
YEAR THREE

**ELK HUNTER-GRIZZLY BEAR
INTERACTION RESEARCH**



Close encounters between people and grizzly bears are rare events, most often arising when people come in proximity to bear food sources. Although the odds of an encounter are low, big game hunters are a high-risk group for having a close encounter with a grizzly bear. Factors that increase the likelihood of a successful hunt (moving stealthily through the woods, masking scent, and being active at dusk and dawn) also increase the likelihood of a surprise encounter with a grizzly bear.

Generally, when hunters and grizzly bears come into close contact, more often than not both parties go their separate ways. However, these situations can be potentially life-threatening for both hunters and grizzly bears. Consequently, wildlife managers and Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) officials are seeking information on how to increase safety for both hunters and grizzly bears. In a continued effort to gather this information, researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) are continuing to monitor elk hunters and grizzly bears during the GTNP elk reduction program (WGFD Elk Hunt Areas 75 & 79).

Researchers will seek assistance from elk hunters to map when and where elk kills are made, which will provide important information to determine how GPS-collared grizzly bears locate and use elk remains. 8.5" x 11" topographic maps will be provided in the GTNP hunter information packets and large scaled detailed maps will be present at GTNP park permit drop off locations allowing successful hunters to easily mark approximate kill locations on their GTNP park permits. No personal information will be used in the study, nor would any location data of successful harvest be made available to the public.

Finally, using GPS tracking technology, researchers will investigate how the risk of grizzly bear encounters may be reduced by simultaneously studying the detailed movement patterns of hunters and grizzly bears during the hunting season. The GPS units carried by hunters are very small (2.5" x 1.25" x 0.25"), weigh only 22 grams, and require no user interface, so they will not inconvenience a hunt in any way. Hunters that have permits for Elk Hunt Areas 75 & 79 and are interested in assisting in the study should contact Mike Ebinger with the U.S. Geological Survey (406- 579-6509; mebinger@usgs.gov), Kate Wilmot with the National Park Service (307-739-3673; Katharine_wilmot@nps.gov).

Winners of the hunter participation raffle from the previous two years will be announced in September. For more information about the participation raffle please contact Steve Kilpatrick with the Wyoming Wildlife Federation (307-335-8633; stevekilpatrick@wyomingwildlife.org).