

John H. Hoak

Biota-Research and Consulting
P.O. Box 2705
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

Tim W. Clark

Department of Biology
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho 83209

and

Bob Wood

Grand Teton National Park
Moose, Wyoming 83012

Grizzly Bear Distribution, Grand Teton National Park Area, Wyoming

Abstract

Thirty-two reports (1936-1979) were concentrated in northern Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) and J. D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway (JDR). Twenty-seven reports were of single bears. Three dens were reported.

Introduction

This paper gives information on grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos* L.) distribution in Grand Teton National Park, J. D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway (currently administered by GTNP), and adjacent areas, demonstrating a continuity with the Yellowstone ecosystem. JDR and northern GTNP can now be valued as prehibernation and denning habitat for this threatened species.

Methods

Information was obtained from: 1) extensive interviews with outfitters and backcountry users from 1977-79; 2) field surveys for sight and sign of bears by ourselves since 1969; and 3) files of GTNP, Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF), and Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team (IGBST) flight reports.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows locations of 32 reports 1936-1979. A table giving report details is available from the authors. Reports were concentrated in JDR and along the northern shores of Jackson Lake (GTNP), with others located elsewhere along the lake and in northern GTNP. The southernmost report (#2) occurred in 1940. The concentration of reports in JDR may have been associated with the now-closed Flagg Ranch

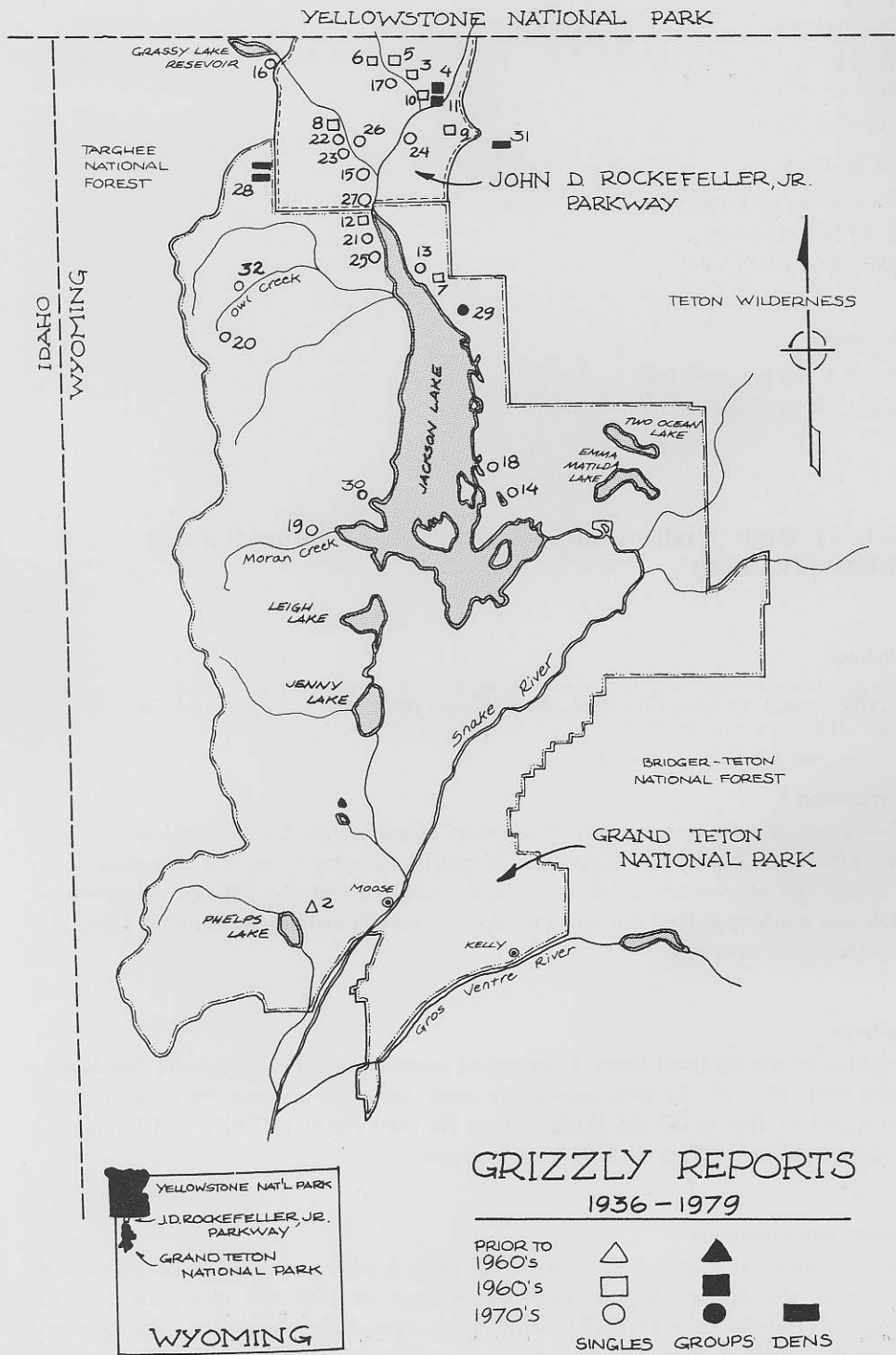


Figure 1. Locations of grizzly bear reports in Grand Teton National Park, J. D. Rockefeller Memorial Parkway, and areas immediately adjacent. (1936-1979.)

dump and nearby Snake River campground. Thirteen reports have occurred since the 1973 dump closure.

Twenty-seven reports were of single bears. Report #4 was of two adults, #29 of two subadults, and #11 of a sow with two yearlings. Other recent work by Hoak *et al.* (1980) in areas of BTNF north and east of GTNP showed higher proportions of family groups reported. A 1936 report by Murie (#1, unplotted) said he personally never saw a grizzly in GTNP, but heard of several reports. He noted that black bears were common. In a 1940 report, Gale estimated GTNP harbored 10 grizzly bears, but gave no other population data or census methods.

We compiled only two pre-1960 reports, whereas 30 were from 1968 to present. Grizzly bears have been reported each year since 1968, except 1972. 1969 yielded the highest number of reports at six. Four reports occurred in 1979. Reports spanned the months May-November, with 29 reports occurring May-September.

The three late-season reports (#27—11/77, tracks; #28—10/78, two dens; #31—11/79, den) demonstrate the importance to grizzlies of JDR and adjacent areas as denning and prehibernation habitat. The den of report #31 was confirmed by telemetry (IGBST Flight Reports, 1979). The radio-collared grizzly came from Targhee National Forest (TNF) in late September and spent the entire prehibernation in JDR, denning nearby.

Acknowledgments

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Literature Cited

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