From:	Servheen, Chris
To:	Michael Thabault
Cc:	Fortin-Noreus, Jennifer
Subject:	Re: Yellowstone Grizzly Bear: Internal tough questions added by DOI
Date:	Wednesday, March 02, 2016 10:48:38 AM

Mike,
Here are some comments on your 2 questions:

Q. Will baiting of bears be allowed? Some hunters and guides have said they would go after well-known bears. Does the proposed delisting support this?

A. How and if bears are hunted, will be decided by the states and tribes who have post-delisting management authority. The numbers of bears that can be killed from all causes is specified in the proposed delisting rule and the post-delisting management plan to assure that the population numbers remain at recovered levels, but the management of mortalities within these annual limits is the purview of the states (and Tribes) once delisting occurs,

The objective of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to get species to the point at which protection under the ESA is no longer required. Therefore, once a species is recovered, it is the responsibility of the Service to delist it and return management to the states and tribes.

The Service and partners will work with states and diverse partners to monitor mortalities and the status and health of the Yellowstone grizzly population to assure that the population remains healthy and mortalities remain within the limits described in the proposed rule.

Q. How can the Service delist Yellowstone grizzly bear if populations are actually declining (a loss of 40 bears in 2015?) and if existing take (even without a hunting program) prevent current population levels from being maintained?

A. Grizzly bear mortalities vary from year to year based on a variety of factors. This variation in mortalities is normal and results in variations in total grizzly bear numbers so that the population is not absolutely the same number each year. The result is slight changes in population estimates from year to year. For example, the population estimate in 2007 was 710 while the population in 2015 is 717.

All mortalities from all causes including hunting will be carefully managed and limited post-delisting so that the population is maintained around the long-term (2002-2014) average population size of 674.

On Tue, Mar 1, 2016 at 6:50 PM, Michael Thabault <michael_thabault@fws.gov> wrote:

I need Chris' help on number 2. Number 1 is pretty redundant. I would add something to the effect that we expect (understand, anticipate) the states to be good wildlife mangers. They will manage the population within the mortality limits agreed to. The method of harvest is not an ESA issue in this respect.

As for number 2 I suspect the population number is roughly within normal fluctuation limits and a population trend from one year can not be the determinative factor.

Michael Thabault
Assistant Regional Director
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On Mar 1, 2016, at 7:41 PM, Serena Baker <serena_baker@fws.gov> wrote:

Hi Mike,

DOI would like these two questions to be included on our Internal Tough Questions. Can you help answer?:

Q. Will baiting of bears be allowed? Some hunters and guides have said they would go after well-known bears. Does the proposed delisting support this?

A. How and if bears are hunted, will be decided by the states and tribes who have post-delisting management authority.

Once a species is recovered, it is the responsibility of the Service to delist it and return management to the states and tribes.

While the Service and partners will work with states and diverse partners to monitor the status and health of the Yellowstone grizzly population, it is the primary authority of states to manage grizzly bears post-delisting.

Management authority of the grizzly bear will be the purview of the states and tribes under their management authority.

Q. How can the Service delist Yellowstone grizzly bear if populations are actually declining (a loss of 40 bears in 2015?) and if existing take (even without a hunting program) prevent current population levels from being maintained?

A. ???

Thanks!

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Serena Baker

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"Try to learn something about everything and everything about something." - Thomas Huxley.