

Within the DMA, the Study Team will estimate annual population size and establish mortality limits for independent males, females, and dependent young based on that year's population estimate. Within the DMA, mortality limits will be based on rates that allow long-term population stability, not decline. Agencies will determine the number of available hunting mortalities outside the National Parks and Parkway for the following year based on achievement of the population criteria the current year. If ecosystem-wide mortality limits within the DMA are not exceeded, the difference between the mortality limit and the current year's estimated mortality count will become the maximum available hunting limit for independent males and females the following year. For example, if the mortality limit for independent males were 25 for a given year and only 20 mortalities occurred, there would be five independent males available for hunting the following year. The proportion of this available number outside of National Park lands (79.5 percent) would be allocated among jurisdictions based on their geographic area within the DMA. In the above example, the five available bears would translate into four available bears outside of National Park Service lands to be allocated among Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and the Wind River Indian Reservation. Based on the geographic area of each of these jurisdictions, this would mean 2.2 bears for Wyoming, 1.4 bears for Montana, 0.3 bears for Idaho, and 0.2 bears for the Wind River Indian Reservation.

Comment [RS1]: Placeholder...need to be able to explain how fractions of bears would work

If ecosystem-wide mortality limits within the DMA are exceeded, there will be no grizzly bear hunting within the DMA in any management jurisdiction the following year. If hunting limits for any sex/age class in a given jurisdiction inside the DMA are exceeded, those excess mortalities due to hunting will apply against the ecosystem-wide sustainable mortality limit for that sex/age class the following year. In areas of the Yellowstone DPS outside the DMA boundaries, respective States and Tribes may establish hunting seasons independently of the mortality limits and other population criteria. Hunting inside and outside the DMA boundaries will not threaten the GYA grizzly bear population because the population inside the DMA will be managed for long-term population stability. While we recognize that population size and trend may fluctuate annually, ecosystem-wide mortality monitoring and interagency coordination ensure the GYA grizzly bear population will be managed so that long-term population declines do not occur. Furthermore, to increase the likelihood of genetic interchange between the GYA grizzly bear population and the NCDE grizzly bear population, the State of Montana will not institute grizzly bear hunting seasons in the Highland or Tobacco Root Mountains in the near-term. To ensure mortality rates remain consistent with population objectives, a the Study Team will conduct a demographic review of vital rates 5 years after any final delisting rule is published and at least every 10 years thereafter to make appropriate adjustments to them. The Study Team selected a 10 year time period because that is approximately how long it takes to obtain estimates with acceptable levels of uncertainty (Harris et al. 2011, p. 29).

Comment [RS2]: working w/ MFWP to get amicable language

Comment [RS3]: Thompson is working on some draft language for these and a definition of "stability."