



Alberta Fish & Game Association

6924 - 104 Street

Edmonton, AB T6K 1T8

Phone: (780) 437-2342 Fax: (780) 438-6872
email: office@afga.org Website: www.afga.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Edmonton, November 12, 2003)...

The **Alberta Fish and Game Association** calls for the Provincial government to continue to allow for the hunting of grizzly bears in Alberta.

Recent discussions in various committees including the Endangered Species Conservation Committee have been reviewing the status of grizzly bears in Alberta. There has been some suggestion that the hunting of these bears should be discontinued due to the status of the population. The government information and that of independent reviewers suggests that over the past 15 years the Alberta Grizzly Bear population has increased from 575 in 1988 to 968 in 2002. During this period of time the number harvested by hunters averaged 13.6 per year.

Ray Makowecki, President of the Alberta Fish and Game Association, said, "the small number of bears harvested through legal hunting appears to have no effect on the increasing population of grizzly bears."

Further the information on other mortalities of grizzly bears, including illegal harvest, self-protection and vehicle collisions also indicates relatively small numbers of bears being lost annually.

The creation of new population assessment models requires careful scrutiny. With the low hunting harvest numbers during the past 15 years and a more subjective non-scientific, population assessment by ranchers and hunters along with the current government estimates, we agree with the numbers that indicate at least a stable or increasing bear population.

"Our Association believes in conservation first and in the case of grizzly bears a small harvest with management controls appears to be effective in maintaining and increasing this natural resource," said Makowecki, "Our Association will continue to work with the Minister to maintain healthy populations of fish and wildlife resources. We hope all Albertans will also express their support."

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization that has been active in habitat conservation since 1908 and has a province-wide membership of well over 14,000 individuals committed to maintaining Alberta's natural heritage.