

BIOLOGY, DEMOGRAPHY, ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF
GRIZZLY BEARS
IN AND AROUND BANFF NATIONAL PARK
AND KANANASKIS COUNTRY



**Final Report of the
Eastern Slopes
Grizzly Bear Project
2005**



Edited by Stephen Herrero



Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Project

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Brian Wolitski
Anonymous Lake Louise visitor
Cedar Mueller

Main cover photograph
Grizzly bear family group on footbridge
Bear #56 against fence

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DEDICATION

To everyone who cares about grizzly bears and wildlife and the ecological systems and processes that support them.

To the graduate students who were the core researchers: Bryon Benn, Mike Gibeau, John Kansas, Cedar Mueller, Karen Oldershaw, Saundi Stevens, and Jen Theberge.

To the funding supporters who had the vision and faith that our research would be worthwhile.

And to my wife, Linda Wiggins, whose unfailing love and support made my contribution possible.



EASTERN SLOPES GRIZZLY BEAR PROJECT (ESGBP) SUPPORTING AGENCIES & GROUPS 1994 – 2004

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	World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF)



PEOPLE WHO MADE THE EASTERN SLOPES GRIZZLY BEAR PROJECT POSSIBLE

(with sincere apologies to others who helped but are not listed)

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PREFACE

Stephen Herrero

The introduction to this report in Chapter 1 provides details related to the origin and execution of the 11-year-long Eastern Slopes Grizzly Bear Research Project (ESGBP). In this preface I hope to orient readers to the nature of the Final Report. In this Report we present the major research findings of people associated with this diverse and complex project. The fundamental aim of the ESGBP was to contribute science-based understanding regarding the influences that people were having on the grizzly bear population in a 40,000 km² area called the Central Rockies Ecosystem (CRE) of Alberta and British Columbia, Canada. We focused our research on reproduction, mortality, and population dynamics of grizzly bears, and factors that influenced these variables. This progression of topics formed the logical structure for organizing the Final Report. We present the results of our research in the context of grizzly bear conservation, for inevitably individuals who do research on this fascinating species hope that their efforts will contribute to conservation of grizzly bears and their supporting ecosystems.

The ESGBP research was carried out primarily by graduate students at the University of Calgary although many other individuals also contributed substantially to the research. Research results are presented in a variety of formats including complete published papers, summaries of several papers and summaries of research still ongoing. When a given chapter or section has been published this is indicated at the end of the Abstract of the paper. Many publications have been published in peer-reviewed journals or in longer form as theses or dissertations. Some chapters or sections have not been published and appear for the first time in this report. Given the nature of the final report, which summarizes a variety of overlapping research efforts, occasionally using some of the same data but analyzing it in different ways, there is some redundancy in the final report. For example, a given study area figure may appear several times but in a different context. While I tried to minimize such duplication, some was inevitable to allow each contributor to develop their ideas without the reader having to refer to another section of the report.

One factor contributing to the complexity of our research and this report is that our largest study area, the CRE, is made up of smaller, component areas such as the Bow River Watershed, Banff National Park, Kananaskis Country, or the Alberta or BC portions of the CRE. Various research projects focused on different portions of the CRE, or sometimes on the whole area. The reader can use maps we provide to see the basic spatial relationships between these areas.

This Final Report presents the details of scientific research. There has been little attempt to explain basic research approaches or findings in non-specialist terms. This should be done in subsequent documents written for broader audiences. For a snapshot of our principle findings and management recommendations related to them I suggest going to the “summary” and the “management recommendations.”

While we have tried to apply science and rationality wherever possible we have as human beings elected to focus on what we think is important related to grizzly bear conservation. Some of our research involves projection into the future of estimated numbers of people and their behavior, and their effects on grizzly bears. This is an inexact, but essential science, for the ESGBP final report is intended to contribute to a future for grizzly bears, the ecosystems that support them, and people who value and respect them.

