

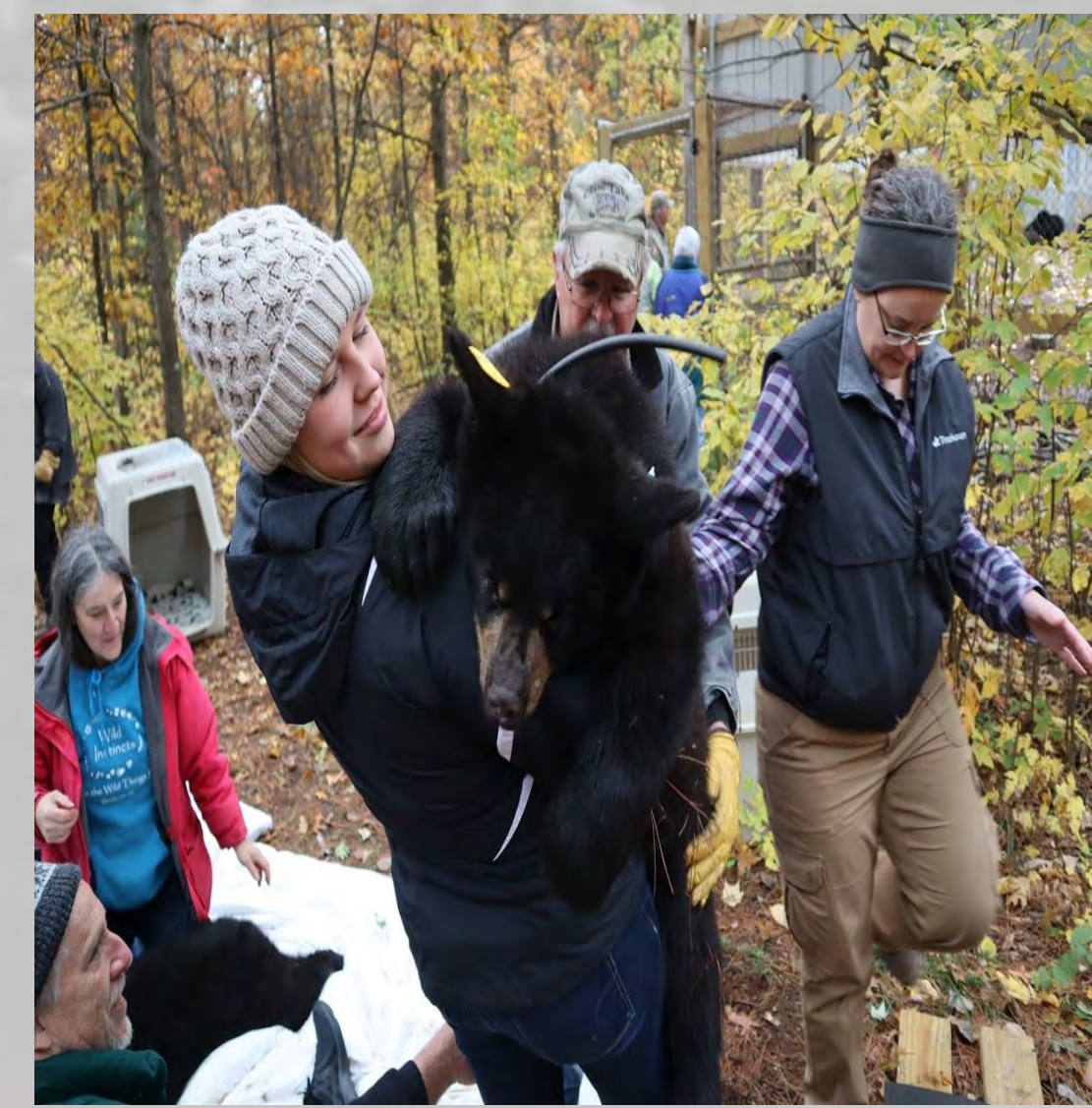
Research Background Information

Orphan black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are frequently rescued and brought to rehabilitation facilities. Eventually the bears can be released back into the wild after being reared in captivity for some time. However, there has not been a lot of research on the fate of black bears post-release and whether rehabilitation proves to be an effective management practice.



Rehabilitation Background Information

- The two bears in our study were held at Wild Instincts, a rehabilitation facility located in Rhinelander, WI.
- The facility has an advanced permit that allows for them to rescue and rehab wild animals.
- Wild Instincts has admitted nearly 400 bears
- The main goal is to have the bears self-feed as soon as possible and minimize contact with humans.
- The two bears were held in the same enclosure with other bears to help develop social behavior.
- Inside the enclosure, the bears are provided with an artificial pond for bathing and drinking



Objective

Our objective is to monitor the movements and evaluate the habitat types occupied by the orphaned bears post-release.

Post release Movement and Behavior of Rehabilitated Orphan Black Bears

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Field Monitoring

Study Area

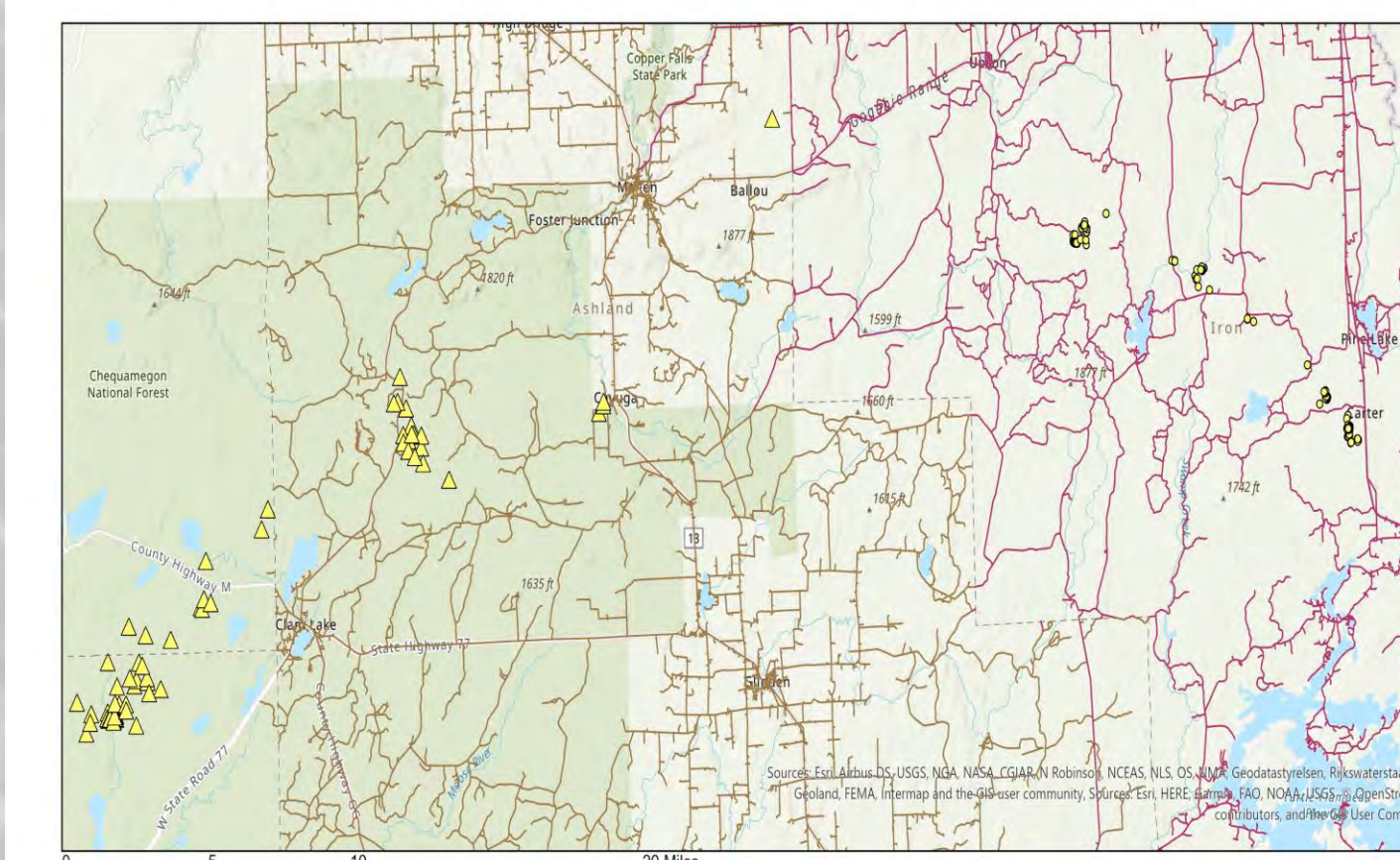
The bears were released west of Clam Lake, WI within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The monitoring of bears took place in the same vicinity of Wisconsin's Northwoods.

Methods

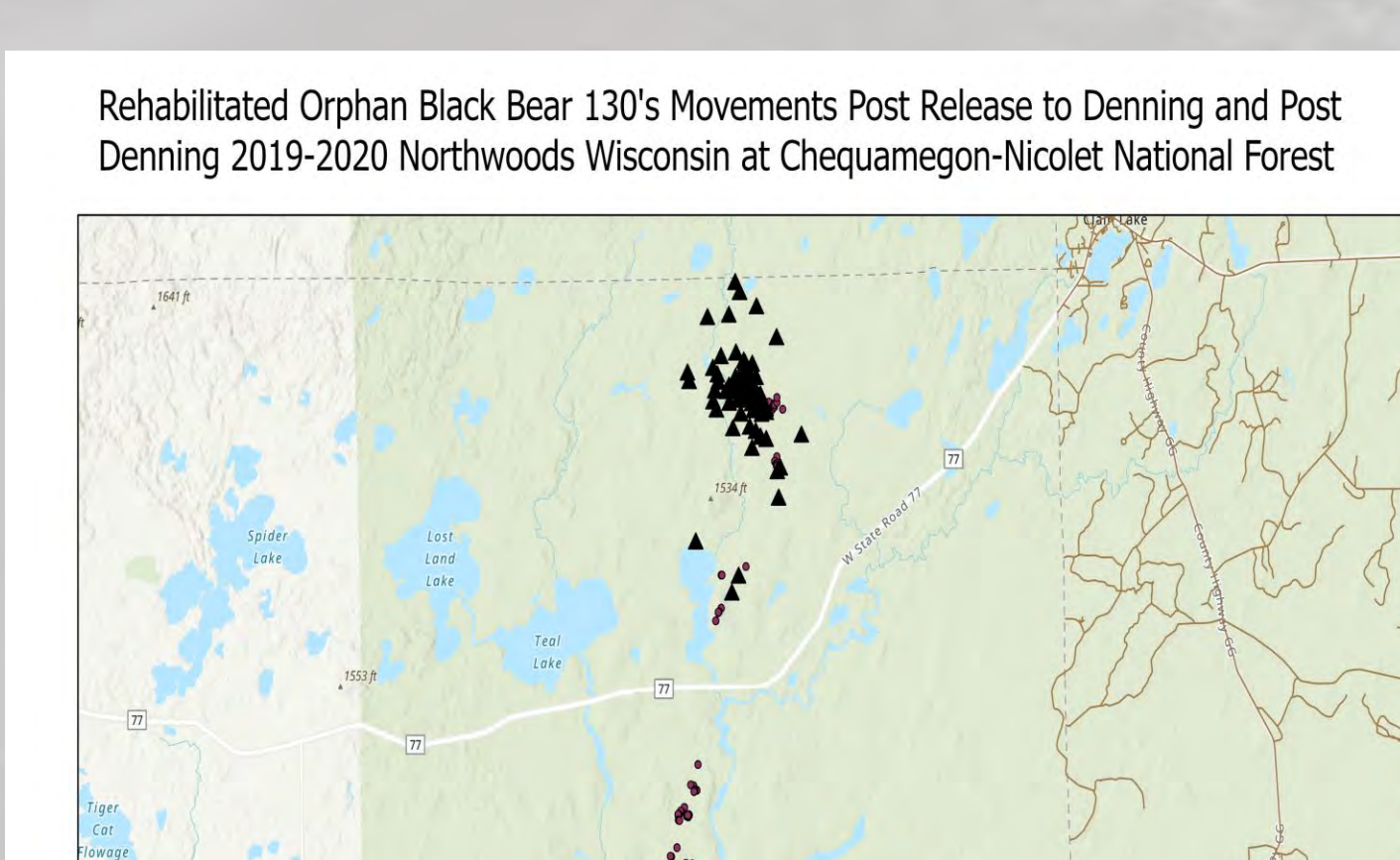
- Following their release in October, the locations of bears were monitored via radio telemetry
- Triangulations were conducted every 30 minutes for the first 72 hours, then spread out as time went on
- Telemetry points were conducted daily until the bears entered their den
- Dens were visited in winter and the bears were fitted with GPS collars
- GPS regularly signaled the location of the bears during the post-denning period



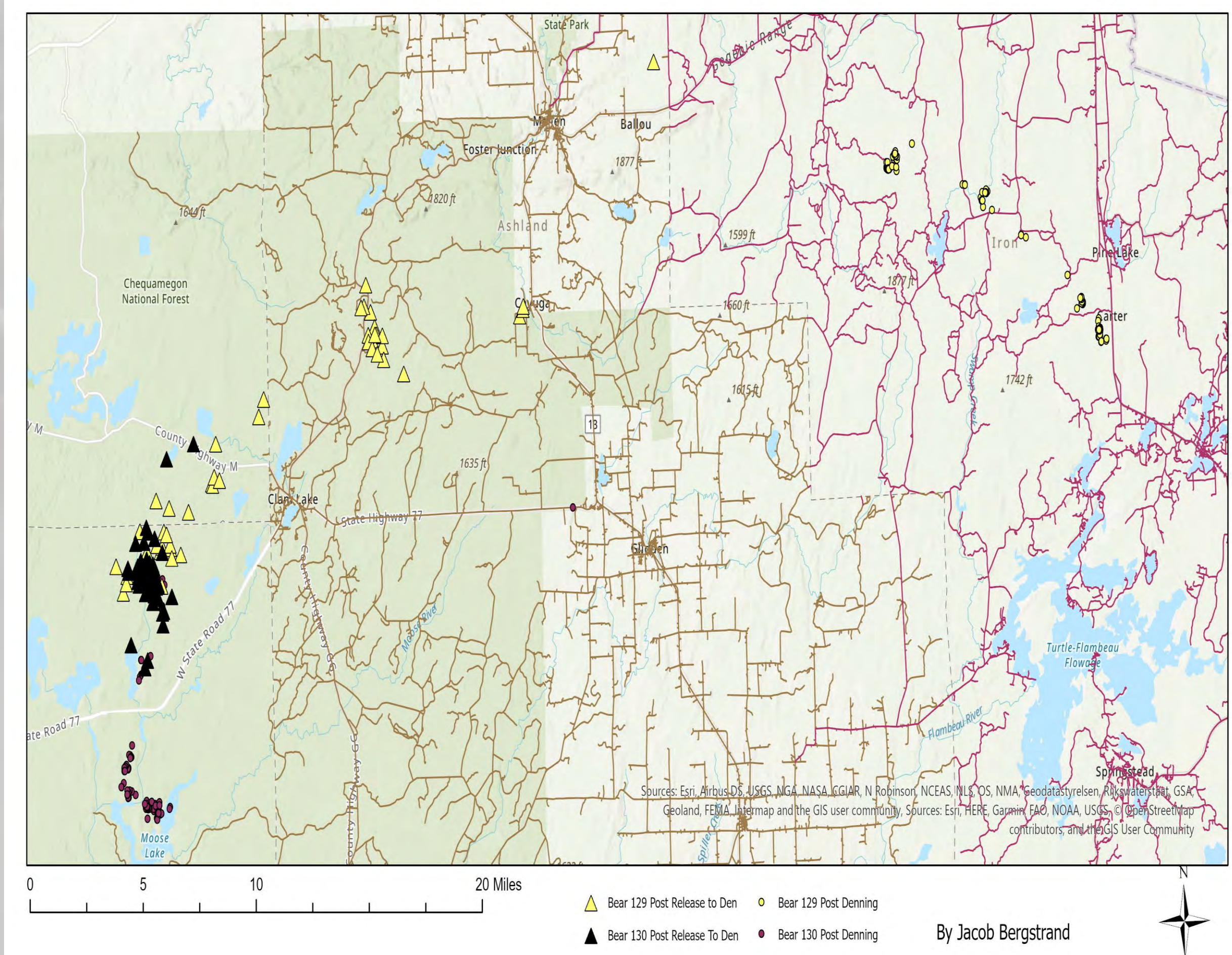
Rehabilitated Orphan Black Bear 129's Movements Post Release to Denning and Post Denning 2019-2020 Northwoods Wisconsin at Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest



Rehabilitated Orphan Black Bear 130's Movements Post Release to Denning and Post Denning 2019-2020 Northwoods Wisconsin at Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

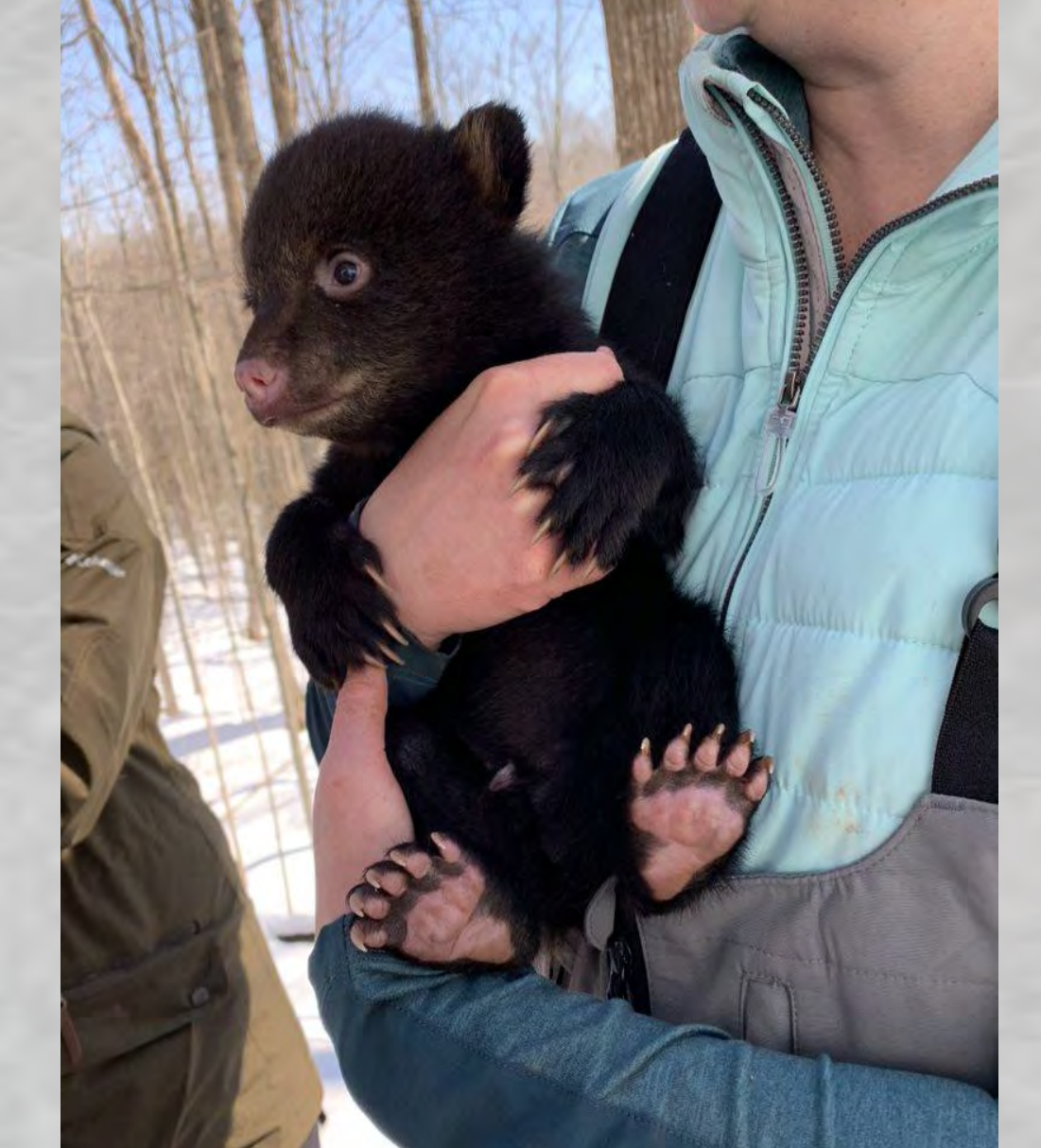


Rehabilitated Orphan Black Bears Movements Post Release to Denning and Post Denning 2019-2020 Northwoods Wisconsin at Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest



Data and Results

- LOAS software was used to develop locations of the bears based on their collected telemetry points, which were then plotted on a GIS map
- Post-release Bear 129 moved 36.6 miles from the release site, ending up less than 20 miles from the Michigan border, with its den in a low-lying cedar swamp. Post-den Bear 129 traveled 10.6 miles before being struck by a vehicle, fatally killing her.
- Bear 129 consistently stayed within protected land of Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and Iron County Forest with a consistency of mainly residing and traveling in deciduous forests and woody wetlands habitat.
- Post-release Bear 130 traveled a very short distance and settled within one mile of the release site, with its den situated within 50 yards of Forest Road 204. Post-den she moved 6.9 miles before her collar died.
- She stayed on Chequamegon- Nicolet National Forest residing and traveling mainly within deciduous forest and woody wetlands.
- Mixed and Evergreen Forests were typically avoided.



Future Research

- Compare movement patterns of released orphan bears and wild bears proximity to roads, houses, and waste disposal areas.
- Examine the likelihood of orphaned bears becoming nuisance bears
- Determine whether rehabilitating orphaned bears can be a viable management method

Acknowledgements

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