



Before your hunt, we ask that you please take a few moments to consider why it is important to select a male Grizzly Bear during your hunt.

As with all species, females play the major role in sustaining hunted populations. However, many hunters don't fully realize what effect the harvest of female bears has on both the viability of Grizzly Bear populations, and on future hunting opportunities. A slight change in adult female survivorship, such as through hunting, can have a dramatic impact on a population's growth rate.

British Columbia's Grizzly Bear harvest is monitored closely through compulsory inspection. Maintaining accurate records of the age and sex of each Grizzly Bear killed is a key component of our comprehensive Grizzly Bear Harvest Management Procedure. In British Columbia, Grizzly Bear populations have been divided into 57 Grizzly Bear Population Units (GBPUs), and the Ministry is confident that current harvest levels are sustainable within all hunted GBPUs in the province given our knowledge of population size. By policy, the total allowable mortality (including known and estimated illegal kills, motor vehicle accidents, rail kills, wildlife conflict kills and hunting) of Grizzly Bears in a given GBPU may not exceed 6% of the population (some exceptions apply). As an additional safeguard against overharvest, the maximum allowable mortality of females is 30% of the maximum mortality level. **If the female mortality exceeds 30% of the allowable mortality, then harvest opportunities will be reduced or even eliminated in future years.** If reducing the total female mortality rate is needed, it can only be effectively done by changing the hunter kill. Thus, it is the hunter who has a choice, and it is the hunter who can choose not to harvest a female Grizzly Bear.

Each year the number of Grizzly Bear LEH authorizations may be reduced because of female over-harvest. In 2011, there were numerous closures and reductions in LEH authorizations due to excessive mortality of female Grizzly bears. The South Rockies (M.U.s 4-21, 4-22, 4-24, and Zones A and B of 4-23) and South Purcells (M.U. 4-20) Grizzly Bear Population Unit have been temporarily closed largely because the female mortality over the past four years had exceeded the allowable rate. In the North, Grizzly bear hunting opportunity in the Nation (M.U.s 7-14, 7-16, 7-24, 7-25, and 7-26) and Moberly (M.U.s 7-30 and 7-31) GBPUs were also reduced to address excessive mortality of female Grizzly bears.

Additionally, there are Management Units or LEH Zones where the mortality of female bears has approached, met, or exceeded the allowable limits and the number of authorizations was reduced. These include M.U.s 3-35, 4-32, 6-02, 6-03B, 6-07, 6-11, 6-28, 7-06, 7-22, 7-29, 7-36, 7-42, 7-43, 7-48, 7-50, and 7-58. Management Units and zones where hunting has been temporarily closed, or authorizations reduced to 1, represents a reduction of approximately 23% of 2011 Grizzly bear hunting opportunity in the province due to female Grizzly bear mortality.

Your patience, self control, awareness, education and pride are all factors that can ensure BC's Grizzly Bear populations continue to be managed to a world class standard. It often takes patience and perseverance to distinguish a male from a female grizzly, and even then mistakes may be made even by experts. In some cases it can be extremely difficult to distinguish female from male Grizzly bears and this is why it is legal to harvest a female Grizzly bear. We are appealing that you and your fellow hunters consider the implications of harvesting a female bear and take the extra time to use your abilities of judgment and discrimination to identify the sex of each bear before shooting.

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Please do your research on male and female Grizzly Bear identification. A good place to start is the Yukon Territorial Government and Alaska Department of Fish and Game Bear Identification Video “Take a Closer Look” located on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Multimedia Library at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=bearbaiting.bearchoice>

(note: coloration properties of McNeil River, coastal Alaska bears are different from most Grizzly Bears in British Columbia). Generally, males have larger, less streamlined skulls than females. Adult males are also larger than females, at least a third larger, and sometimes twice as large as adult females. Another identification feature is that a female Grizzly Bear urinates behind her back legs whereas a male Grizzly Bear urinates in front of his back legs.

Thank you for your cooperation. Have a safe and memorable hunt.

Sincerely,

Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Management Branch  
Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations