

## 2013 Bear Season

Kylie Jones

### Management

While this was not our busiest year in terms of management calls Erik Wenum (Region One Bear and Lion Specialist) and I (Kylie Jones Bear and Lion Technician) received 559 phone calls about bears, completed 91 site visits and captured 30 bears. In the lion world we received 108 phone calls, completed 9 site visits and captured 3 lions between January and December. While these numbers are lower than our 10 year average, they are far from our lowest numbers in bears caught and phone calls received in the previous 10 years. The trend in the number of bears captured has held steady for the past 10 years, while the number of phone calls ranges from 1331 to 502.

### Teaching experience

This was the first year in the last 4 that Erik Wenum and I have had an intern (Nicole Montgomery) working with us. I was able to work one on one with Nicole in her training. Beginning in July, Nicole and I responded to many phone calls about bears and set a few traps. I also assisted in her training in setting snares for bears during our grizzly trapping efforts.



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Kylie and Nicole checking the temperature of an immobilized black bear

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Another teaching experience this past summer is that I was able to help instruct the wildlife handling and chemical immobilization course. I supervised the drugging and handling of 6 yearling black bears by students in the course, including our soon to be intern Nicole.



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Drugging course at the  
Montana Wildlife  
Rehabilitation Center

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## Research

As always, this was also a learning year for me. After training and preparing, I darted my first bears this year. In the past 2 years I have been chemically immobilizing bears using a syringe pole. This past summer I darted 3 black bears during our research trapping efforts.



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Kylie darting a black  
bear

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Kylie handling an  
immobilized black bear

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During the 2013 season I was able to assist the Grizzly Bear Trend Monitoring team on three different trips in the Swan Valley, the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, and the South Fork of the Flathead River. During this time we caught 2 grizzly bears, many black bears, and captured thousands of pictures of everything from black bear family groups to turkey vultures.



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Erik, Kylie and Nicole with a grizzly bear captured for research

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Black bear family group  
at capture site

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Mountain lion checking out our bait

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Turkey vultures stealing our bait

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Moose are common visitors

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### Orphaned cubs

In addition to regular duties, our team also captured 6, and released 12 black bear cubs orphaned and rehabilitated at the Montana Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Helena. During the summer, we conducted aerial telemetry flights to locate and check status of cubs via helicopter, and retrieved several ear tag transmitters that had fallen off, as well as monitored cubs using telemetry from the ground. This was Nicole's first year using telemetry equipment, and she learned very quickly.



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Ear tag transmitter found in  
Goat Creek

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Kylie tuning the telemetry gear

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Nicole learning telemetry

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During the winters of 2013 and 2014 (to come) I also volunteer with Erik Wenum on denning work of the orphaned cubs released. During the 2013 winter denning trip we visited one den site with a yearling cub inside, and retrieved one ear tag transmitter that had fallen off a bear.



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Bear denned in log, Swan Valley

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### Other events

In addition to regular duties, Erik Wenum, Kylie and Nicole also responded to a handful of deer issues in Whitefish. These included a deer with a rat trap stuck on its lower jaw, and a fawn with a rope tied around its neck. Most of the community was very helpful in locating the deer so these issues could be resolved.

### Bear encounters

On occasion, bear encounters in the backcountry lead to the damage of property. In one instance this past summer, a Montana Conservation Core (MCC) group was away from their camp site when a bear came in and 'pounced' on several tents ripping them as well as a few sleeping pads and bags. Erik Wenum and I searched through the gear looking for hair samples while we attempted to capture the bear responsible. The hair sample would provide evidence of what species of bear we were targeting and if we have caught the correct bear, as well as a reference for any possible future incidences.



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Kylie checking ripped gear for hair samples

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Camp site torn by bear

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Bear tracks found at camp site

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