



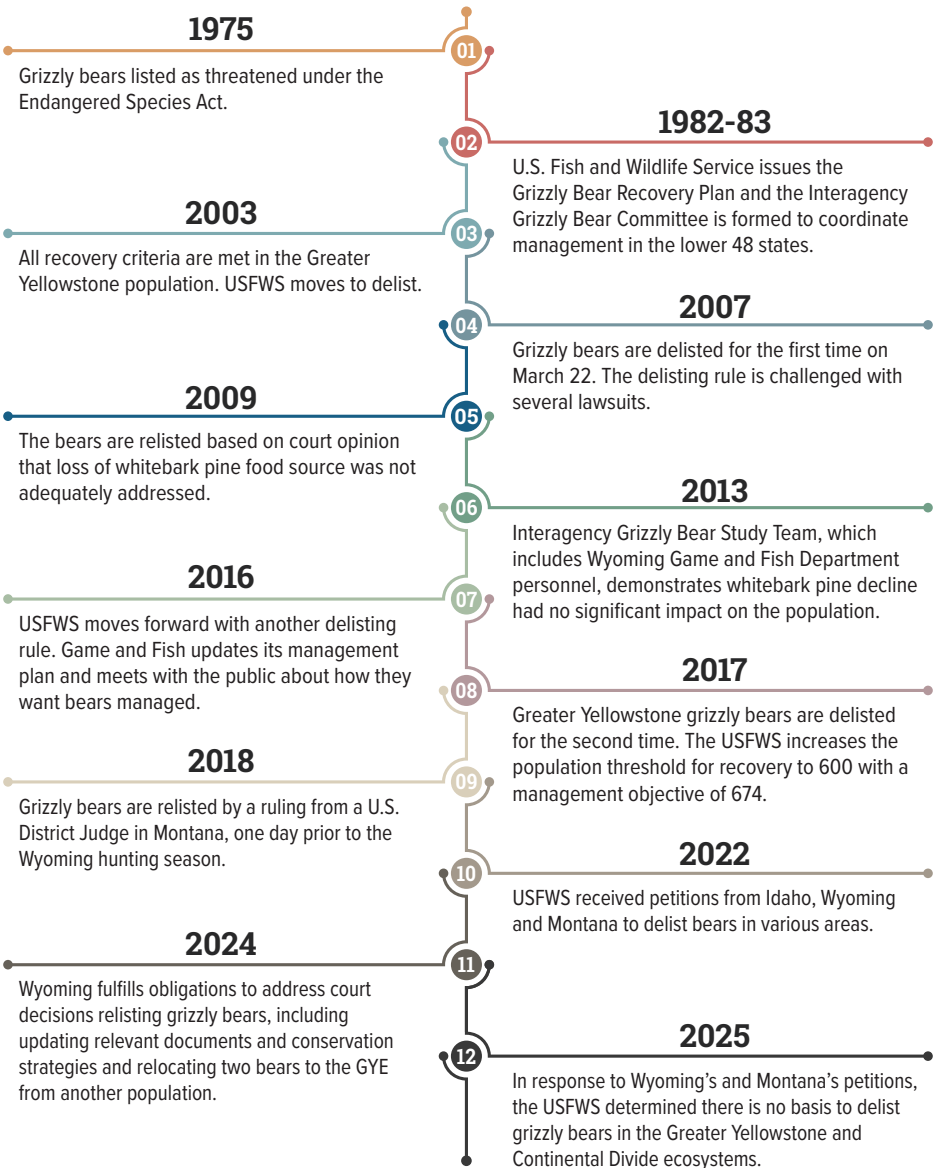
GRIZZLY BEARS IN WYOMING



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Grizzly bears, with their intelligence, adaptability and formidability, are one of Wyoming's most iconic and awe-inspiring creatures. Roaming the rugged landscapes of the northwest part of the state, these majestic animals symbolize the wild and untamed spirit of the American West. Once widespread across much of North America, grizzlies faced severe population declines due to habitat loss and persecution in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Today, thanks to decades of dedicated conservation work, grizzly bears have made a remarkable recovery, particularly in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. They are not just a natural treasure but a symbol of resilience and coexistence between humans and wildlife. For locals and visitors alike, seeing a grizzly in the wild is a humbling reminder of Wyoming's rugged beauty and the importance of conserving these magnificent creatures for future generations.



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES



Recovered but Listed

Despite meeting recovery goals, grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem remain federally listed as threatened due to lawsuits and shifting recovery standards. Without being able to use hunting as a management tool, the Wyoming Game and Fish manages these bears on the ground, balancing conservation with public safety.



Habitat and Conflicts

Grizzly population growth and expansion into unsuitable habitats increase conflict risks. Prime habitats offer natural food sources, remote areas and minimal human interaction, but these spaces are limited and already filled with grizzly bears. On average 21 grizzly bears are euthanized each year over the last decade due to conflicts.



Relocation Challenges

Relocation sites for grizzlies are increasingly limited, complicating management efforts to balance bear conservation with human safety.

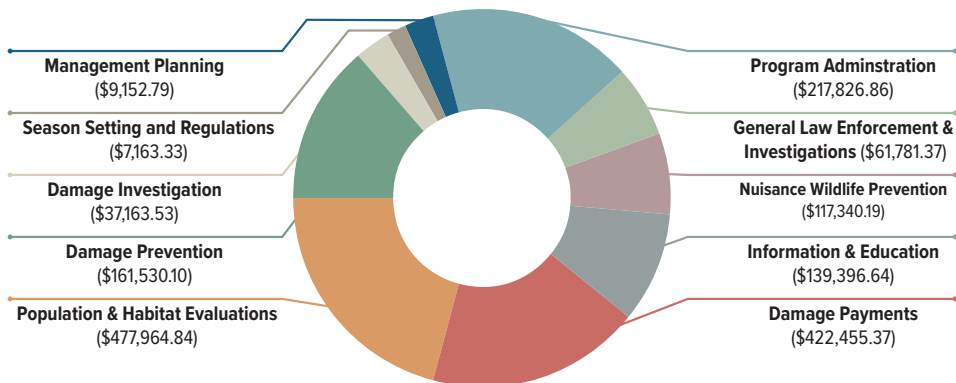


Public Perceptions

Some view grizzlies as iconic symbols, while others see them as threats. Game and Fish navigates polarizing opinions while promoting science-based, balanced management.

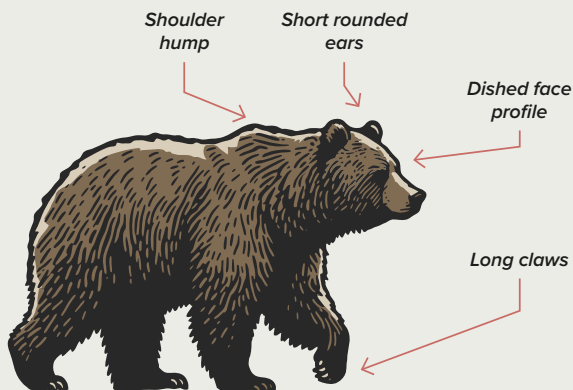
Funding the Effort

Grizzly management costs Game and Fish \$1.65 million in direct expenditures annually (Fiscal Years 20-24), funded largely by license sales and a federal excise tax on hunting and recreational equipment.



GRIZZLY BEAR PROFILE

Grizzly bears are a subspecies of the brown bear and are recognized by their distinct physical features. They have a muscular shoulder hump, which is used for digging. Grizzlies have large, dish-shaped faces, long claws (up to 4 inches) and an exceptional sense of smell, which they rely on to locate food from miles away. Their fur ranges from light brown to nearly black, often with silvery or “grizzled” tips that give them their name.



Weight

The adult bruins typically weigh between 250-700 pounds in Wyoming, with males being larger than females.

Lifespan

Grizzly bears can live beyond 25 years in the wild and are highly adaptable, playing a vital role in ecosystem function.

Diet

They are omnivores with a diet that includes plants, berries, insects, fish and occasionally large mammals.



Tracks

Their front tracks are identifiable by long claws and five in-line toes.



Distribution in Wyoming

From 1990-2022, the area of occupied range has increased steadily at a rate of 3.65% per year, with a high of 27, 208 square miles occupied by grizzly bears in 2020. The range has stabilized in size since 2020, suggesting that grizzly bears are occupying all ecologically and socially suitable areas in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

- Grizzly bear recovery zone
- Demographic monitoring area
- Total grizzly bear occupied range



Population Estimates from the Integrated Population Model



THE WORK OF GAME & FISH

Monitoring

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department leads grizzly monitoring in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Biologists capture and collar bears annually, collecting vital data on survival, reproduction and mortality. This long-term dataset informs science-based management decisions and helps ensure documentation of population health.

Research

Grizzly bear management is rooted in peer-reviewed science. Game and Fish analyzes data and contributes to studies, advancing species knowledge. As part of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, the department provides insights into habitat, behavior and ecosystem impacts, such as interactions within the grizzly bear population and with other species.

Conflict Response

Specialized teams respond to conflicts involving property damage, livestock depredation and public safety. Staff mitigate risks, assist communities and work to prevent human-wildlife conflicts through proactive management, including relocation and removal.

Education

Through the Bear Wise Wyoming program, the Game and Fish promotes bear safety to hunters, campers, landowners and communities. Outreach helps reduce conflict potential and fosters understanding and tolerance for grizzly bears.

Collaboration

Game and Fish collaborates with federal agencies, tribes, private landowners and stakeholders across the GYE to manage grizzlies. Partnerships with United States Forest Service, National Park Service, producers, and local groups ensure balanced, ecosystem-wide conservation.

Training

Wyoming Game and Fish provides expertise on grizzly conflict management and capture techniques, training agencies nationwide and internationally to enhance large carnivore conservation strategies.



BY THE NUMBERS

9

Number of full-time Wyoming Game and Fish Department staff assigned to work on grizzly bears.

51

Scientific articles Game and Fish staff have written or co-written on grizzly bears in the past 15 years, including peer-reviewed papers and technical reports.

200

On average, the number of grizzly bears born each year in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

231

The average number of verified conflicts with grizzly bears each year in Wyoming.

266

Different plant and animal species grizzly bears eat in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

711

Pounds of the largest grizzly bear caught by Game and Fish in the last decade.

1,030

The population estimate of Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bears in 2023.

2,300

The number of grizzly bears captured since 1990 for monitoring or conflict management purposes by Game and Fish.

22,000+

People in Wyoming reached annually with Bear Wise education.



BEARWISE WYOMING

Bear Wise Wyoming is the foundation of grizzly bear conservation education and outreach in Wyoming. Check out our videos and guides to learn how to avoid attracting a bear to your home or camp, minimize your risk while recreating in areas occupied by bears and what to do if you encounter a bear.

Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/wy-bearwise to learn more about bear safety in Wyoming.

