that has been active in habitat conservation since 1908 and has a province-wide membership of well over 14,000 individuals committed to maintaining Alberta’s natural heritage.

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