

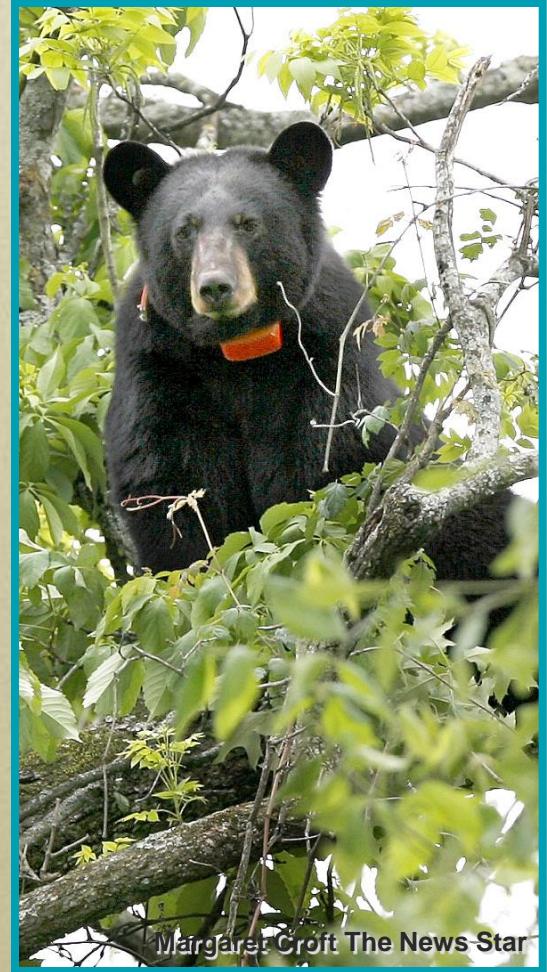


Florida Black Bears

Ursus americanus floridanus

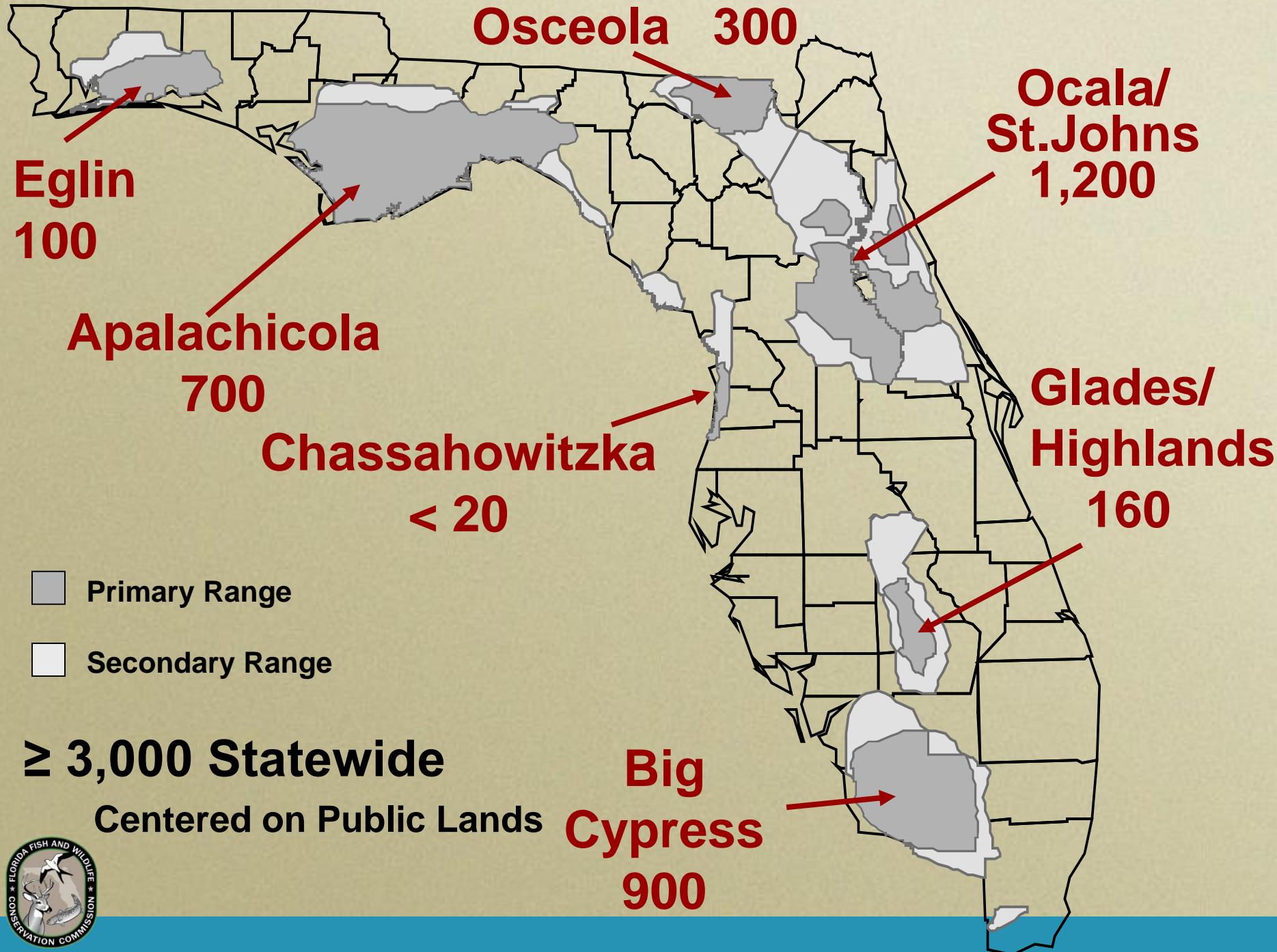
History

- European Settlement = 11,000
- 1950's = 500
- 1974 = Listed as threatened
- 1994 = Closed all bear hunting
- 2010 = New Listed Species Rule
- 2012 = Removed from list



Margaret Croft The News Star





Males vs. Females

- 250-450lbs (760 lbs)
- 62 sq. miles
- More risk-taking
- 125 -250lbs (400 lbs)
- 15 sq. miles
- More secretive/careful

Male
350 lbs



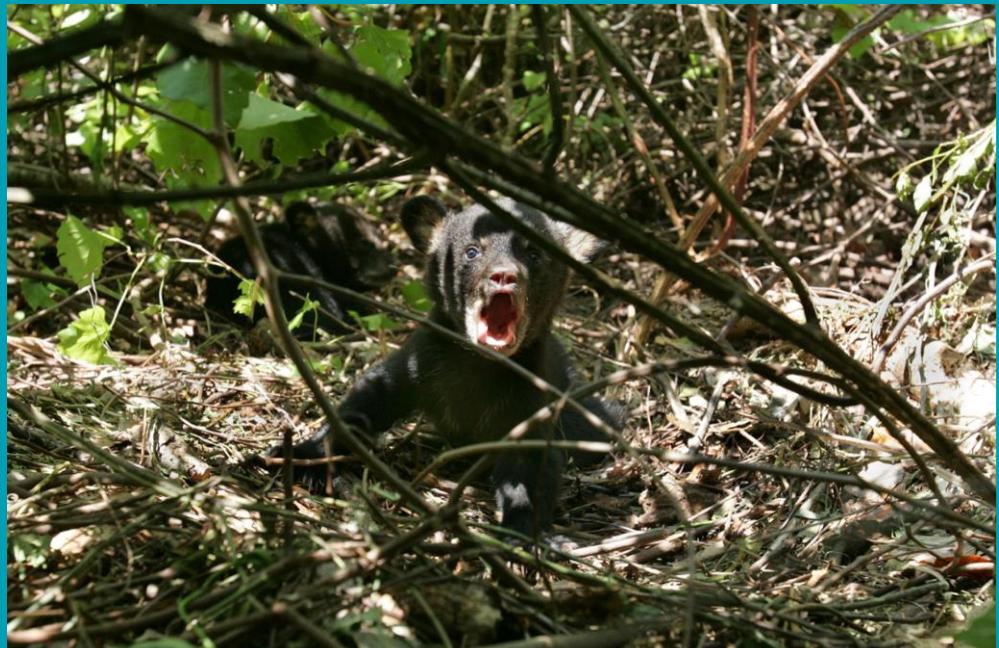
Female
150 lbs

Breeding



- June to July
- Delayed
Implantation

- Born in Feb. in den



Cubs

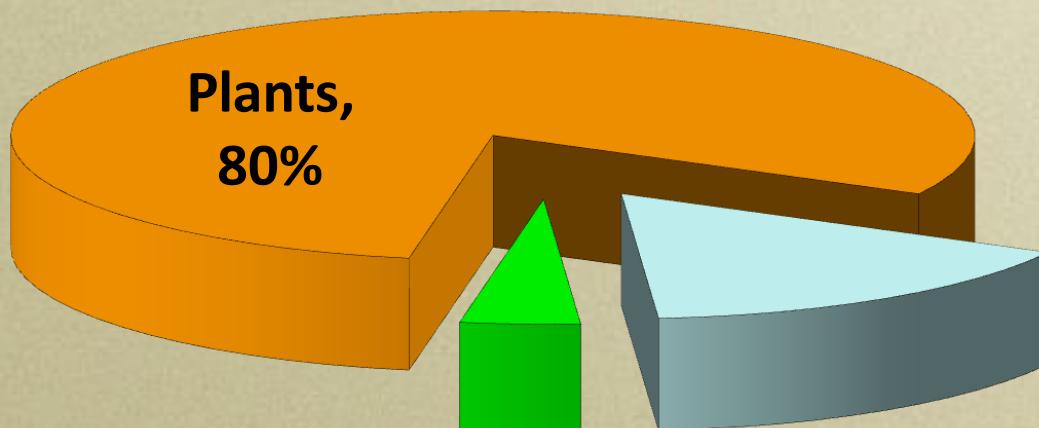
- 12 oz at birth
- 1-5/litter
(average = 2-3)



- 5 lb by April
- Mobile
- Stay with mom 1.5 yr



Diet



Animals,
4%

Insects,
16%



Behavior



Communication



Avoidance

- 90% of time
- Runs
- Hides
- Climbs



Curiosity

- Stands upright
- Ears/nose high
- Better to see/smell
- NOT aggressive



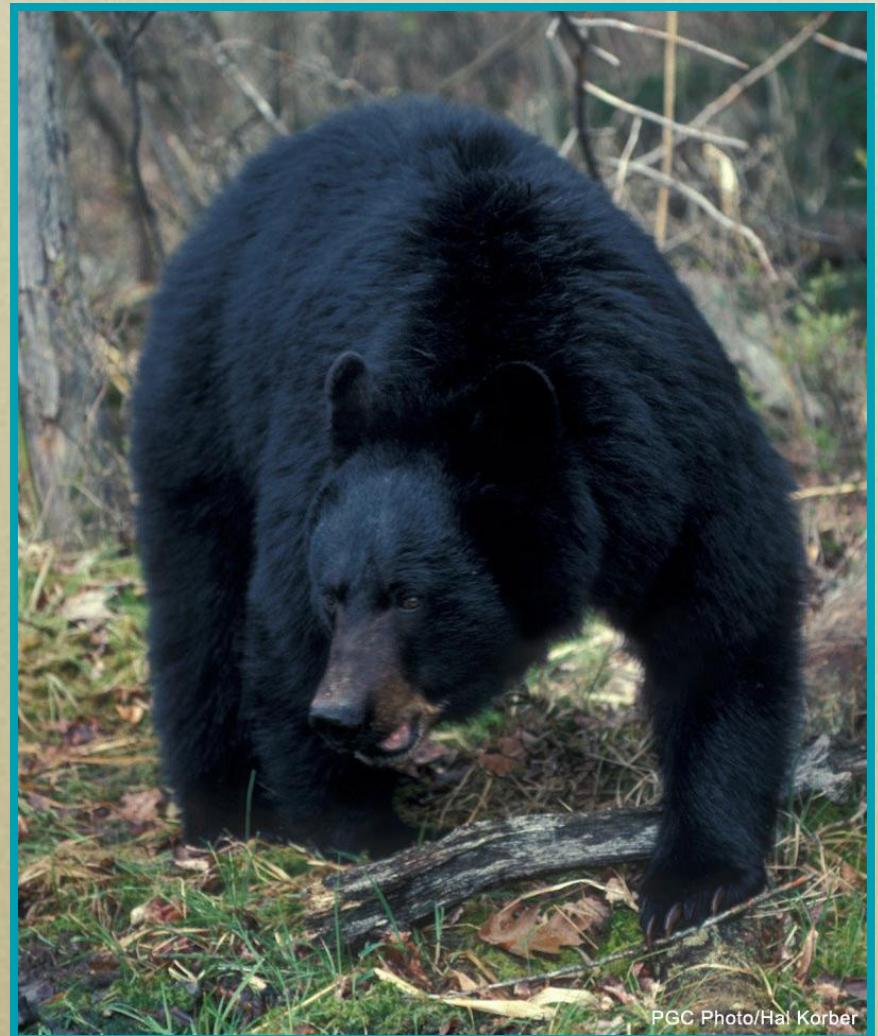


Video by Dean
Weber
MyFWC



Defensive/Warning

- Personal space
- We can de-escalate



PGC Photo/Hal Karber



Defensive/Warning



Her rushes are ritualized and consistent.

©NABC www.bear.org

Jaw popping

Ground stomp

Bluff charge

Huff

Ears pinned back



Bear Encounter vs. Bear Attack

- DO NOT RUN or PLAY DEAD!



**16 people have been scratched or bitten
by bears in Florida.**



- Back away slowly
- Talk quietly

- Raise your arms, yell
- Fight back



Human Influence

18.8 million residents +
5 million visitors/day

- Habituation
 - accustomed to people
- Food Conditioned
 - associates people with food
- Food Conditioned & Habituated
 - strong association & not afraid to approach

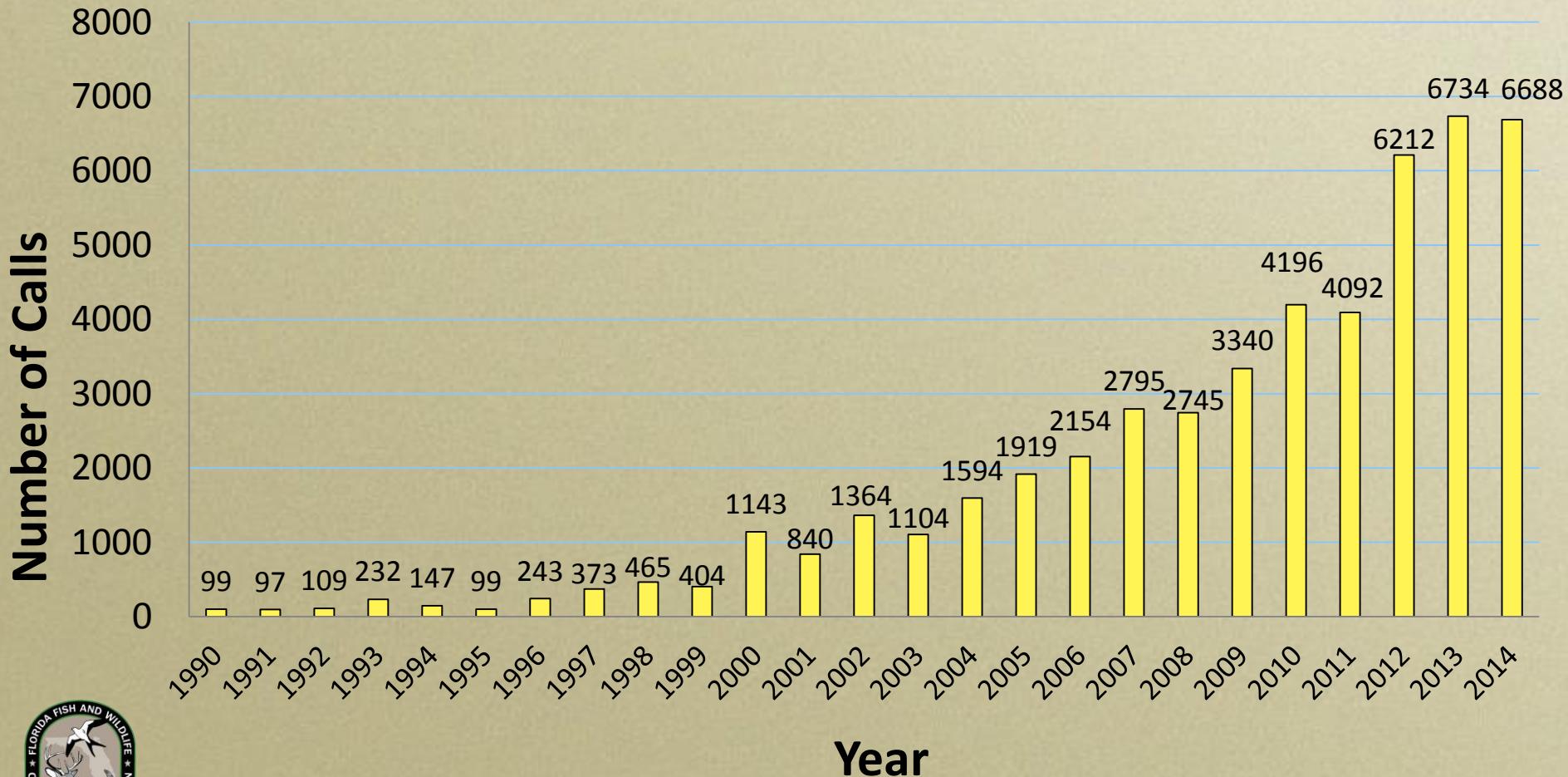


Human Influence



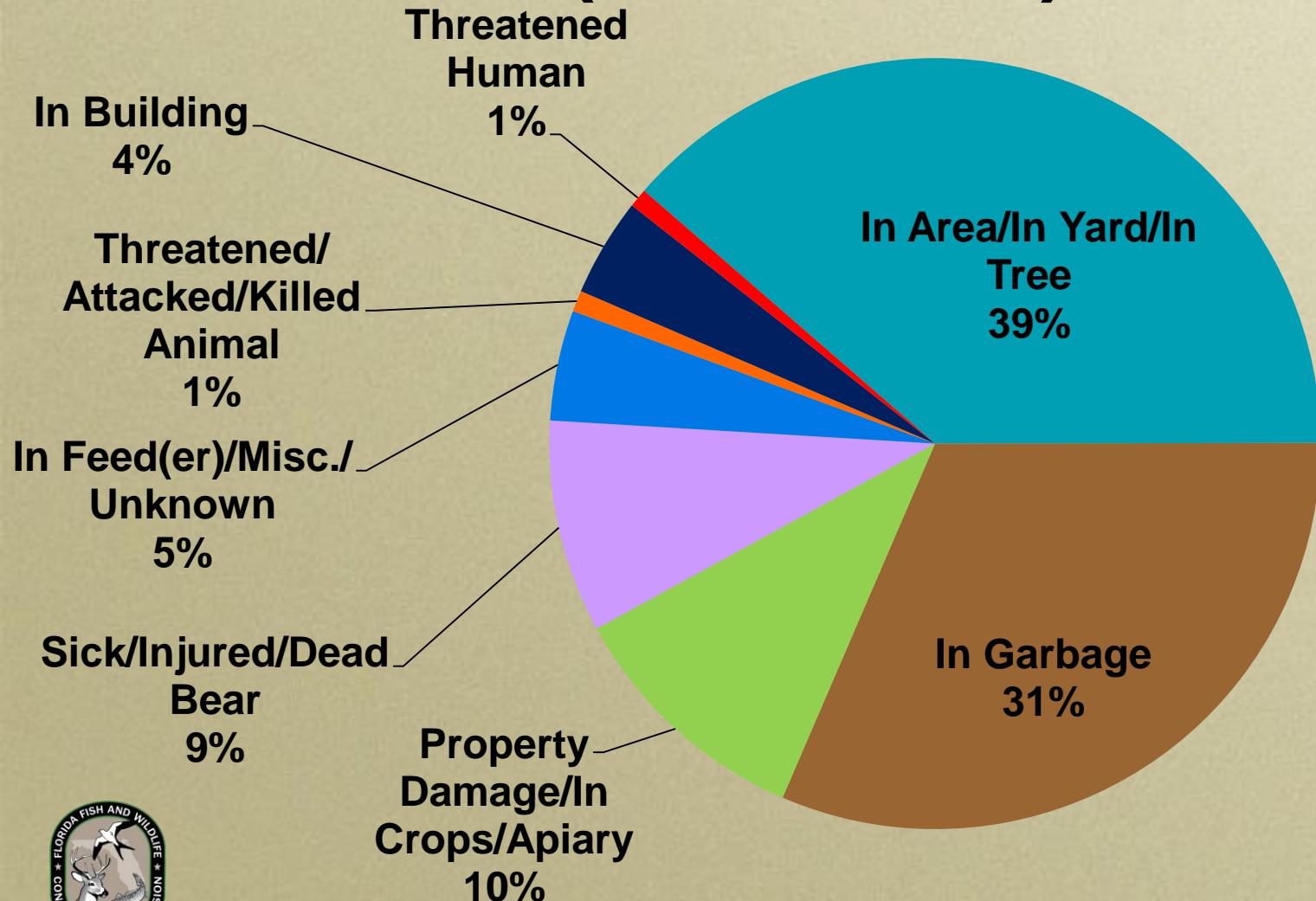
Statewide Bear Calls 1990-2014

(n = 49,188)



Human/Bear Conflicts 1990 - 2014

(n = 49,188)



Garbage (Commercial)

- Switch out plastic doors with steel doors
- Clip on side



Residential Garbage

- Secure in building until morning pickup
- Retrofit cans
- Build Caddy
- Buy new cans

Bear resistant containers
and plans for building
one are at:
MyFWC.com/bear



Gardens, Livestock, Beeyards



Grit.com



EHow.com

“How-To” video available on
[YouTube.com/myFWCvideos](https://www.youtube.com/user/myFWCvideos)



Gardens, Livestock, Beeyards



Bird Feeders

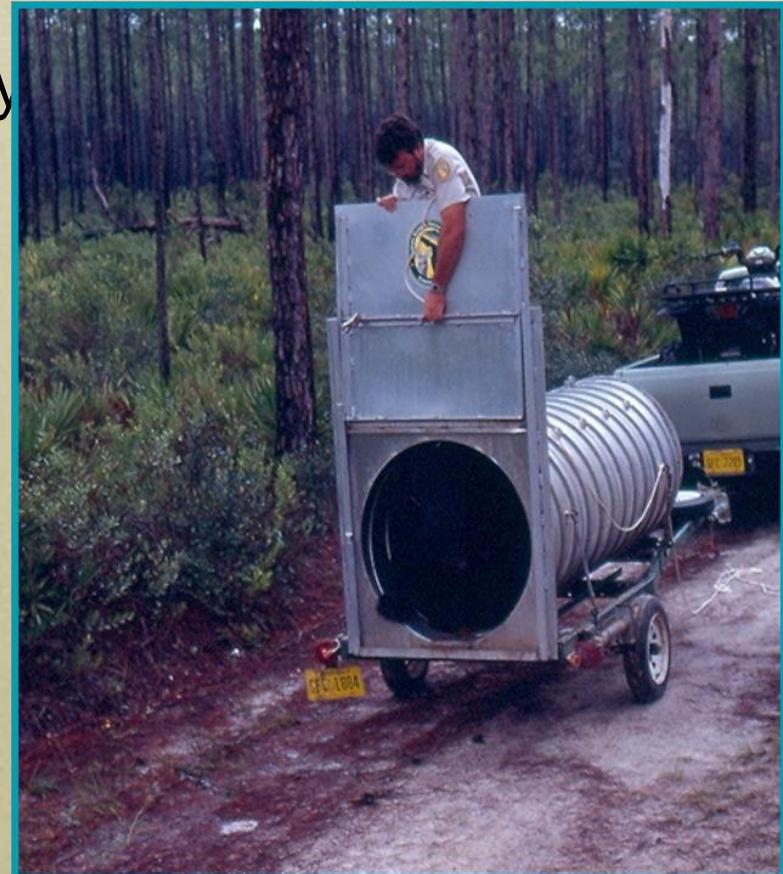


FWC Policy

- Technical assistance via the phone
- Emphasis on personal responsibility
- Secure attractants because
another bear WILL visit

Why Not Trap and Relocate?

- Moving problem to new area
- 50% Repeat Offense
- 70% Return or Wander
- No remote/empty areas left



Feeding Bears is Illegal

- 68A-4.001 “Intentionally placing food or garbage, allowing the placement of food or garbage, or offering food or garbage in such a manner that it attracts black bears, foxes or raccoons and in a manner that is likely to create or creates a public nuisance prohibited.”



Terry DeBruyn



Bear in Neighborhood

- If in tree, scared or feeding
- Clear area
- Allow bears to find their way out
- Likely come down when clear /at dark
- Do not chase/corner



Deter Bears from the Neighborhood

- Human Dominance
- Pots and pans
- Car and Air Horns
- Motion Sprinklers
- Motion Lights
- Firecrackers



Human Dominance



Video by Nishanto Kane



Scare and Secure

- Takes time to learn attractants secure
- Will return periodically to check...be vigilant!
- “ Scare that Bear”
- Only need to slip up once



Proposed Legislative Changes

Changes to Feeding Rule

Staff recommends replacing the existing language of Florida Administrative Code Rule 68A-4.001 (3) with the following:

*"Placing food or garbage, allowing the placement of food or garbage, or offering food or garbage in such a manner that **the person knew or should have known** it attracts black bears, **coyotes**, foxes or raccoons and in a manner that is likely to create or creates a public nuisance, **property damage, or a public safety risk** is prohibited."*



Proposed Legislative Changes

Feeding Rule Penalties:

- Current = 2nd degree misdemeanor (criminal)
- Proposed Penalty Change
 - All feeding rules (except Marine Fish):
 - 1st Offense = Non-criminal, \$100 fine
 - 2nd Offense = 2nd degree misdemeanor
 - Bears and Crocodilians Only
 - 3rd Offense = 1st degree misdemeanor
 - 4th+ Offense = 3rd degree felony



Proposed Legislative Changes

Changes to Bear Conservation Rule

- Allow for bear depredation permit when:
 - ✓ damage to property
 - ✓ protective methods defeated OR no viable options
 - ✓ FWC unable to capture after 4 trap nights



Changes to Bear Policy

- Allow property owners/lessees to scare bears:
 - ✓ paintball guns
 - ✓ slingshots
 - ✓ bear spray



- Allow agencies/org. to train with FWC to use:
 - ✓ shotguns
 - ✓ starter pistols
 - ✓ other non-lethal



Conceptual Hunting Framework

- Consider hunting as a tool to manage bear populations and help reduce conflicts
- Take a conservative approach to ensure no negative impacts to bear populations
- Use Bear Management Plan as foundation
 - ✓ Bear Management Unit (BMU) framework
 - ✓ Population levels and goals by BMU
- Limit total mortality to $\leq 20\%$ of any subpopulation
- Females with cubs and bears <100 lbs protected



Questions/Comments?



Thank you!



 USGS Northern Divide Bear Project



MyFWC

