

BLACK BEAR HOMING PANEL SUMMARY

LYNN L. ROGERS. *USDA-Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station, 1992 Folwell Ave., St. Paul, MN55108*

What I think we have said is that there has been quite a bit of experience moving bears. There is a question whether emphasis should be put on moving bears or on rectifying the problems at the source. Both have their merit. I've heard two different ideas from managers. One is to stop moving bears; it costs a lot of money and there is a chance they will come back or get in trouble somewhere else. The other is that moving bears makes good public relations, spares some reproductively important females, and saves other bears at least until fall hunting seasons. Hunters usually use the bears they kill, but bears shot as nuisances usually are wasted. Important questions, then, are: How many return home? How many cause further problems. From what is known so far, it looks like there is good survival of translocated bears in some areas but poor in others, especially around the Great Smoky Mountains. Except where chances of man-caused mortality are high, the release site doesn't seem to be too important unless perhaps the bear being moved is a cub or yearling. A fair percentage of

these have remained near where they were released, so it might be important to release them in remote areas where there is good food. But the older bears are probably going to leave the release areas anyway, as Henry Laramie said, even if there are dumps there for them to feed in. Mike Pelton and others have noted that bears are quite specific in their nuisance behavior. So if a bear that's caused one type of nuisance is released where there is potential for a different kind of nuisance, the bear probably won't engage in it. The age of a bear appears to be important. Subadult males that are dispersing may be captured and moved away from areas that they were just passing through. These would be unlikely to return. Adults show a strong tendency to move toward home, but very few of them will travel more than 75 miles (120 km) to do so. Somewhere between 40 and 75 miles (64 and 120 km) seems to be a cutoff point, but there are exceptions like El Harger's bear that returned home from 142.5 miles (229 km) away.