

2023 Bear Population Trend Analysis

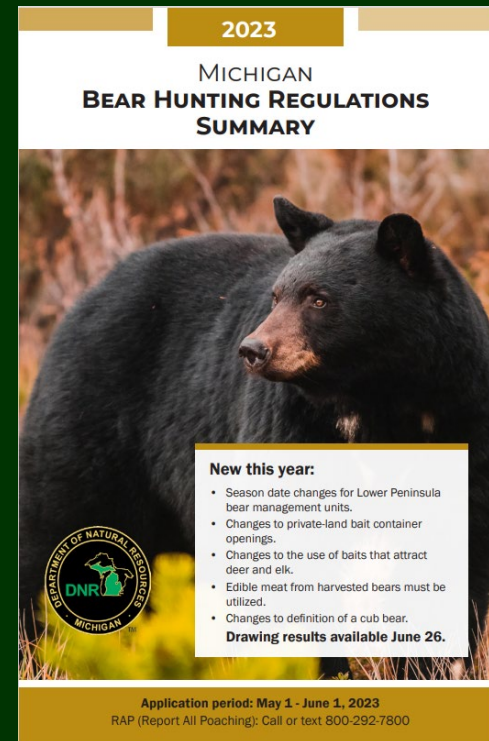


Cody Norton
Wildlife Division
February 8, 2024



Bear Regulations

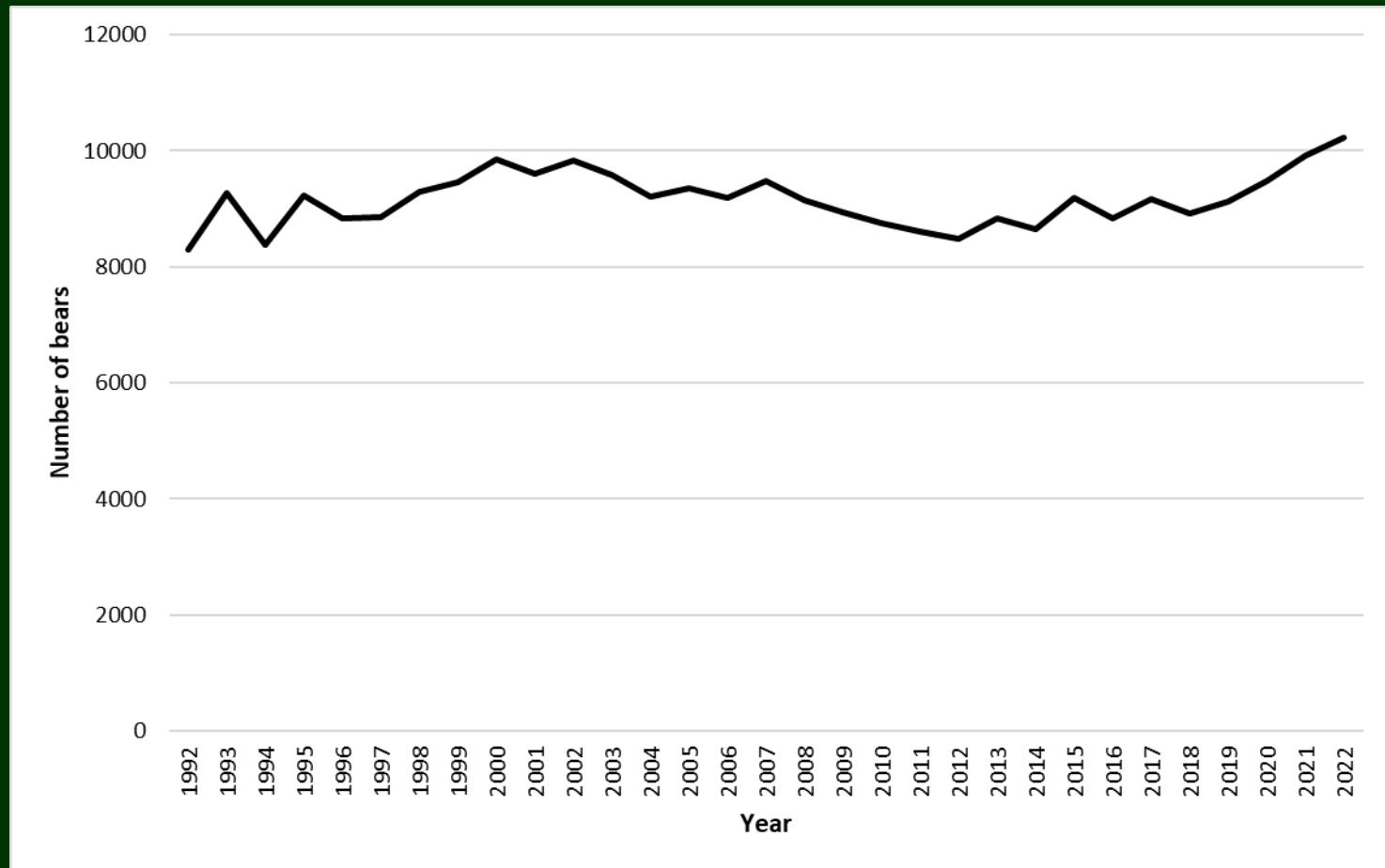
- Two-year cycle
 - 2025-26
- Bear Forum
 - August 2024
- NRC & Director
 - For Information: February 2025
 - For Action: March 2025



Bear Management Units



Upper Peninsula

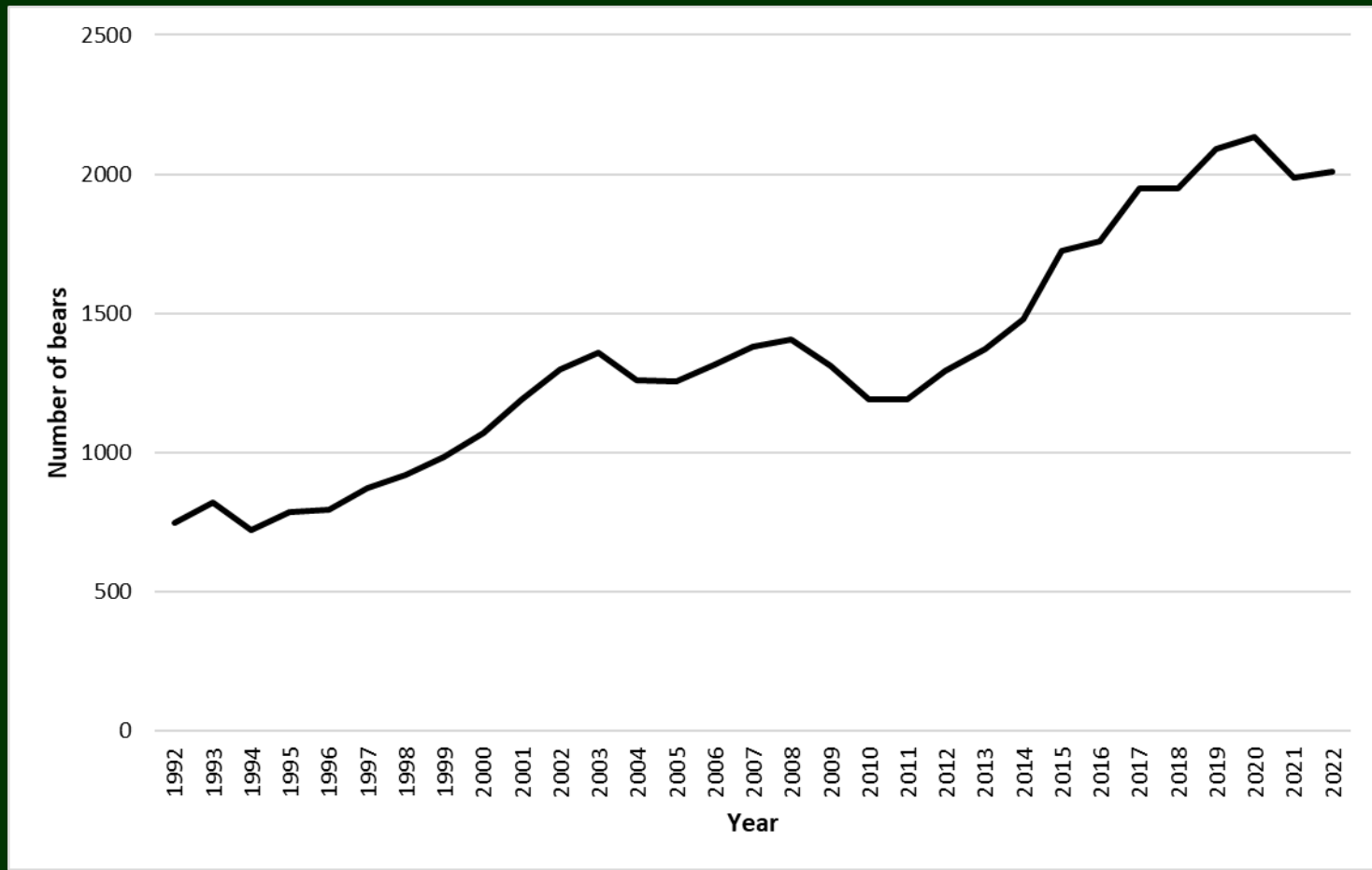


10,218 bears
in 2022. Up
21% since
2012

- Population Trajectory Goal: To continue to increase the bear population, but at a slower rate, by increasing harvest slightly.



Northern Lower Peninsula



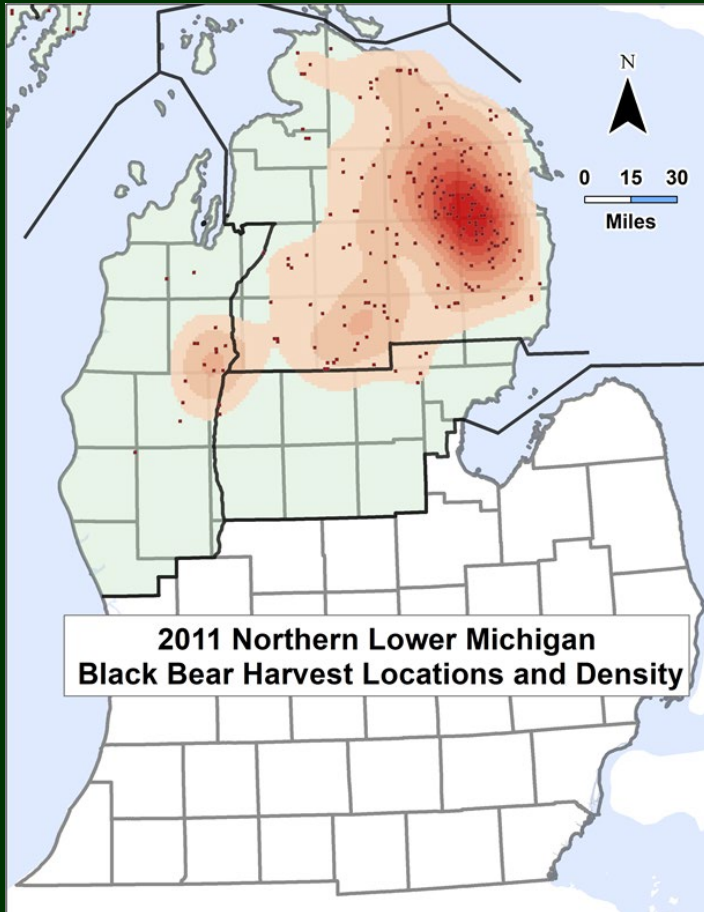
2,008 bears
in 2022. Up
55% since
2012

- Population Trajectory Goal: To slow the population growth to eventually achieve a stable population.



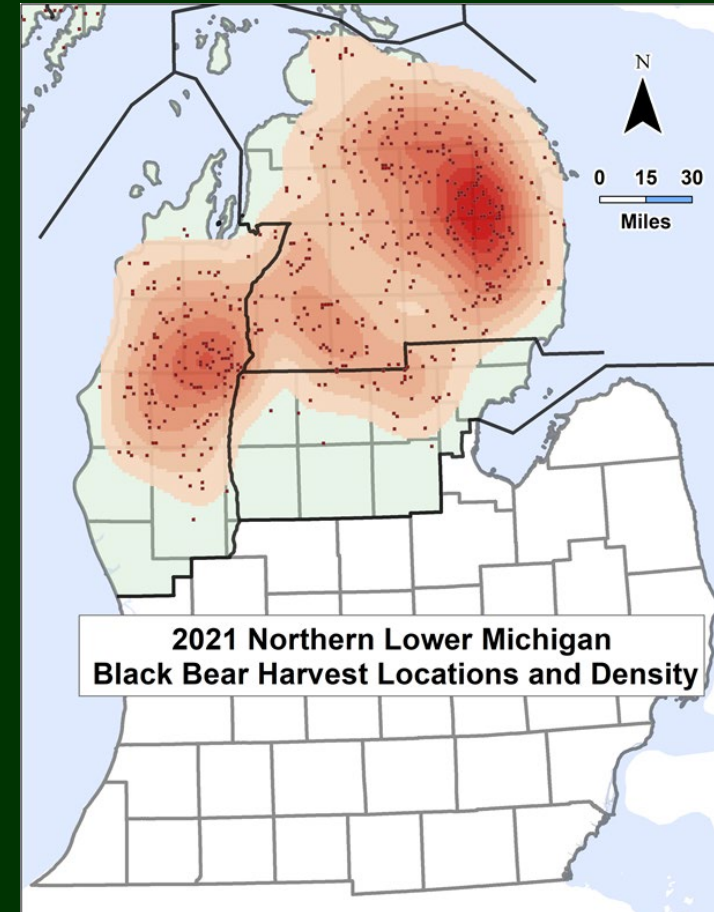
Expanding Distribution

7,800 mi²



74%

13,600 mi²





Other Indices and Information

- Hunter effort
- Hunter success rates
- Hunter opinion
- Square miles/bear harvested
- Nuisance bear complaints
- Habitat and mast



2023 Statewide Harvest

(State licensed hunters)

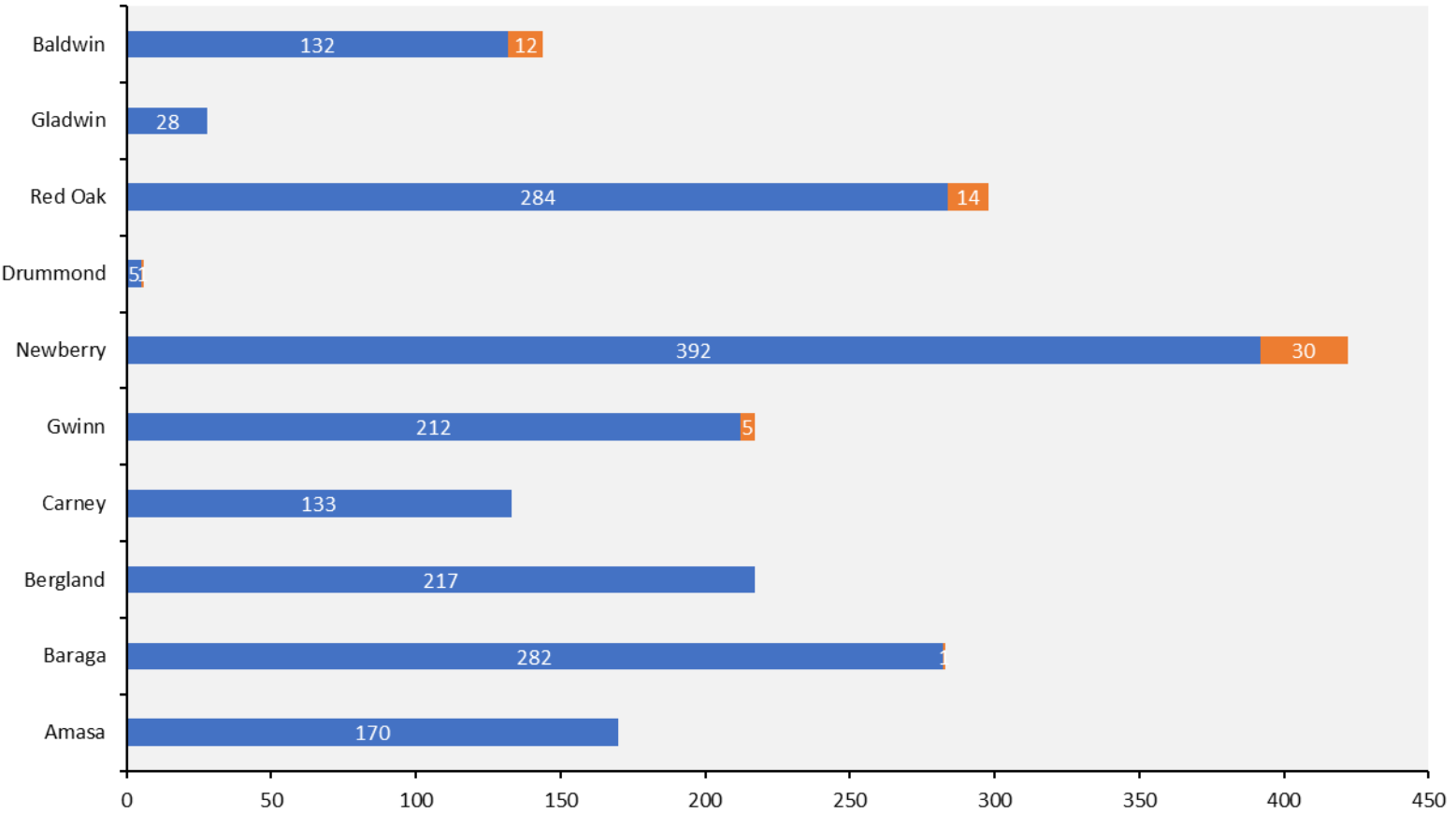
- 1,854 bears harvested statewide
- 3% below last year (1,905)
- 9% above 10-year average
- Very good success rates in the EUP





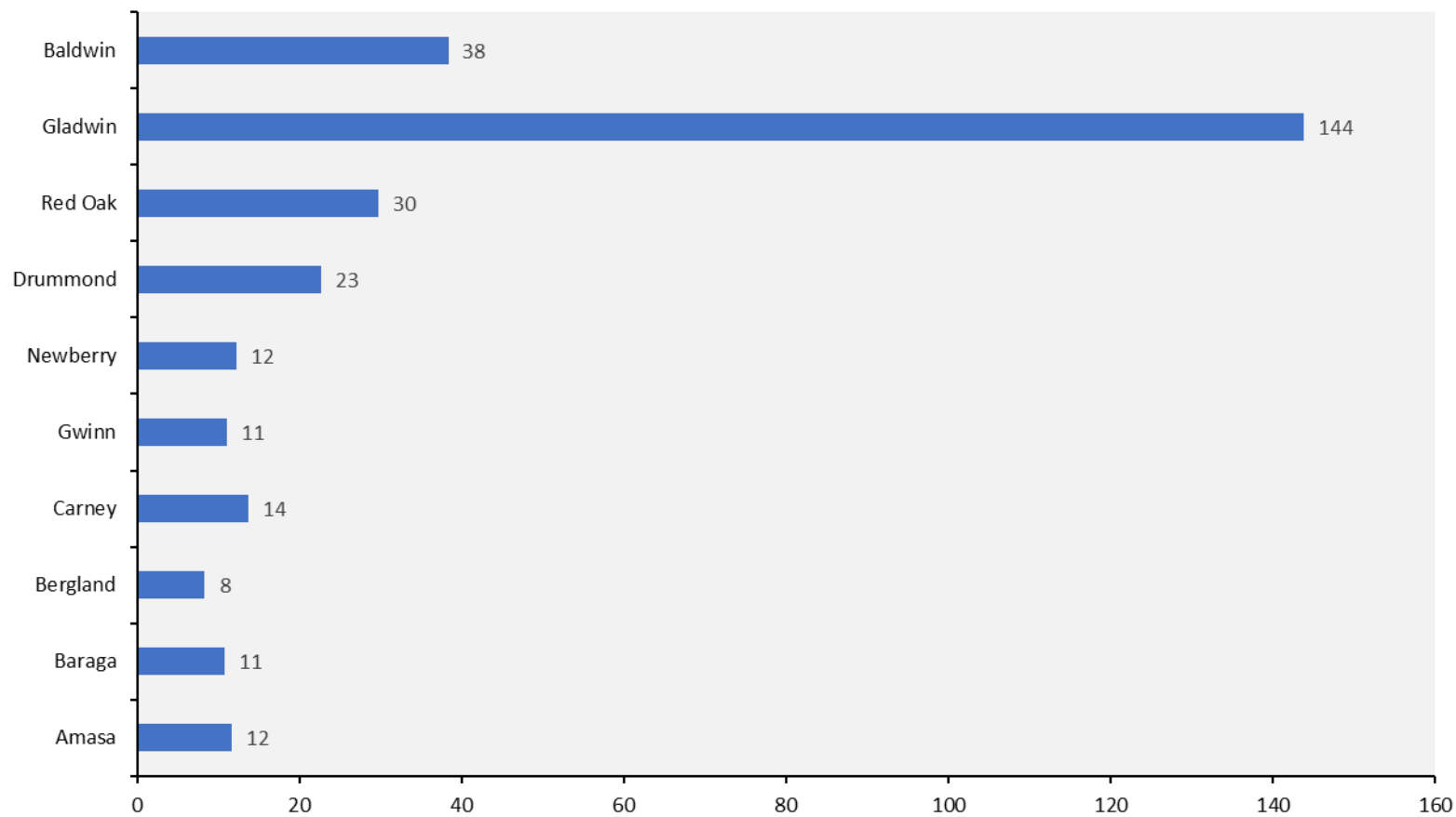
2023 Registered Harvest

■ State ■ Tribal





2023 Square miles / harvested bear State and Tribal



2022 Bear Hunter Survey

- Most hunters (88%) relied primarily on bait-only
- 9% relied primarily on dogs alone or a combination of baiting (strike) and dogs
- 85% of harvested bears were taken over bait
- Bait-only hunters had a 38% success rate, dog hunters had a 57% success rate



2022 Bear Hunter Survey

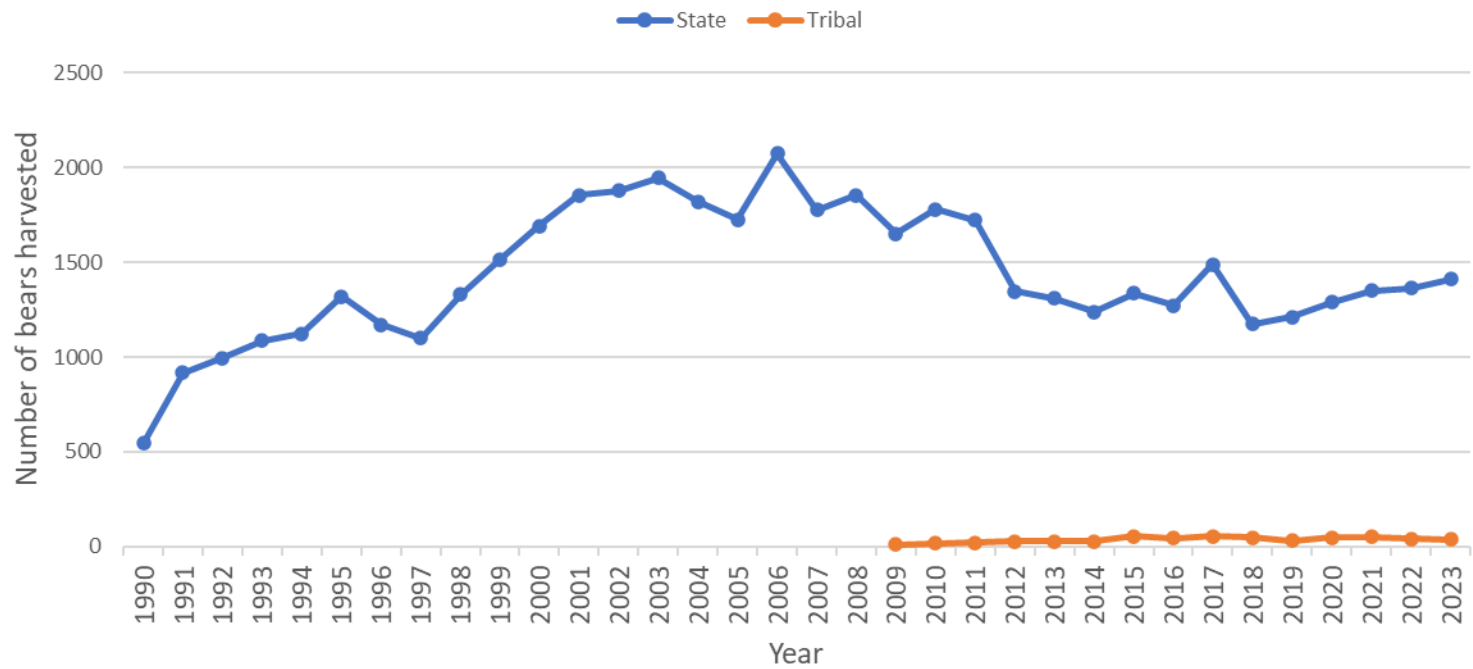
- The success rate of hunters that hired a guide was 55%
- Approximately 732 hunters (14%) hired a guide
- 5,844 people bought a bear license, which is a decrease of 27% since 2012 (7,994)
- 60,636 people applied, increase of 19% since 2012 (51,152)





UP Bear Harvest

State long-term average: 1,431

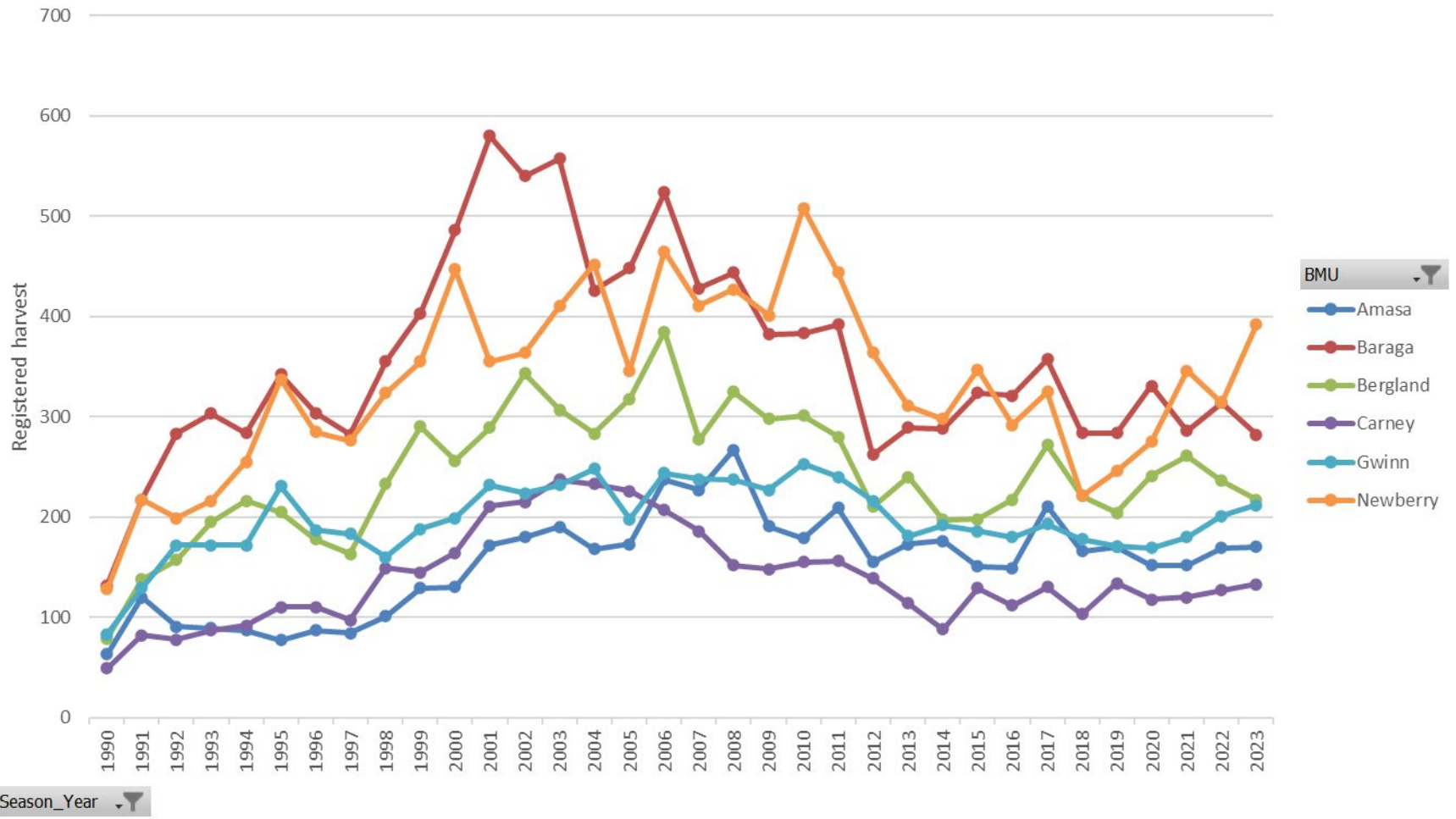


1,411





UP: Number of bears registered by BMU (State-licensed hunters)

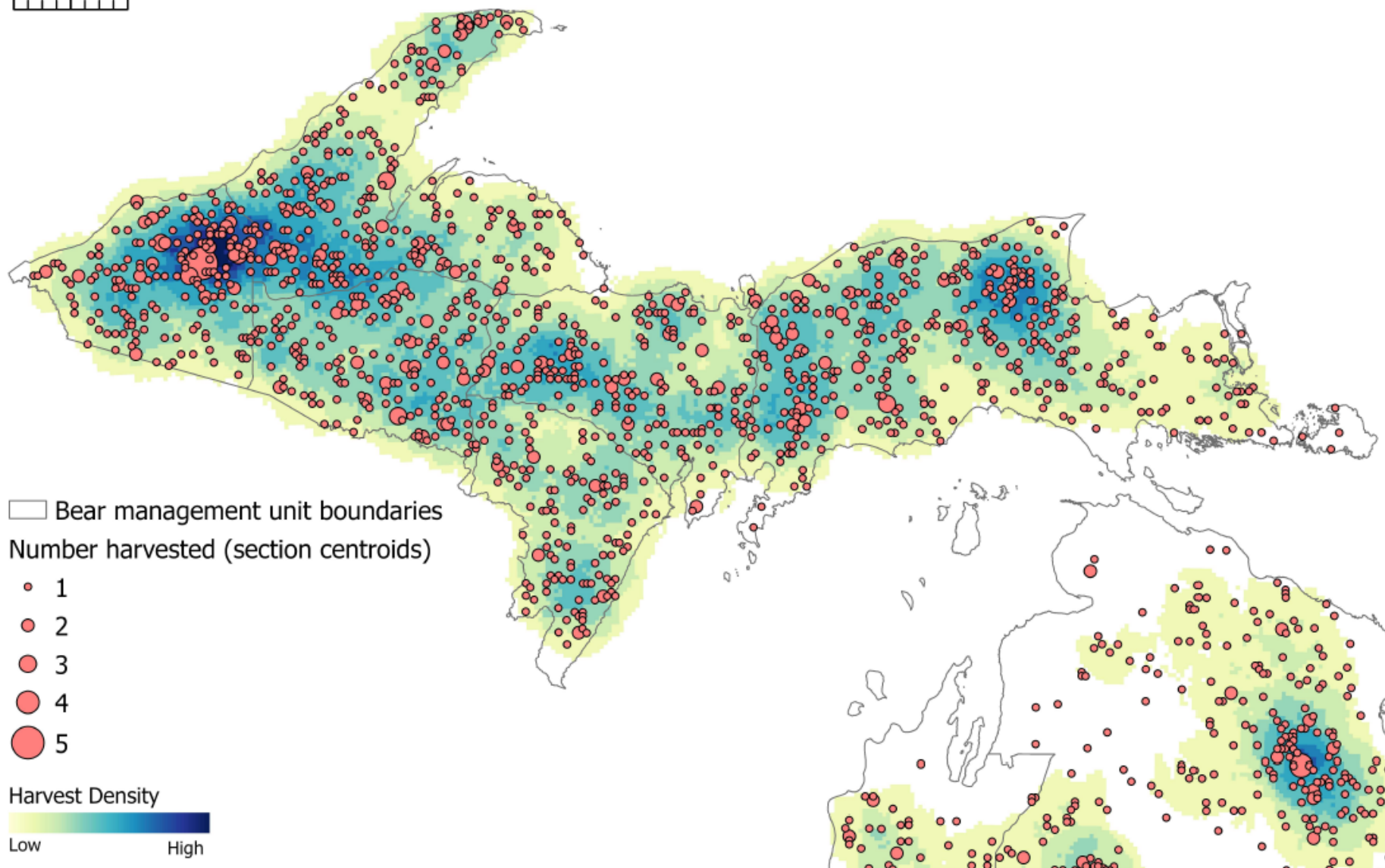


N

0 10 20 40 Miles

2023 Bear Harvest Locations - UP

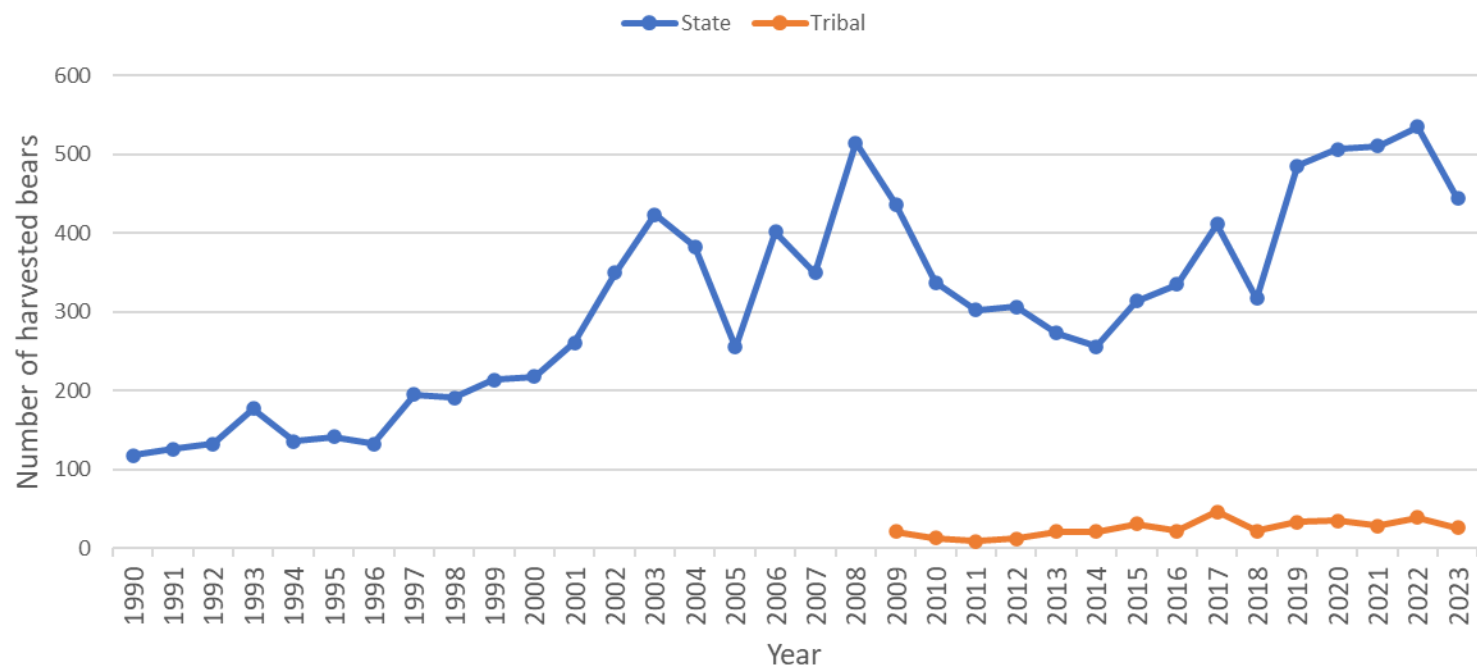
Note: This map shows only registered bears taken by hunting with a state-issued license. Statewide, 27 bears had missing or incomplete location information and are not displayed.





NLP Bear Harvest

State long-term average: 308

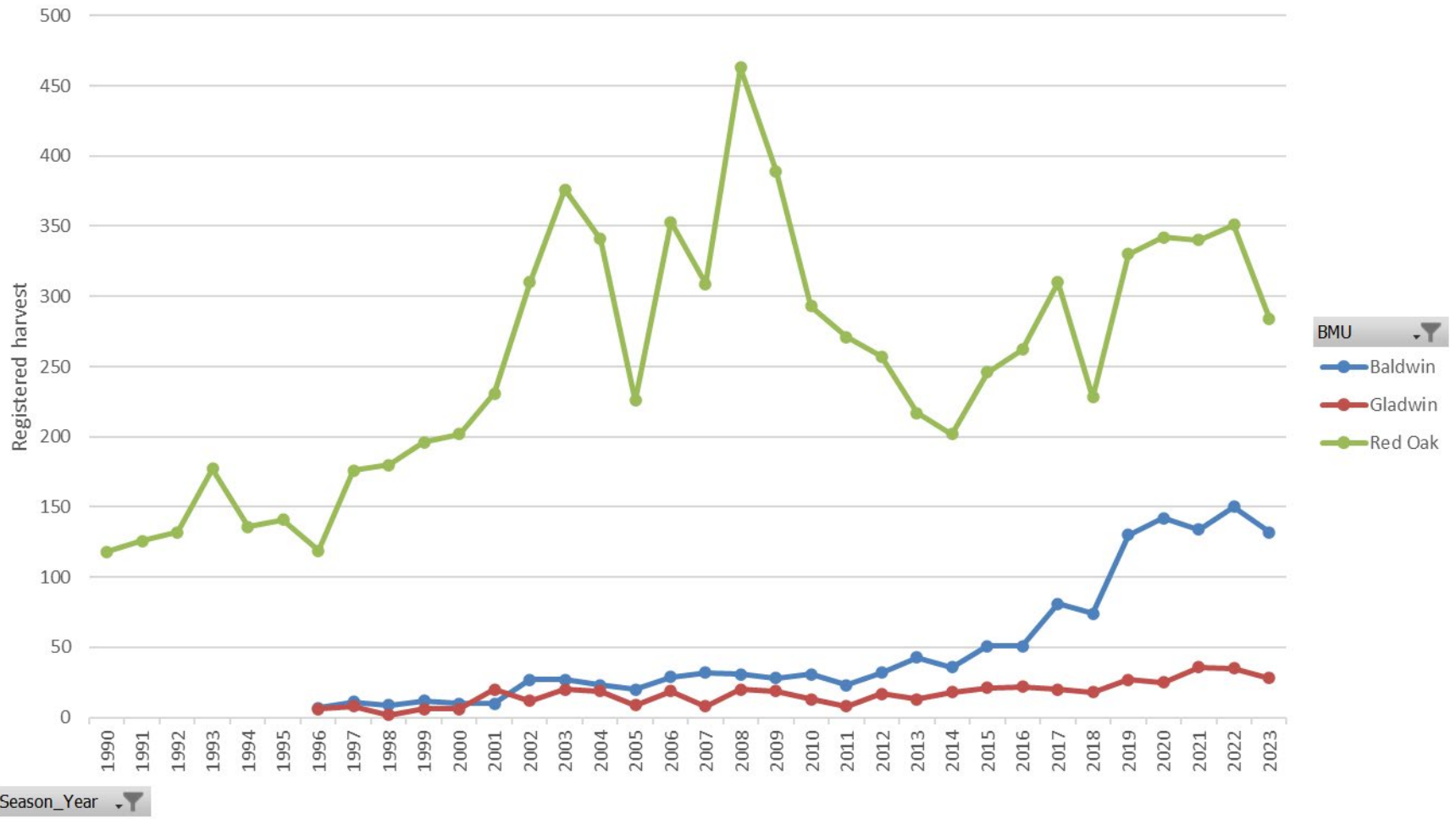


444





NLP: Number of bears registered by BMU
(State-licensed hunters)



2023 Bear Harvest Locations - NLP

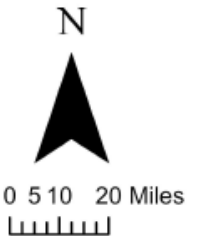
Note: This map shows only registered bears taken by hunting with a state-issued license. Statewide, 27 bears had missing or incomplete location information and are not displayed.

□ Bear management unit boundaries

Number harvested (section centroids)

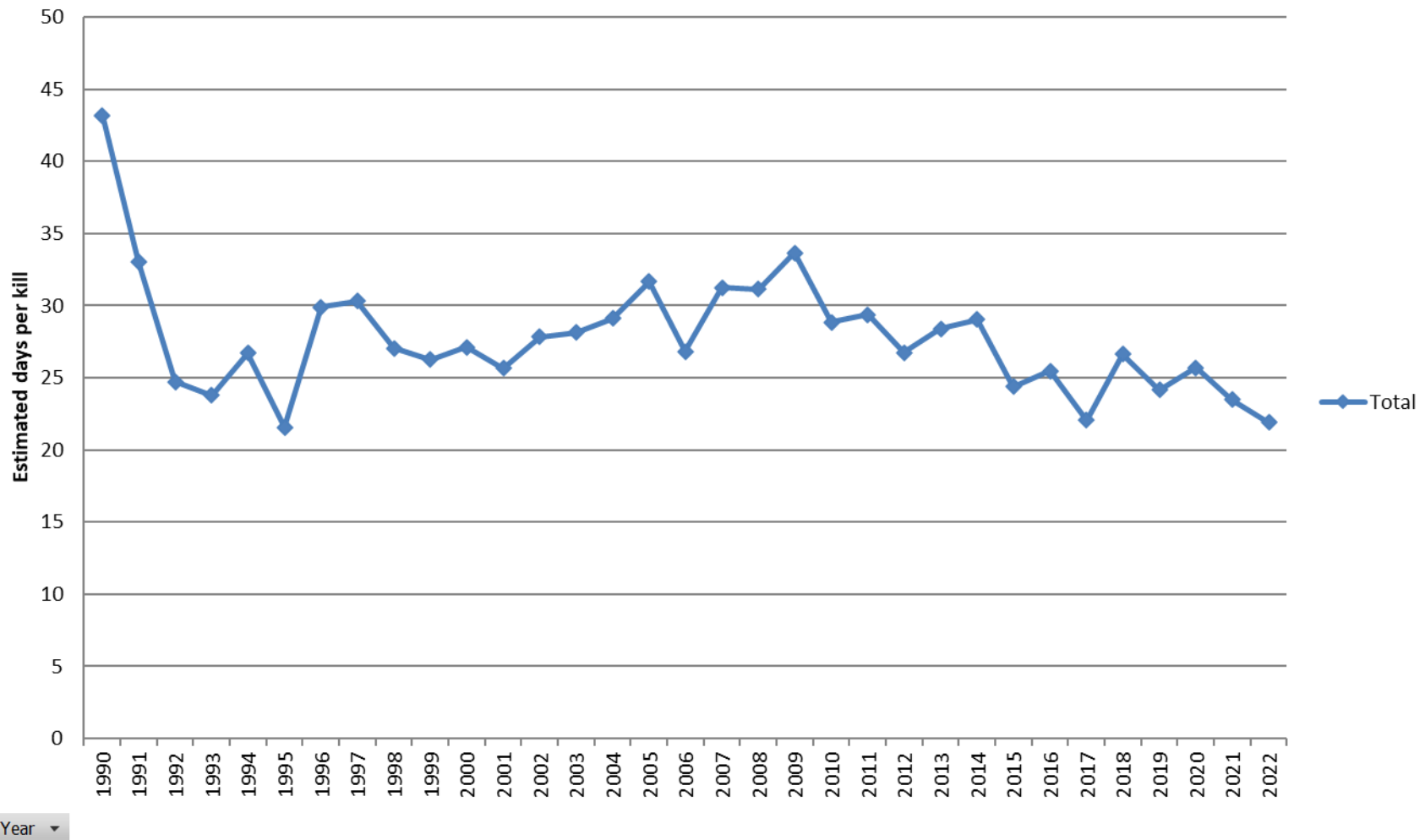


Harvest Density



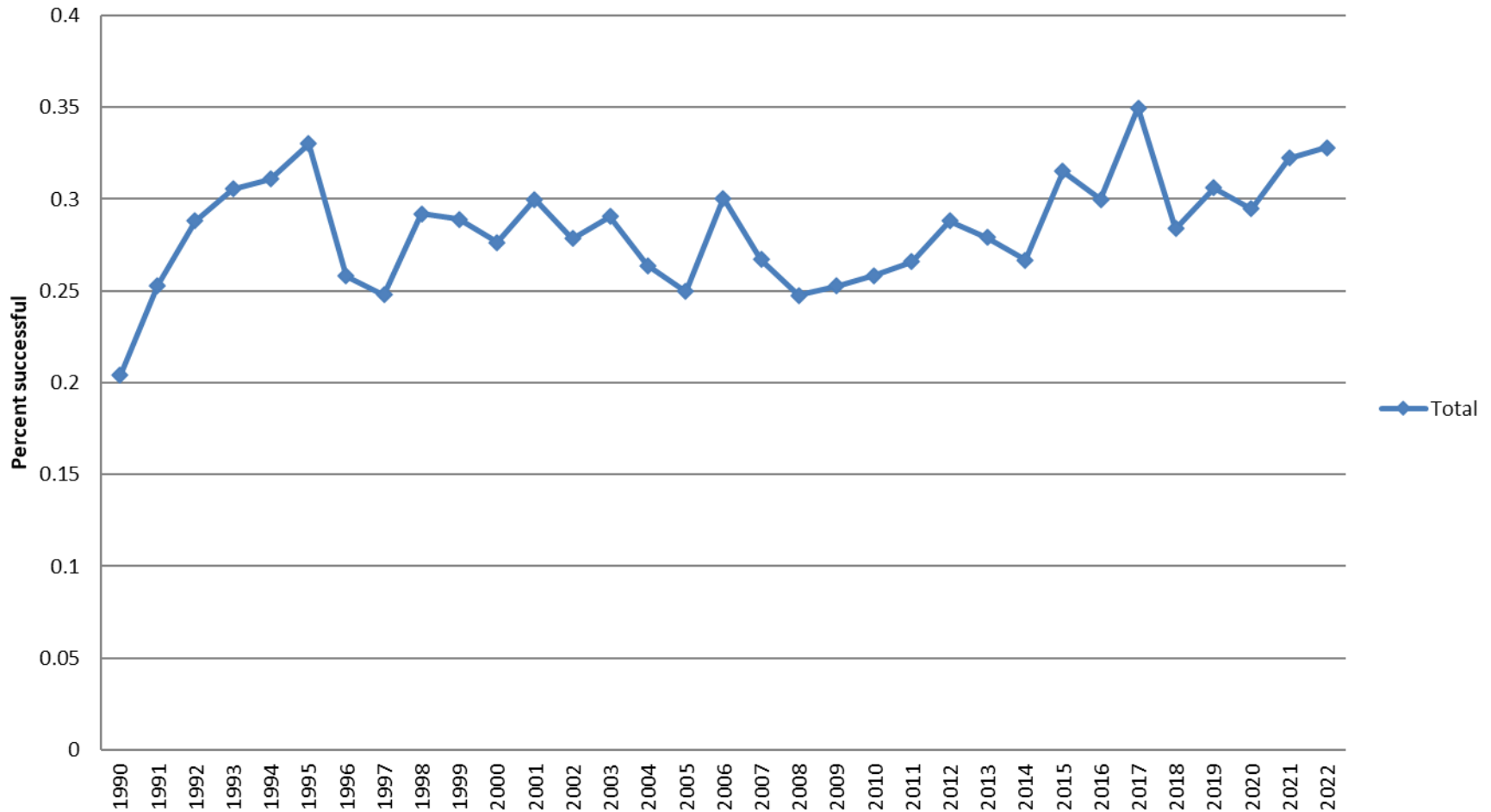
Upper Peninsula

Estimated effort per bear



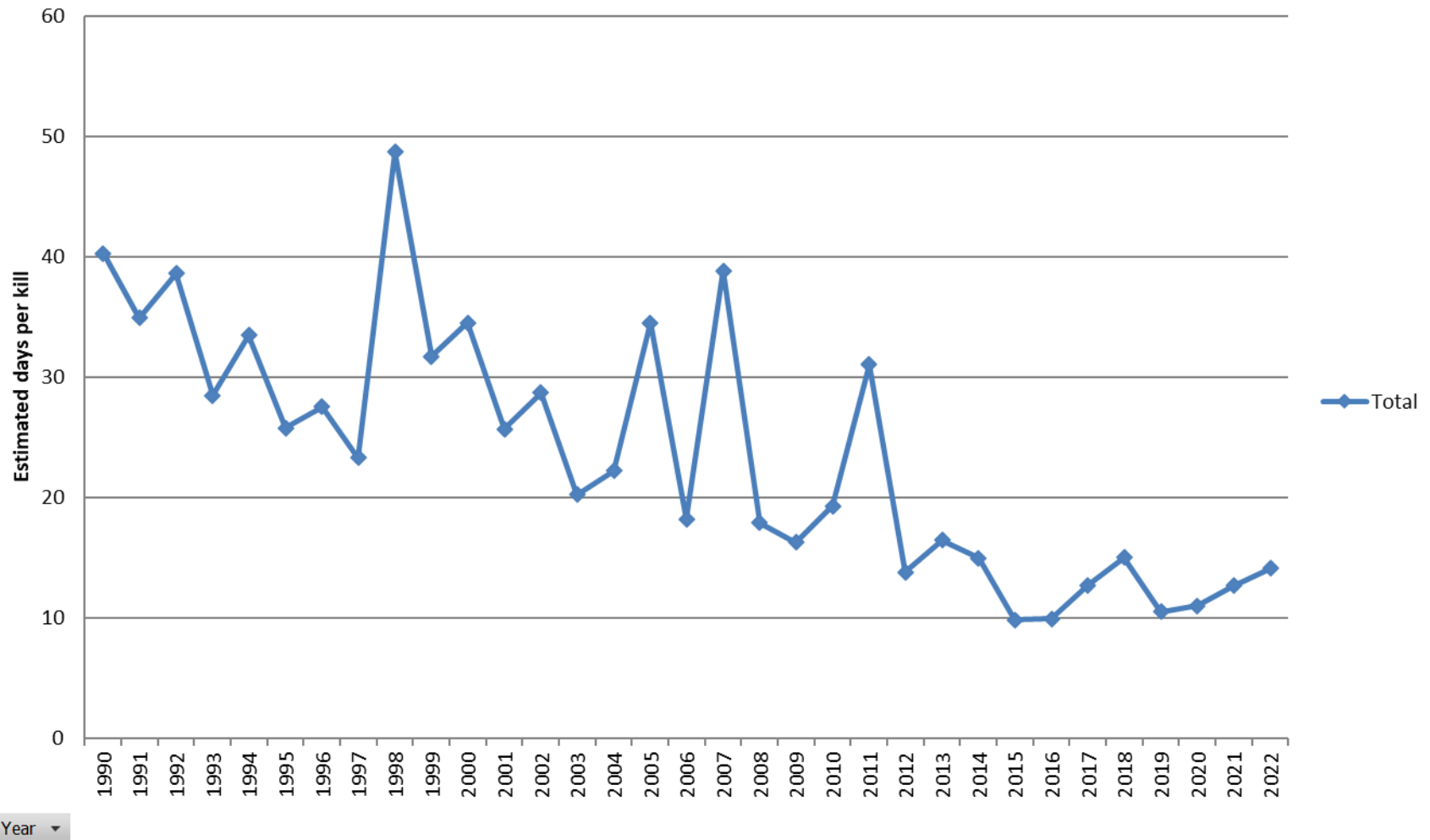
Upper Peninsula

Estimated percentage of successful hunters by year



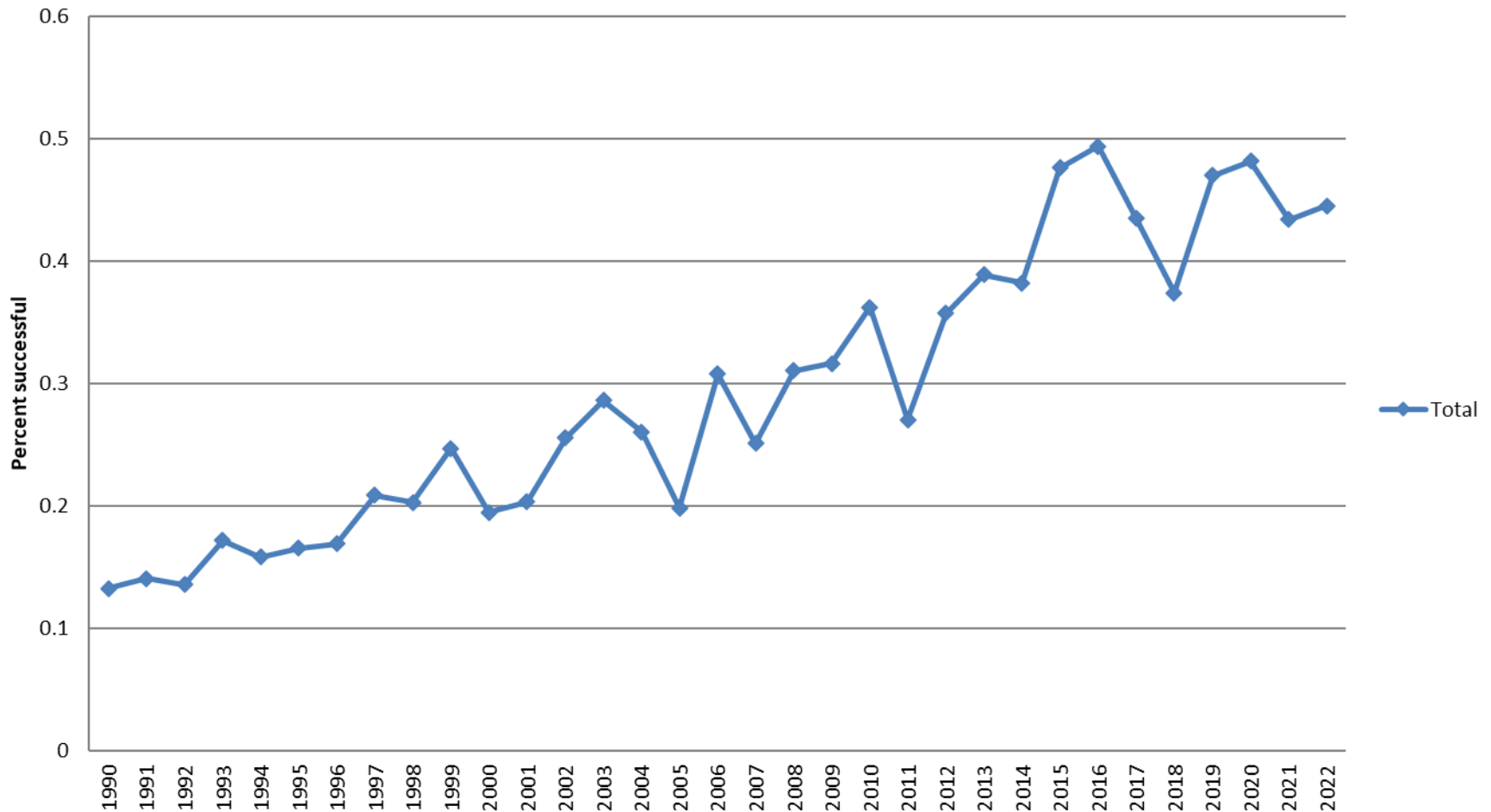
Northern Lower Peninsula

Estimated effort per bear



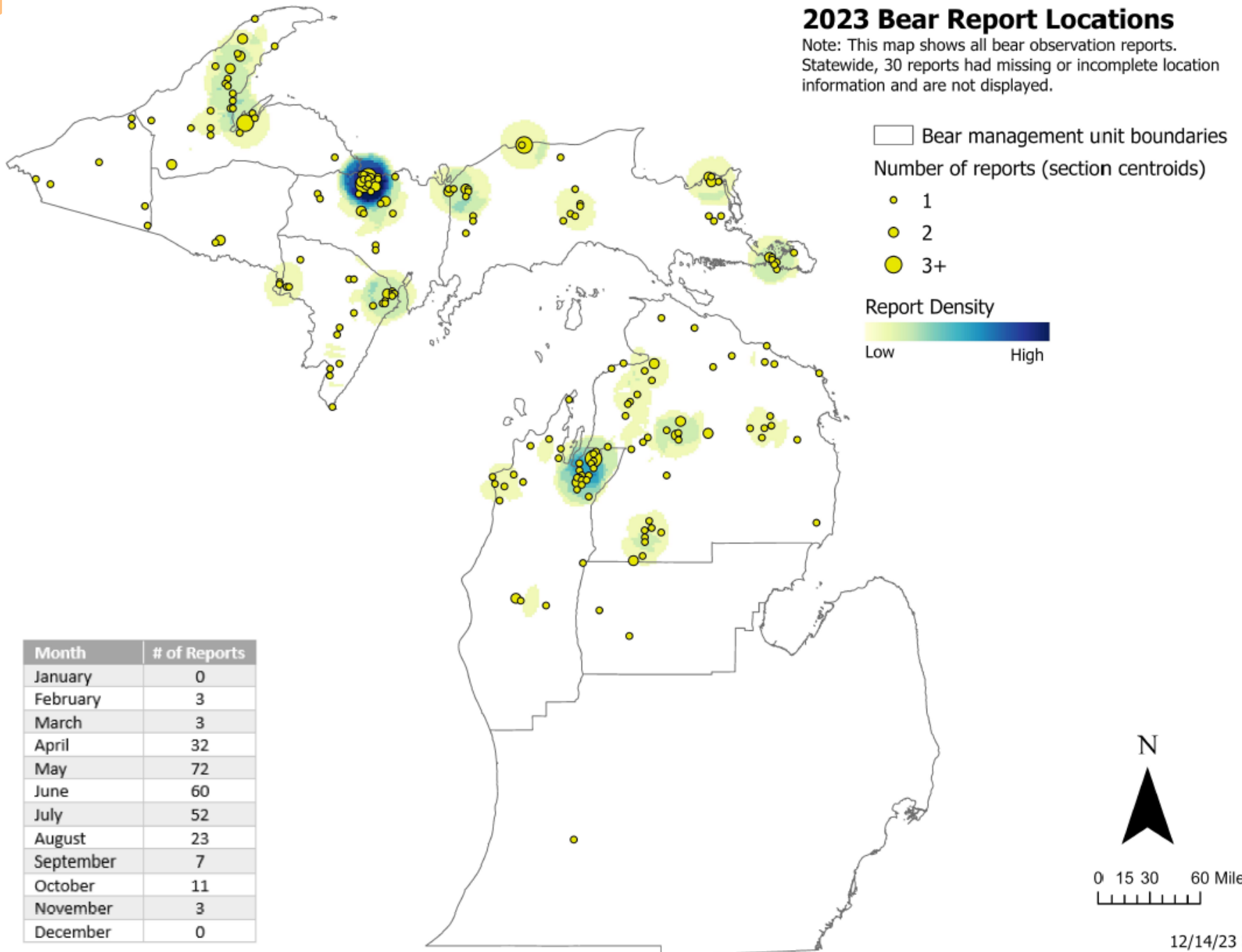
Northern Lower Peninsula

Estimated percentage of successful hunters by year



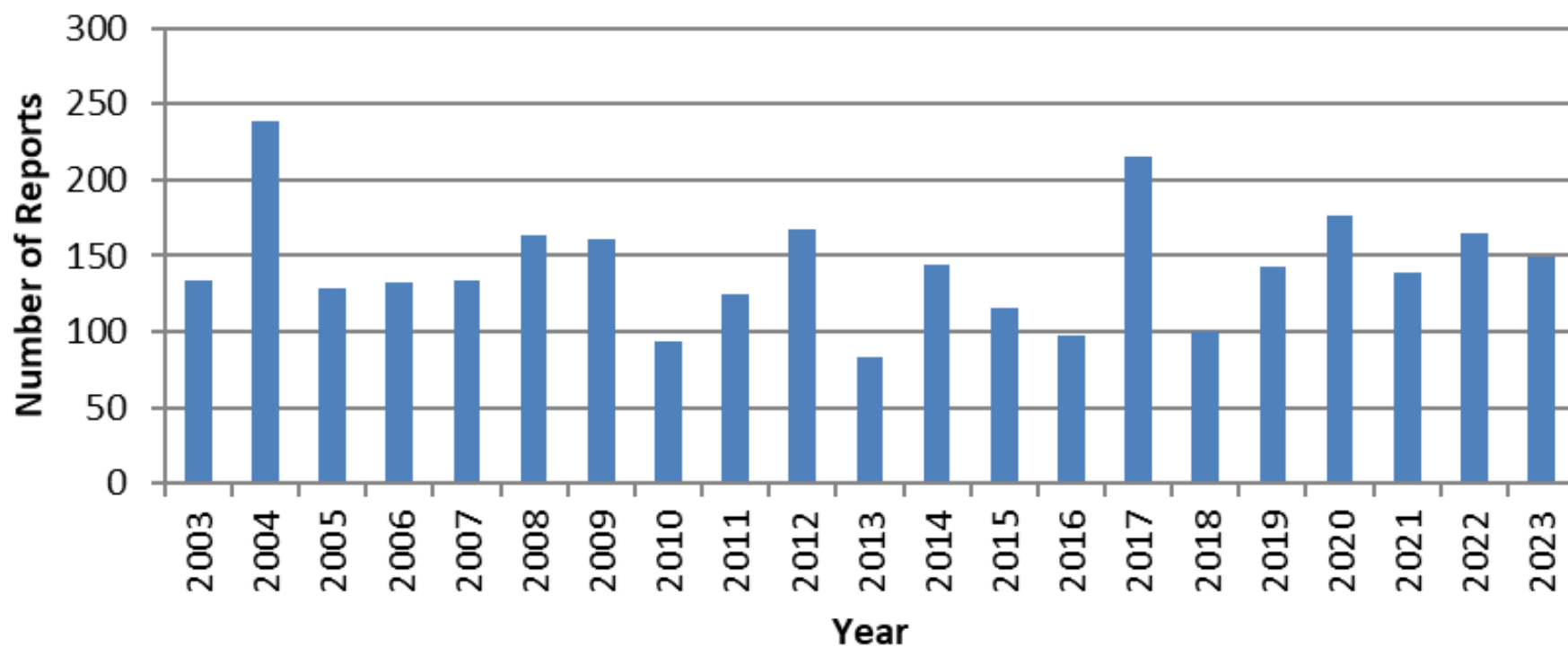
2023 Bear Report Locations

Note: This map shows all bear observation reports. Statewide, 30 reports had missing or incomplete location information and are not displayed.



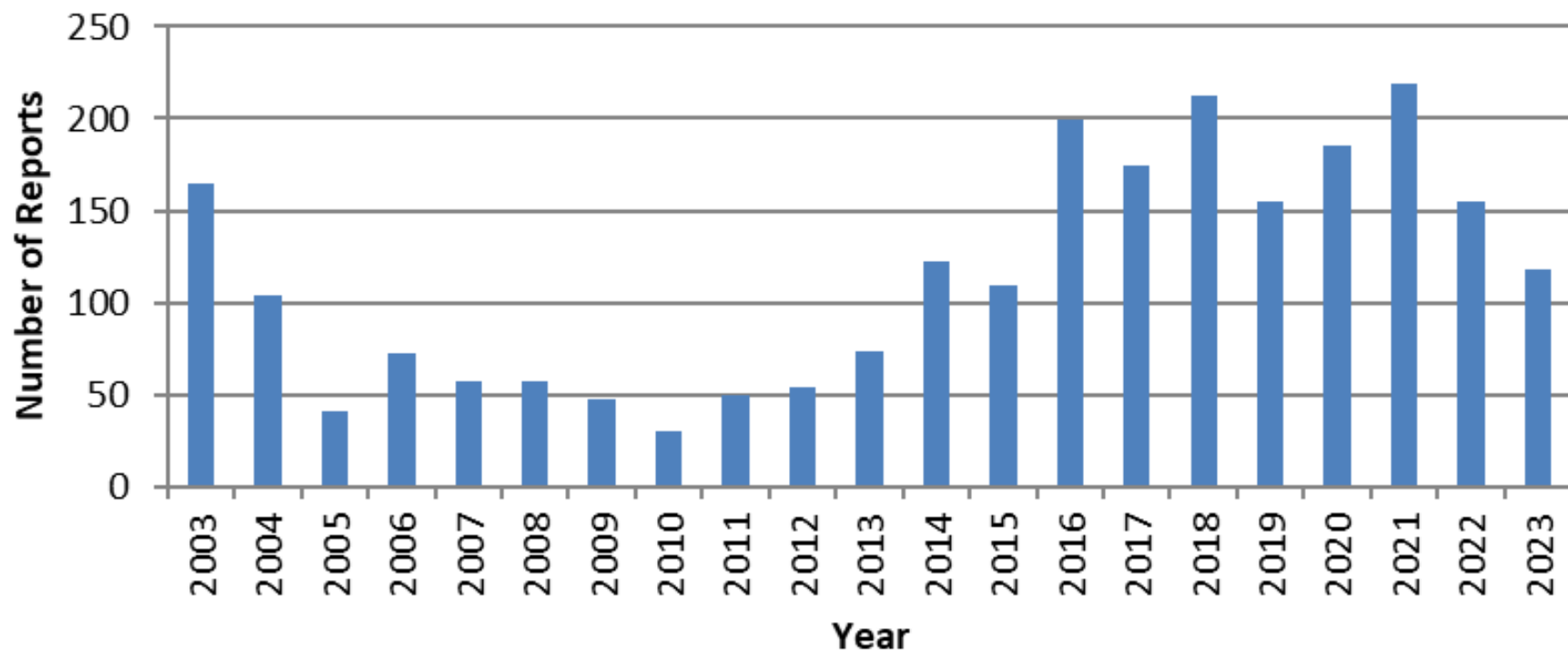


UP Region Nuisance Complaints





NLP Region Nuisance Complaints





Bear Management Goals

- Maintain a sustainable population within biological carrying capacity
- Facilitate bear-related benefits
- Minimize bear-related conflicts
- Conduct science-based and socially acceptable management



Thank You

