2023
Bear Population Trend Analysis

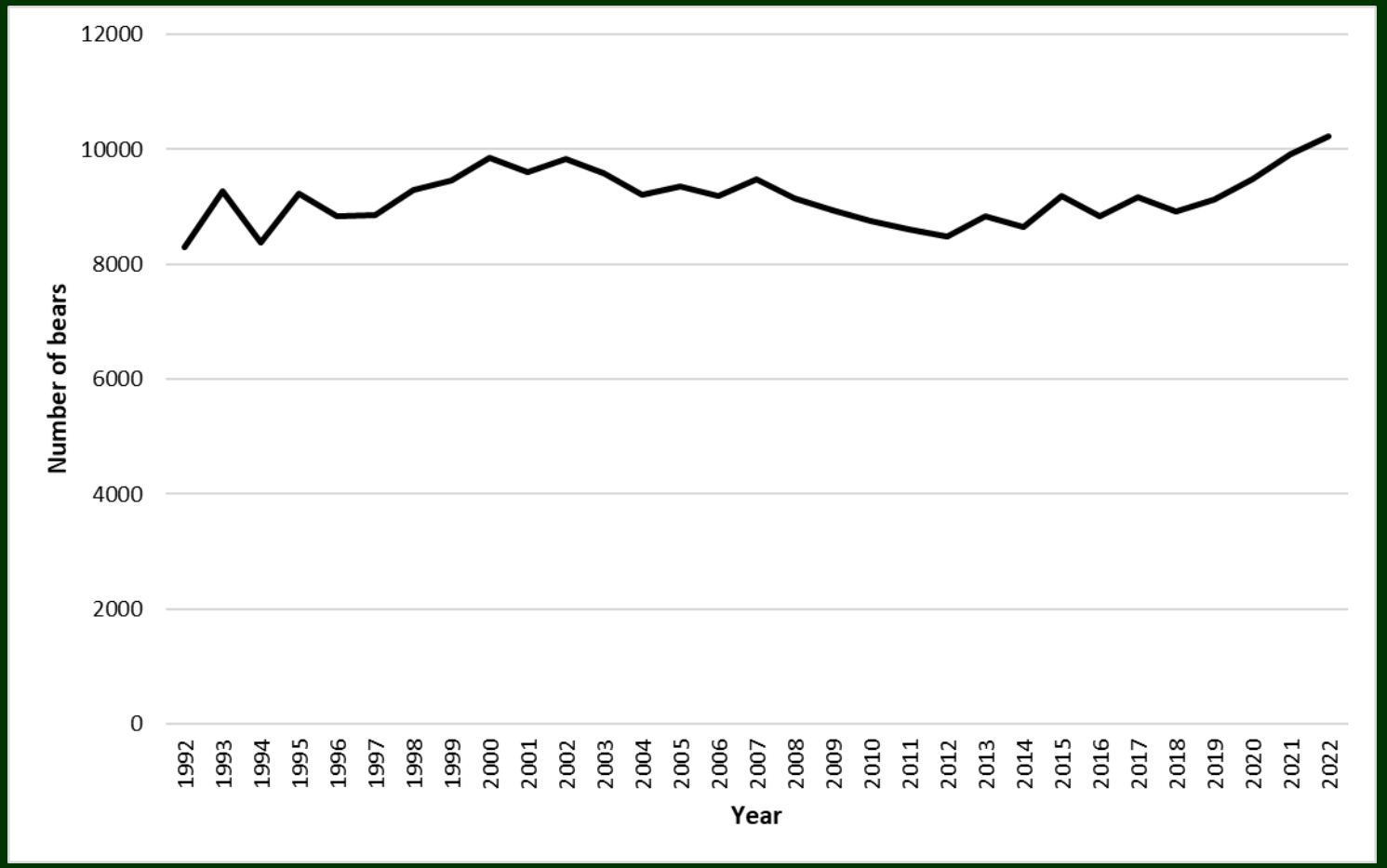
Cody Norton
Wildlife Division
February 8, 2024

Bear Regulations

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

Bear Management Units

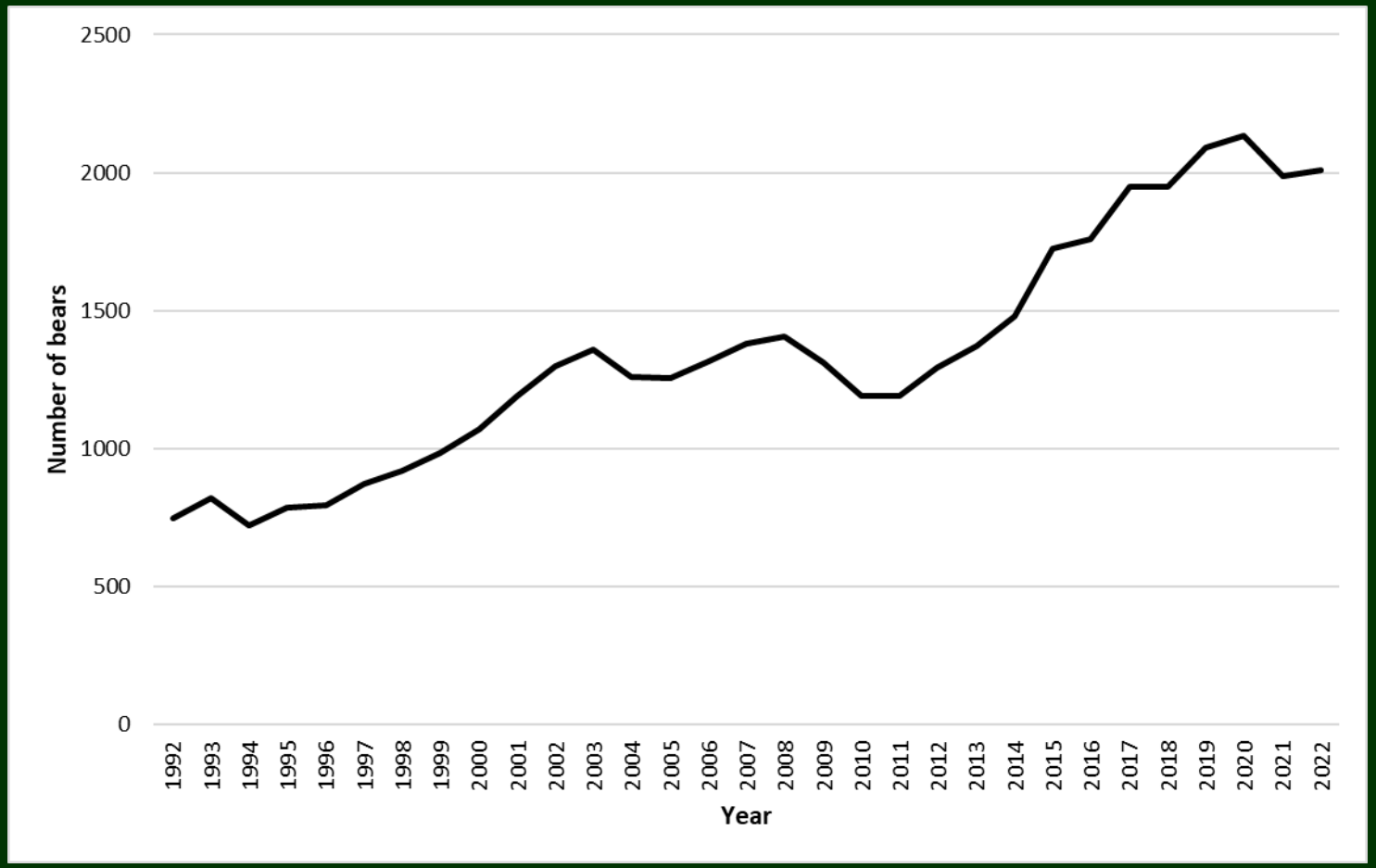
Upper Peninsula



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

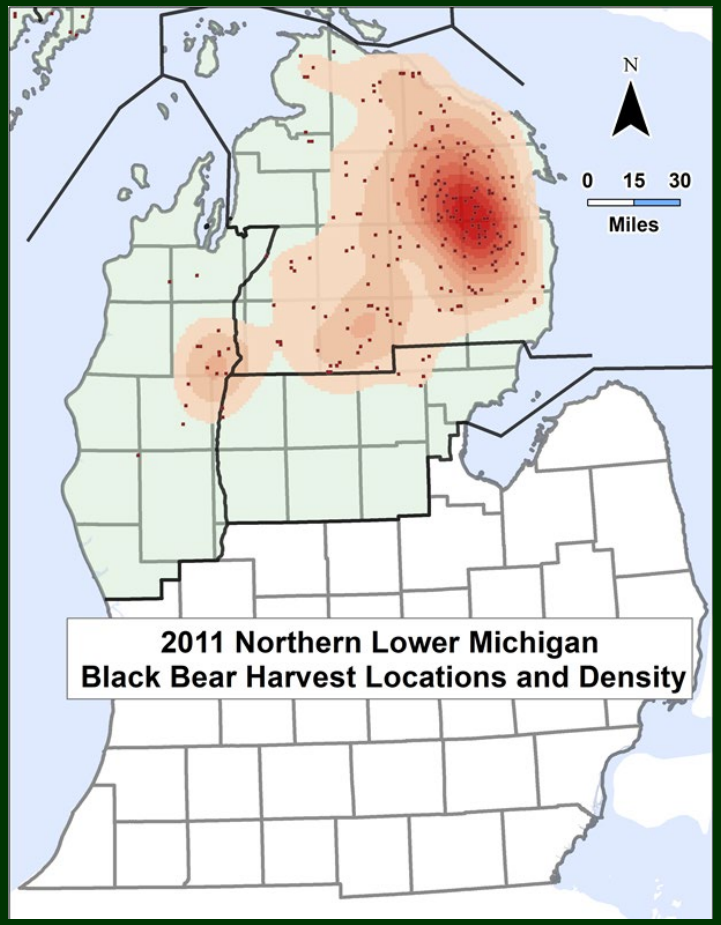


2,008 bears in 2022. Up 55% since 2012

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

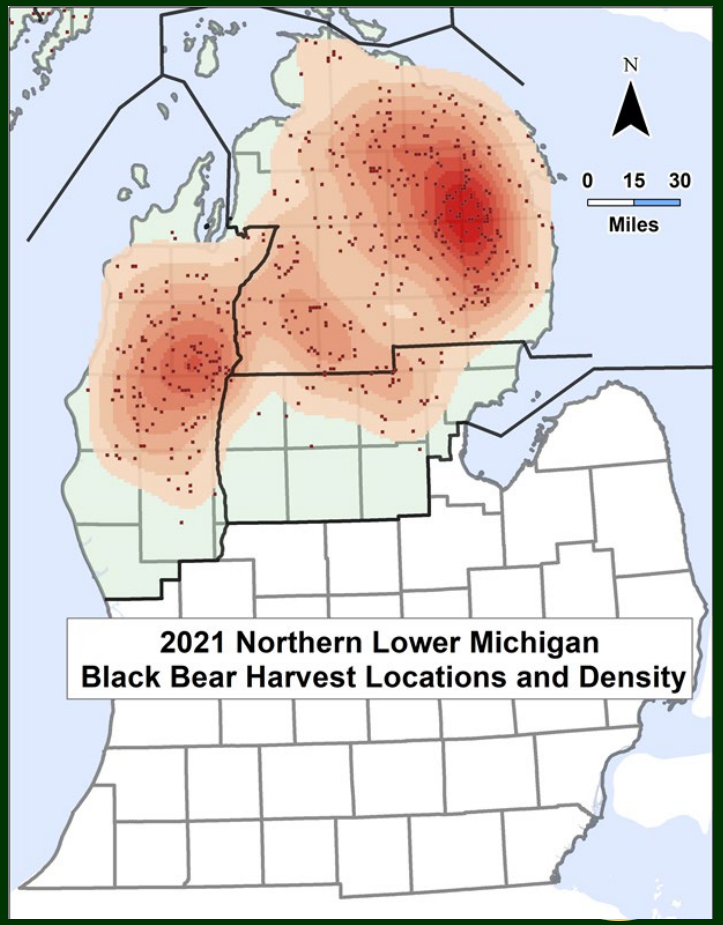
Expanding Distribution

7,800 mi²



74%

13,600 mi²



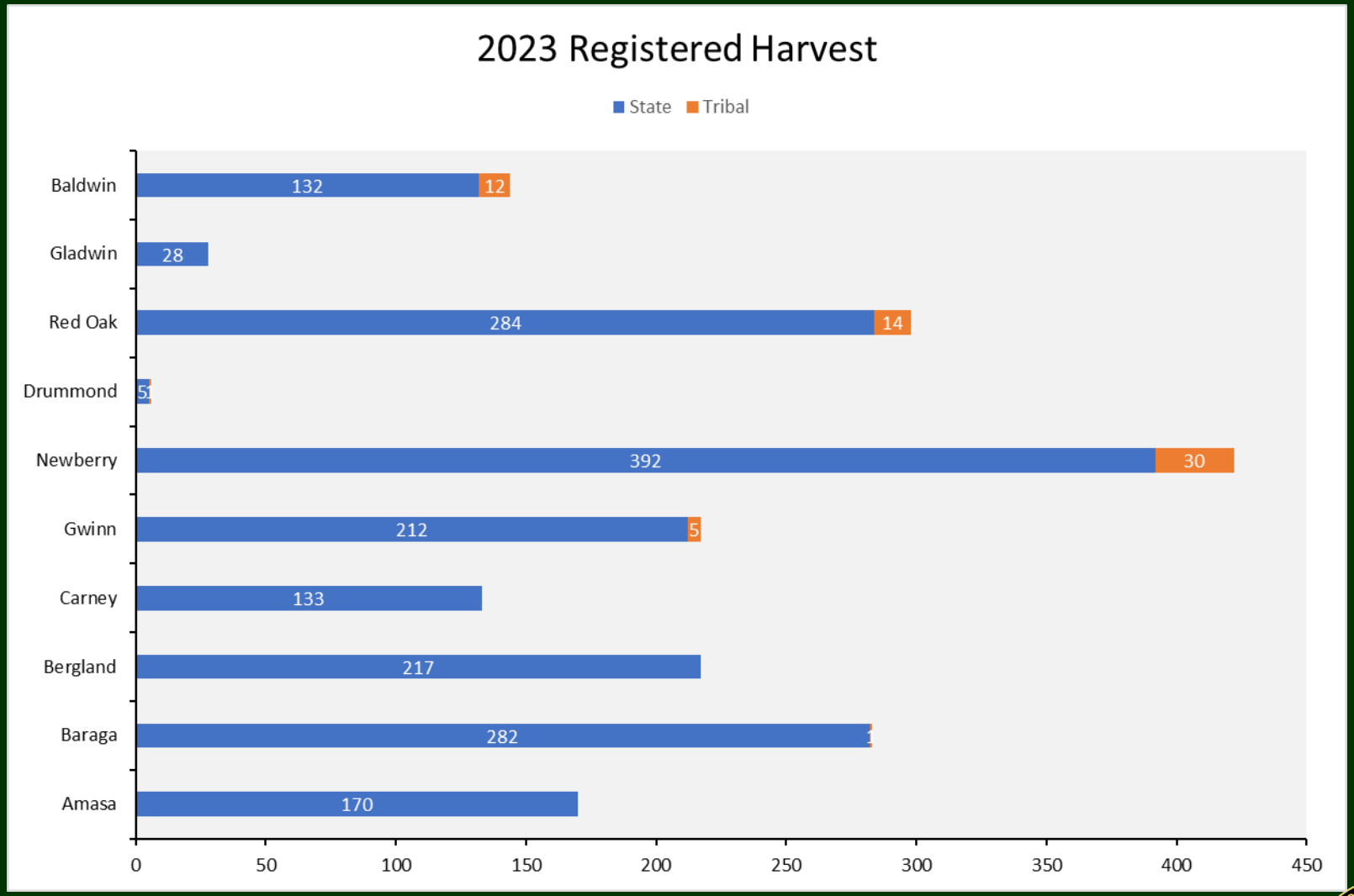
Other Indices and Information

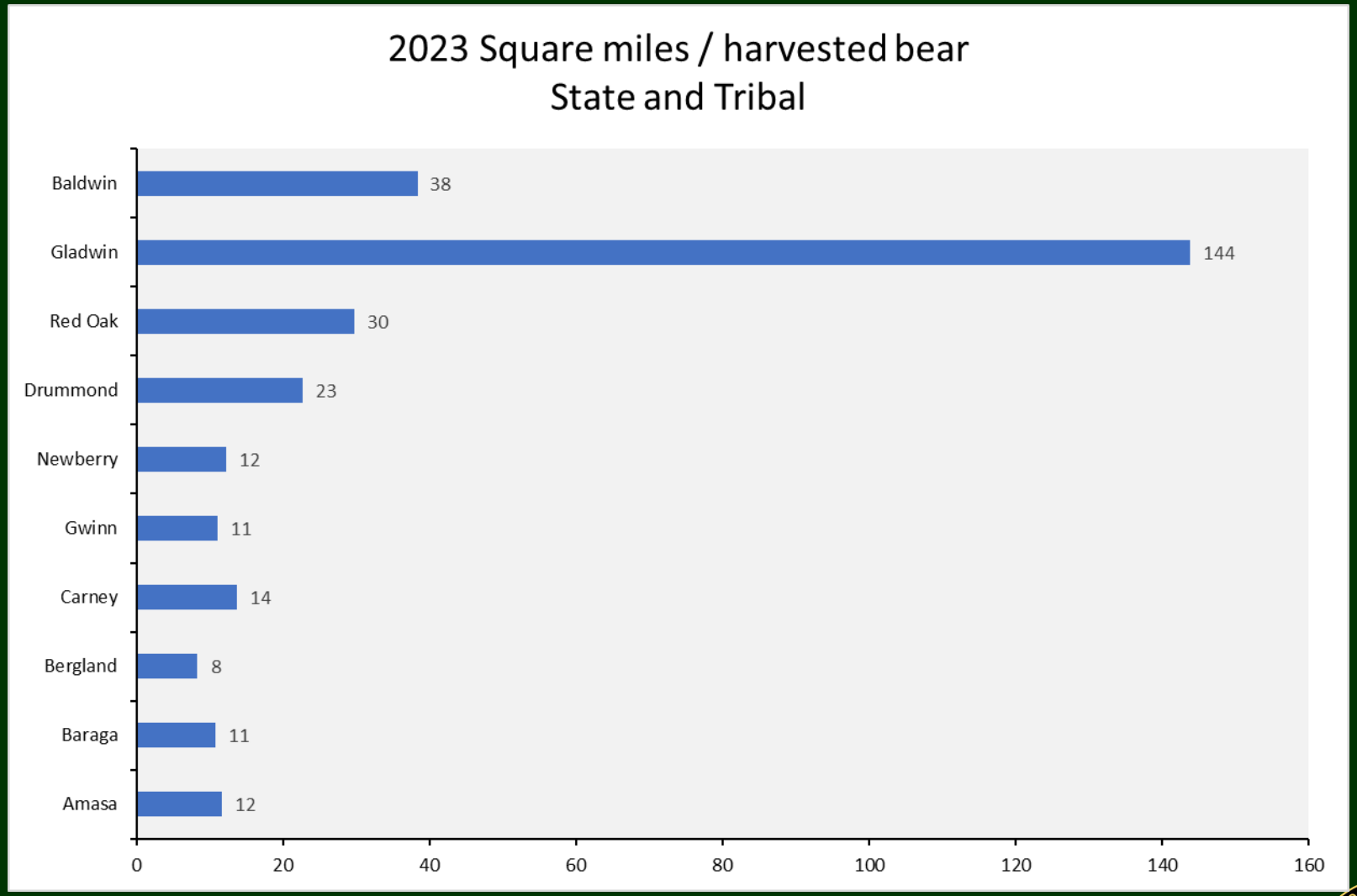
- Hunter effort
- Hunter success rates
- Hunter opinion
- Square miles/bear harvested
- Nuisance bear complaints
- Habitat and mast

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
Baldwin
132
12
Gladwin
28
Red Oak
284
14
Drummond
5
Newberry
392
30
Gwinn
212
5
Carney
133
Bergland
217
Baraga
282
Amasa
170
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450

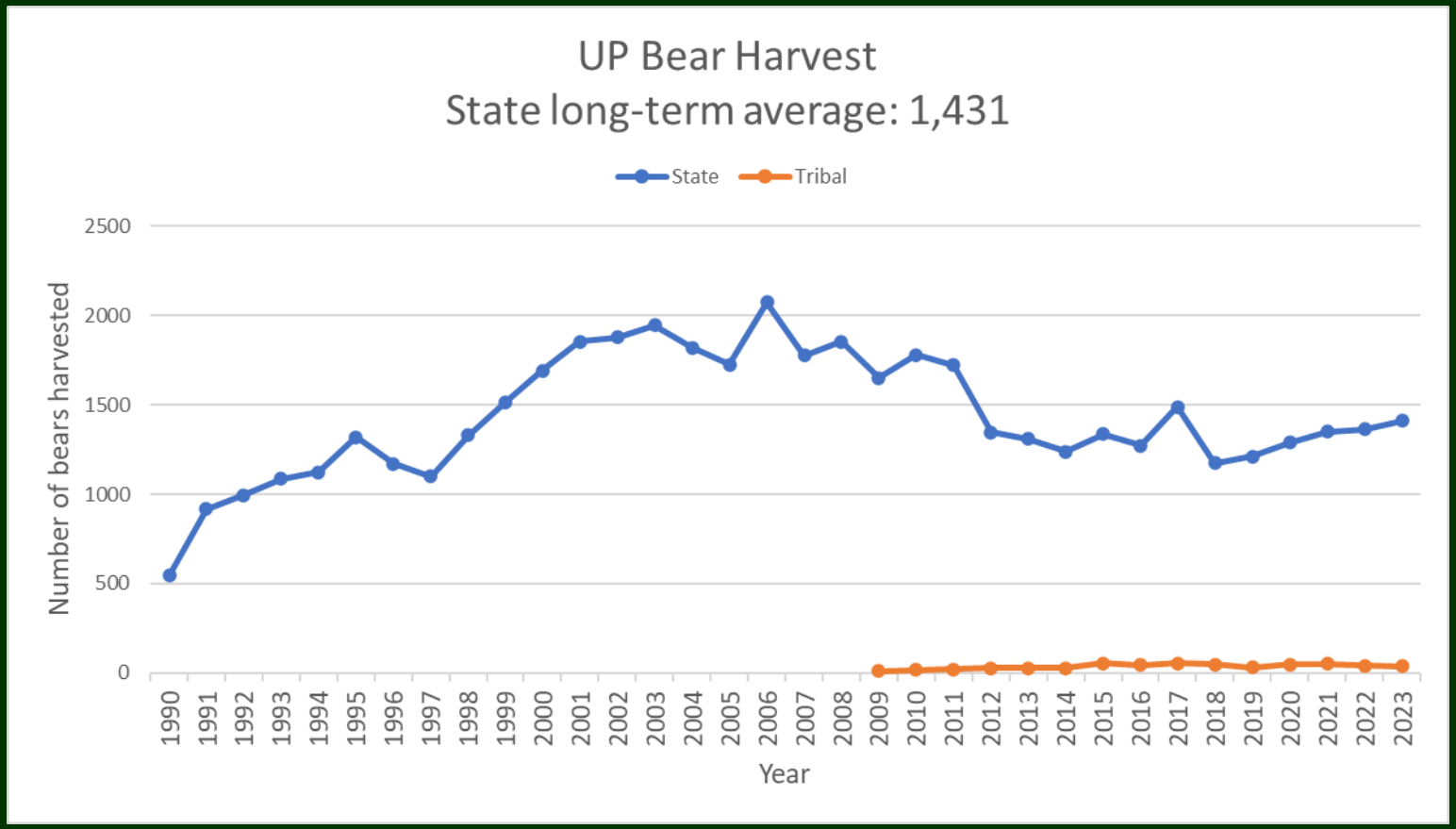

2023 Square miles / harvested bear
State and Tribal
Baldwin
38
Gladwin
144
Red Oak
30
Drummond
23
Newberry
12
Gwinn
11
Carney
14
Bergland
8
Baraga
11
Amasa
12
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160

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
State
Tribal
Number of bears harvested
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
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2012
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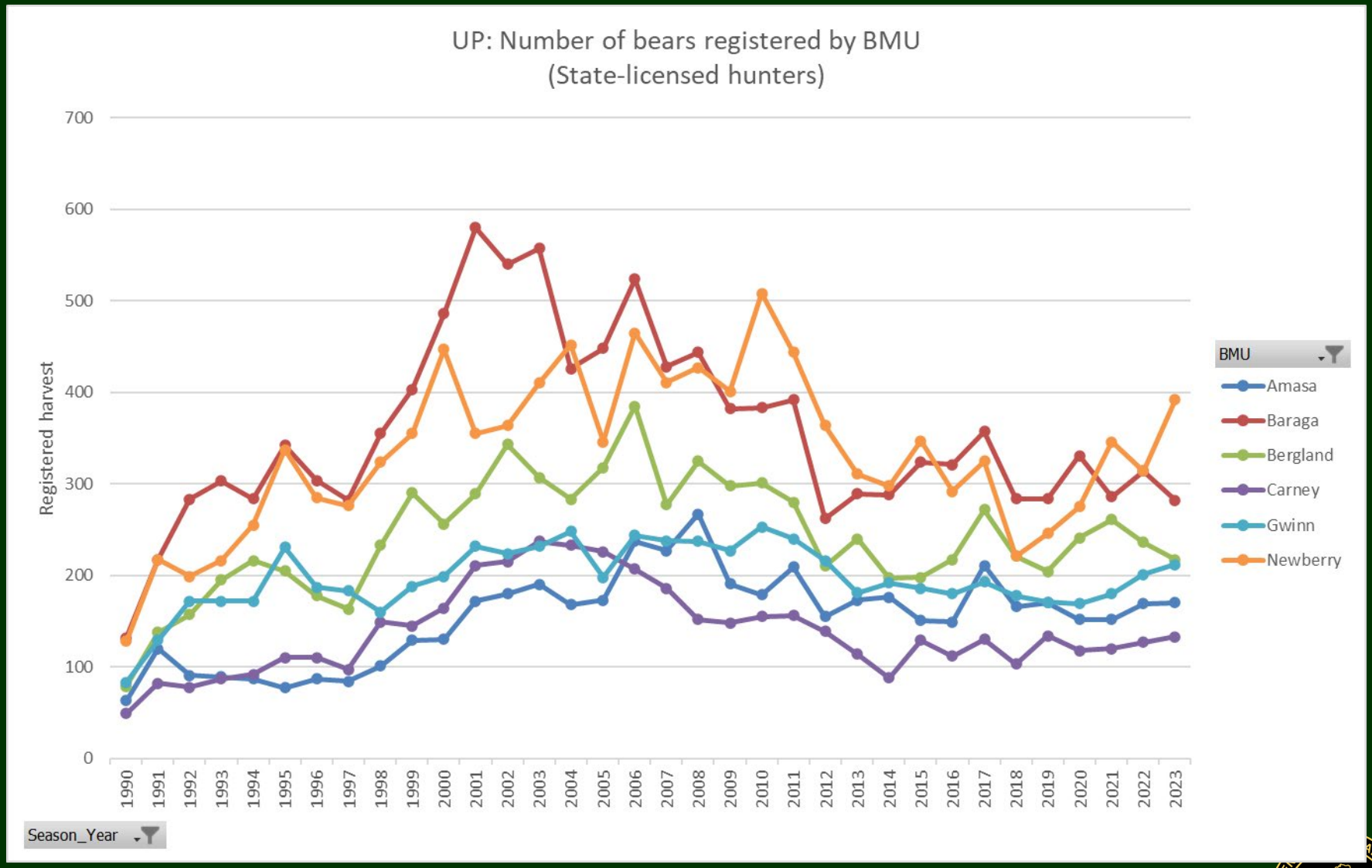
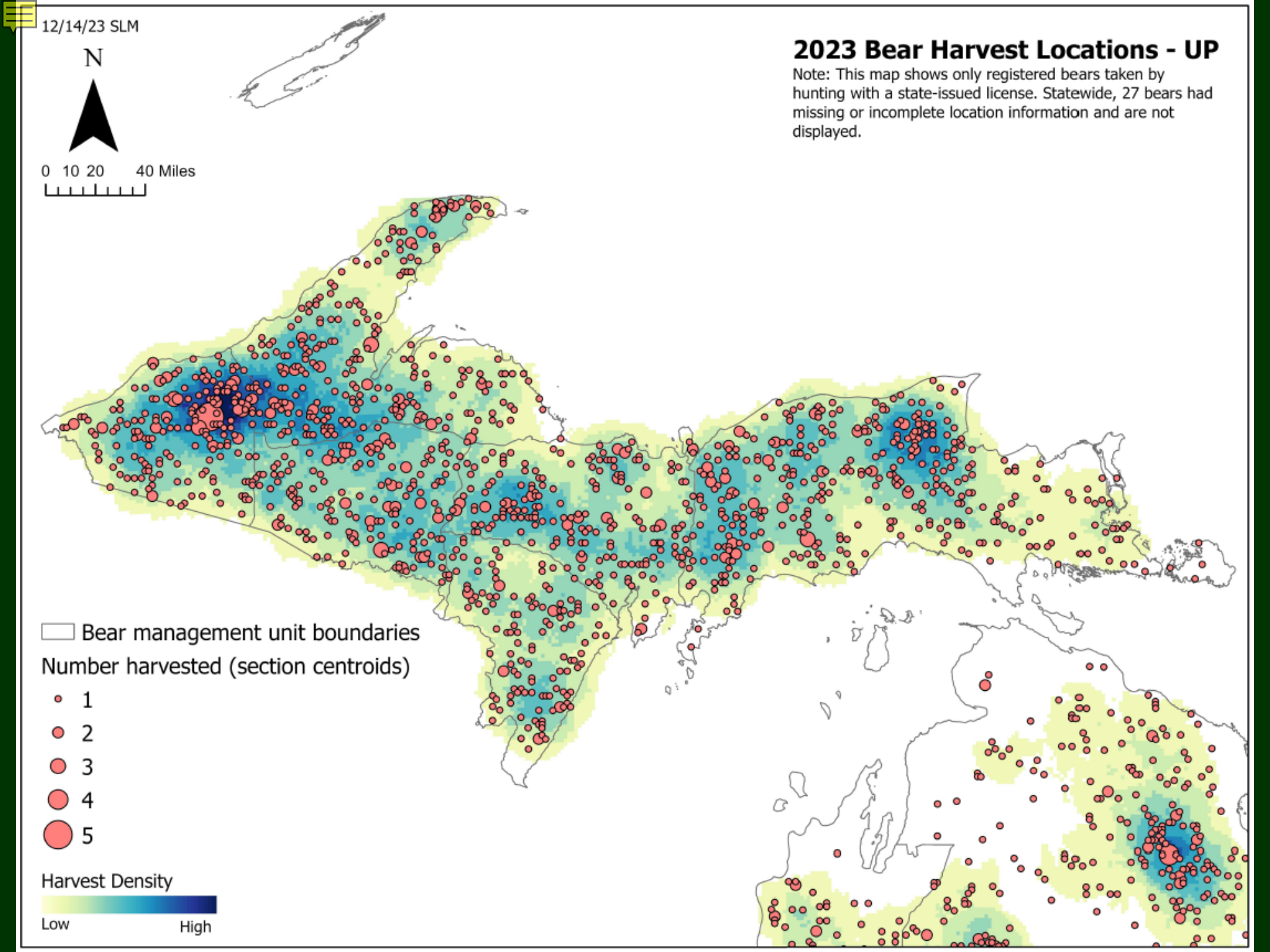
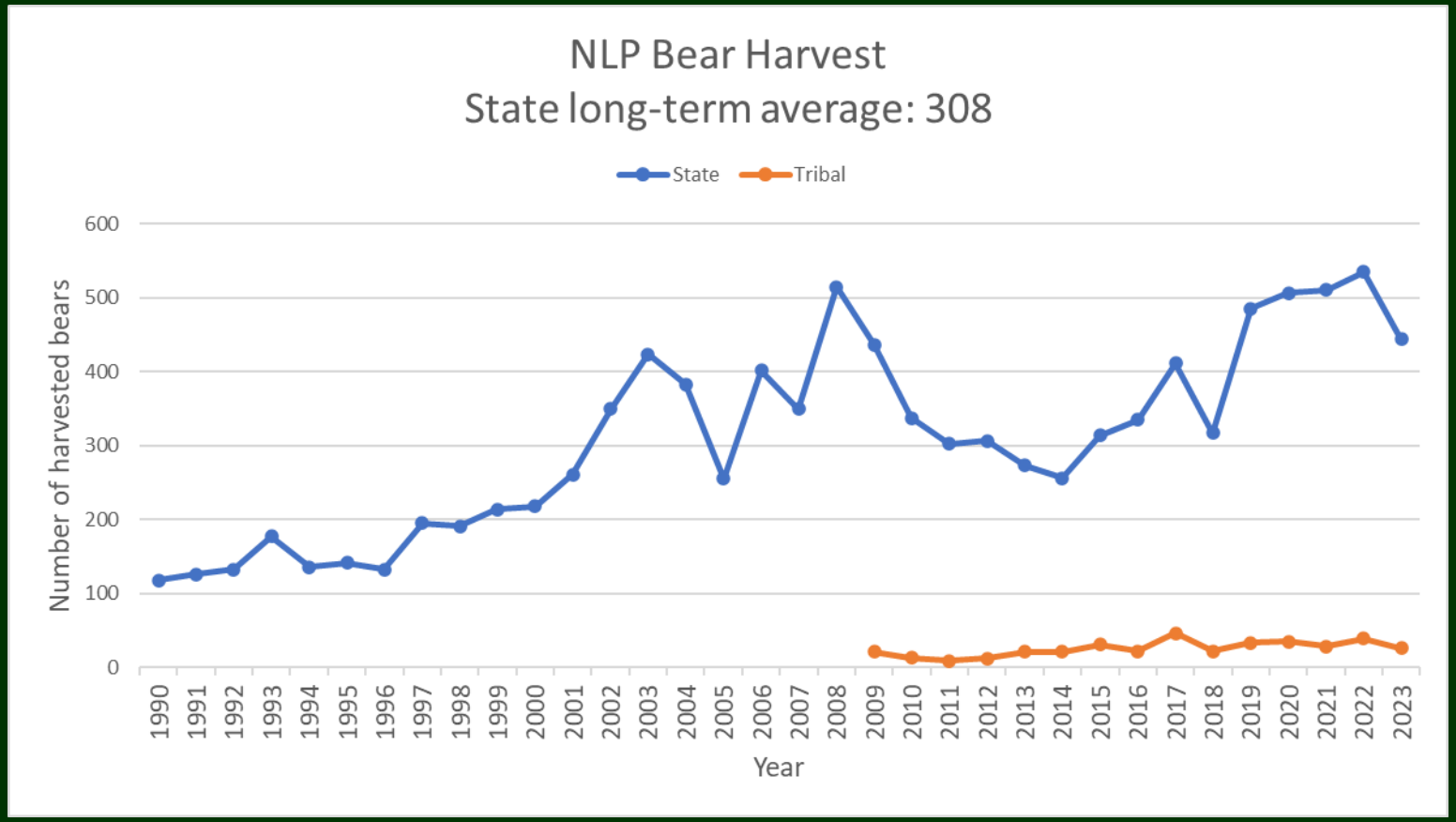
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
Year

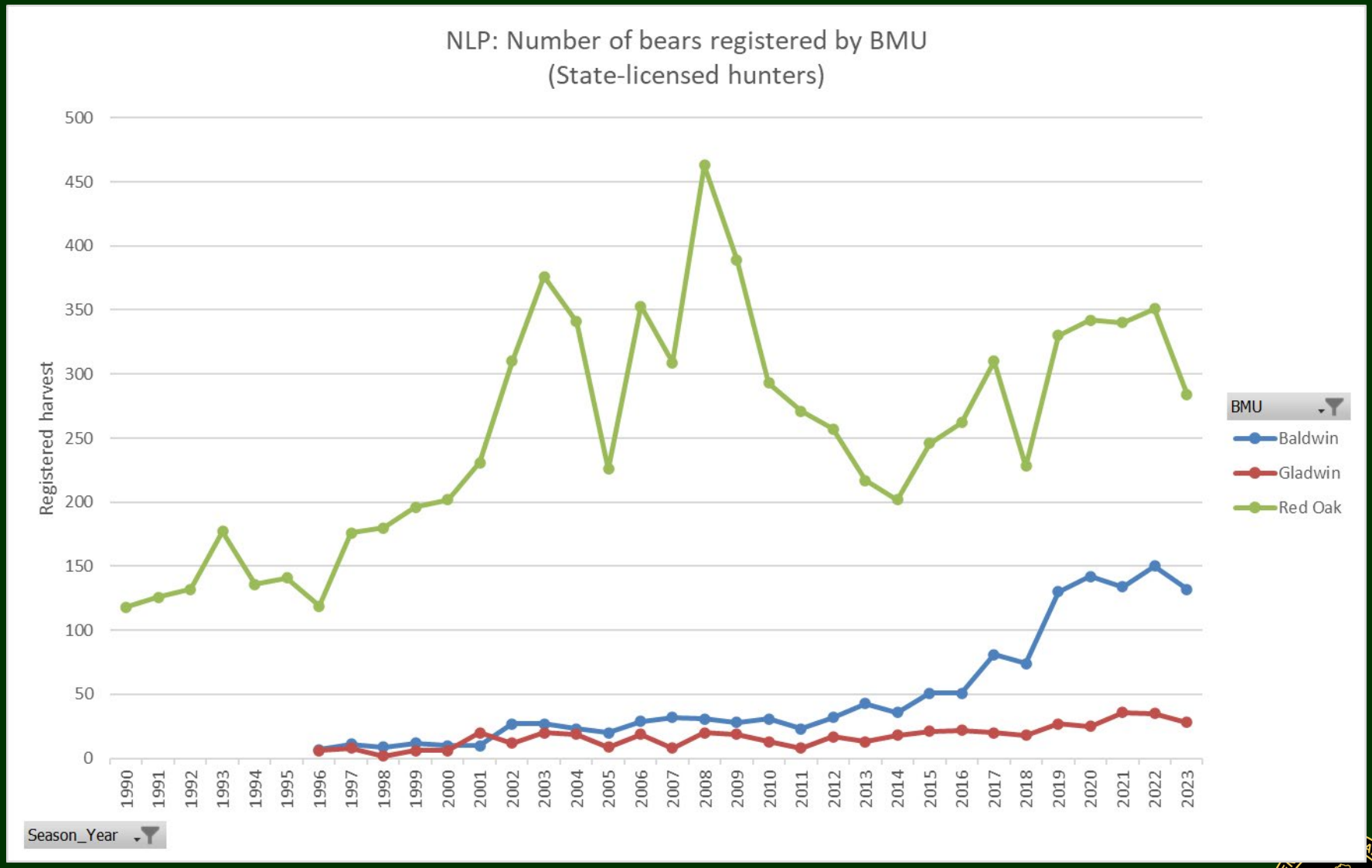
1,411

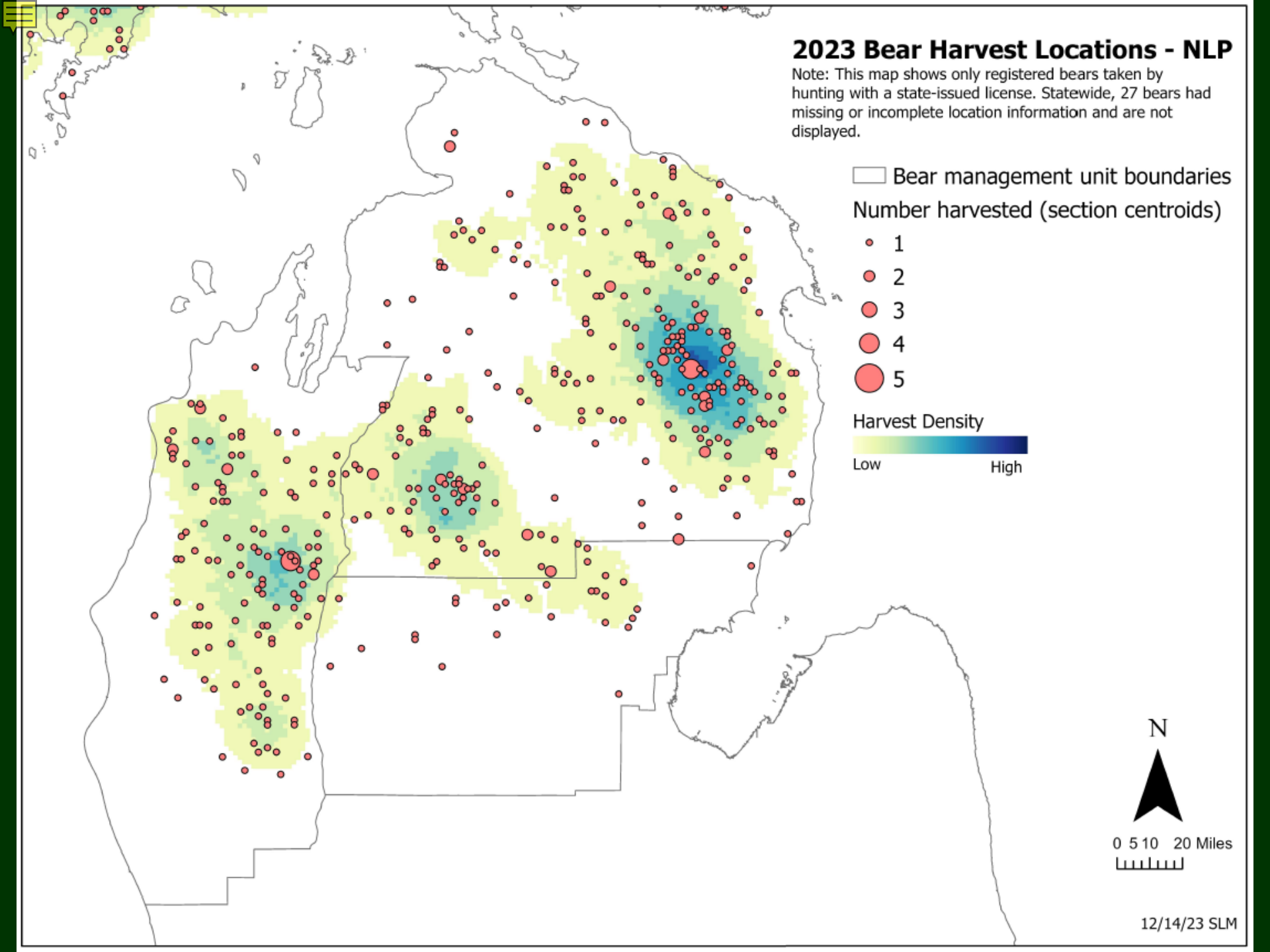

UP: Number of bears registered by BMU
(State-licensed hunters)
Registered harvest
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
BMU
Amasa
Baraga
Bergland
Carney
Gwinn
Newberry
Season_Year


12/14/23 SLM
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.
Bear management unit boundaries
Number harvested (section centroids)
1
2
3
4
5
Harvest Density
Low
High

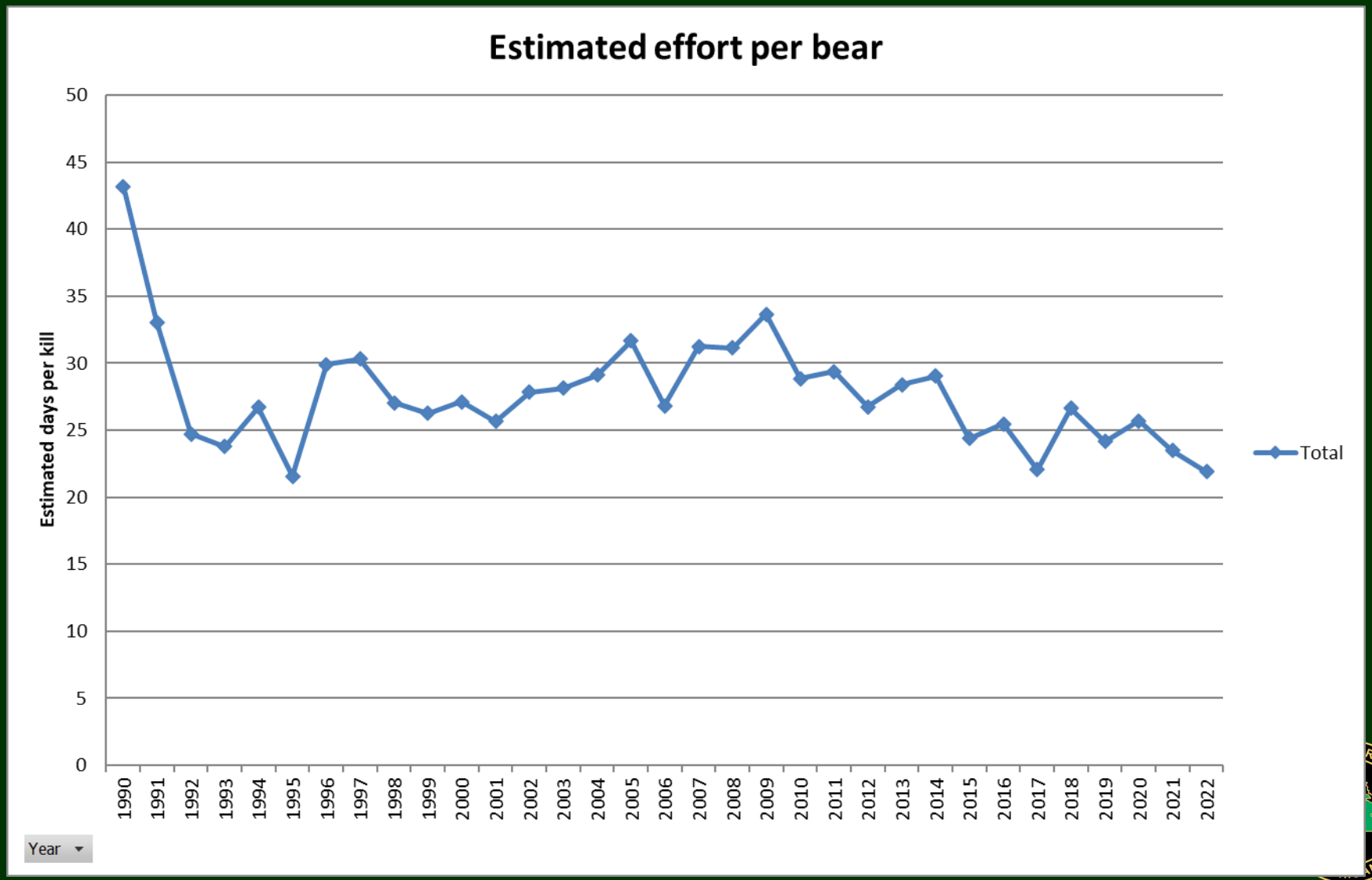

NLP Bear Harvest
State long-term average: 308
State
Tribal
Number of harvested bears
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
Year

444

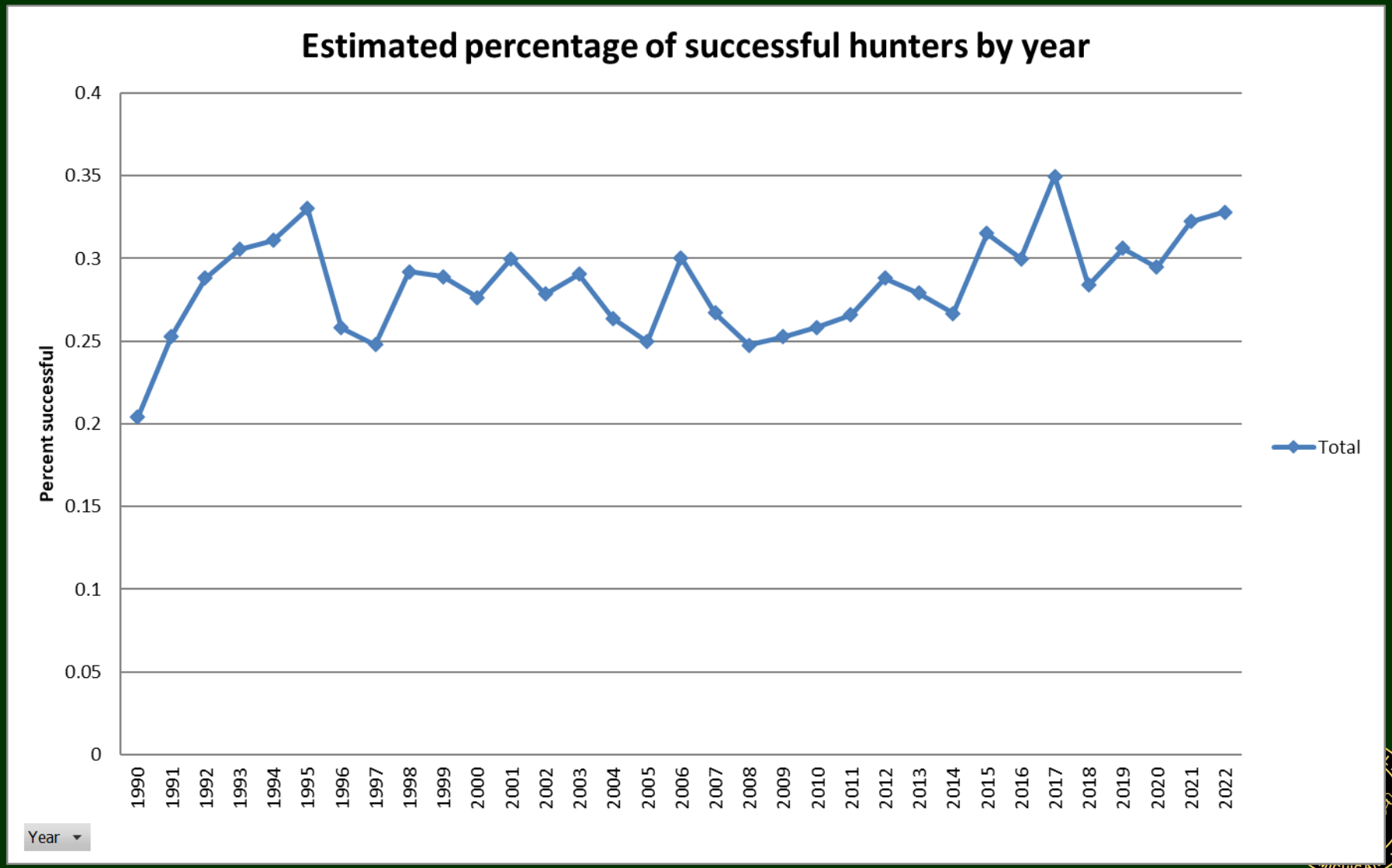

NLP: Number of bears registered by BMU
(State-licensed hunters)
Registered harvest
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
BMU
Baldwin
Gladwin
Red Oak
Season_Year


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)
1
2
3
4
5
Harvest Density
Low
High
N
0 5 10 20 Miles
12/14/23 SLM

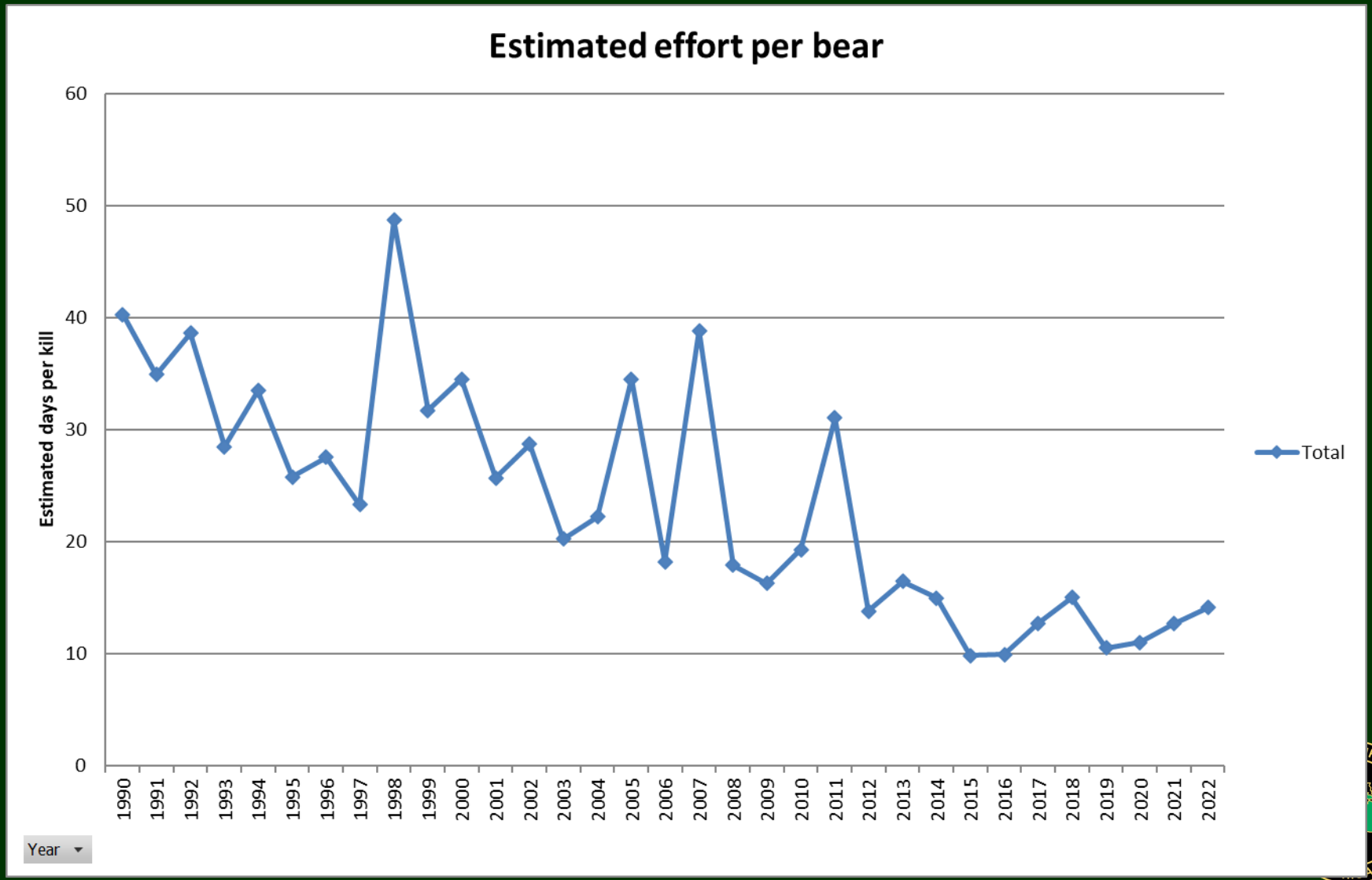
Upper Peninsula



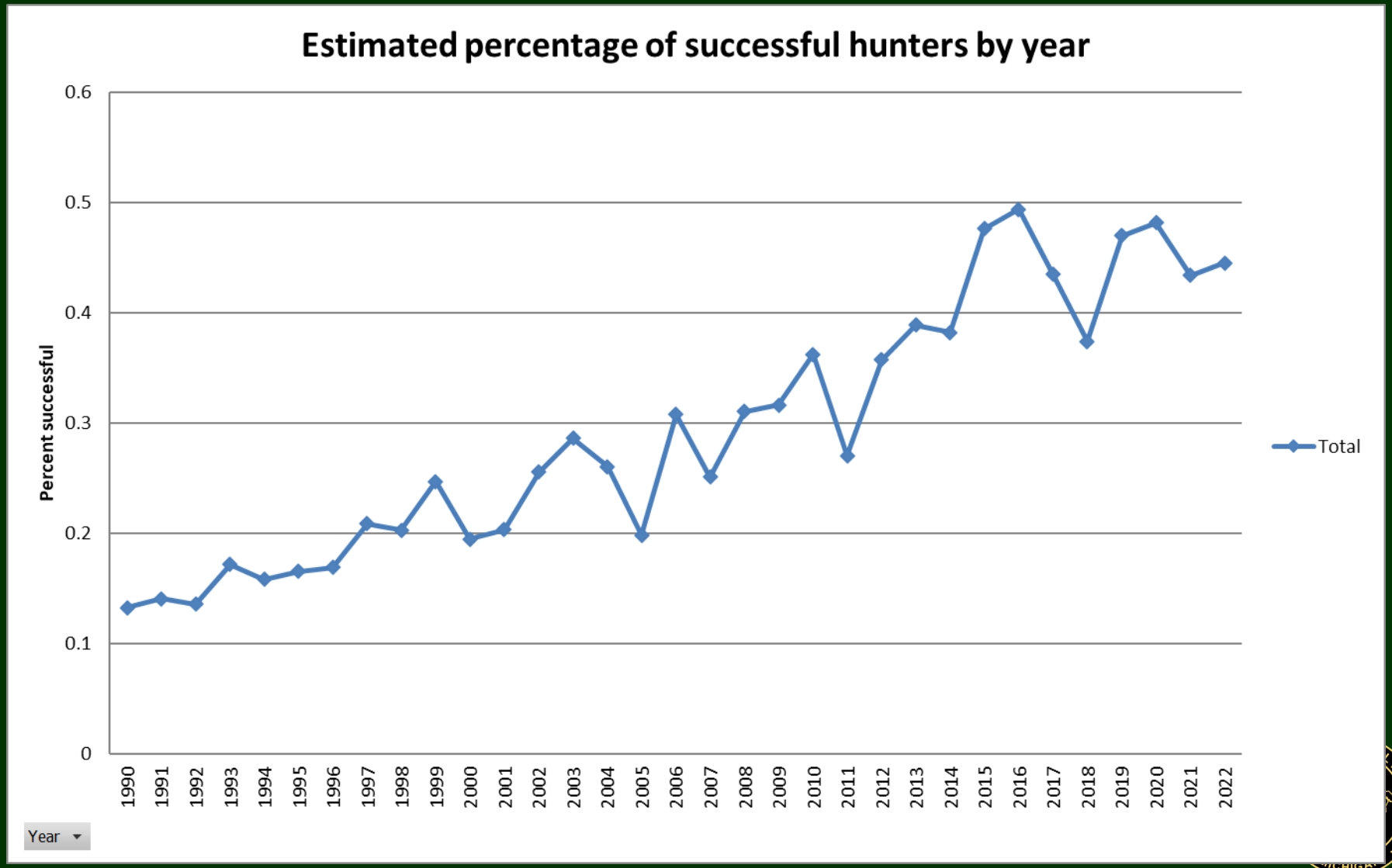
Upper Peninsula



Northern Lower Peninsula

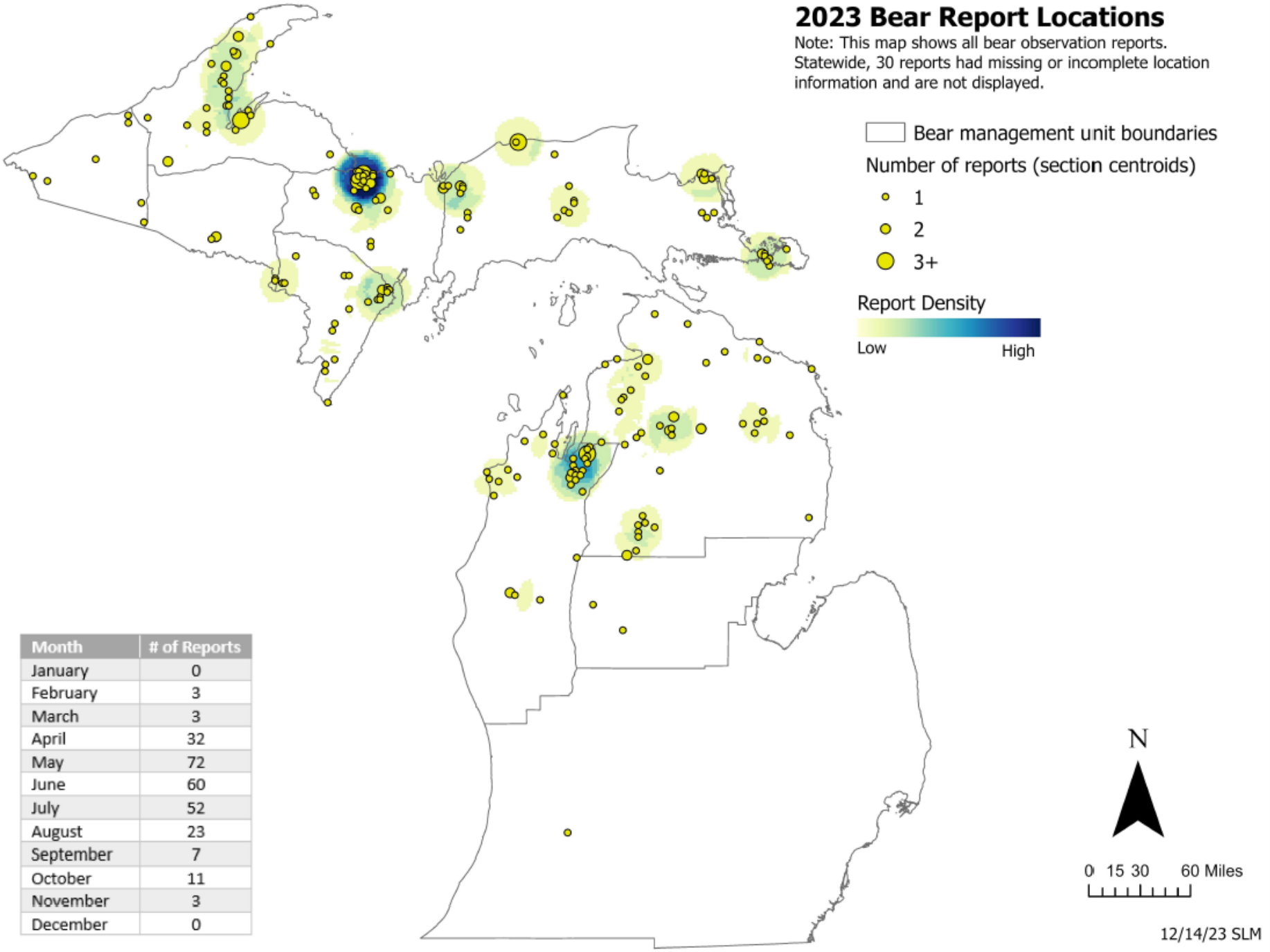


Northern Lower Peninsula



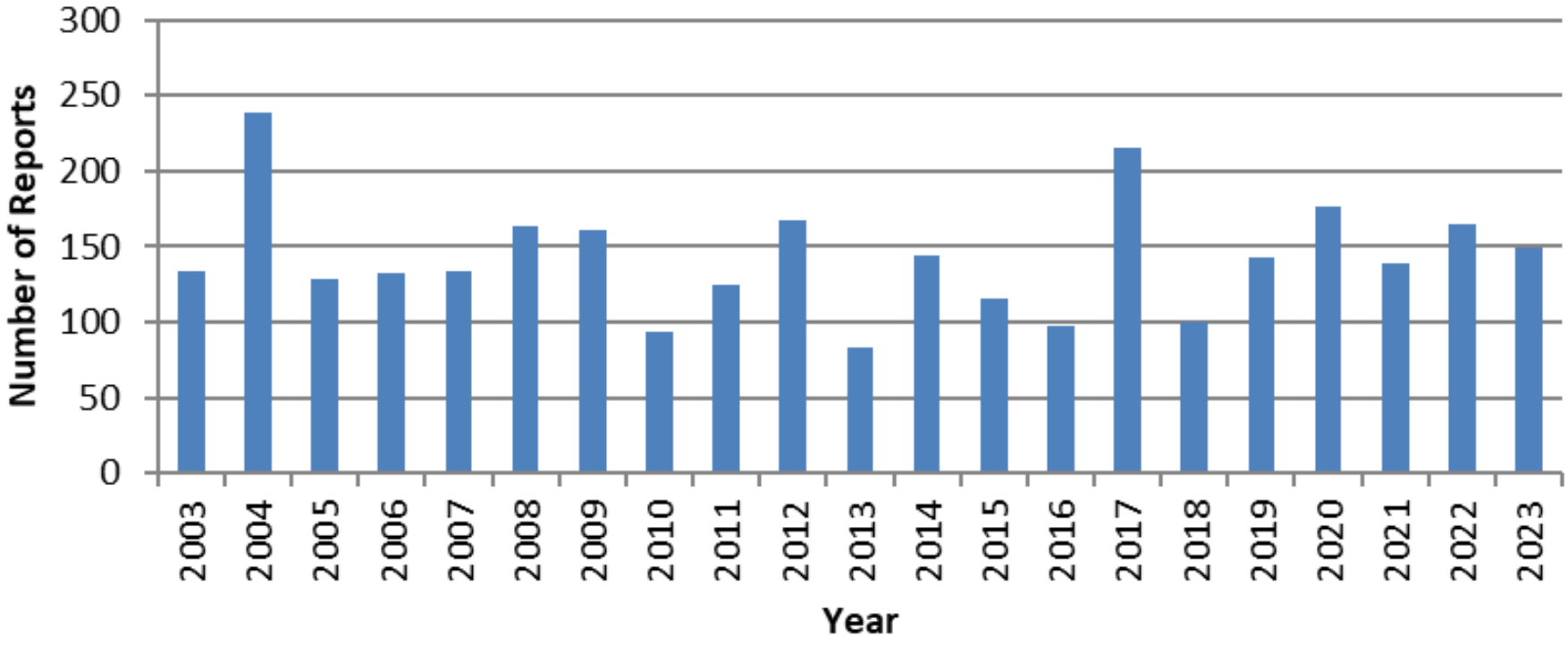
2023 Bear Report Locations

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

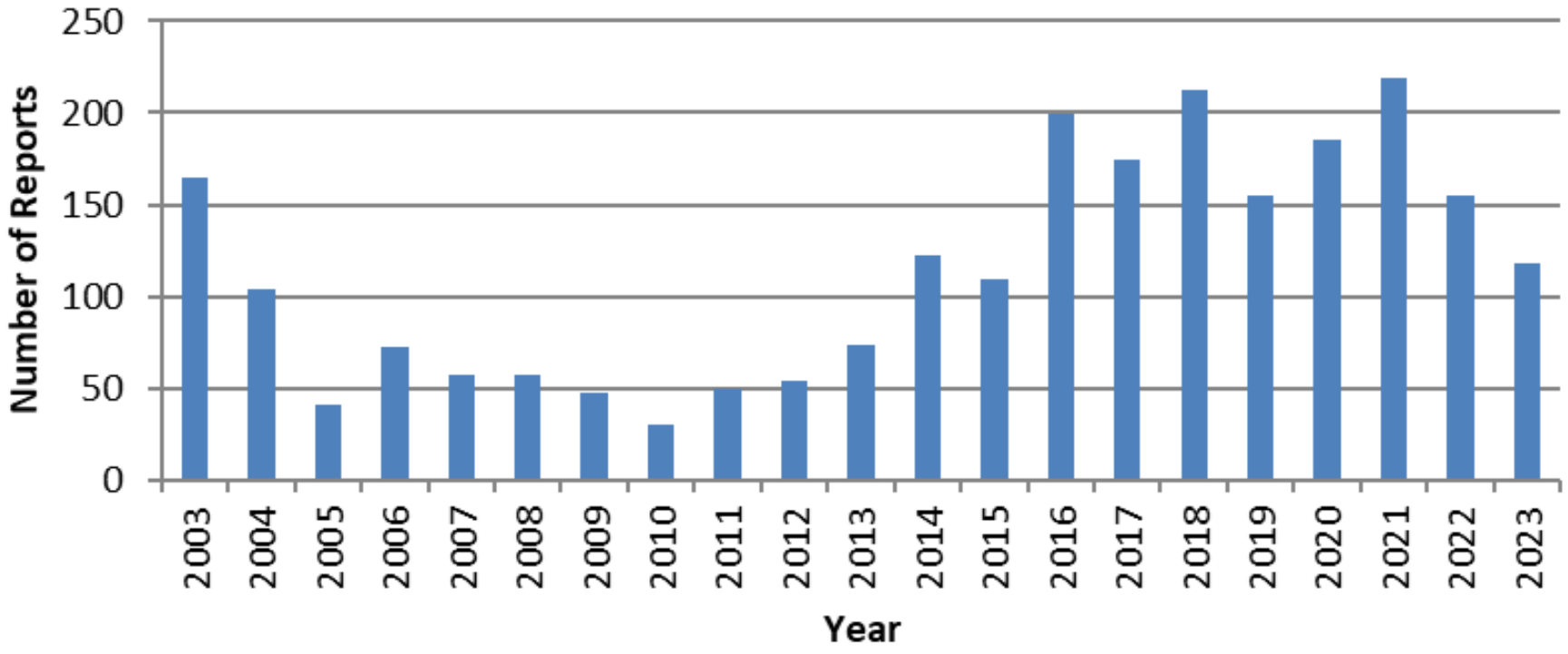


Month	# of Reports
January	0
February	3
March	3
April	32
May	72
June	60
July	52
August	23
September	7
October	11
November	3
December	0

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

Antler Point Restriction Guidelines

Chad Stewart, Deer and Elk Management Specialist
Wildlife Division
February 8, 2024

DNR/NRC Guidelines, Initiation, Evaluation, and Review of Mandatory APRs

- Identify four keys to successful implementation of APRs
  - Willingness of the sponsoring parties to coordinate and support public information meetings
  - Support from both landowners and hunters
  - Regulations understandable and enforceable
  - Sufficient trial period for the regulation to impact herd structure

History of APR workgroups

- First formed APR workgroup in 1998
  - Guidelines adopted from Georgia
    - Regulations must protect >50% of yearling bucks
- Second group revised the policy in 2010
- At the request of the NRC, a third group was developed and updated the document in 2019

APR Workgroup Participants

- Michigan Quality Deer Management Association
- Michigan United Conservation Clubs
- United Sportsmen Alliance
- Michigan Bow Hunters
- Michigan Farm Bureau
- UP Whitetails
- Western UP Citizen's Advisory Council
- Oakland Hunt Club
- Thumb Hunters for APRs
- Michigan DNR Wildlife Division
- Michigan DNR Law Enforcement Division
- Michigan State University

Group Recommendations

- Expanded APR exemptions for Junior hunters (10-16) and for all hunters who qualify for the Independence hunt, and for all apprentice license holders
  - All individuals exempt from mandatory APRs, including the 4 point rule on the restricted tag of the combination license during all hunting seasons
  - Passed by NRC

Group Recommendations

- Reduce the threshold for APR recommendation to the NRC from 66% to 60%
  - Recommendation should not be subject to error estimate (ex. 59% support +/- 2%)
  - Percentage support not renegotiated for 10 years
  - DMAP and Damage Permit holders included in survey
  - Survey population should come from previous years participants, not simply from the preceding year
    - To be determined by the survey specialist

Group Recommendations

- Group agreed that a management framework should be put in place to meet benchmarks
  - Felt that this would entail the development of another work group
  - Recommended to be installed at a later date

Workgroup Results Presented to NRC

Deer Regulation Recommendations

Ashley Autenrieth, Deer Biologist
Chad Stewart, Deer Management Specialist
Wildlife Division
May 14, 2020

Antler Point Restriction Recommendations

- Topics Covered:
  - Simplify Antler Point Rule exemptions
    - Current APR exemptions are confusing and difficult to communicate
    - Desire to increase opportunities and success for novice hunters
    - Supported by APR work group

License Type	Current APR exemption	Proposed APR exemption
Mentored Youth (age 9 and younger)	Exempt	Exempt in all seasons, regions and licenses
Junior (age 10-16)	Exempt in Liberty season only	Exempt in all seasons, regions and licenses
Apprentice holders	Not exempt	Exempt in all seasons, regions and licenses

All group members supported simplifying exemptions. One group did not support APR exemptions on the restricted tag of the combination license

July 2020 Resolution

- Department's APR Guidelines
  - Stay at 66% percent approval rating until active research study is conducted in the CWD zone is concluded or for five years, whichever is longer
  - No new surveys related to APRs until CWD study is concluded, or five years, whichever is longer
  - DNR cannot revise guidelines without approval by NRC and proper public vetting, comments, transparency

Thank You

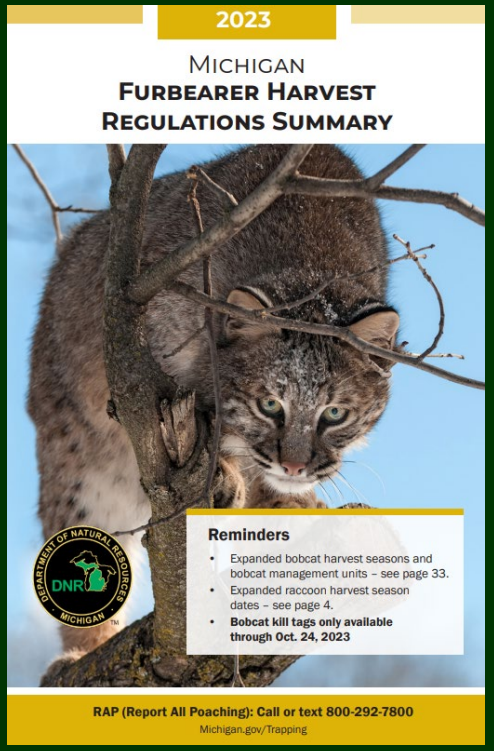
www.michigan.gov/deer

2024-2025
Furbearer Regulations Cycle

Cody Norton
Wildlife Division
February 8, 2024

Furbearer Regulations

- Two-year cycle
  - 2024-25
- Input
  - WLD staff
  - LED staff
  - Furbearer Workgroup (internal)
  - Tribal biologists
  - Furtaker User Group (external)
- NRC & Director
  - For Information: February
  - For Action: March



Proposed Changes

- Require trap warning signs near public roads and trails
- UP bobcat trapping season dates
- UP second bobcat kill tag landownership
- Fisher and marten combined bag limit
- Centerfire firearm use at night in the LFDZ
- Coyote hunting season length

Require Trap Warning Signs near Public Roads and Trails

- Proposal: if a trap is set within 25 feet of a public road or trail, a warning sign must be posted in both directions, 100-150 feet before nearest point to trap.
  - Regulations already in place
  - Education and outreach more effective
  - Illegal take of protected & limited-take species
  - Trapper harassment and theft
- Department does not recommend this proposal

Require Trap Warning Signs near Public Roads and Trails

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Sponsored ·

Keep your furry friends safe this fall during hunting and trapping seasons with these tips:

🌞🍁 Choose midday strolls! Dawn and dusk are prime hunting times, so opting for a walk in the middle of the day helps us all enjoy the outdoors easily.

🐕‍🦺 Leash up! Let's ensure both you and your pets have a pawsitively enjoyable time. Leash requirements vary depending on the type of land you're on (so check with your local DNR office if you're not sure!), but to ensure everyone can safely enjoy their activities, it's a good idea to keep pets leashed during the fall season.

🧡 Dress in hunter orange! Decking out your pup in bright colors will let hunters and others know where your dog is at all times.

🔒 Know the trap drill! Trapping for specific wildlife species is legal on most public lands, and sometimes our curious canines may wander into a set trap. Watch the quick video below to learn how to safely release your pet from traps.

Let's keep our walks safe, enjoyable, and respectful for everyone! Happy hiking! 🚶‍♂️🐾

WATCH Animal Traps - How to Release Your Pet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIAOOtCh2FQ

youtube.com
Animal Traps - How to Release Your Pet
Learn more

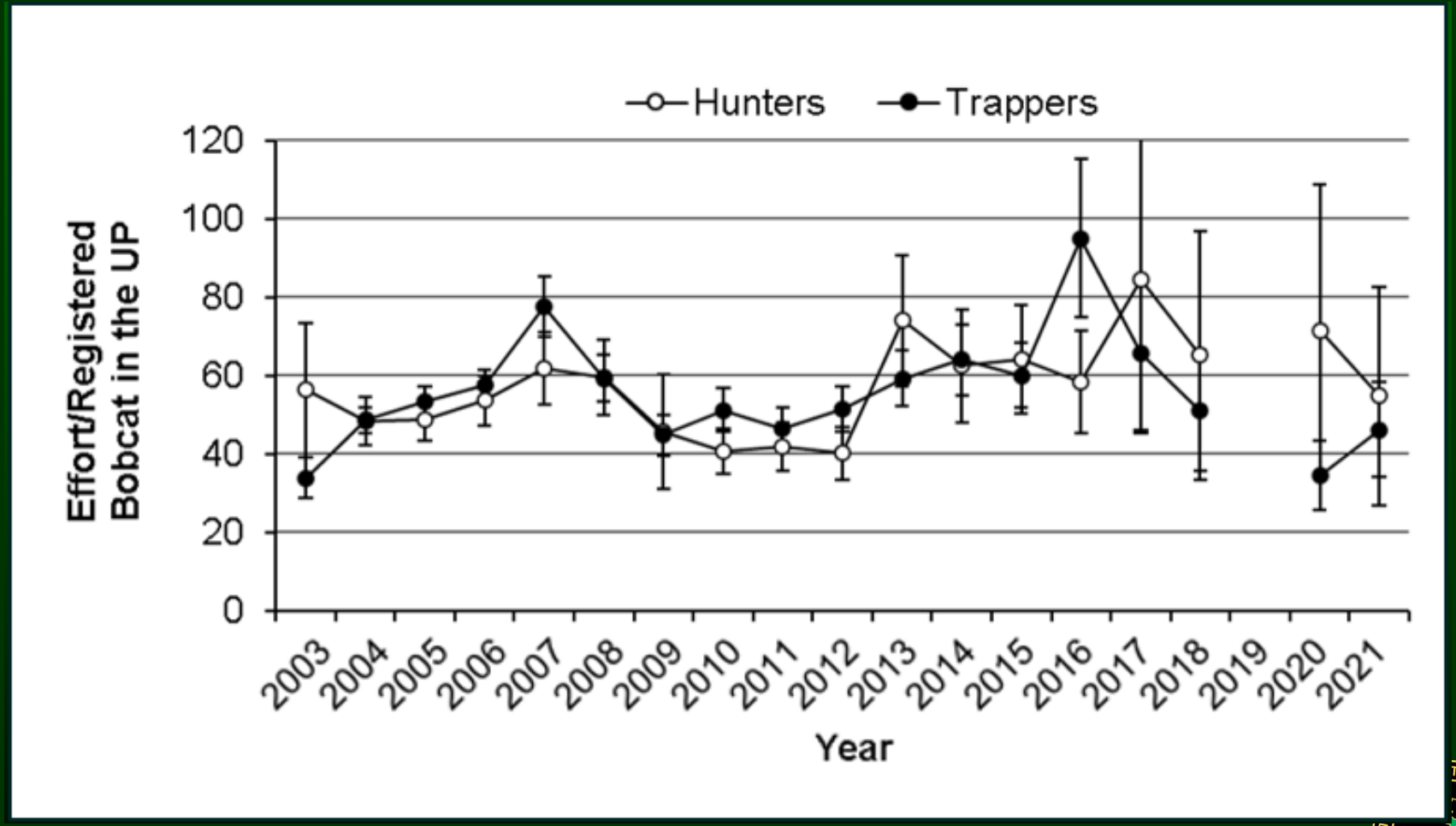
UP Bobcat Trapping Season Dates

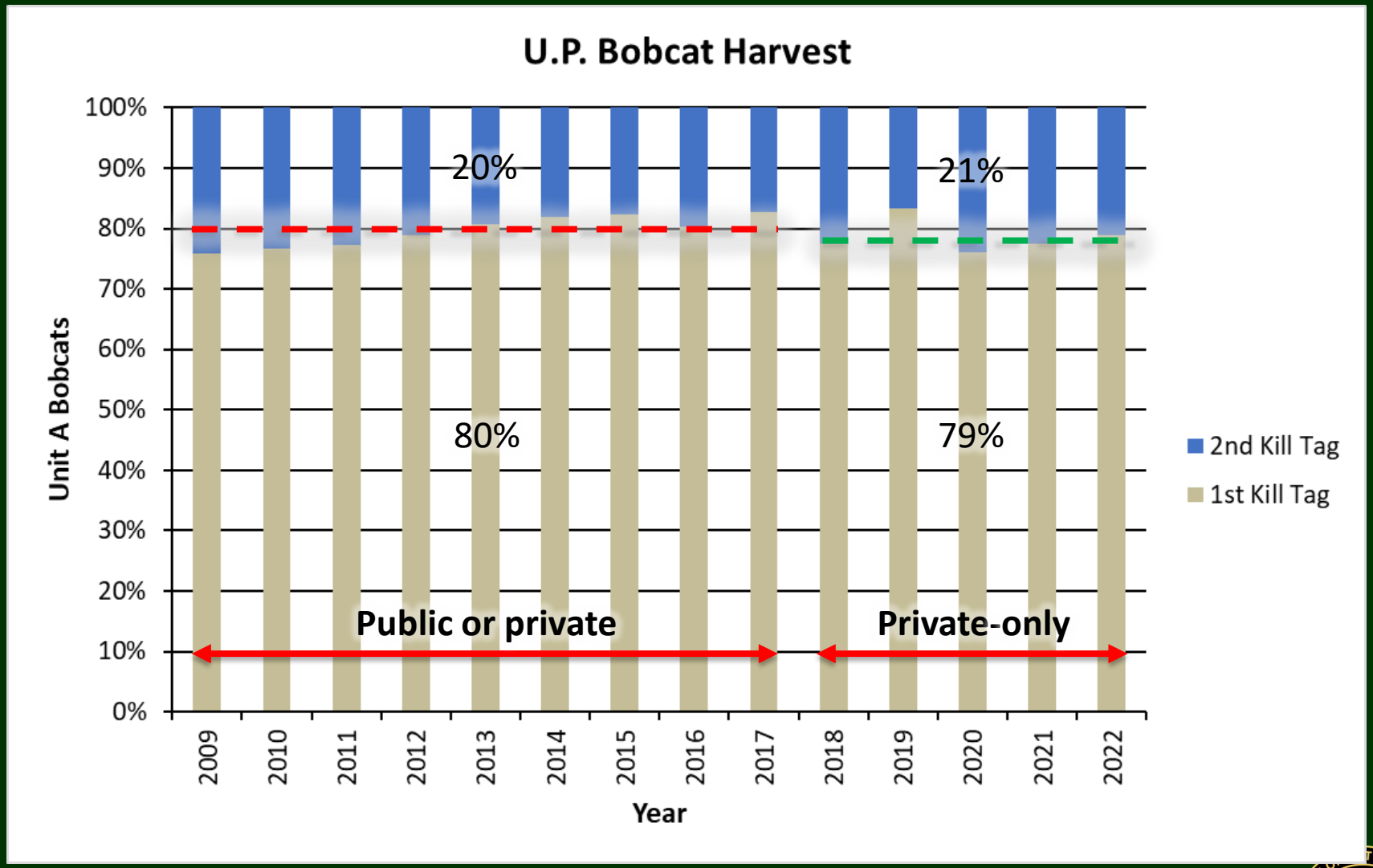
- Currently, season is Oct. 24 - Dec. 26
- Proposal: Change UP bobcat trapping season dates to Nov. 1 - Nov. 14 and Dec. 1 - Jan. 18
  - Same number of days
  - Dry ground and snow conditions
  - Avoid conflicts with firearm deer season
  - Pelt primeness
- Department recommends this proposal

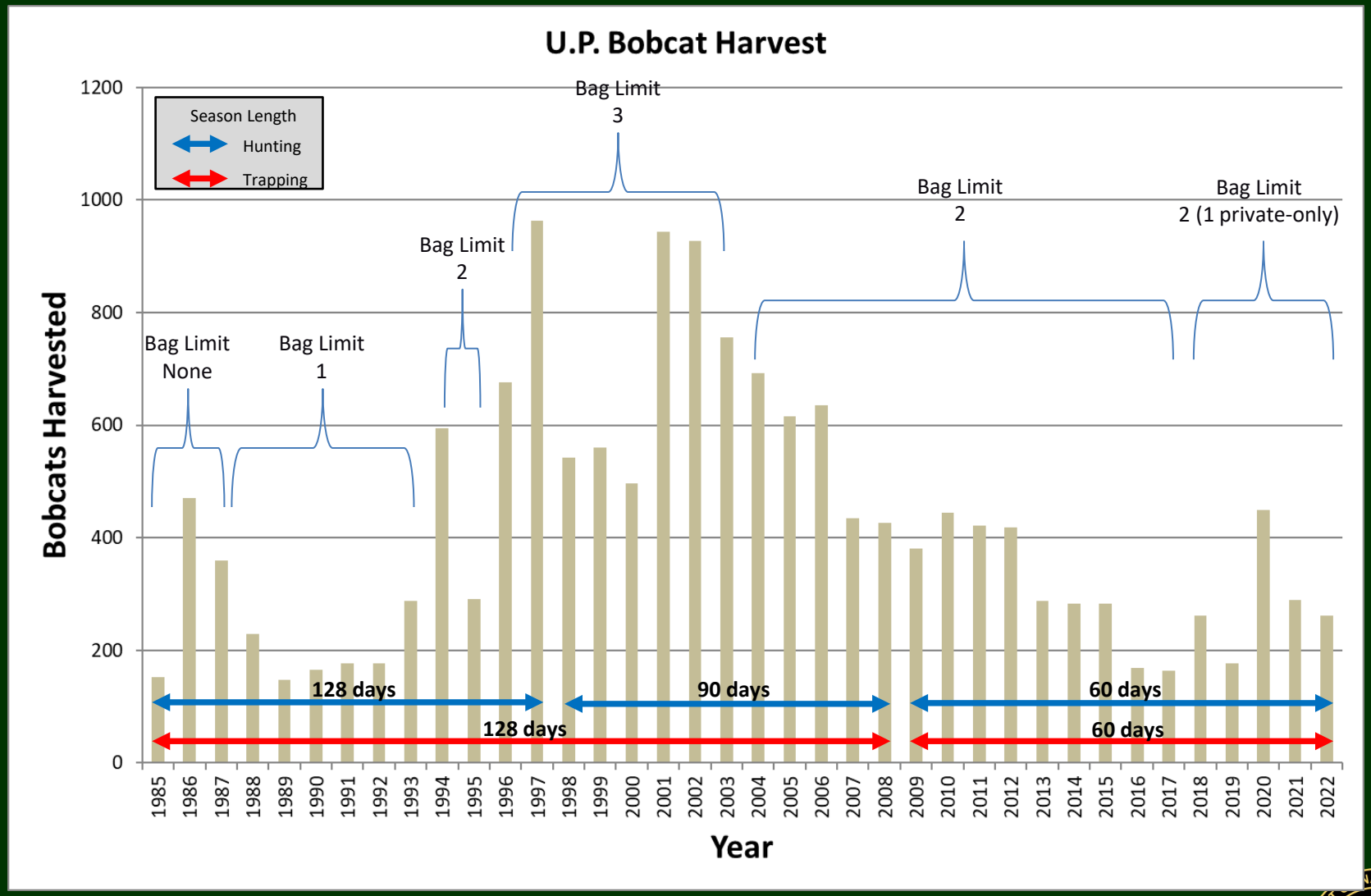
UP Second Bobcat Kill Tag Land Ownership

- Currently, the second bobcat kill tag can only be used on private land in Unit A.
- Proposal: Allow second bobcat kill tag to be used on public or private land in Unit A.
  - Increased opportunity
  - No significant biological impact
- Department recommends this proposal

Abundance Trends




U.P. Bobcat Harvest
Unit A Bobcats
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
20%
21%
80%
79%
Public or private
Private-only
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
Year
2nd Kill Tag
1st Kill Tag


U.P. Bobcat Harvest
Season Length
Hunting
Trapping
Bag Limit
None
Bag Limit
1
Bag Limit
2
Bag Limit
3
Bag Limit
2
Bag Limit
2 (1 private-only)
128 days
128 days
90 days
60 days
60 days
Bobcats Harvested
Year
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
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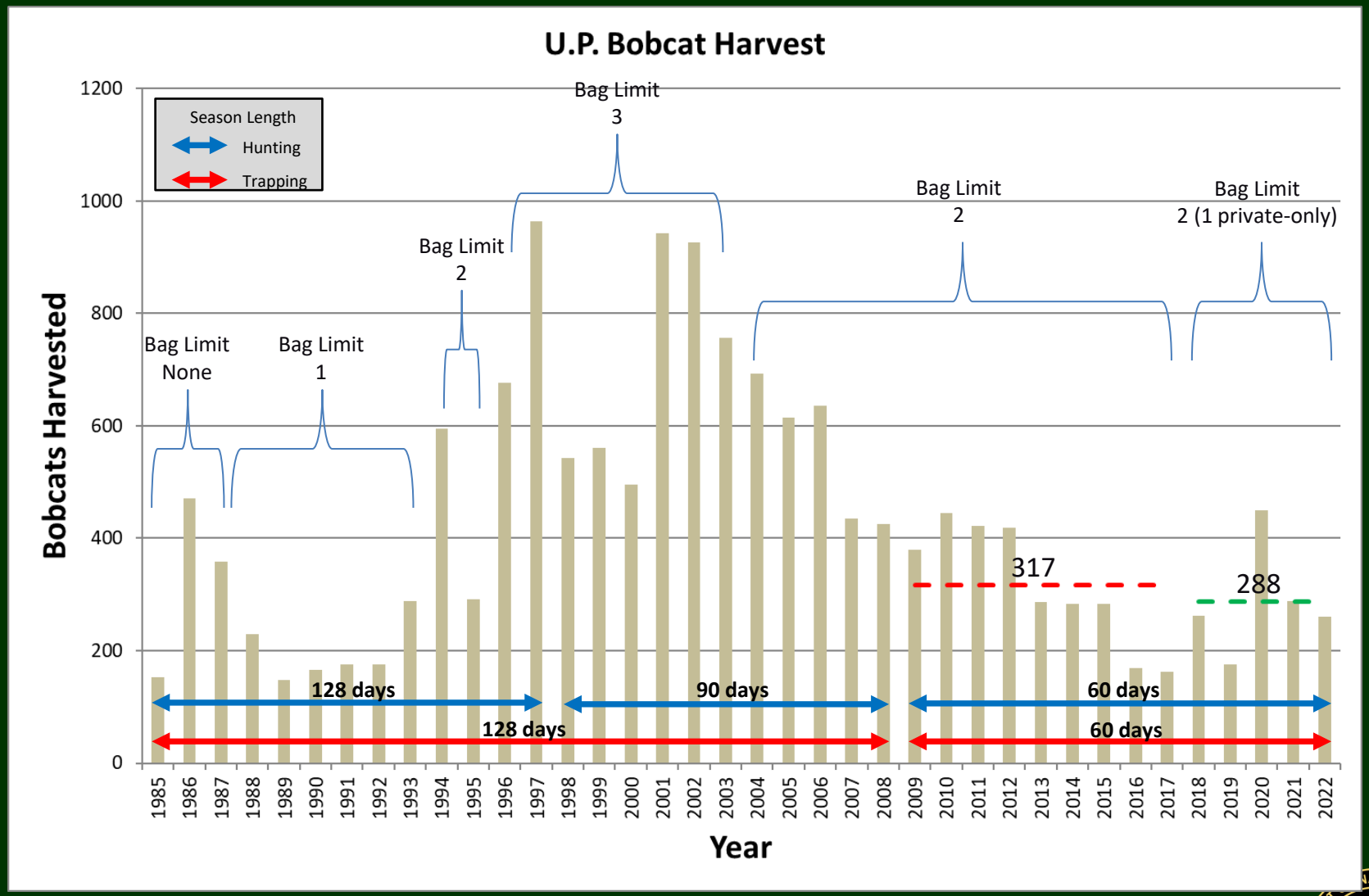
2020
2021
2022


U.P. Bobcat Harvest
Season Length
Hunting
Trapping
Bag Limit None
Bag Limit 1
Bag Limit 2
Bag Limit 3
Bag Limit 2
Bag Limit 2 (1 private-only)
317
288
128 days
128 days
90 days
60 days
60 days
Bobcats Harvested
Year
0
200
400
600
800
1000
1200
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
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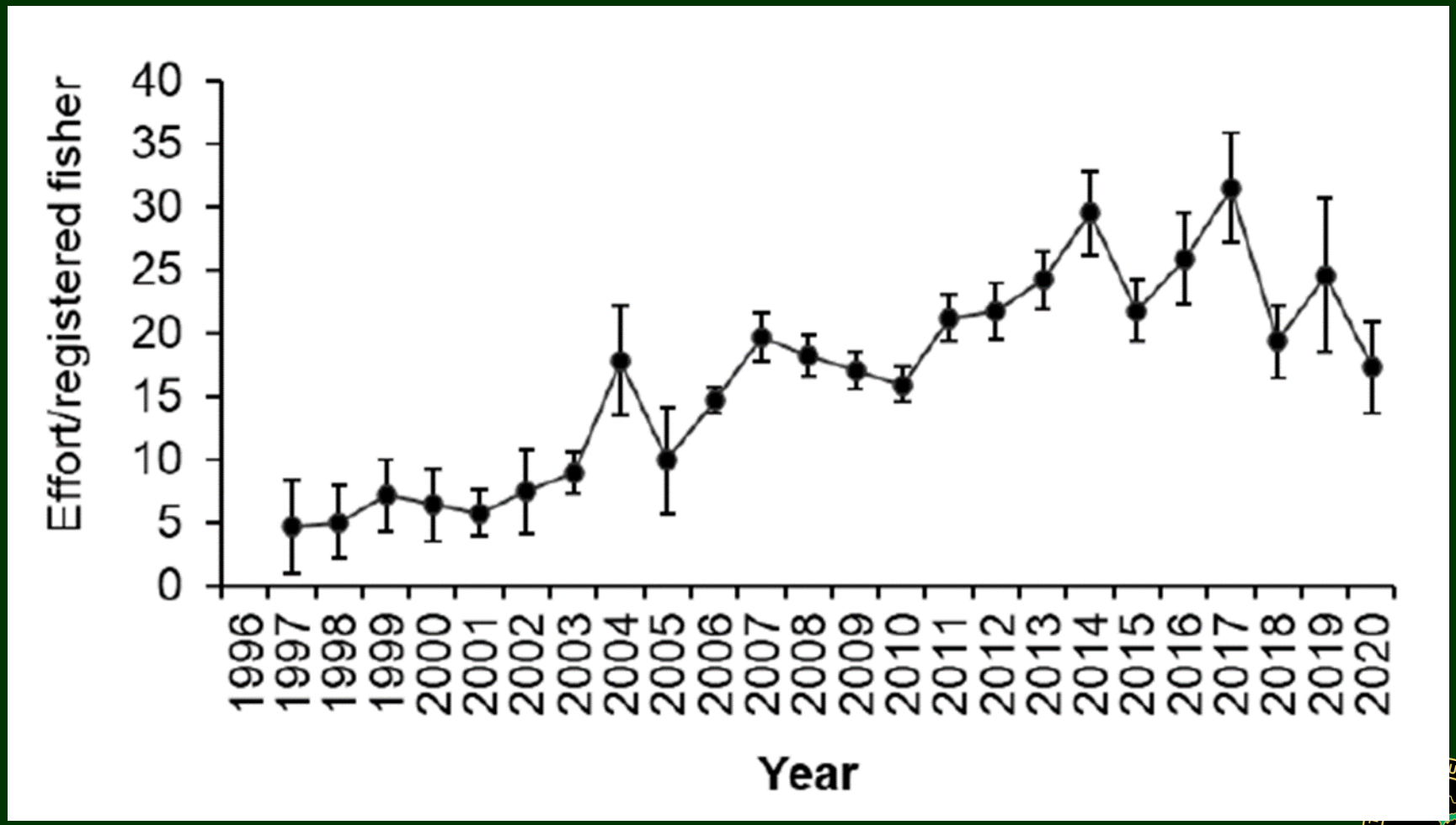
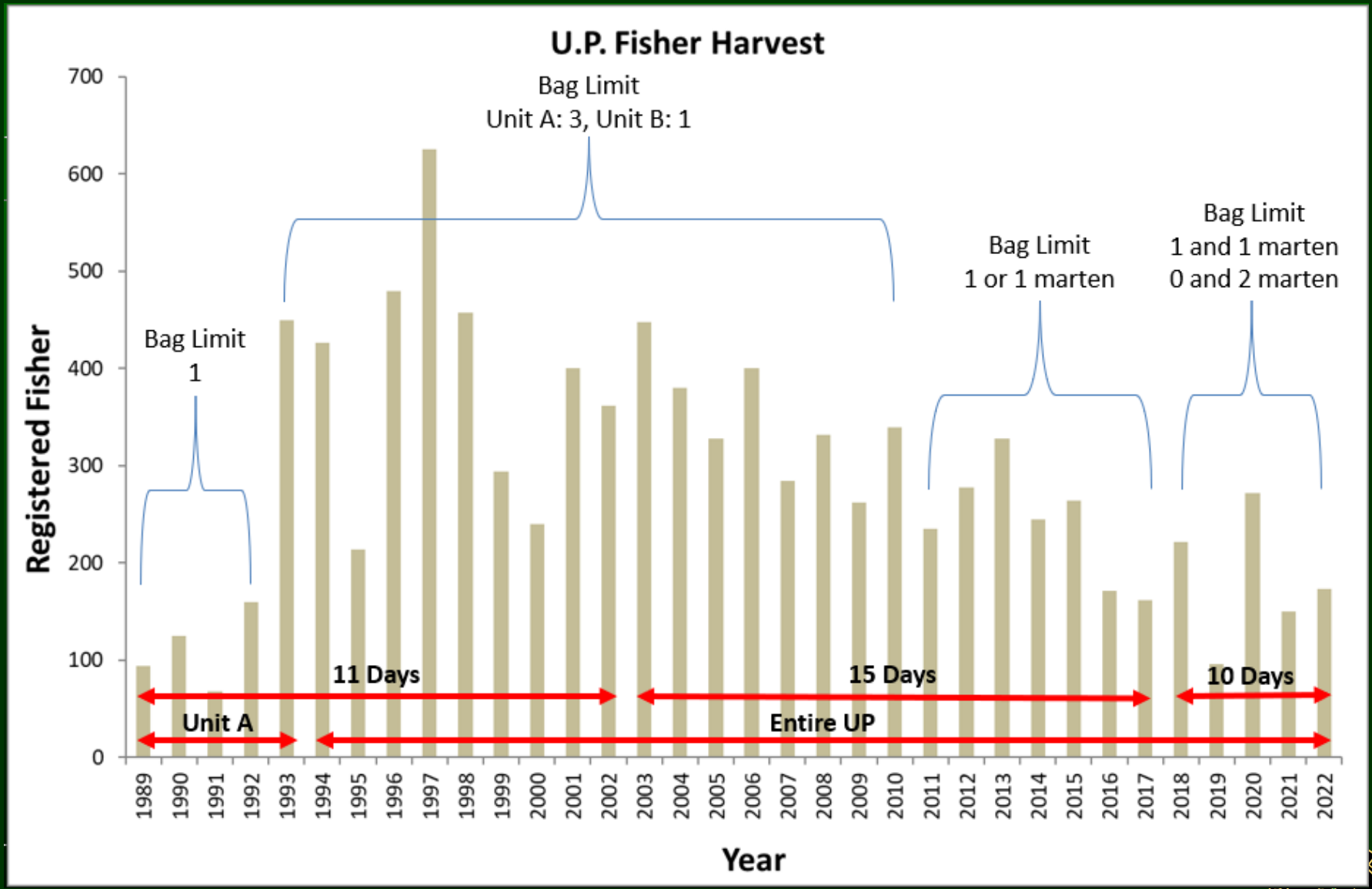
2020
2021
2022

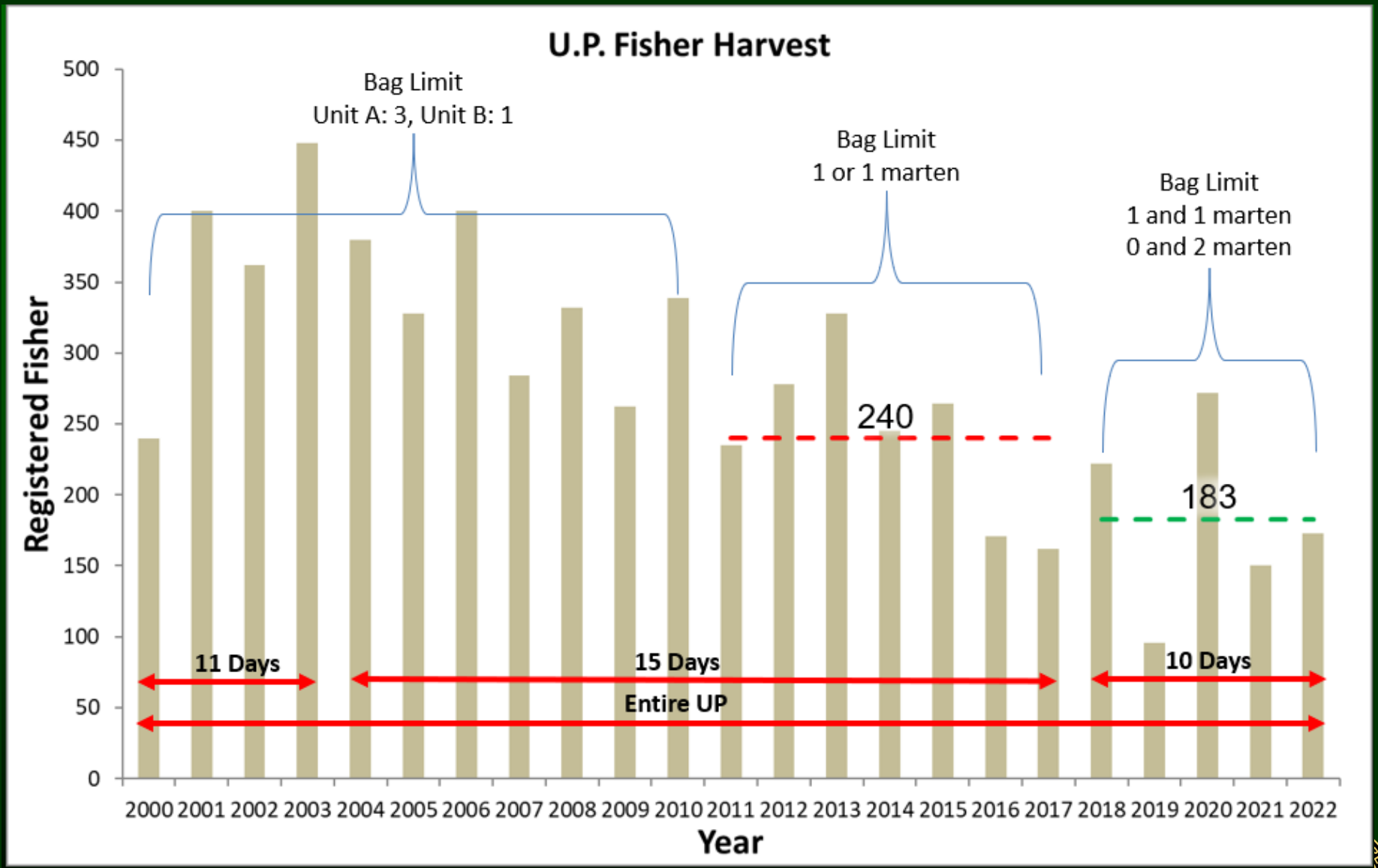
Fisher and Marten Combined Bag Limit

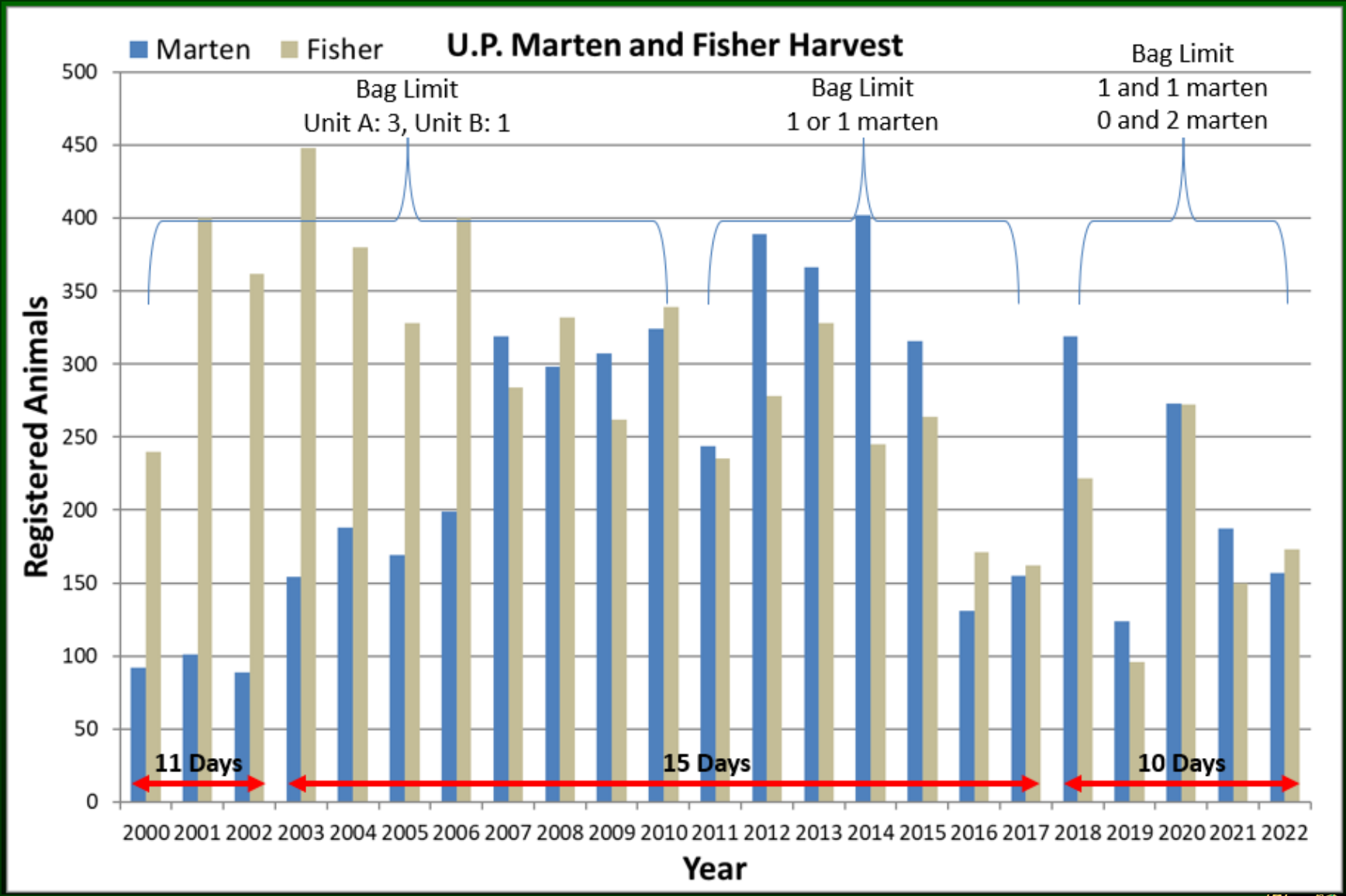
- Currently, combined bag limit of two, of which only one may be fisher.
- Proposal: Change bag limit to two of any combination.
  - Two marten, two fisher, or one of each
  - More opportunity
  - Simplify regulations
- Department recommends this proposal

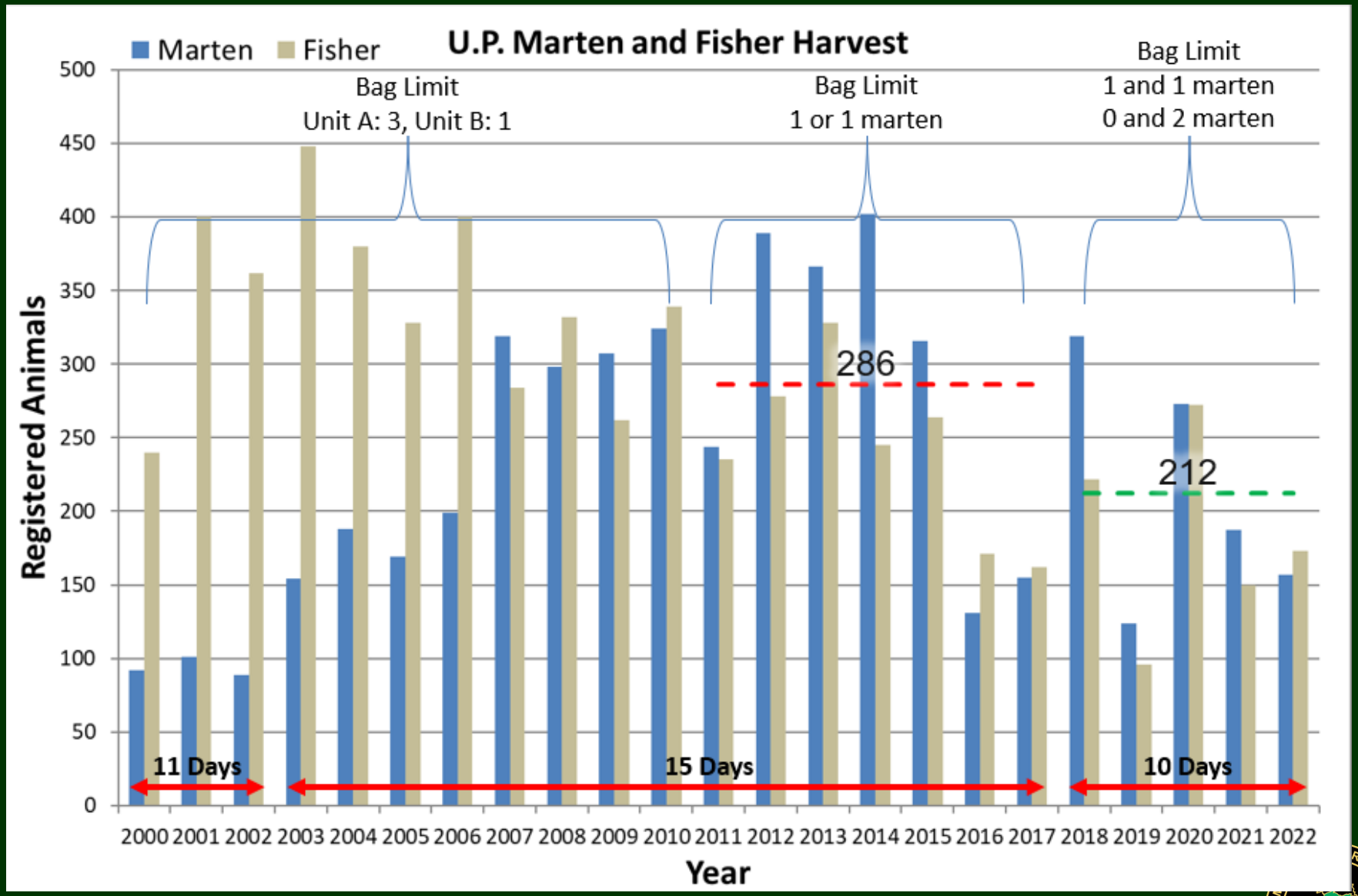
Abundance Trends




U.P. Fisher Harvest
Bag Limit
Unit A: 3, Unit B: 1
Bag Limit
1
Bag Limit
1 or 1 marten
Bag Limit
1 and 1 marten
0 and 2 marten
Registered Fisher
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
11 Days
15 Days
10 Days
Unit A
Entire UP
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
Year


U.P. Fisher Harvest
Bag Limit
Unit A: 3, Unit B: 1
Bag Limit
1 or 1 marten
Bag Limit
1 and 1 marten
0 and 2 marten
240
183
11 Days
15 Days
10 Days
Entire UP
Registered Fisher
Year
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
500
2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022


Marten
Fisher
U.P. Marten and Fisher Harvest
Bag Limit
Unit A: 3, Unit B: 1
Bag Limit
1 or 1 marten
Bag Limit
1 and 1 marten
0 and 2 marten
Registered Animals
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
11 Days
15 Days
10 Days
2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022
Year


U.P. Marten and Fisher Harvest
Marten
Fisher
Registered Animals
Year
Bag Limit
Unit A: 3, Unit B: 1
Bag Limit
1 or 1 marten
Bag Limit
1 and 1 marten
0 and 2 marten
286
212
11 Days
15 Days
10 Days
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
400
450
500
2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

Incidental Catch

- 87% of marten trappers used conibears
  - 27% footholds
- 83% of fisher trappers used conibears
  - 28% footholds

Centerfire Firearm Use at Night in the LFDZ

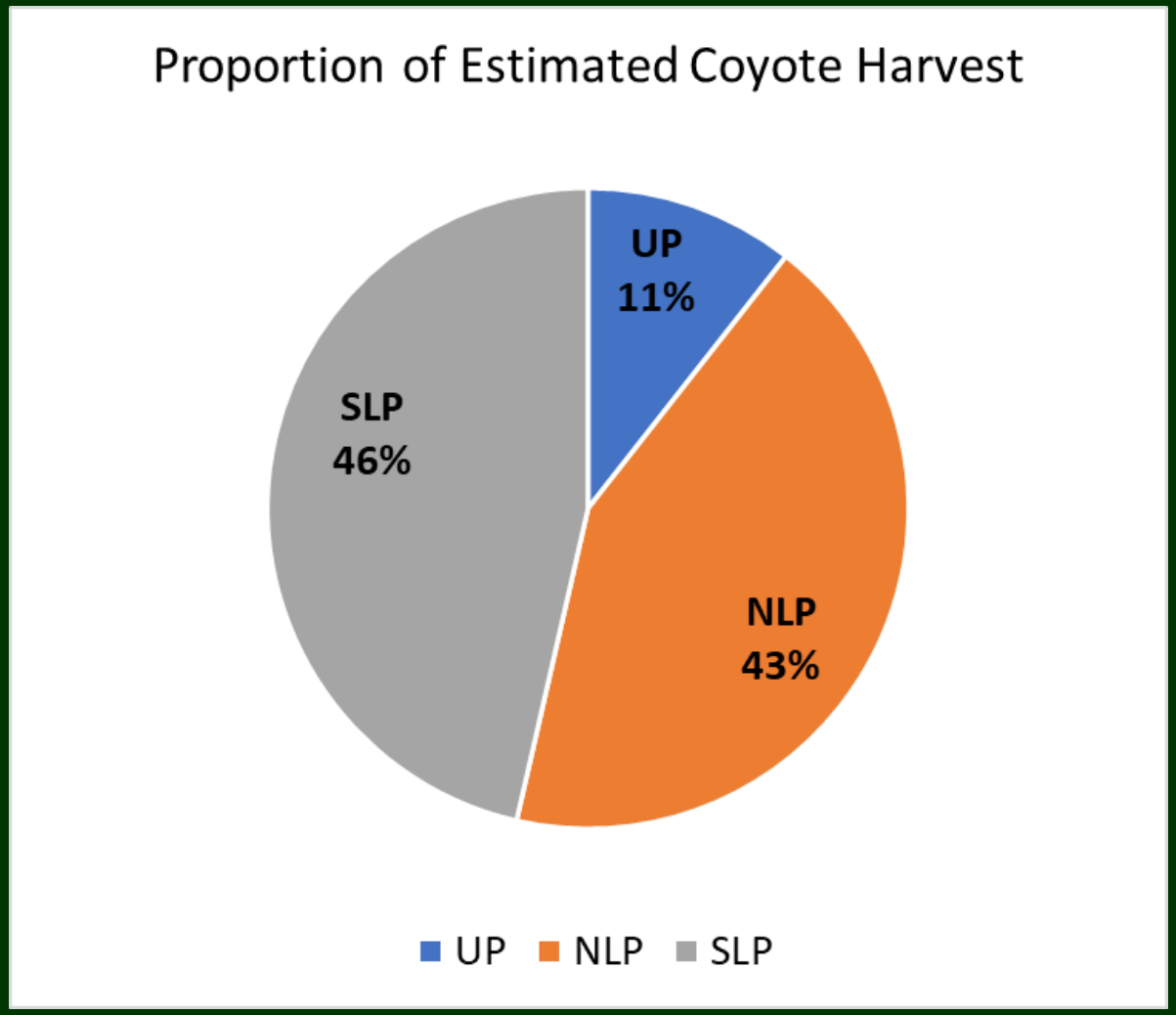
- Currently, centerfire firearms can be used at night in the LFDZ on private lands only.
- Proposal: Allow ≤.269 cal. Centerfire firearms at night in the LFDZ on public and private lands to hunt coyote, fox, raccoon, and opossum.
  - Increased opportunity
  - Simplify regulations
  - Do not expect increased risk of injury
- Department recommends this proposal

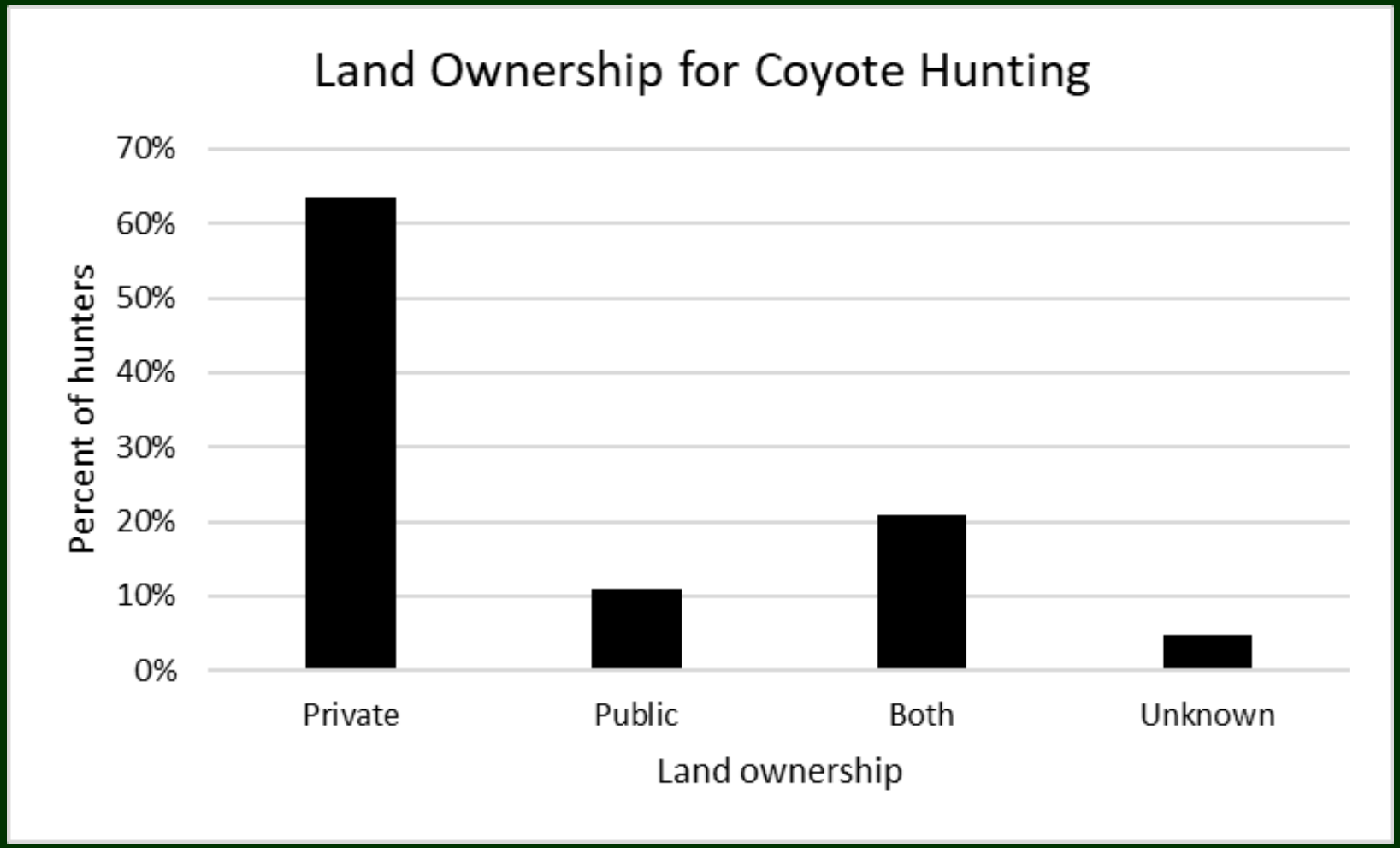
Current Regulations

- North of LFDZ
  - Day – any centerfire
  - Night - ≤.269 cal.
- LFDZ
  - Day – any centerfire
  - Night
    - Private - ≤.269 cal.
    - Public – no centerfire

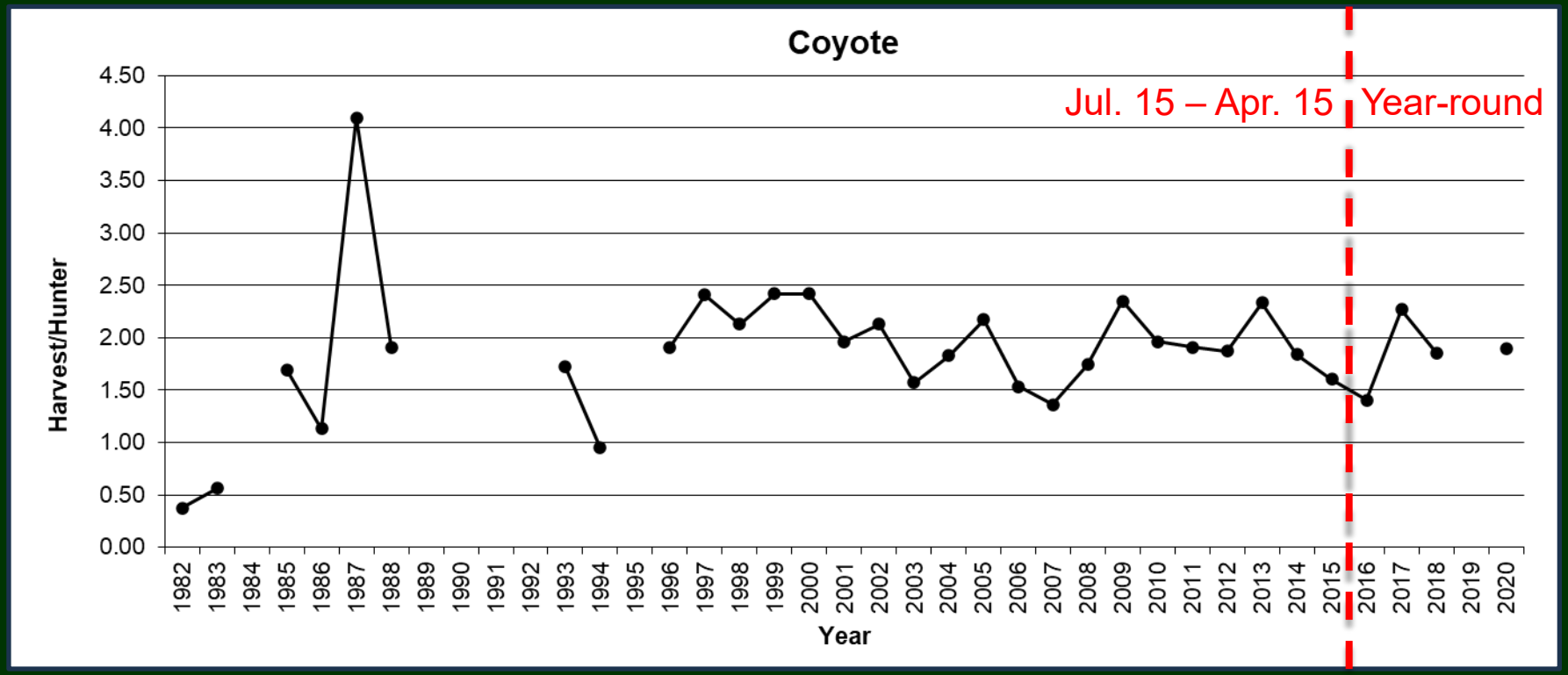
Coyote Hunting Season Length

- Currently, coyote hunting season is year-round.
- Proposal: Change coyote hunting season to July 15 to April 15, statewide.
  - Avoid time when coyotes have dependent young
  - Consistent with management of other species
  - Public perception and future opportunities
  - Still year-round on private land to mitigate damage
  - Do not expect change in harvest

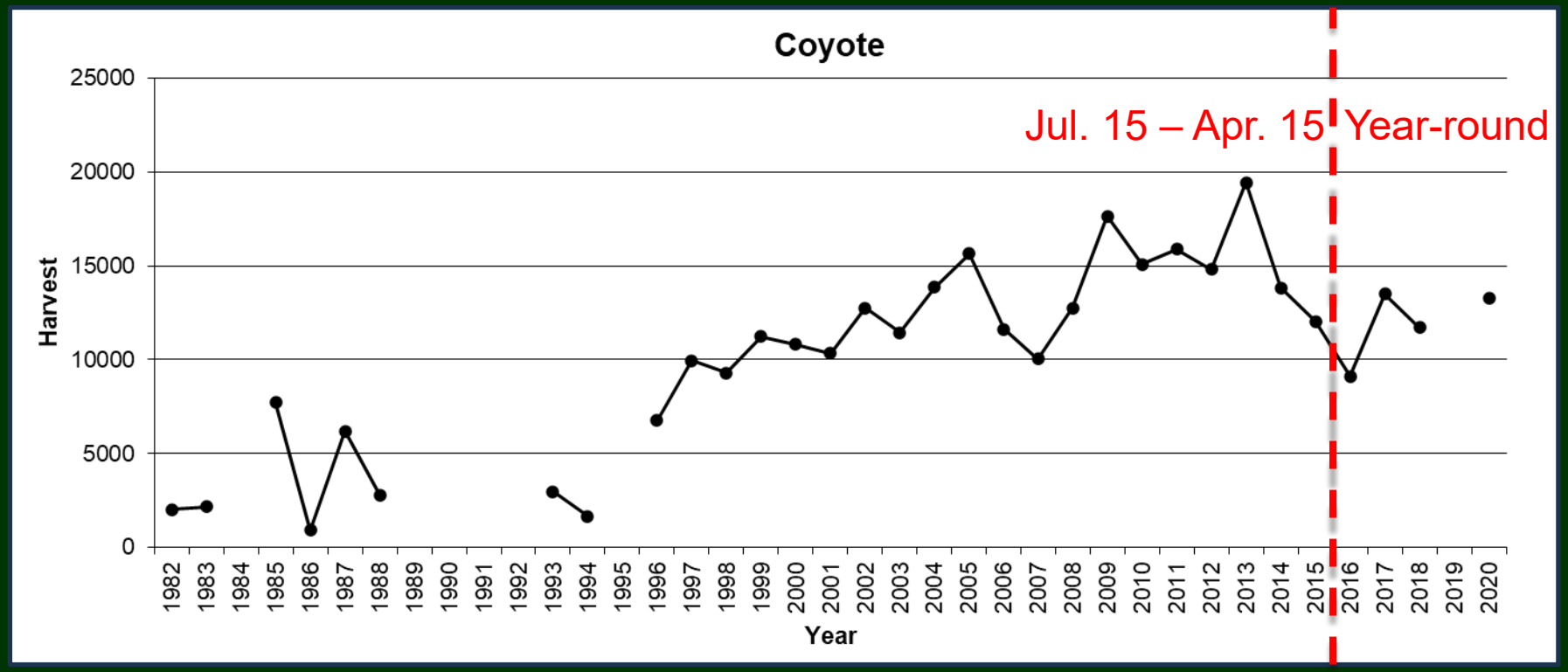

Proportion of Estimated Coyote Harvest
UP
11%
NLP
43%
SLP
46%
UP
NLP
SLP

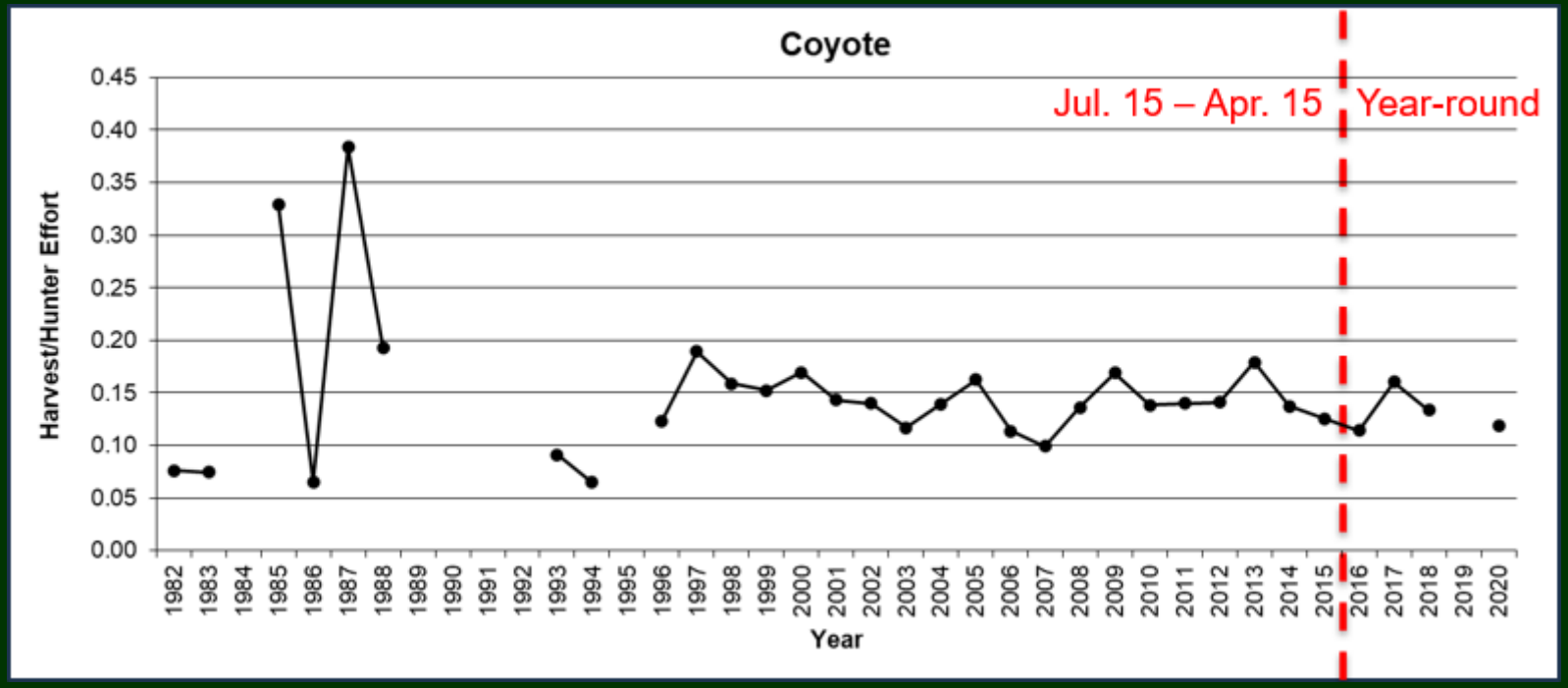

Land Ownership for Coyote Hunting
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Percent of hunters
Private
Public
Both
Unknown
Land ownership

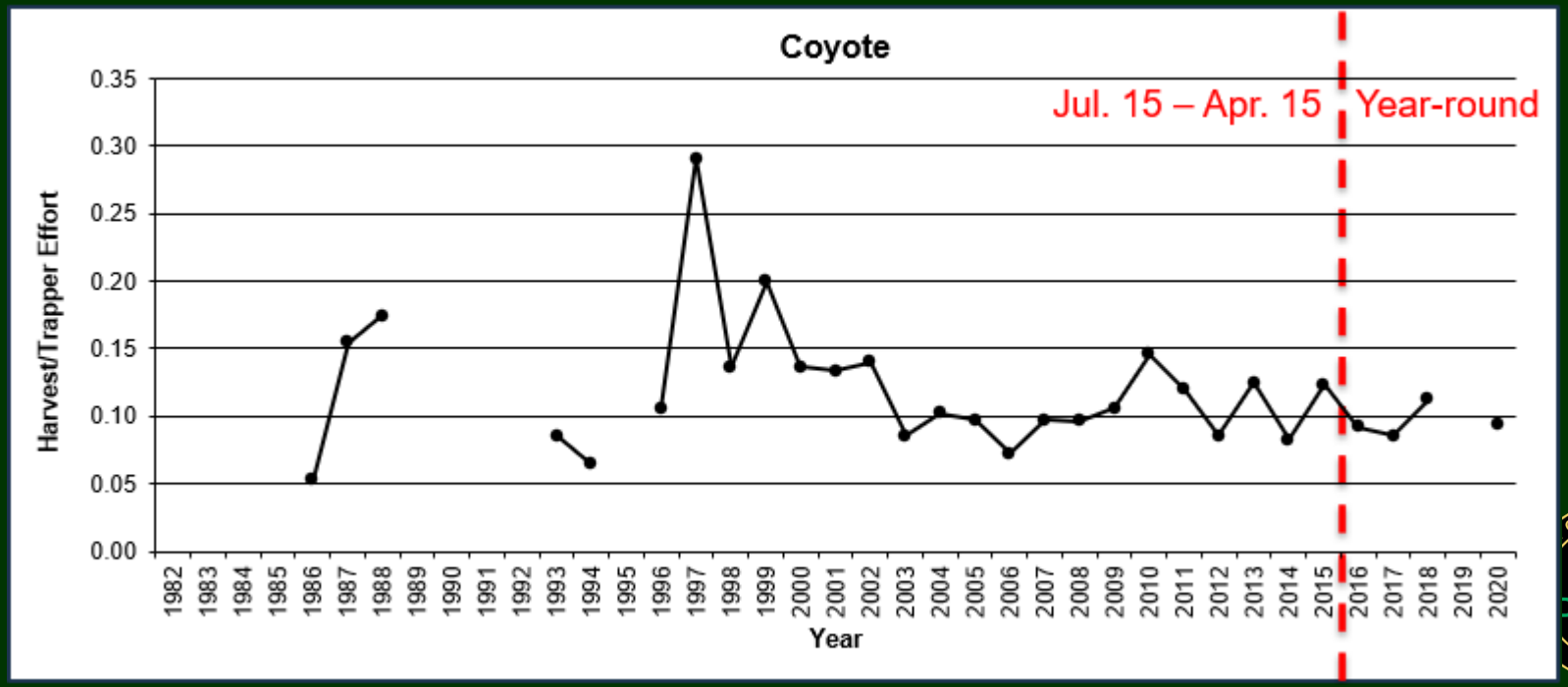
Harvest per Hunter



Harvest


Coyote
Harvest
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
Jul. 15 – Apr. 15
Year-round
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
Year


Coyote
Jul. 15 – Apr. 15
Year-round
Harvest/Hunter Effort
0.45
0.40
0.35
0.30
0.25
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020
Year


Coyote
Jul. 15 – Apr. 15
Year-round
Harvest/Trapper Effort
0.35
0.30
0.25
0.20
0.15
0.10
0.05
0.00
1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020
Year

Thank You