

October 26, 2004

Grizzly bear encounters prompt closure of South Ghost area

Hunters and recreationalists urged to plan ahead to avoid the area

Edmonton... In the interests of public safety, an area near the South Ghost Provincial Forest Recreation Area has been closed to the public because of the presence of aggressive grizzly bears, some accompanied by cubs.

The South Ghost area is located 45 minutes north and west of Cochrane, about an hour's drive from Calgary. It is southeast of the Waiparous Creek Provincial Forest Recreation Area.

The area closed by Fish and Wildlife officers includes a 25,467-hectare area in wildlife management unit 412. The closure will be in effect until bear activity has ceased in the area. Bears usually hibernate by the end of November.

Some of the reported incidents involve a grizzly bear accompanied by cubs, which demonstrated unusually aggressive behavior toward people on separate occasions in the area recently. There have been reports this month of a bear charging someone on an all-terrain vehicle and twice charging two other vehicles. Fish and Wildlife officers previously put up warning signs, but following increased bear activity, a decision has been made to close the entire area.

Hunters and recreationalists are reminded that bears in Alberta are still very actively searching for food to fatten up for the winter. Some of the aggressive bear incidents in the South Ghost area involved bears chasing humans away from food sources such as animal carcasses.

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