

2025
Region One
Black Bear Report

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
June 2026





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is intended to provide a general summary of black bear harvest data collected by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) from Bear Management Units (BMU) 100, 101, 103, 104, 110, 120, 121, 122, 123, 130, 140, 141, 150, and 170 within Region 1 (R1) of Northwest Montana. Data is used to inform wildlife biologists, managers, fish and wildlife commissioners and members of the public on harvest and demographic trends. All data is preliminary and subject to change.

R1 encompasses the northwestern corner of Montana and differs from much of the rest of the state due to its heavily forested landscape, steep terrain and relatively high amounts of annual precipitation. Black bear regulations have varied over time both in season dates and BMU boundaries. Currently, black bears are managed within 14 BMUs in R1 (Figure 1), with boundaries generally following those identified for deer and elk hunt districts.



Figure 1. Region 1 Black Bear Management Units.



MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Black bears in Montana are managed in accordance with guidelines identified in the FWP Black Bear Environmental Impact Statement (1994). The impact statement is guided by statewide data and developed harvest criteria for statewide management and individual BMUs. The statement outlines criteria that provide safeguards against overharvest; including 1) no more than 40% of annual harvest comprised of females and 2) median age of harvested bears are > 6 years for females and > 4 years for males. More recently, the FWP Black Bear Harvest and Research Management Report (2011) indicated that age metrics from harvest data may not be the most effective way of population monitoring. FWP is currently evaluating improved monitoring methods to accurately estimate black bear abundance and population trends statewide.

Prior to 2022, successful black bear hunters were required to report harvests and present black bear hides and skulls to FWP personnel for inspection, tagging and pre-molar tooth extraction. Beginning in fall of 2022, hunters who harvested a black bear in R1 were permitted to fill out a harvest form reporting harvest information including sex, location and date as well as depositing black bear teeth in drop boxes or sending via mail to an FWP office, no longer requiring in person inspections. It is unlawful for a hunter to harvest any black bear female with cubs present or any cub less than one year old. Apart from the 2024 spring season, R1 has not set female harvest quotas that would close a BMU if female harvest proportion has been exceeded. From 2012 - 2023 the spring black bear season was open from April 15th through May 31st in most of R1. Beginning in 2022, the spring season in BMU 130 was extended to June 15th. The spring black bear season was then extended through June 15th for all BMUs throughout R1, starting with the 2024 license year. The fall black bear season occurs annually from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November.

HARVEST SUMMARY

Statewide, black bear harvest steadily increased from 2020 – 2022 with the highest harvest occurring in 2022 resulting in 2,159 bears harvested. During 2022, 749 black bears were harvested within the 14 BMUs encompassing R1 (34.7% of the statewide total). Region 1

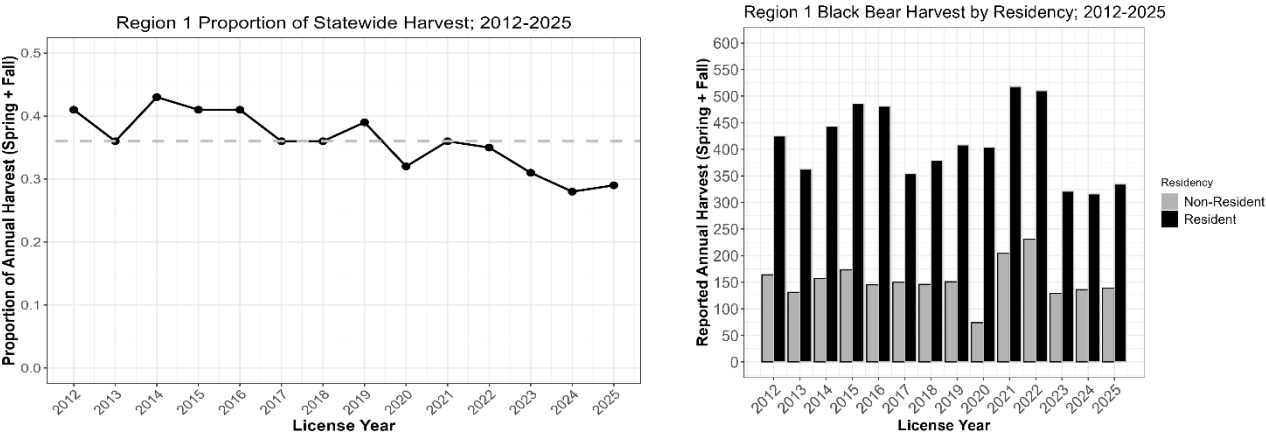




Figure 2. Annual Proportion of black bears harvested in R1 from statewide totals, 2012-2025. Dashed line represents long-term average.

continues to produce the largest proportion of statewide black bear harvest, accounting for over one third of yearly harvest on average since 2012 ($\bar{x}$ = 35.8%, Figure 2), though its overall proportion has decreased since 2022 as statewide harvest increased during 2024 and 2025.

Harvest by residents and non-residents has historically fluctuated within R1, with residents harvesting 73% of all black bears since 2012 (Figure 3). From 2012-2020 non-residents consisted of 25.6% of total harvest, since then the mean non-resident harvest has slightly increased in 2021-2025 to 29.5%.

During the 2025 license year, 473 black bears were harvested within R1 comprised of 317 males and 156 females (Figure 4). Seasonally, of the 473 total black bears harvested, 315 were harvested during spring and 158 during the fall hunting seasons. R1 black bear harvest in 2025 was slightly higher than that of 2024 (n = 454), the first year of increase since the record harvest of 749 during the 2022 license year. Despite this increase, 2025 harvest fell below the long-term average ($\bar{x}$ = 566.3, LTA; 2012- 2024) by 17.8%. Spring female harvest proportions for R1 have regularly remained < 40% since 2012, though was slightly above that threshold during 2016 (Figure 5). When considering a three-year rolling average, spring trends have shown consistent 2-3-year fluctuations in female harvest as females harvest proportions have steadily increased.

Figure 3. R1 black bear harvest by residency, 2012-2025.

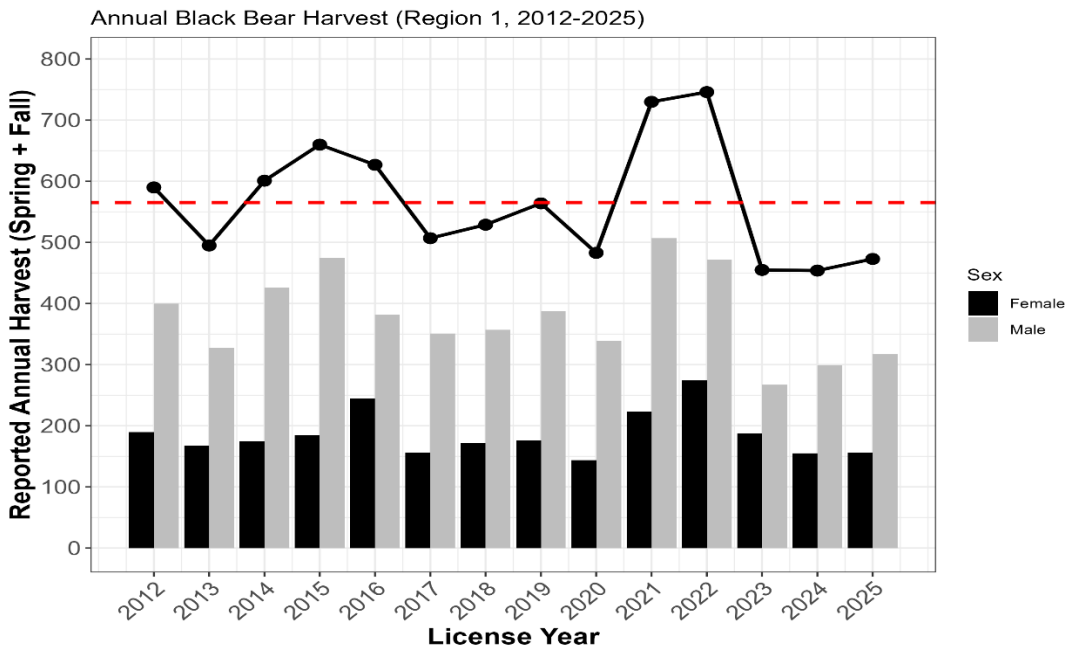


Figure 4. Total reported hunter- harvested black bears, 2012-2025. Black points and line show total harvest for each license year; dashed line indicates long term harvest average and colored bars represent harvest by sex group.

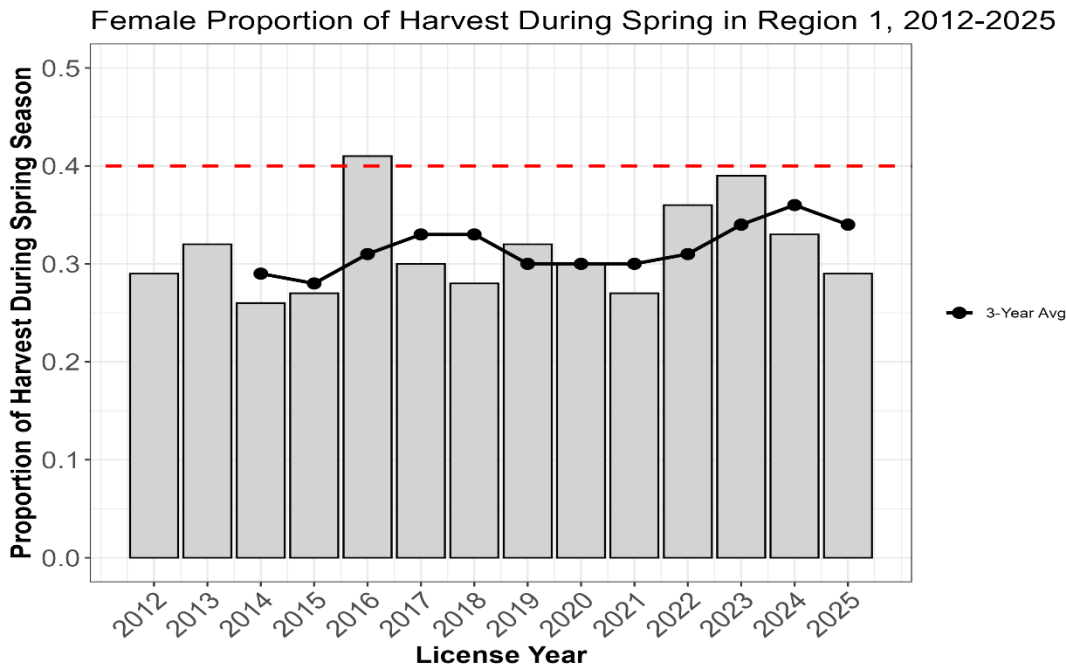


Figure 5. The proportion of Region 1 female black bears harvested during the spring season, 2012-2025. Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

BLACK BEAR TEETH AGING

Harvested black bear tooth collection has occurred in R1 since 2016, apart from 2020 as bears were not inspected nor were teeth collected due to the Covid pandemic. Mean age at harvest was ≥ 4 years for males 2016-2025 and ≥ 6 years for females in all years except 2021 (Figure 6), which meets the criteria adapted in 1994 by FWP for sustainable harvest. Since the 1994 harvest criteria guidelines were implemented, later research has questioned the value of age and sex ratio data to accurately inform harvest management (FWP 2011). Although mean age at harvest and sex composition has limitations as stand-alone values to inform management, they can help by being incorporated into future and current integrated population modeling efforts (IPM). Collection of teeth from harvested bears in R1 will continue to be mandatory to improve population monitoring efforts and inform management.

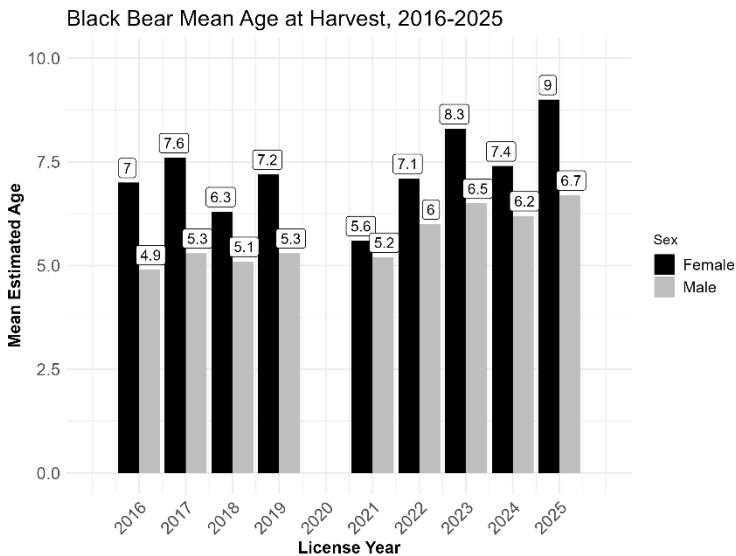


Figure 6. Mean age at harvest of black bears in Region 1, 2016 – 2025. Black bear teeth were not collected by FWP staff during 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. Data for 2025 is for spring season harvested black bears only.



ACCESS

Much of Region 1 is heavily forested mountainous terrain with elevations ranging from 1,800 ft to 9,000 ft. Most public land in northwestern Montana is owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). USFS also maintains (open/closed) the roads accessing USFS land. FWP does not provide Forest Service maps, but they are available online (search for the Forest in which you’d like to hunt). Additional land available for public hunting includes state trust (DNRC), Wildlife Management Areas (WMA; FWP), wildlife refuges (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), or private land enrolled in block management which is primarily corporate timberland. Information on block management (BMAs), as well as downloadable maps can be found on online (<https://fwp.mt.gov/hunt/access/blockmanagement>). Information about WMAs can be found on our website, including a description, location, rules, and open/close dates (<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/wildlife-management-areas>).

Region 1 BMU Land Access				
BMU	Public Land (%)	BMA Acres (2025)	WMA Acres	Approx. Elevation Range (ft)
100	90	29,538	1,072	1,800-7,600
101	79	1,306	1,486	2,630-7,000
103	51	284,525	0	2,300-6,300
104	77	52,901	0	2,300-6,900
110	85	10,201	0	3,000-7,600
120	27	103,909	0	2,900-6,000
121	83	7,023	1,552	2,150-7,950
122	54	144,878	517	3,00-7,000
123	81	2,275	0	2,200-6,000
130	90	0	1,886	3,750-9,400
140	93	0	0	3,200-8,500
141	98	0	0	3,200-8,700
150	100	0	0	4,000-9,000
170	7	166	2,783	3,000-3,900

Harvest ranges widely across BMUs with those primarily or solely in wilderness areas (141, 150) or with high human populations and little public land (170) having the lowest harvest. These data along with other helpful information (e.g., BMU maps, hunting in grizzly country) can be found on FWP’s website (<https://fwp.mt.gov/hunt/regulations/black-bear>). Weather can also greatly affect bear harvest due to its impacts on den emergence, resource use, and access.

INDIVIDUAL BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (BMU) SUMMARIES

The following pages present the available information regarding black bear harvest in each of R1’s 14 BMUs. Because BMUs vary in size, higher total harvest does not necessarily translate to higher bear densities. Care should be taken when interpreting individual point observations within the data, as it gains value when trend is interpreted across years as with long-term and 3-year averages.



BMU 100
NORTH KOOTENAI

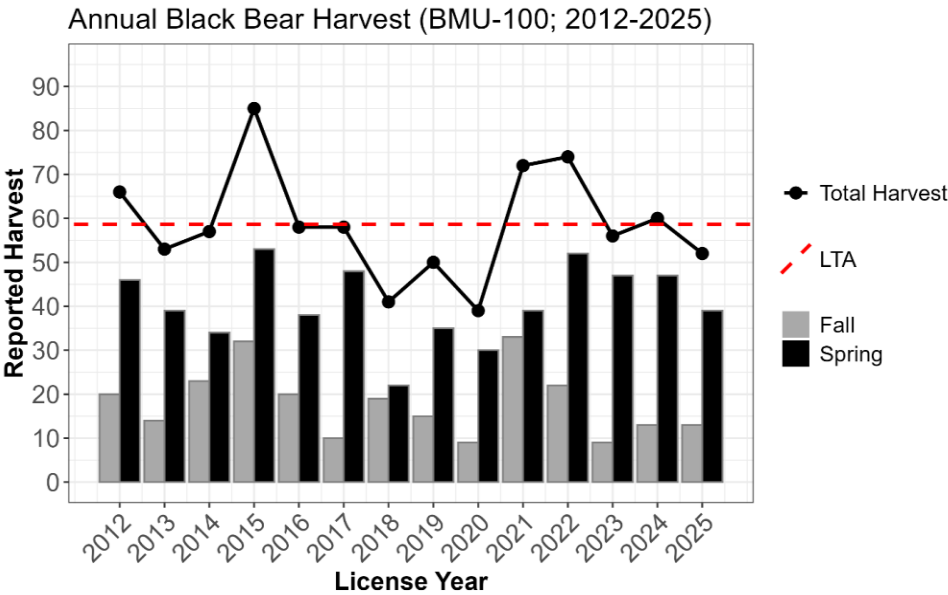
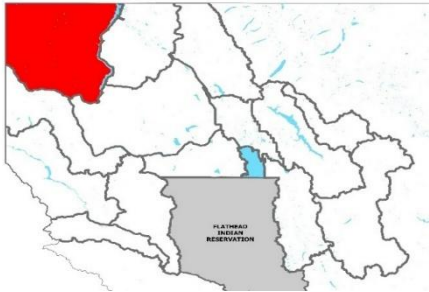


Figure 7. Black bear harvest in BMU 100 (2012-2025).

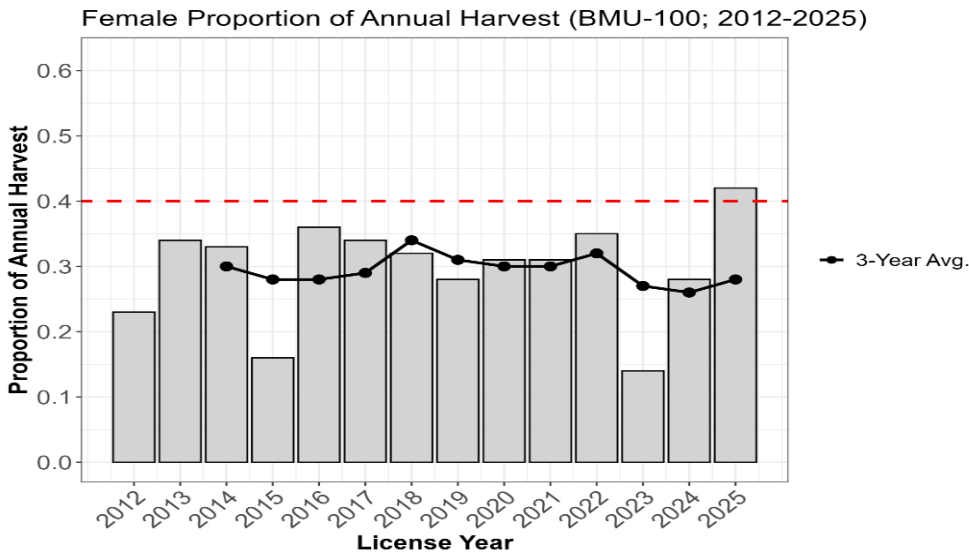


Figure 8. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 100 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

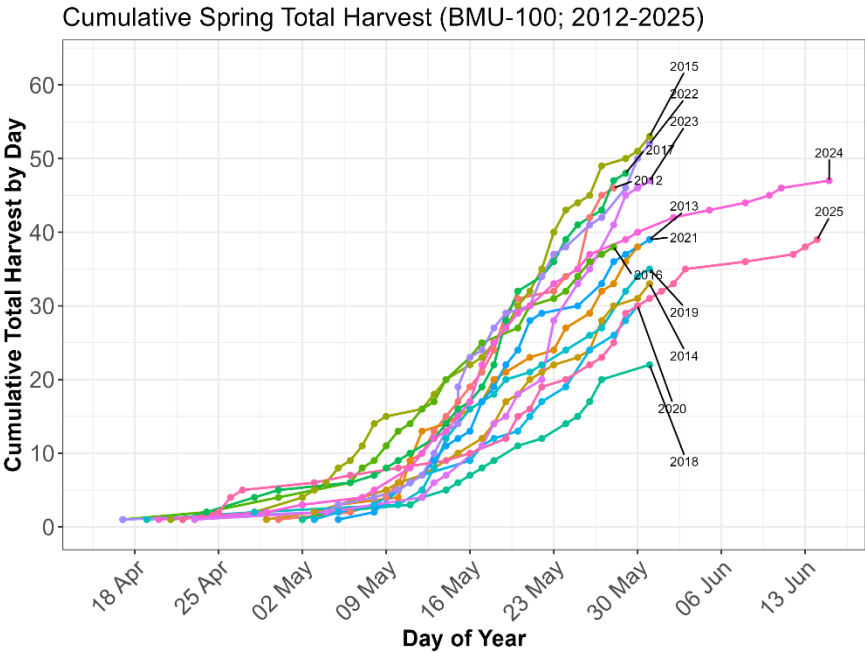


Figure 9. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 100 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

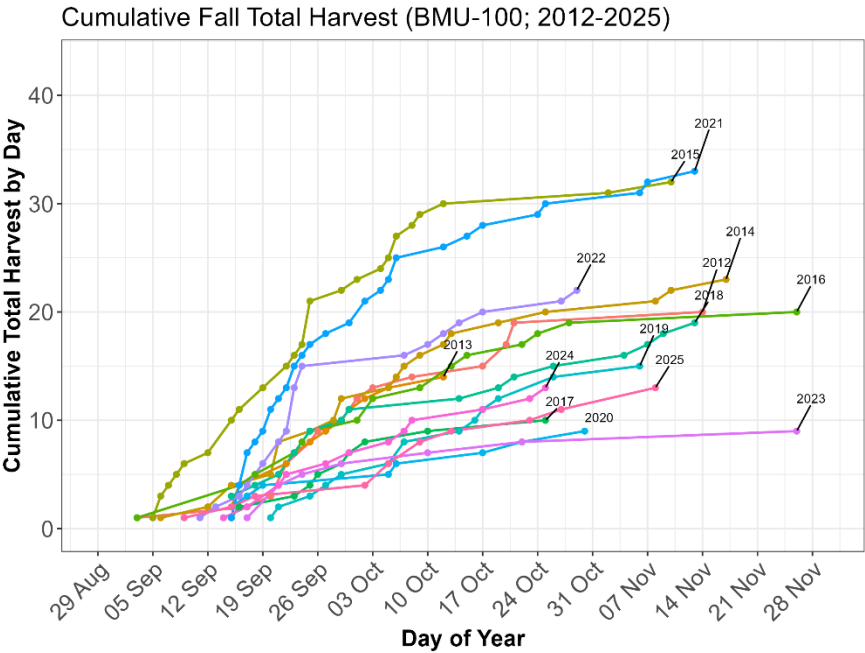


Figure 10. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 100 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 101
EUREKA

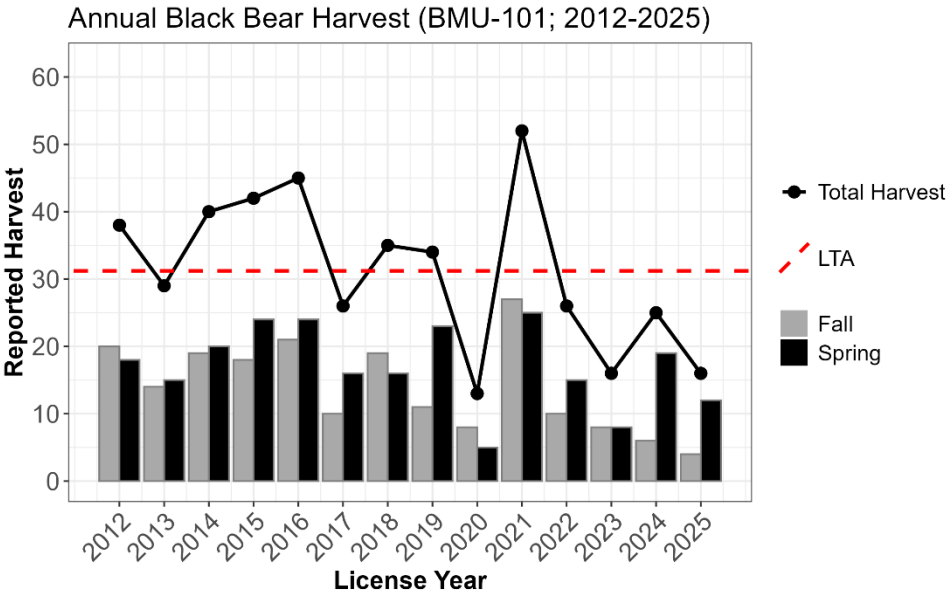
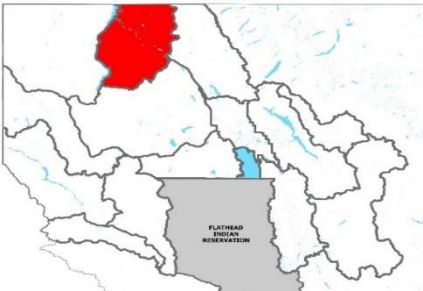


Figure 11. Black bear harvest in BMU 101 (2012-2025).

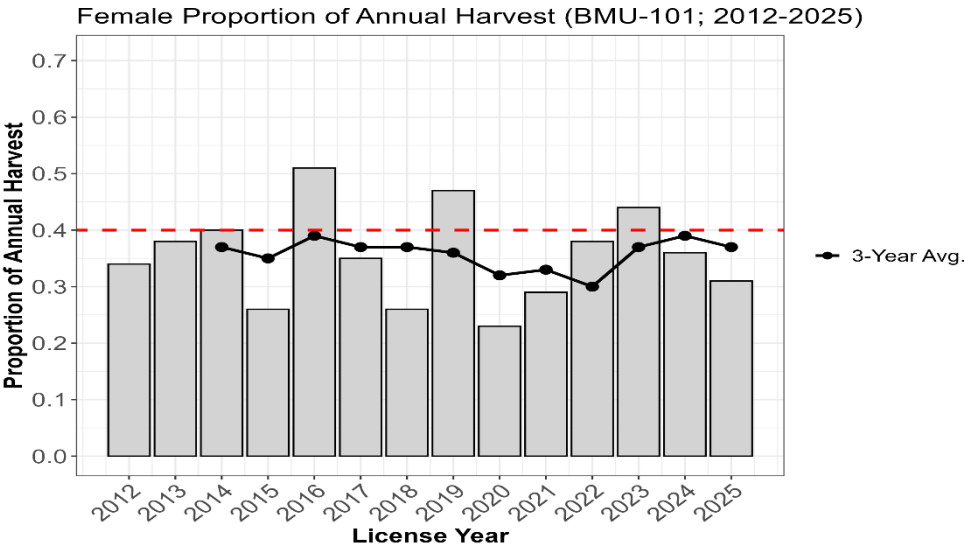


Figure 12. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 101 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

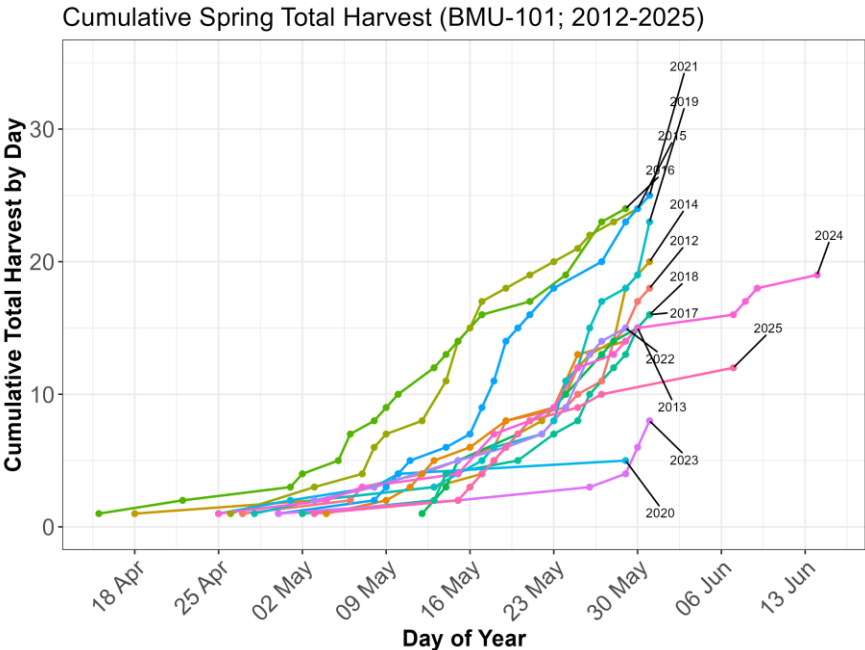


Figure 13. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 101 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

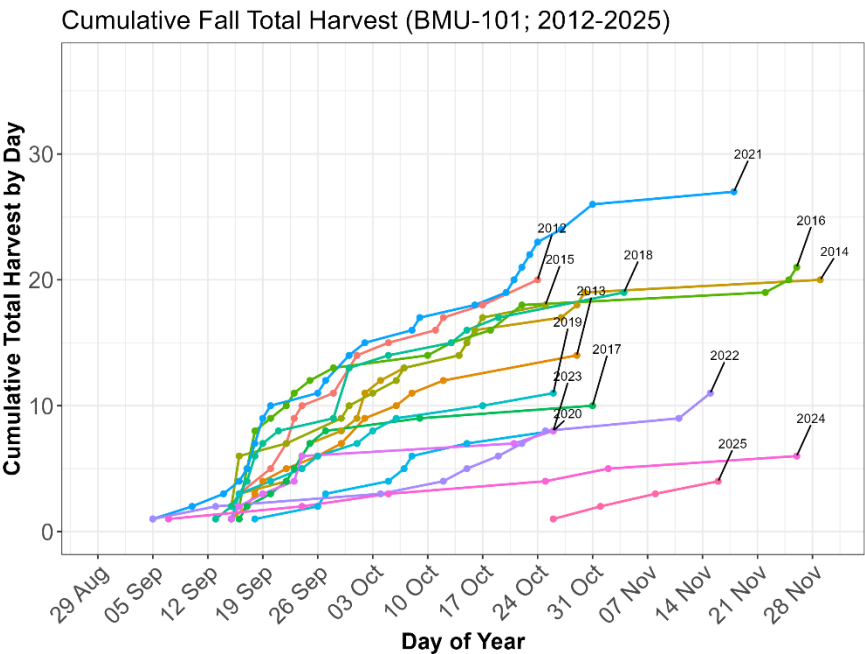


Figure 14. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 101 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 103

SALISH

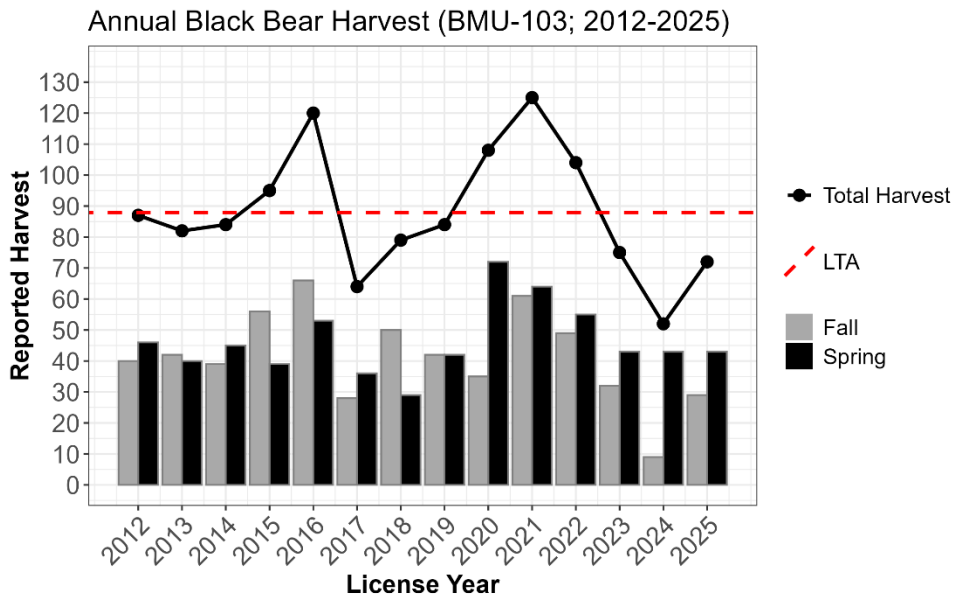
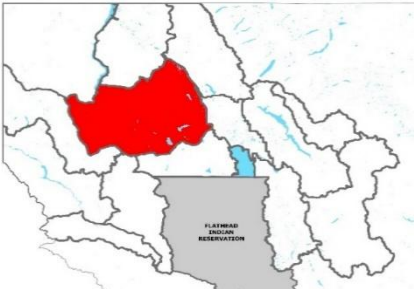


Figure 15. Black bear harvest in BMU 103 (2012-2025).

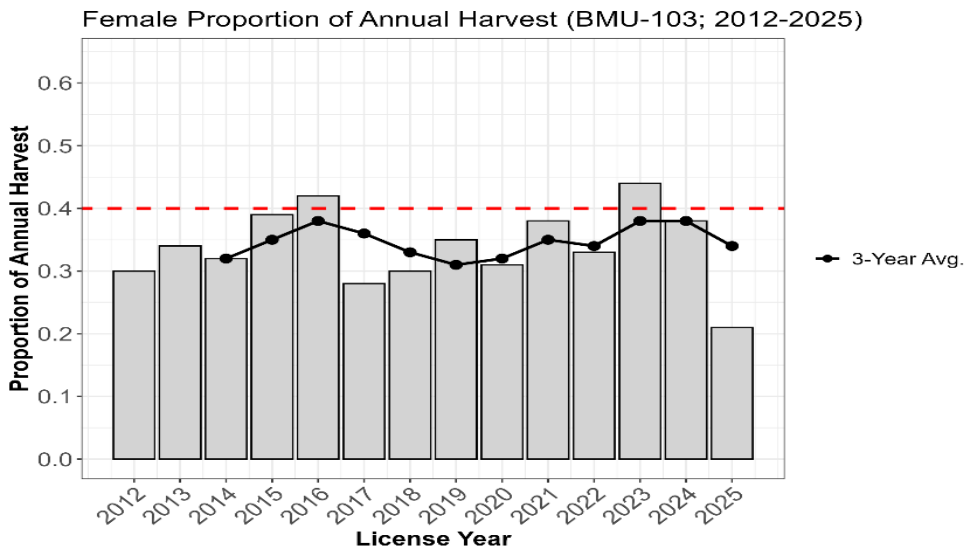


Figure 16. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 103 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

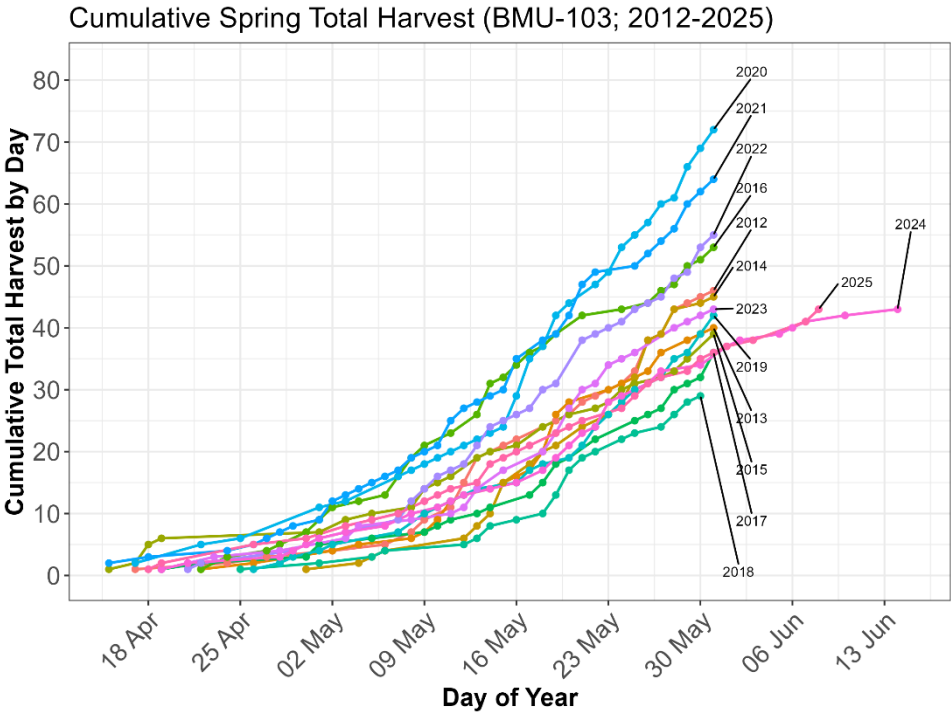


Figure 17. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 103 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

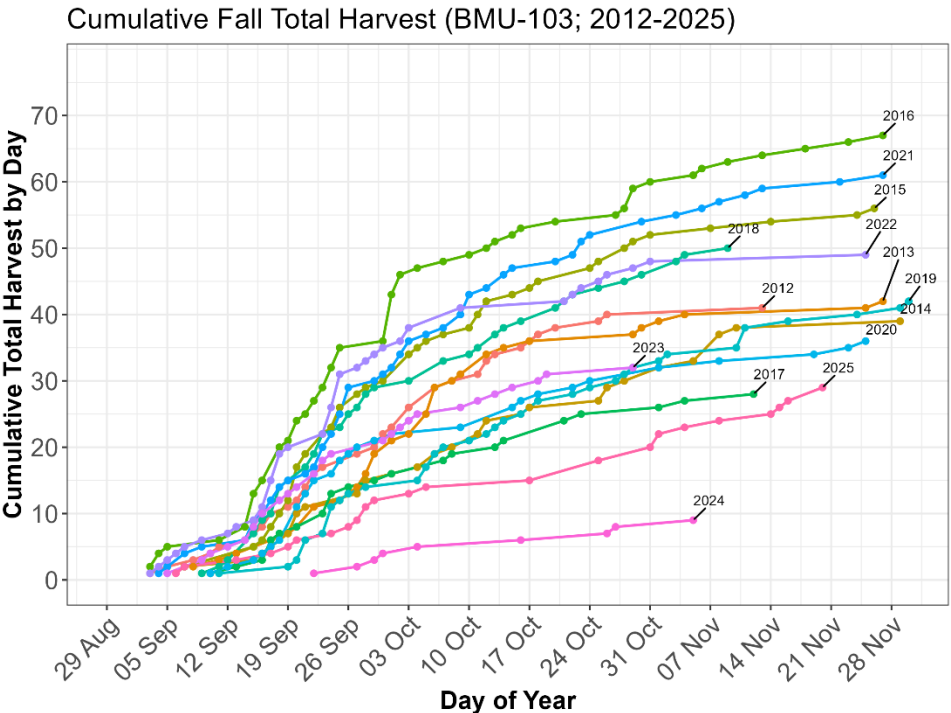


Figure 18. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 103 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 104
CABINETS

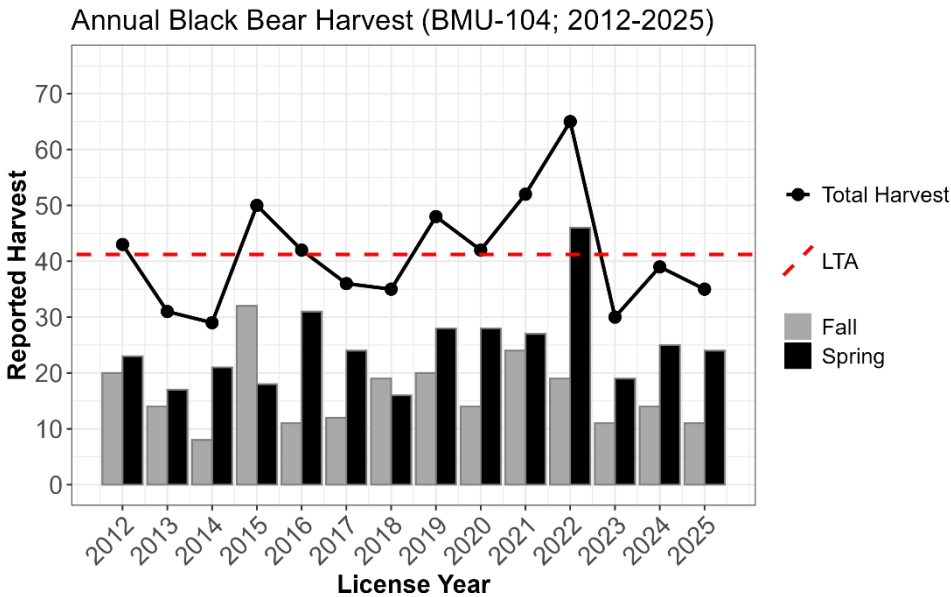
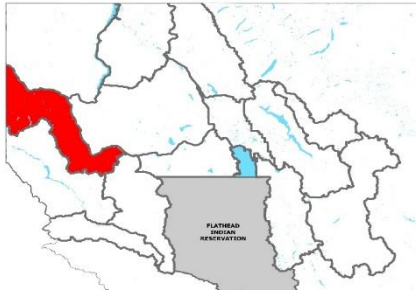


Figure 19. Black bear harvest in BMU 104 (2012-2025).

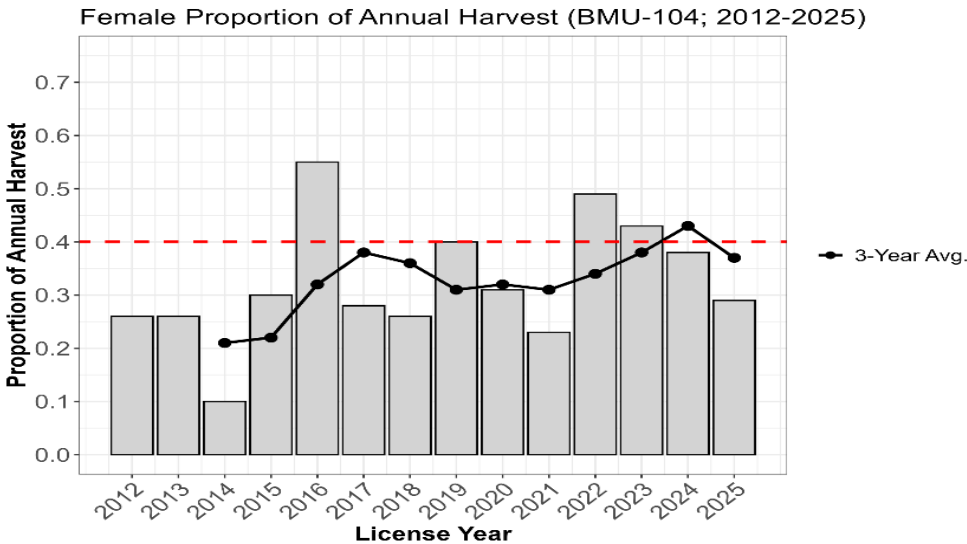


Figure 20. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 104 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

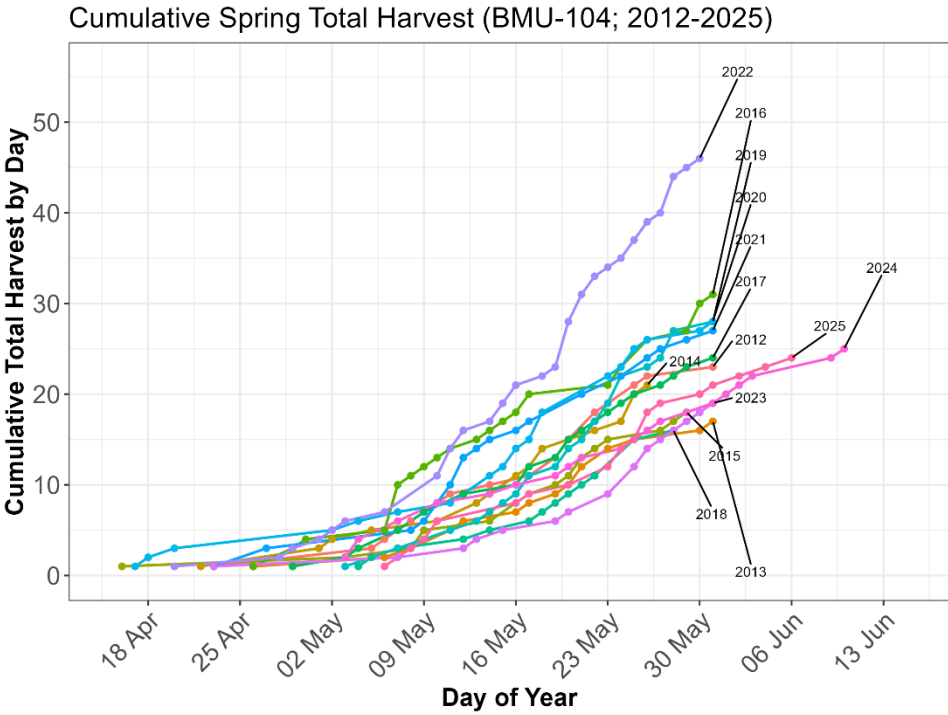


Figure 21. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 104 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

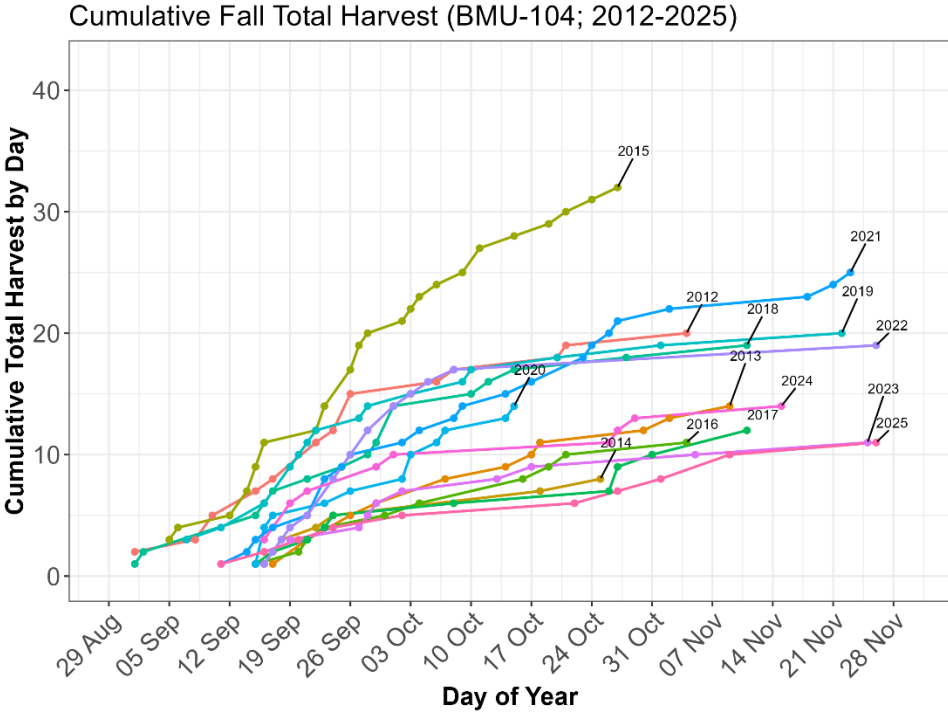


Figure 22. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 104 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 110
WHITEFISH

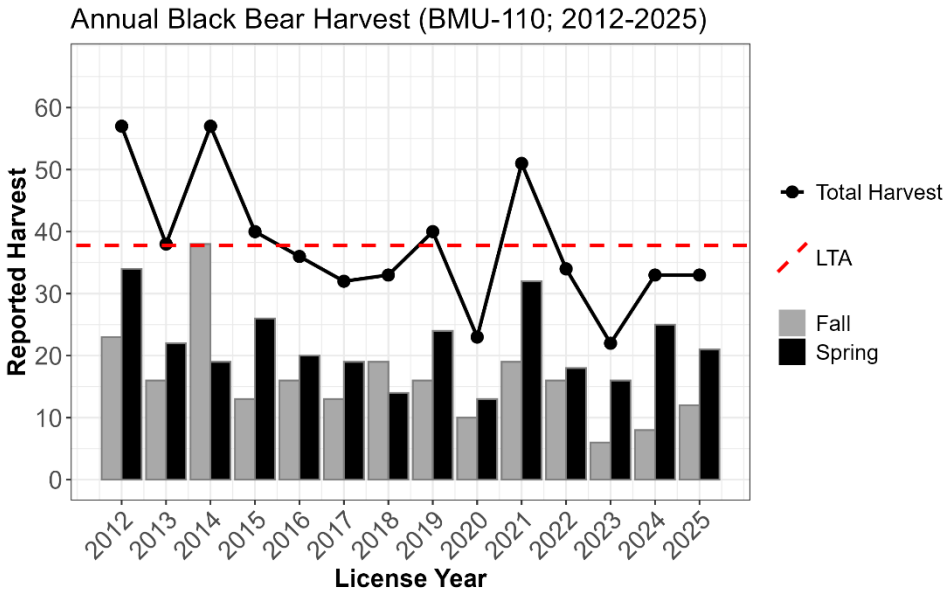
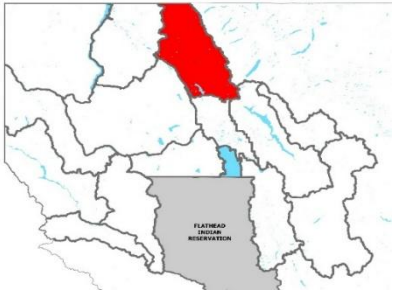


Figure 23. Black bear harvest in BMU 110 (2012-2025).

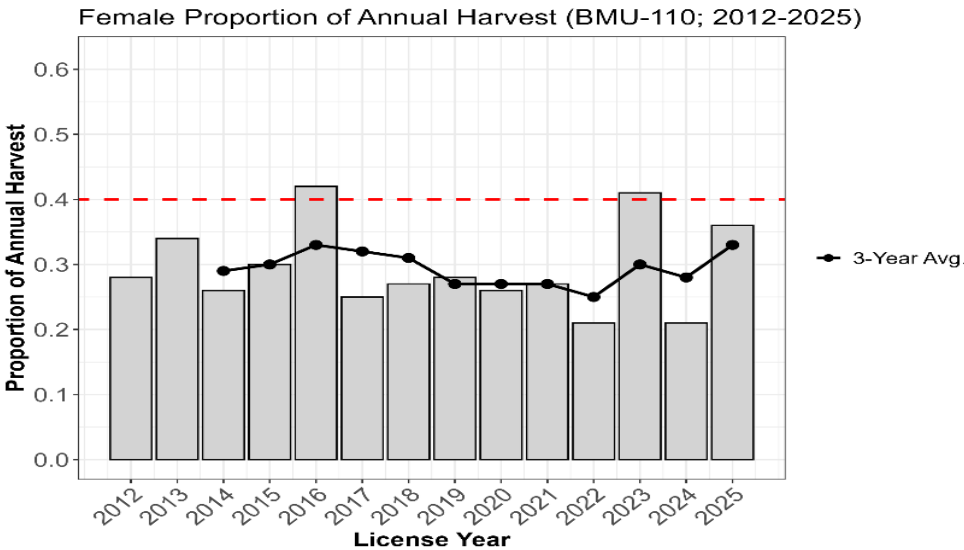


Figure 24. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 110 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

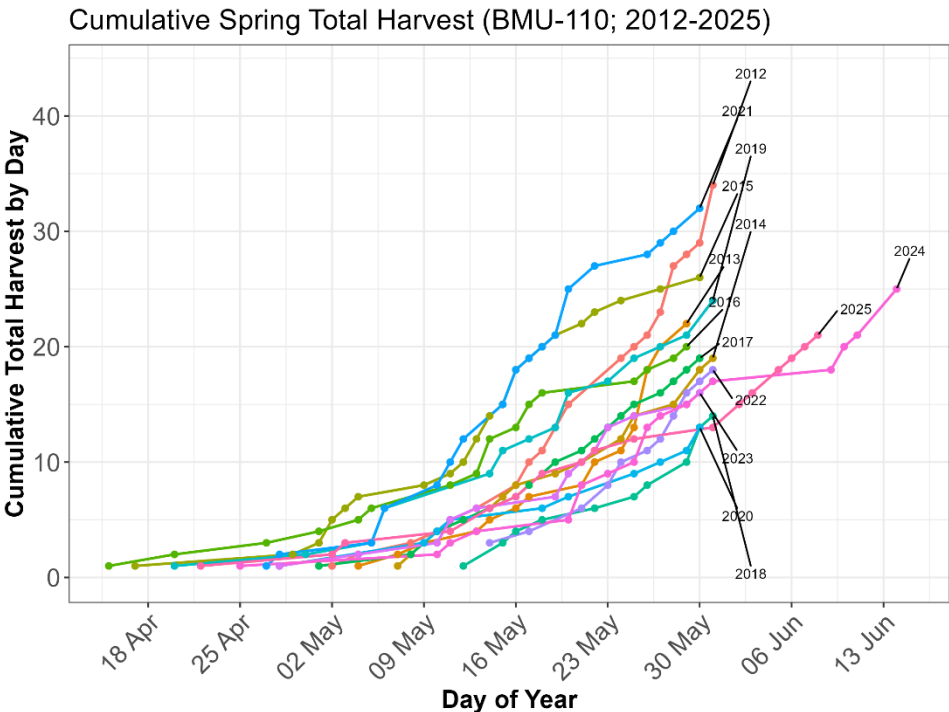


Figure 25. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 110 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

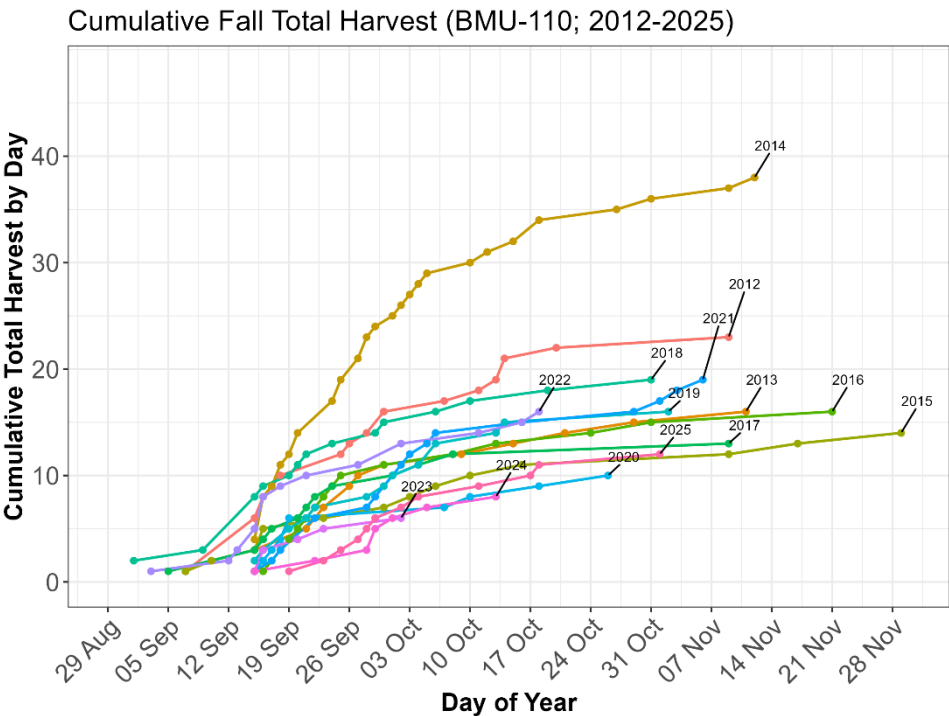


Figure 26. Male, female, long-term average and total black bear harvest in BMU 110 (2012-2025). Black points and lines indicate total reported hunter harvest, dashed line indicates long term harvest average and colored bars represent annual male and female harvest.



BMU 120
BLACKTAIL

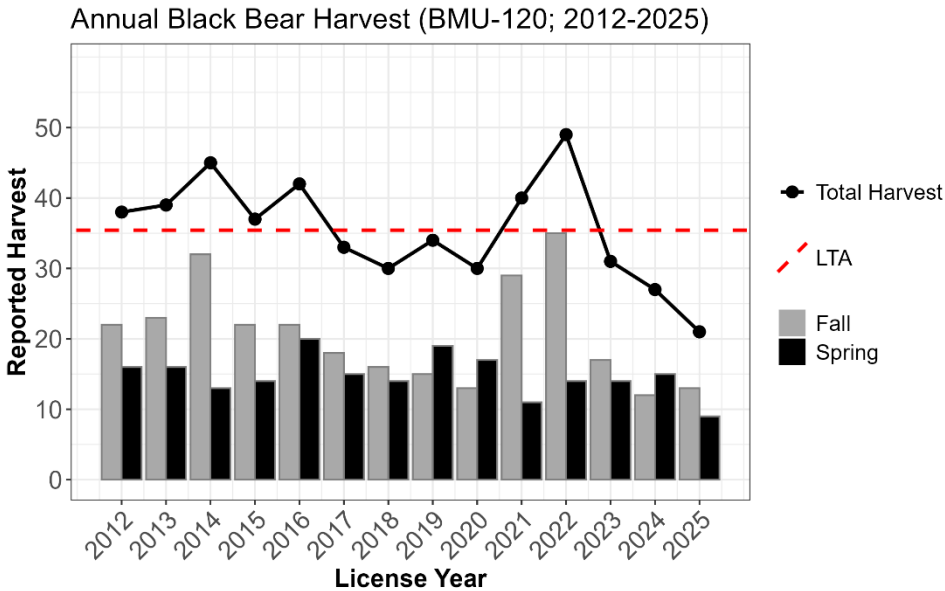
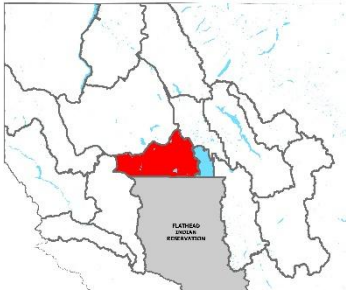


Figure 23. Black bear harvest in BMU 120 (2012-2025).

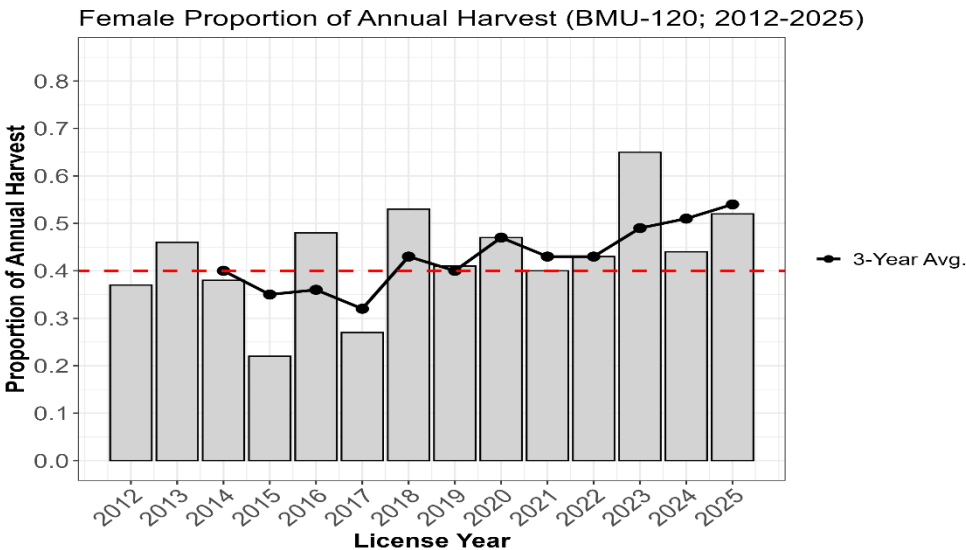


Figure 24. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 120 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

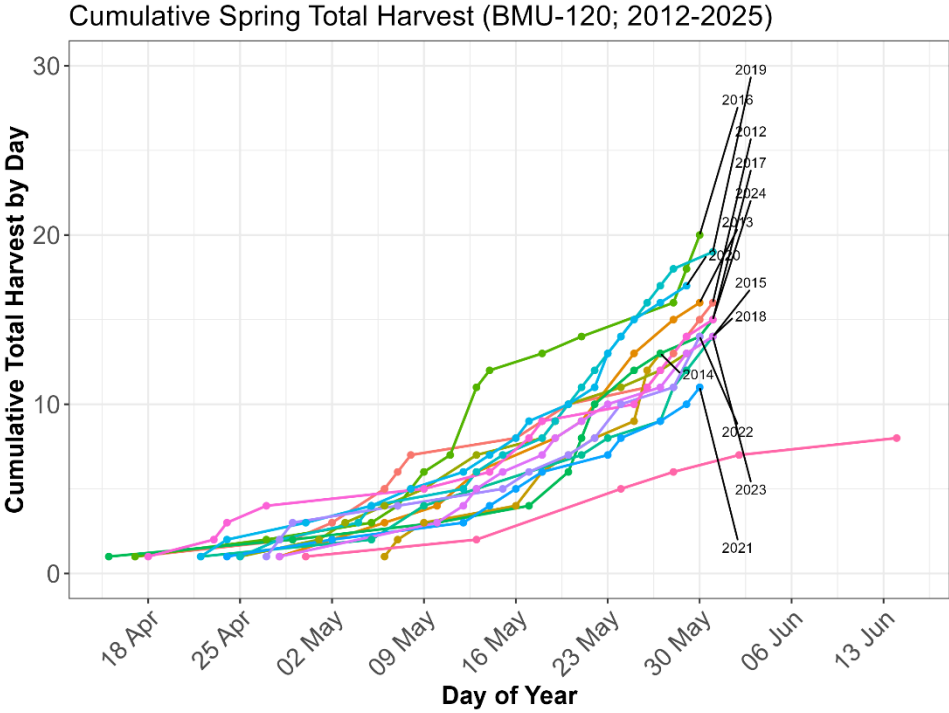


Figure 25. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 120 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

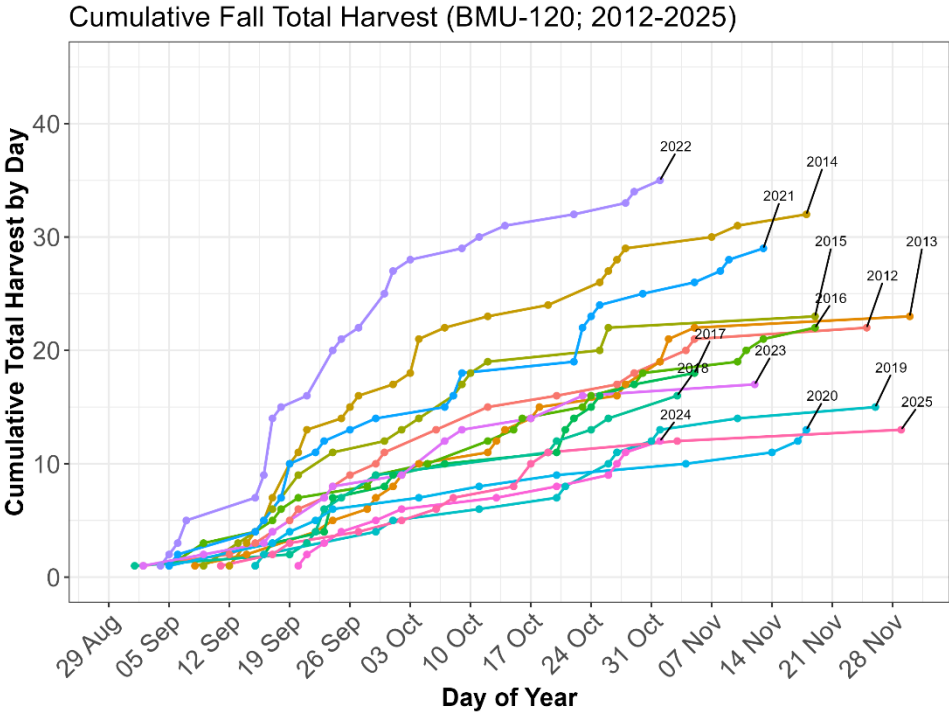


Figure 26. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 120 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 121

WEST CLARK FORK

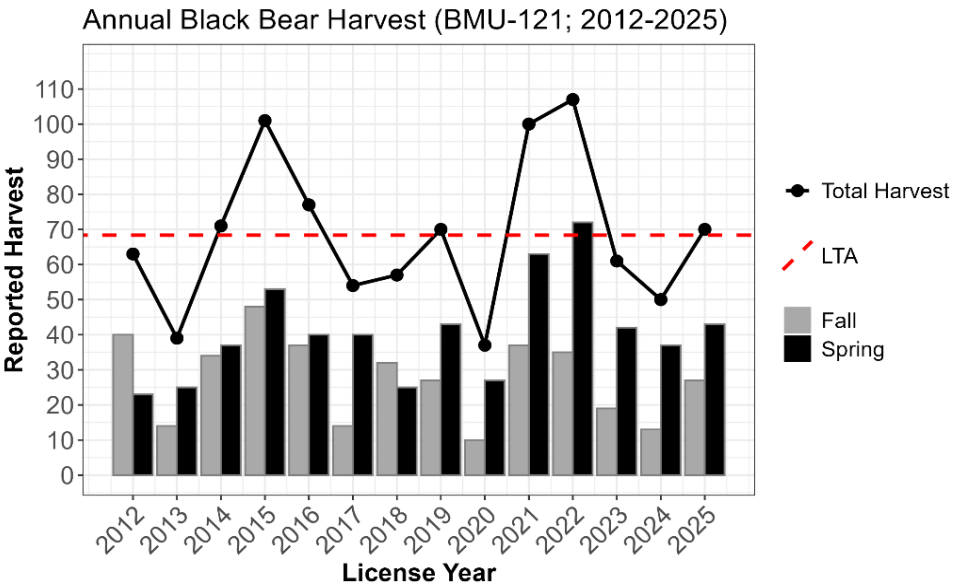
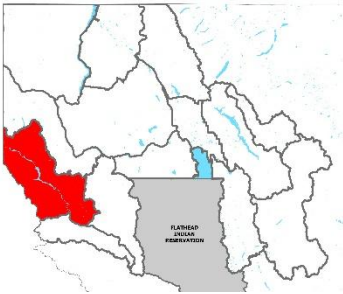


Figure 27. Black bear harvest in BMU 121 (2012-2024).

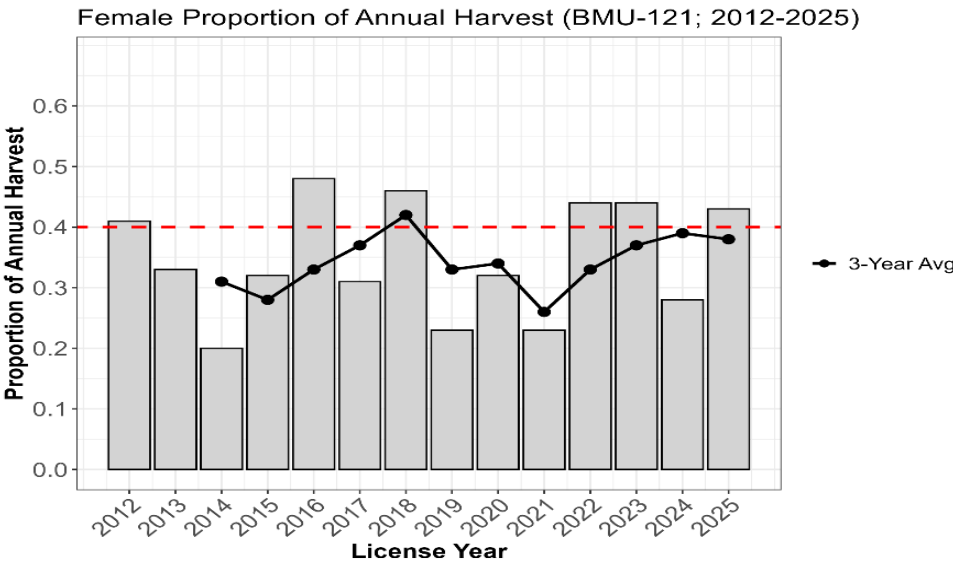


Figure 28. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 121 (2012-2024). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

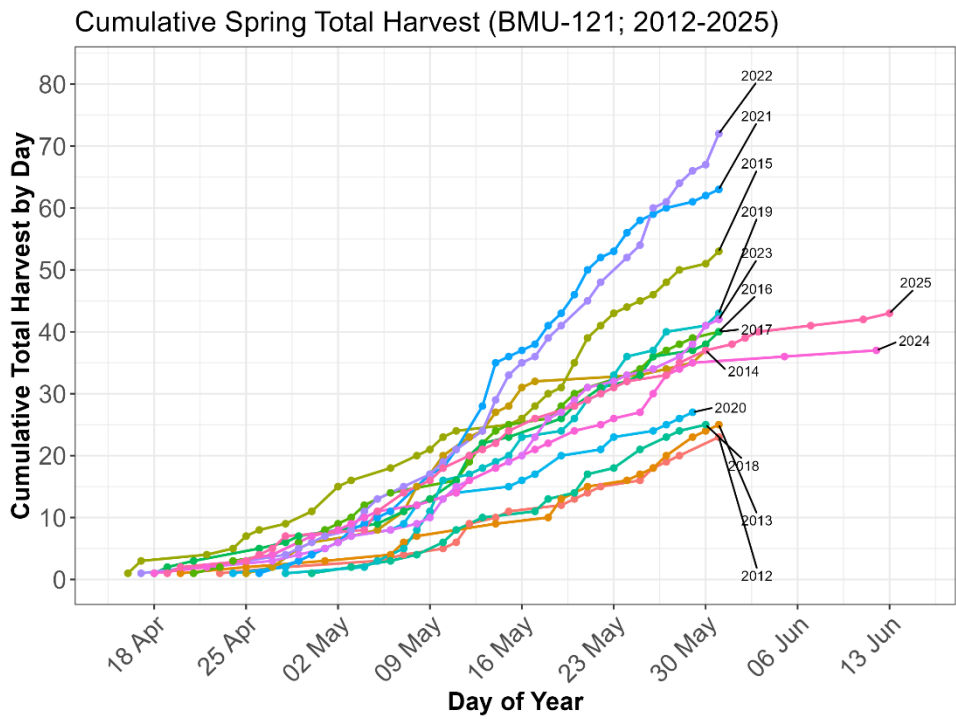


Figure 29. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 121 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

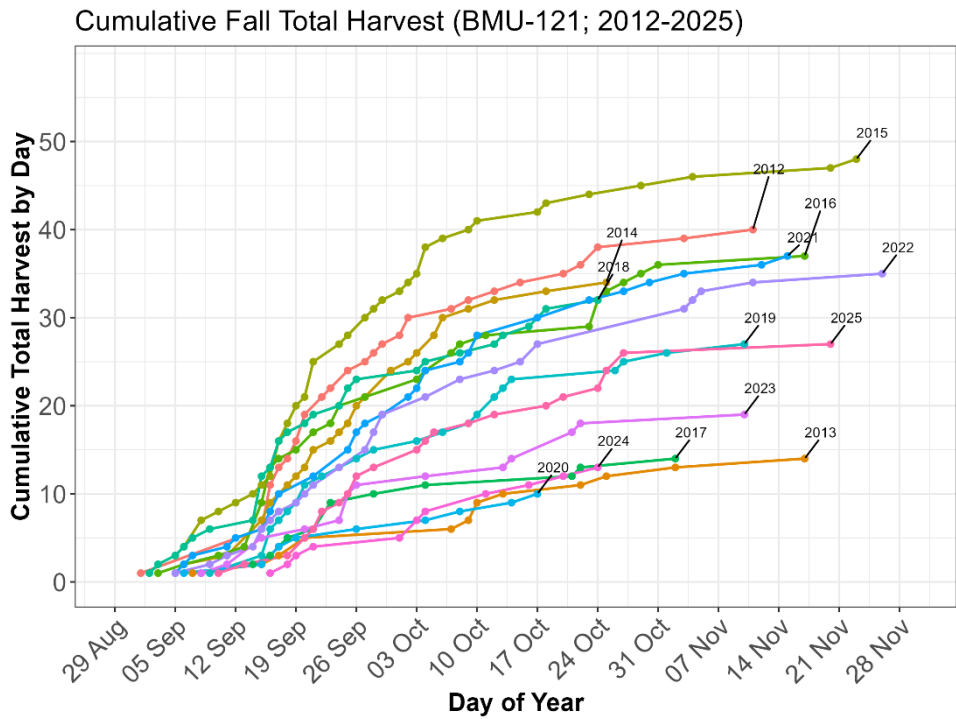


Figure 30. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 121 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 122
THOMPSON RIVER

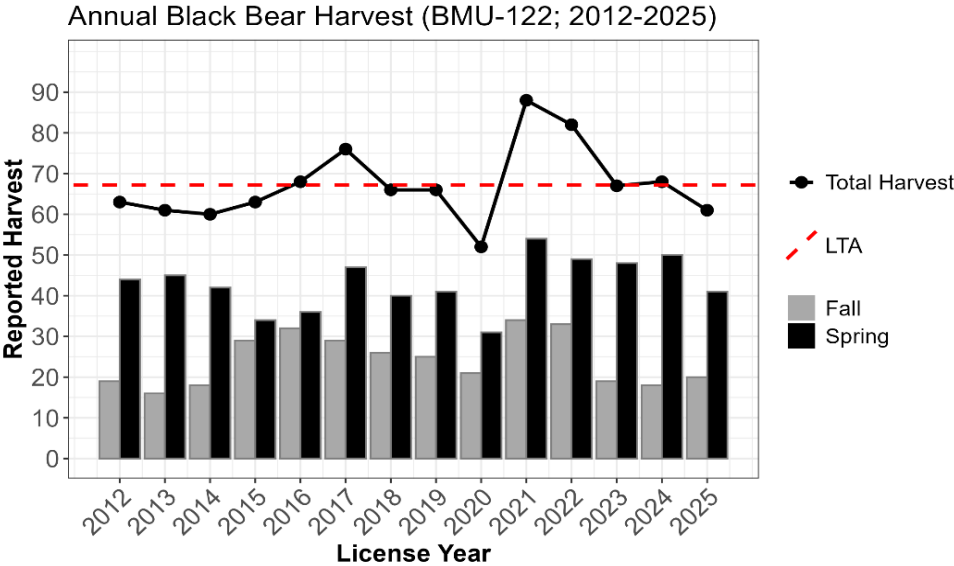
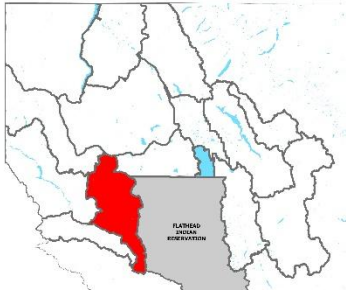


Figure 31. Black bear harvest in BMU 122 (2012-2025).

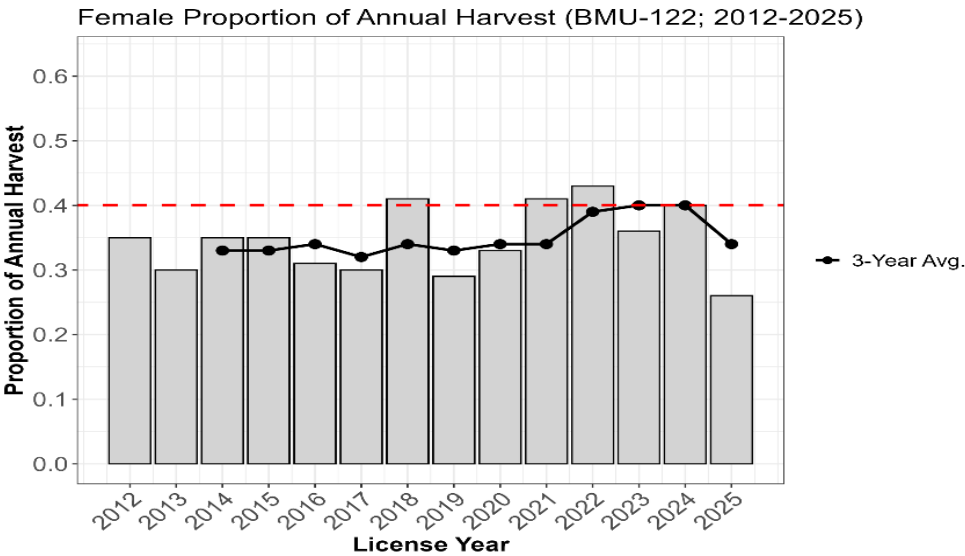


Figure 32. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 122 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

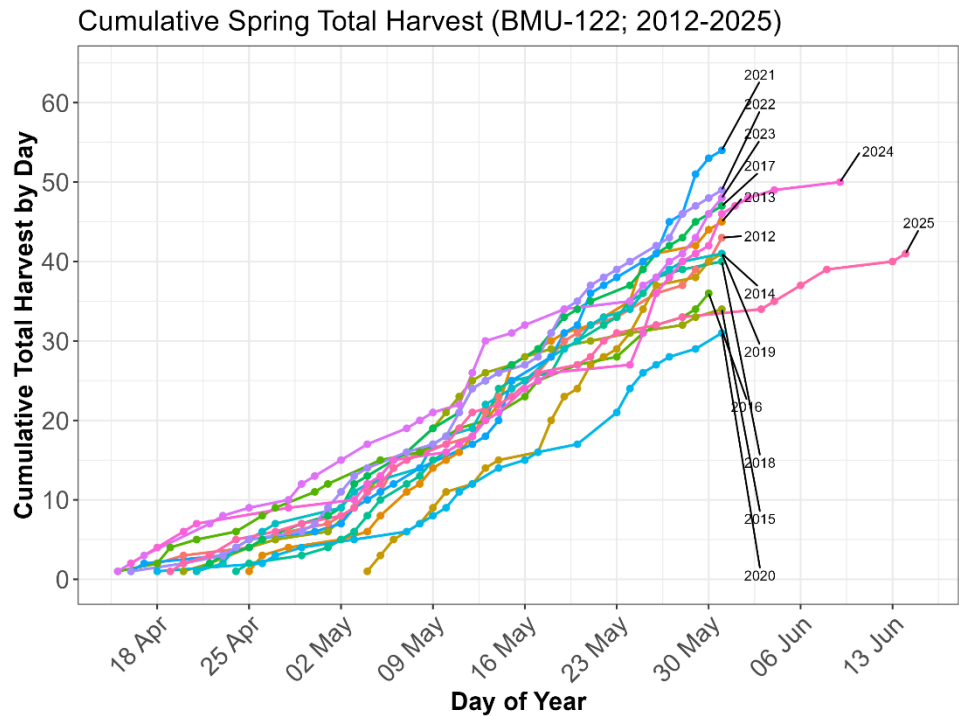


Figure 33. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 122 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

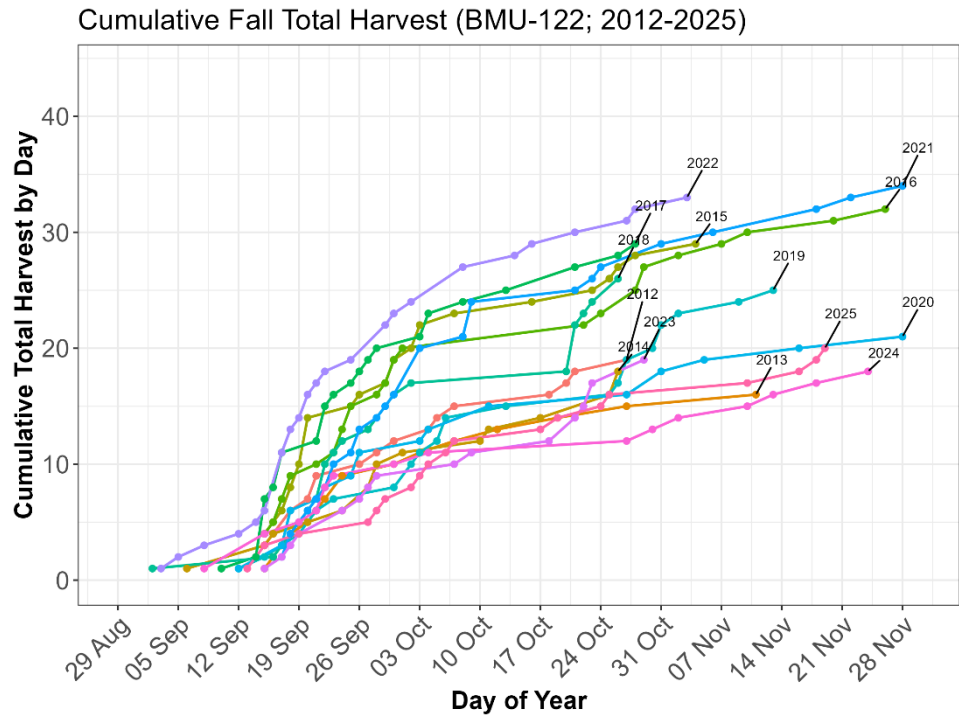


Figure 34. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 122 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 123
LOWER CLARK FORK

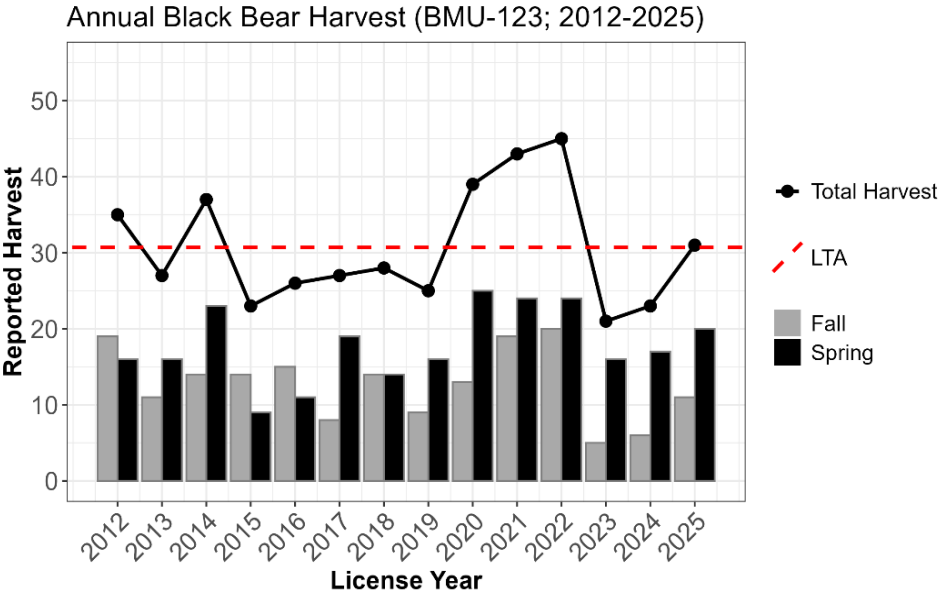
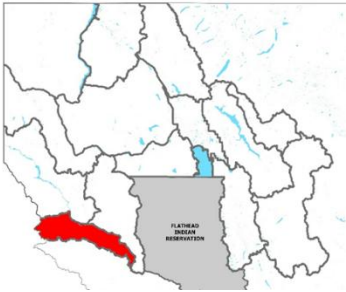


Figure 35. Black bear harvest in BMU 123 (2012-2025).

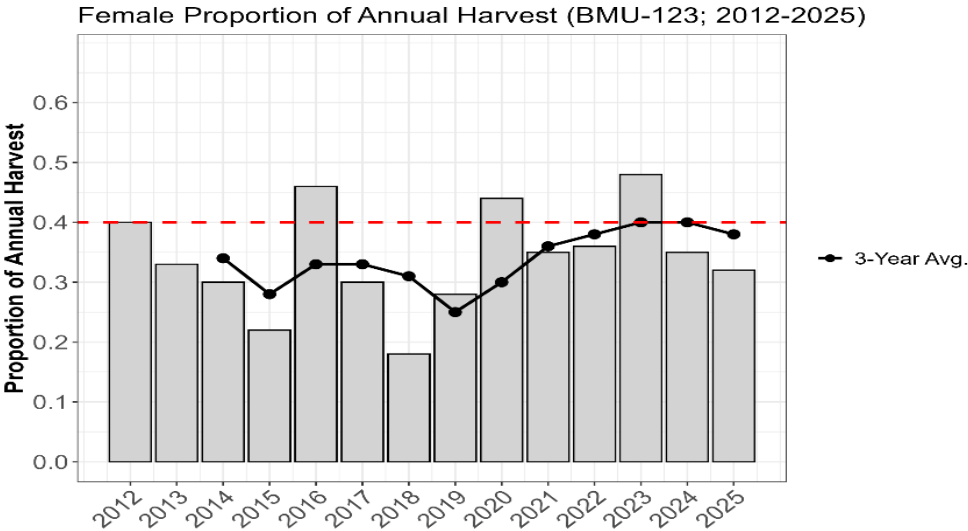


Figure 36. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 123 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

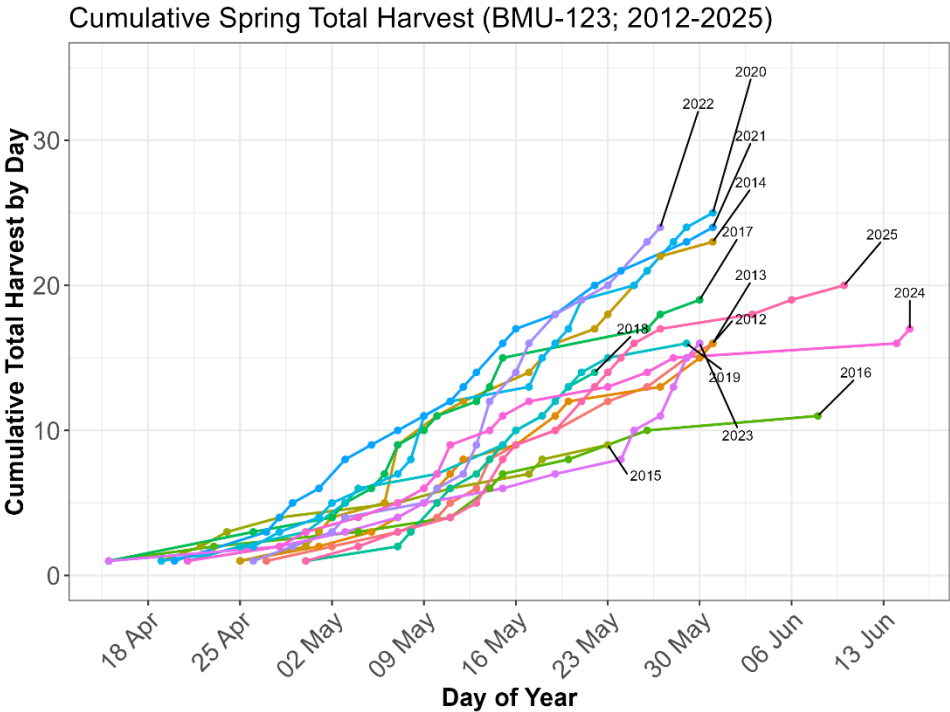


Figure 37. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 123 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

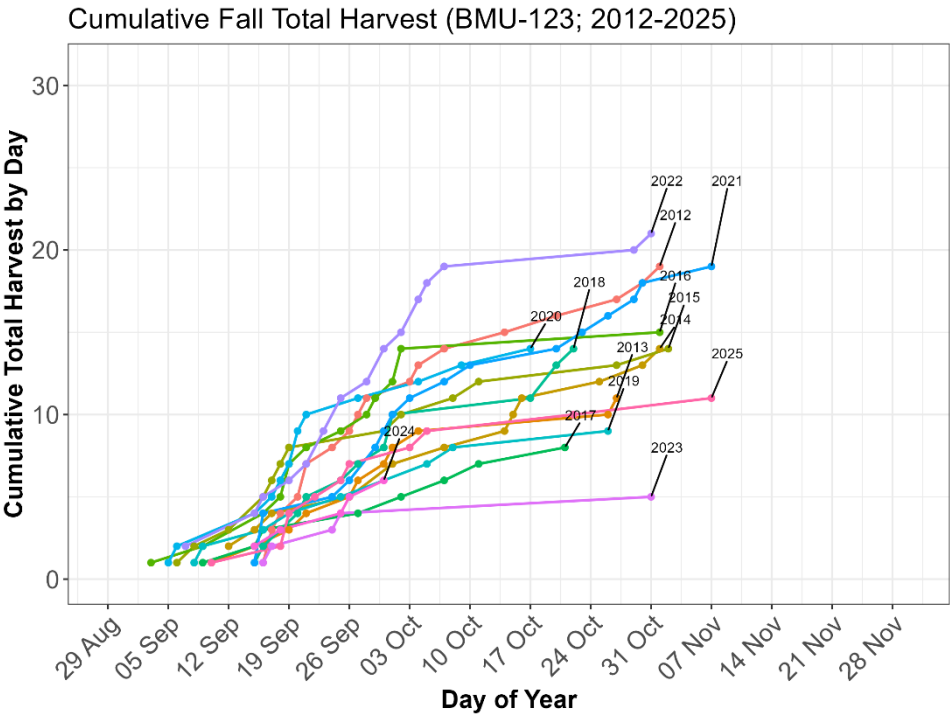


Figure 38. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 123 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 130

SWAN

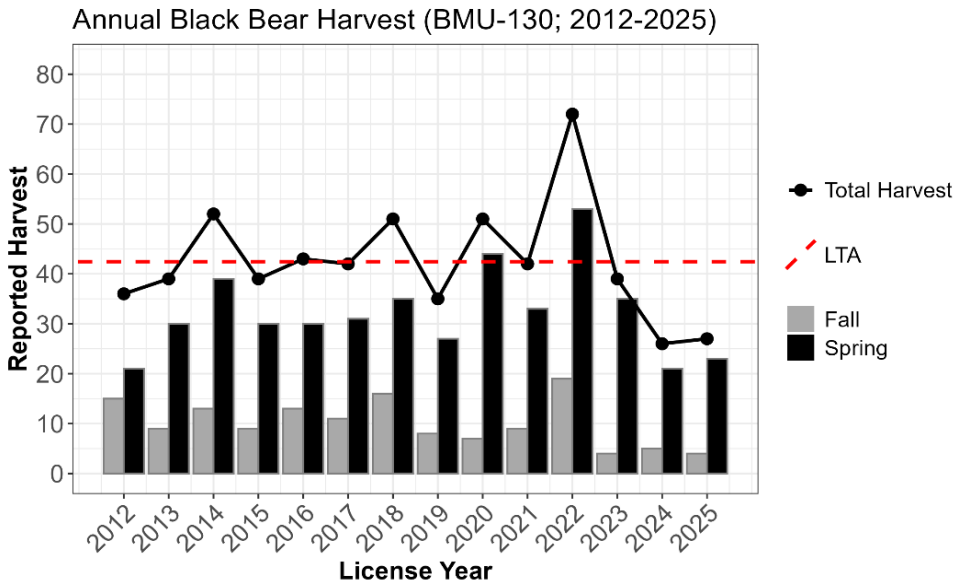
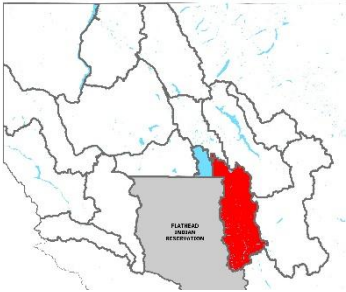


Figure 39. Black bear harvest in BMU 130 (2012-2025).

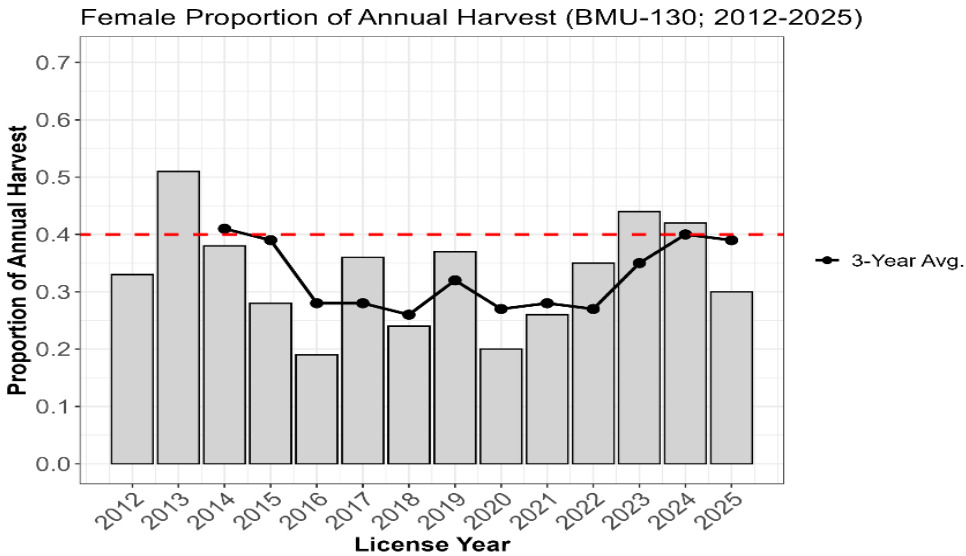


Figure 40. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 130 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

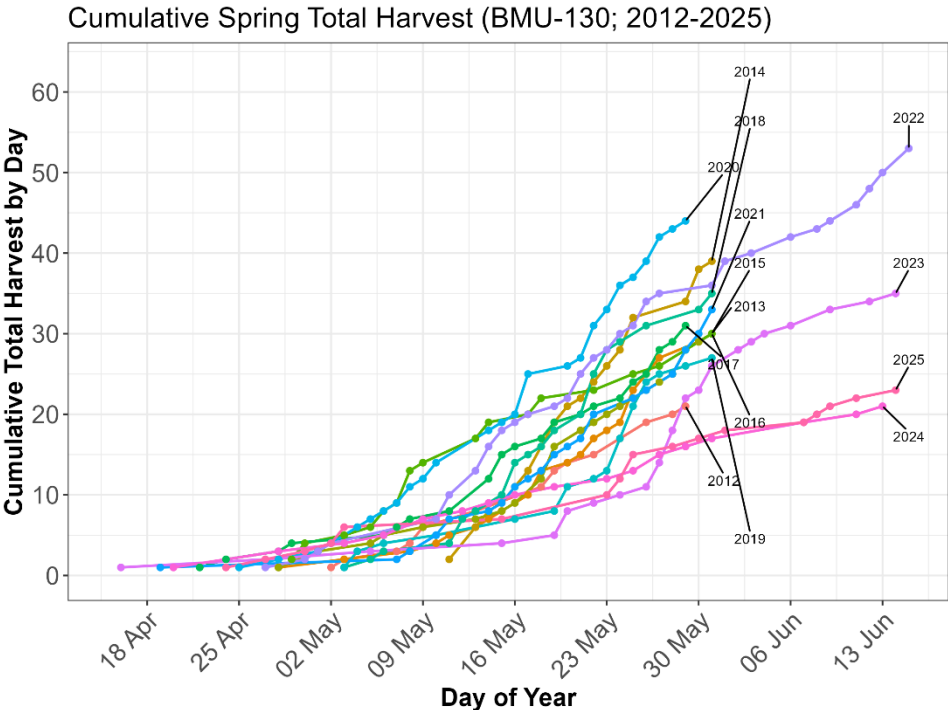


Figure 41. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 130 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

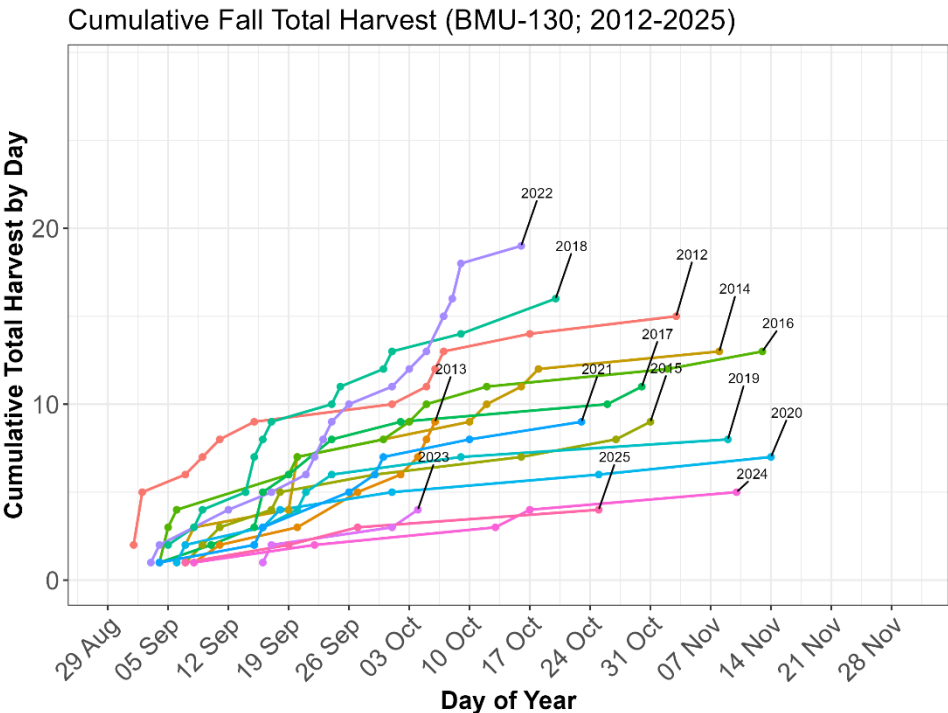


Figure 42. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 130 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 140
LOWER SOUTH FORK

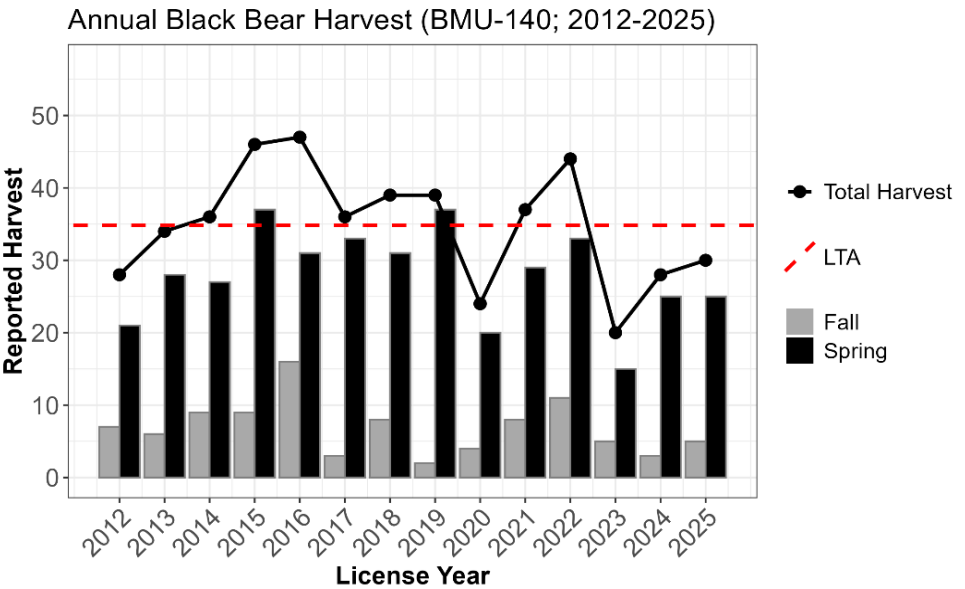
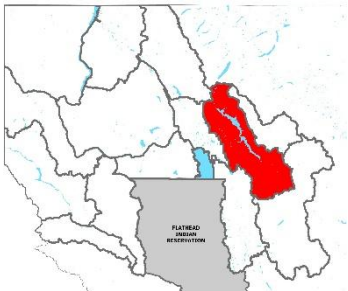


Figure 42. Black bear harvest in BMU 140 (2012-2025).

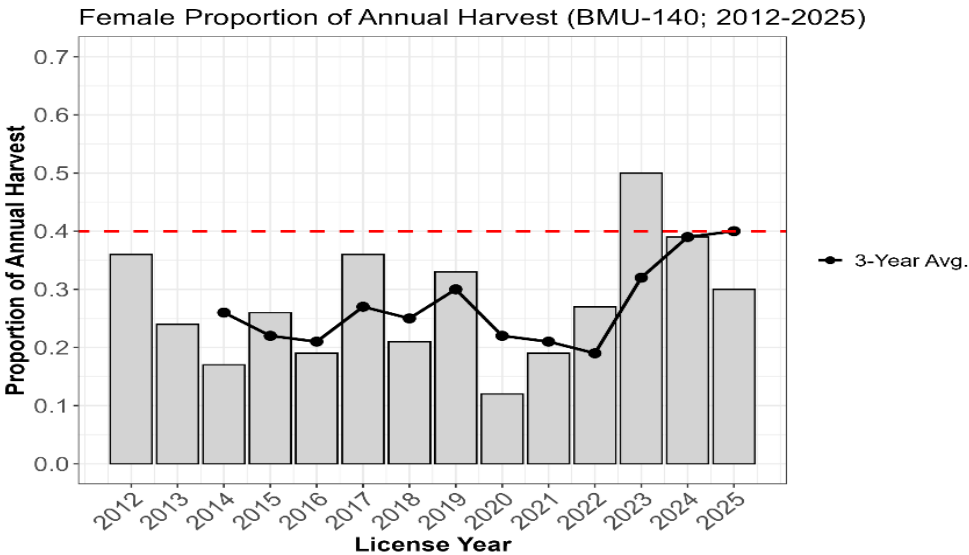


Figure 43. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 140 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

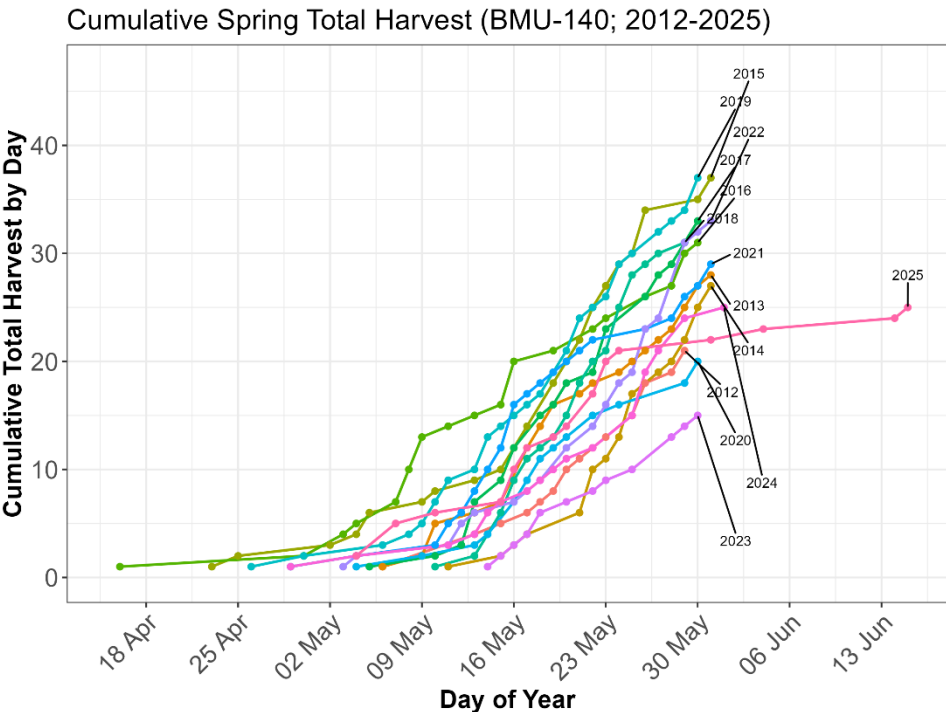


Figure 44. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 140 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

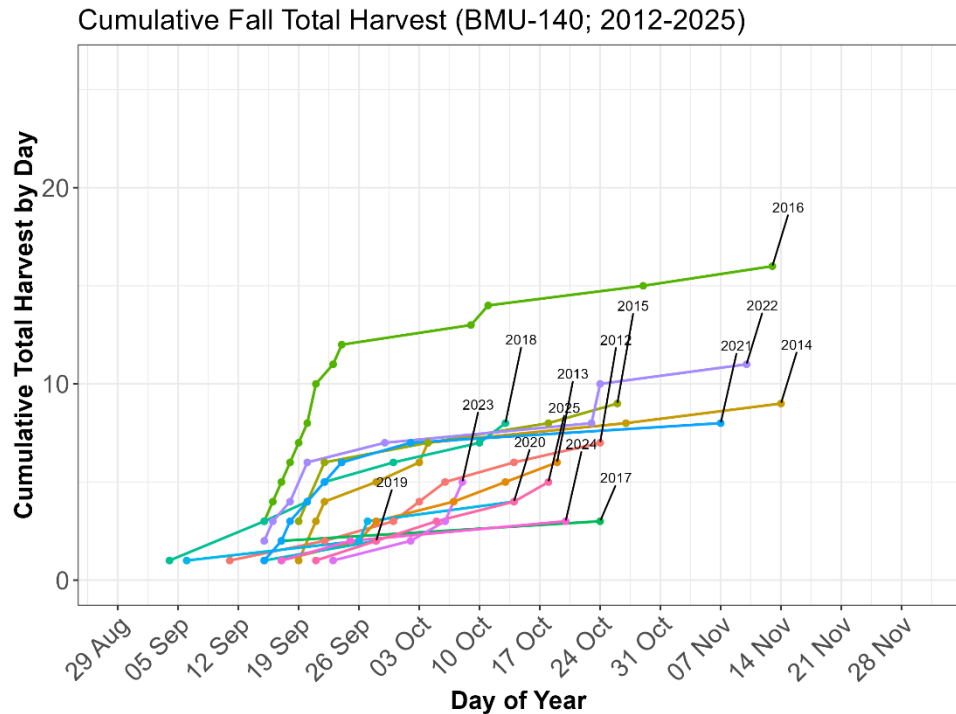


Figure 45. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 140 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 141

LOWER MIDDLE FORK

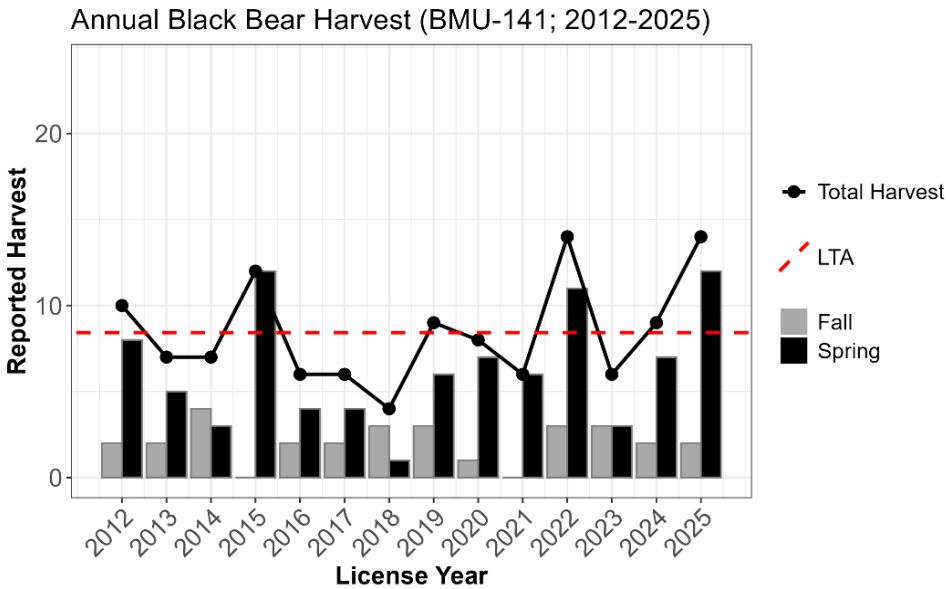
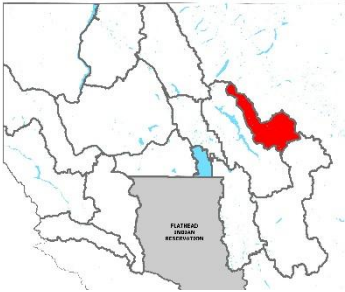


Figure 46. Black bear harvest in BMU 141 (2012-2025).

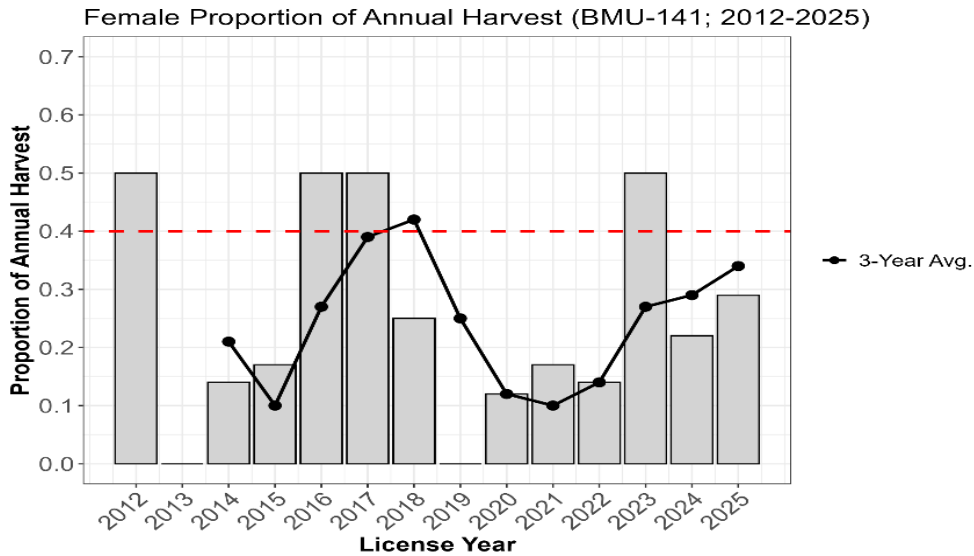


Figure 47. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 141 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

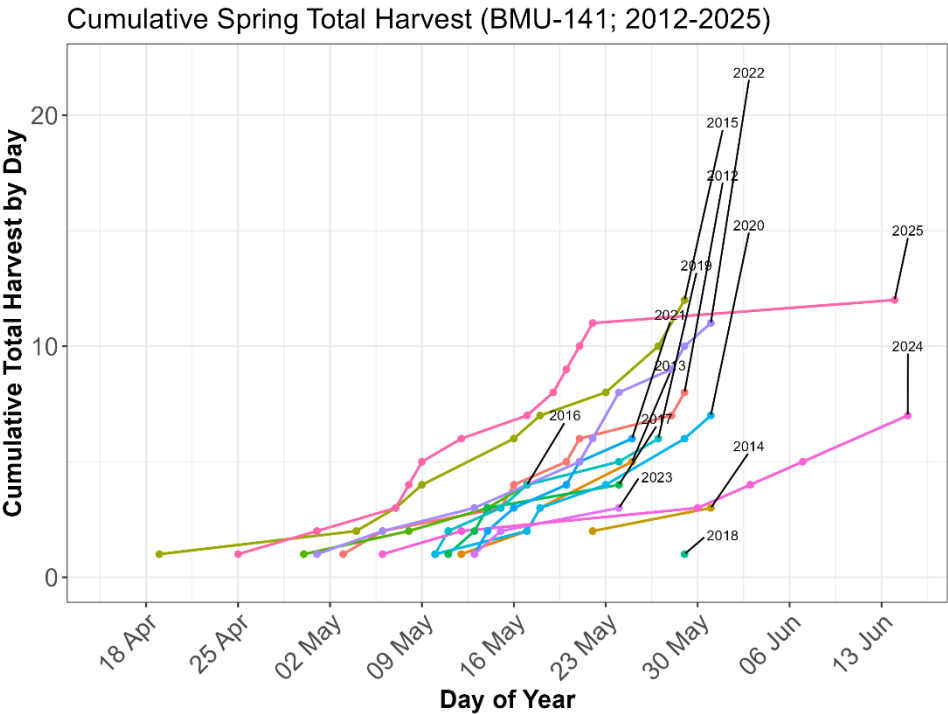


Figure 48. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 141 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

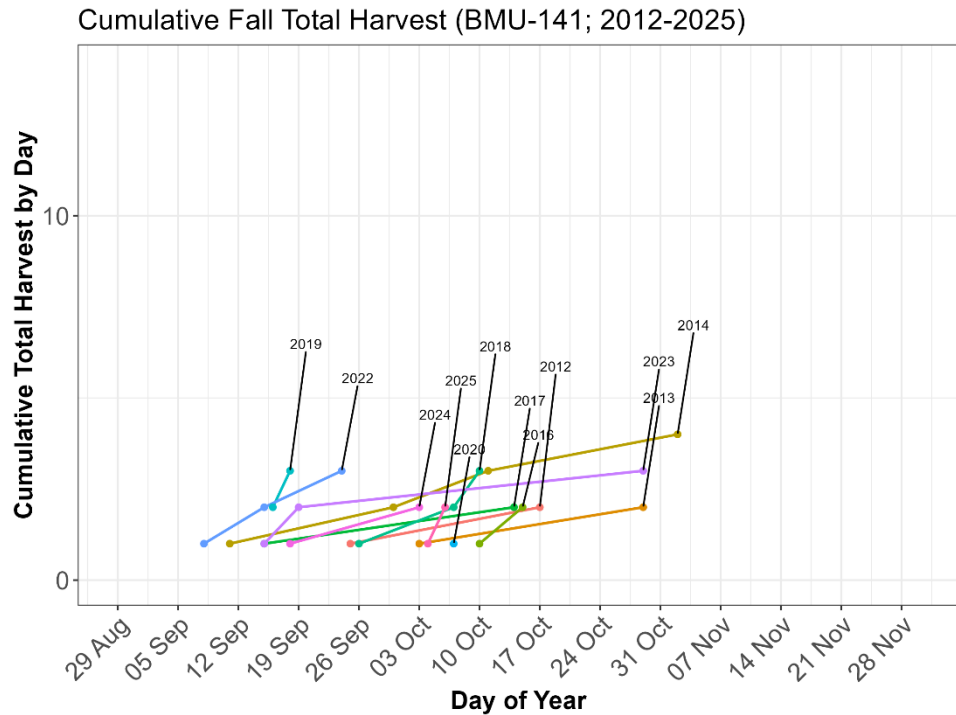


Figure 49. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 141 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 150
UPPER SOUTH FORK

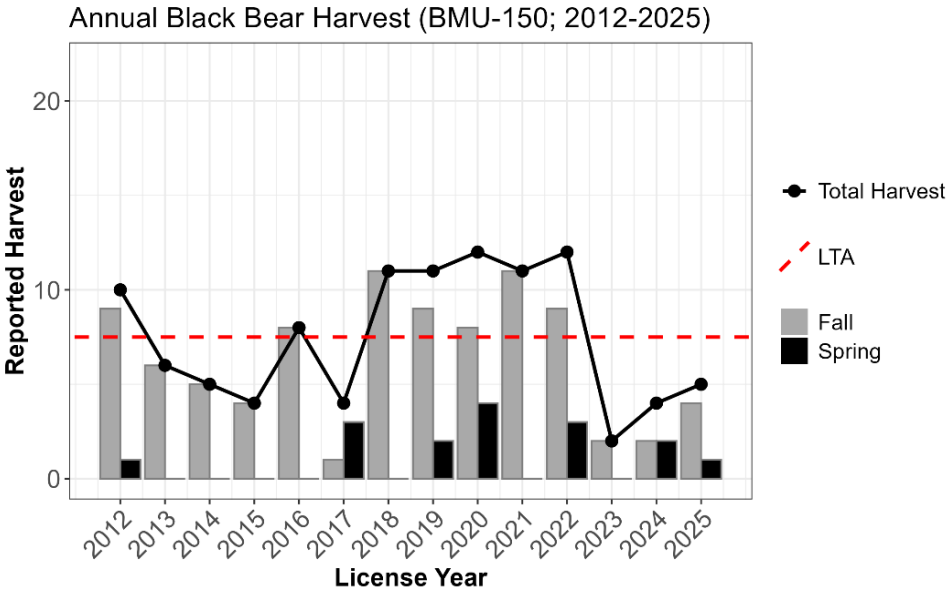
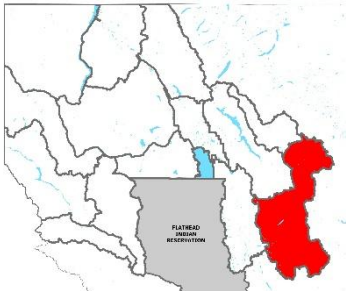


Figure 50. Black bear harvest in BMU 150 (2012-2025).

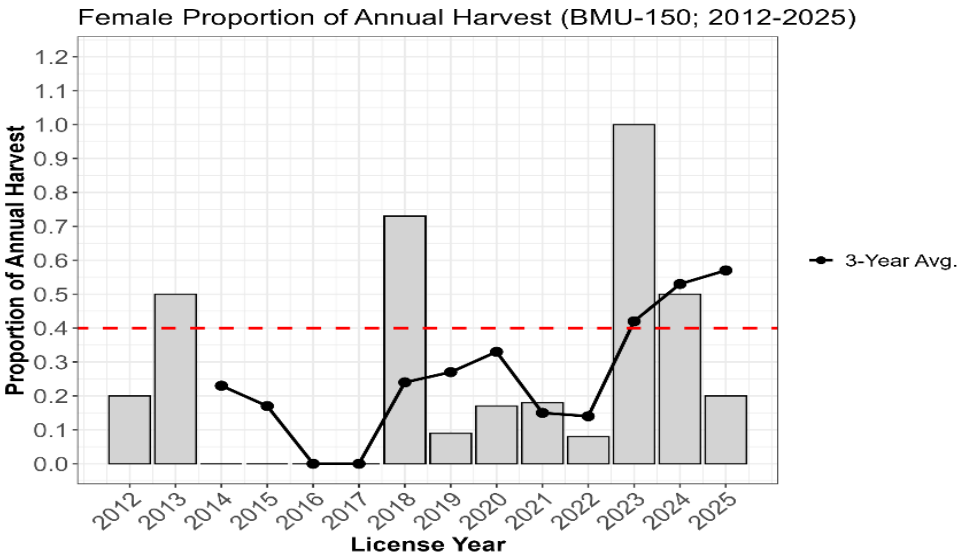


Figure 51. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 150 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

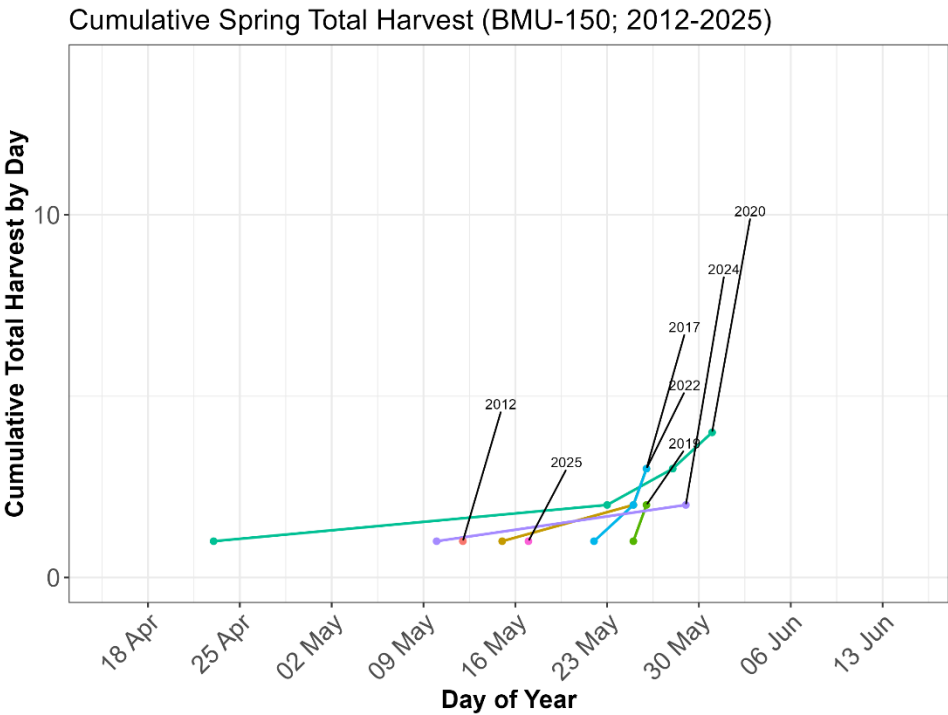


Figure 52. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 150 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

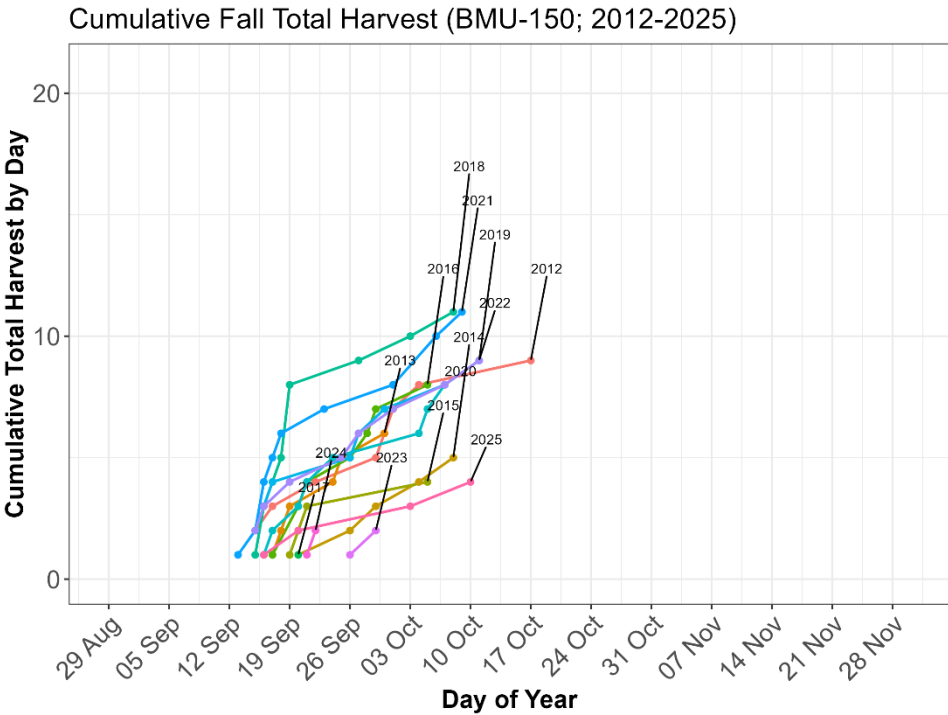


Figure 53. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 150 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



BMU 170
FLATHEAD RIVER

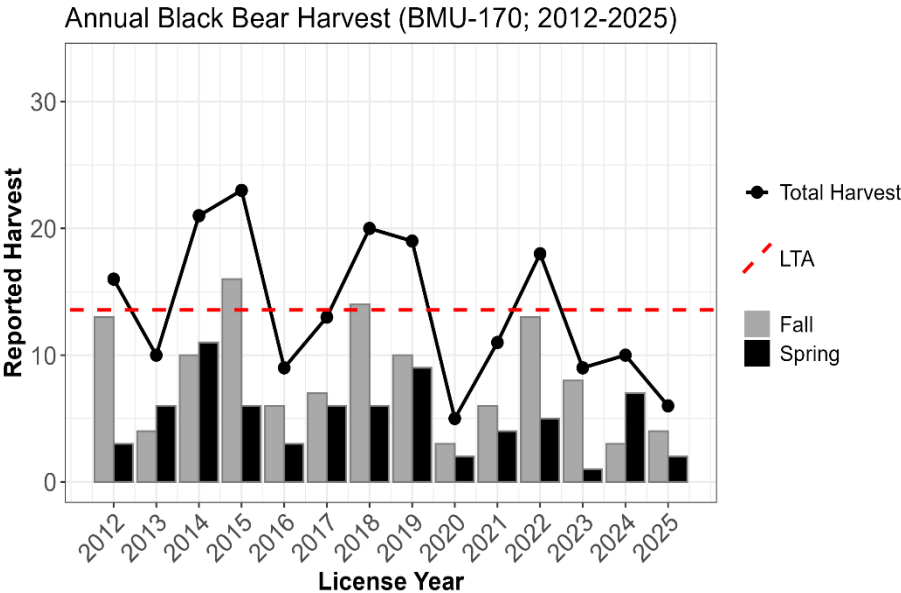
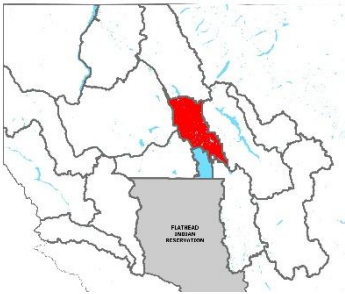


Figure 54. Black bear harvest in BMU 170 (2012-2025).

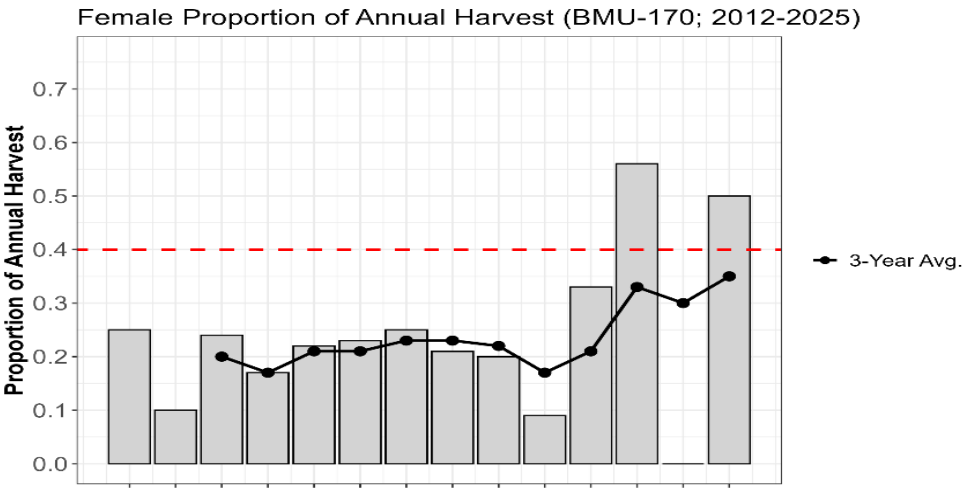


Figure 55. Proportion of females in the total annual black bear harvest in BMU 170 (2012-2025). Dashed line indicates 40% harvest threshold.

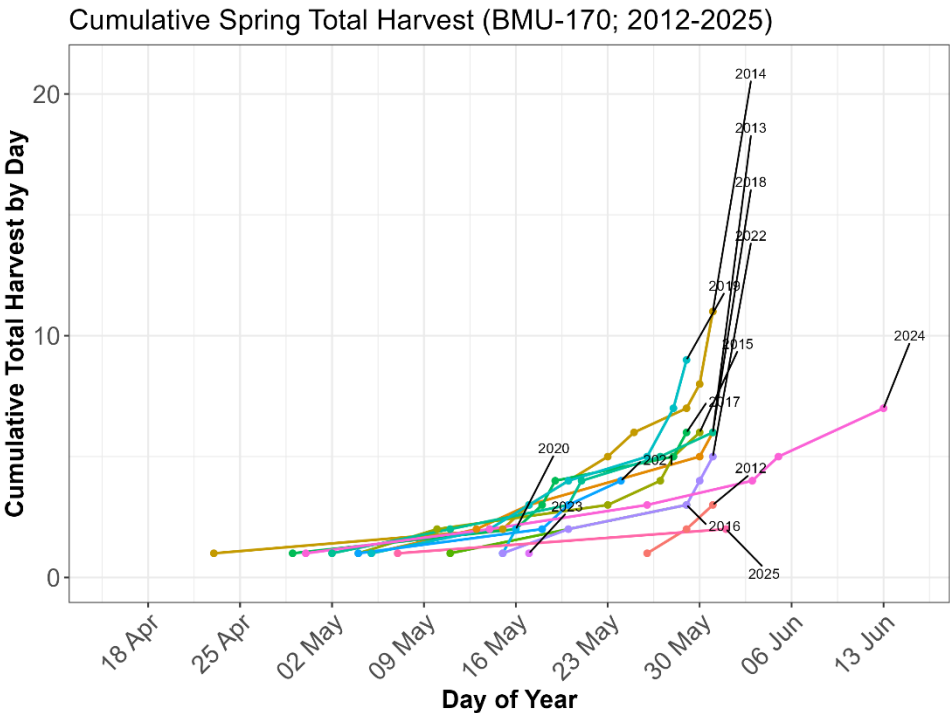


Figure 56. Cumulative daily spring harvest in BMU 170 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative spring harvest by license year. Spring black bear seasons occurred from April 15th – May 31st 2012-2023. The spring black bear season was extended through June 15th beginning in 2024. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.

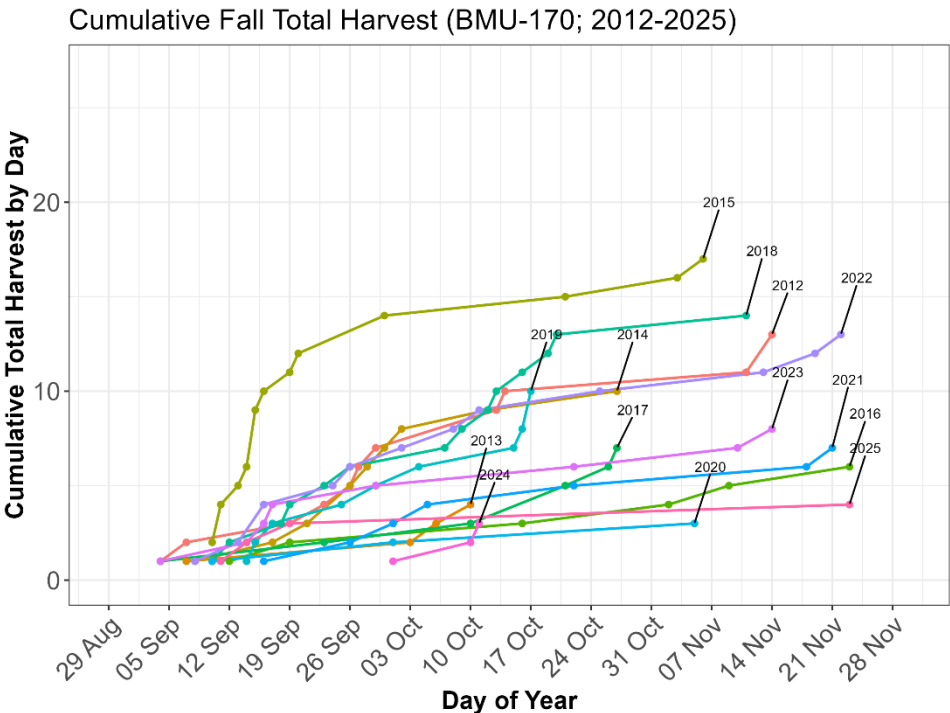


Figure 57. Cumulative daily fall harvest in BMU 170 (2012-2025). Lines and points indicate the daily cumulative fall harvest by license year. The fall season occurs from the first Saturday in September through the last Sunday in November. Note that harvest lines end on the date of last reported harvest, therefore season lines have different end dates.



2025 REGION ONE BLACK BEAR REPORT

Version: 2026.1

Date: - June-2026

Prepared by: Sam Martinez ~ Wildlife Biologist (Libby)

