

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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GRIZZLY TROPHIES IN EUROPE

ARE B.C. GRIZZLY BEAR PARTS BEING UNLAWFULLY IMPORTED INTO THE EU?

Trophy hunting has been the largest source of human-caused death for British Columbia grizzly bears for decades. In several B.C. grizzly bear management units where licensed trophy hunting was permitted, grizzly bear deaths rose to levels considered unsustainable by wildlife biologists.

In 2004, the European Union's Scientific Review Group (SRG) suspended importation of grizzly bear hunting trophies from B.C. because of legitimate concerns about the sustainability of grizzly bear management, particularly the possibility that trophy hunting was contributing to unsustainable levels of human-caused mortality. Although the B.C. guide-outfitting industry complained that the EU suspension had eliminated its EU clientele, media reports indicated that EU hunters continued to travel to B.C. to kill grizzly bears. What was unknown was how many EU hunters continued to hunt grizzly bears in B.C. with the intent of importing their trophies into the EU, despite the ban.

Despite a 2004 European Union suspension on importing grizzly bear parts from B.C., a review shows that Canada granted dozens of export permits to EU trophy hunters.



A review of export permits granted by CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) between 2004 and 2015 indicates that between 25 and 36 hunters from the EU received export permits to repatriate grizzly hunting trophies. There is also evidence that the management and implementation of Canada's CITES permitting system, which is the only mechanism available to track the movement of grizzly bear hunting trophies across national borders, is not as effective as it needs to be. While the fate of most of these grizzly bear hunting trophies is unknown, records from Germany and Denmark indicate that some hunters tried unsuccessfully to import B.C. grizzly bear trophies into EU member states. However, further research is necessary to figure out whether the remaining grizzly bear hunting trophies were left in B.C. or the U.S., or were unlawfully transported into the EU.

While the current ban on trophy hunting in B.C. prevents all hunters from killing grizzly bears for sport, this policy is by no means permanent. A formal review by CITES and customs agencies in Canada and the EU would prevent EU hunters from killing grizzly bears in B.C. or other areas of Canada, and attempting to import them into the EU.

The David Suzuki Foundation has campaigned for close to 15 years to improve the science and management of grizzly bears and to end the trophy hunt. We have published scientific studies on grizzly bear management, supported thousands of people who wanted to speak out against the trophy hunt and convinced B.C.'s auditor general to investigate the trophy hunt and other grizzly bear policies. The report was commissioned to explore whether trophy taking was still a factor driving grizzly bear deaths and to examine whether international trade rules were an effective check on unsustainable hunting practices.

In December 2017, the B.C. government banned grizzly bear hunting throughout the province. This welcome policy would benefit by being made law. Other parts of Canada, especially Yukon, also need to ban trophy hunting. Most areas of the country with historical and current bear populations need to improve science, habitat protection and management practices to help grizzly bears thrive.

A century ago, 35,000 grizzly bears lived in B.C. Others flourished from Alaska to Mexico to Manitoba. Only 15,000 B.C. grizzly bears remain and nine populations are on the verge of disappearing.

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