

214

Fawn Predation by Black Bears

Lynn L. Rogers, Patrick S. Beringer, Robert E. Kennedy, and Gregory A. Wilker, North Central Forest Experiment Station, U.S. Forest Service, SR 1, Box 7200, Ely, MN 55731

Is the black bear (*Ursus americanus*) an important predator of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) fawns? Do fawns contribute significantly to black bear diets? We attempted to answer these and other questions by closely observing 5 wild, researcher-habituated black bears in the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota during 1986-1990. Each bear scavenged or killed 1-6 fawns each year. Thirteen observations of killing or scavenging occurred between 23 May and 28 June. Observations were concentrated on a territorial mother and her independent yearling during 23 May to 27 June 1990. They used an area of 19.7 square kilometers, which was estimated to contain 69 fawns (3.5 fawns/km) (Mark Lenarz, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, personal communication, 1990). The mother killed 2 fawns, found 2 that had been killed by other bears, scavenged a nonpredated carcass, and killed or scavenged 1 other. The yearling killed and ate 1 fawn. The 7 fawns comprised 10 percent of the 69 fawns available and were 2-5 percent of the 2 bears' diets. The bears detected bedded fawns up to 10 m away and detected carcasses at greater distances. They found fawns or carcasses incidentally while feeding upon insects and vegetation. They did not appear to hunt fawns, although hunting might be expected in regions of North America where ungulate densities are higher.

Rogers, L. L., P. S. Beringer, R. E. Kennedy, and G. A. Wilker. 1990. Fawn predation by black bears. Page 261 in Abstracts: 52nd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conf. December 2-5, 1990. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 406 pp. (Abstract)