



Understanding Human/Bear Conflicts in Florida



Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Law Enforcement

Division of Wildlife

Office of Informational Services



Yes, we have bears in Florida!

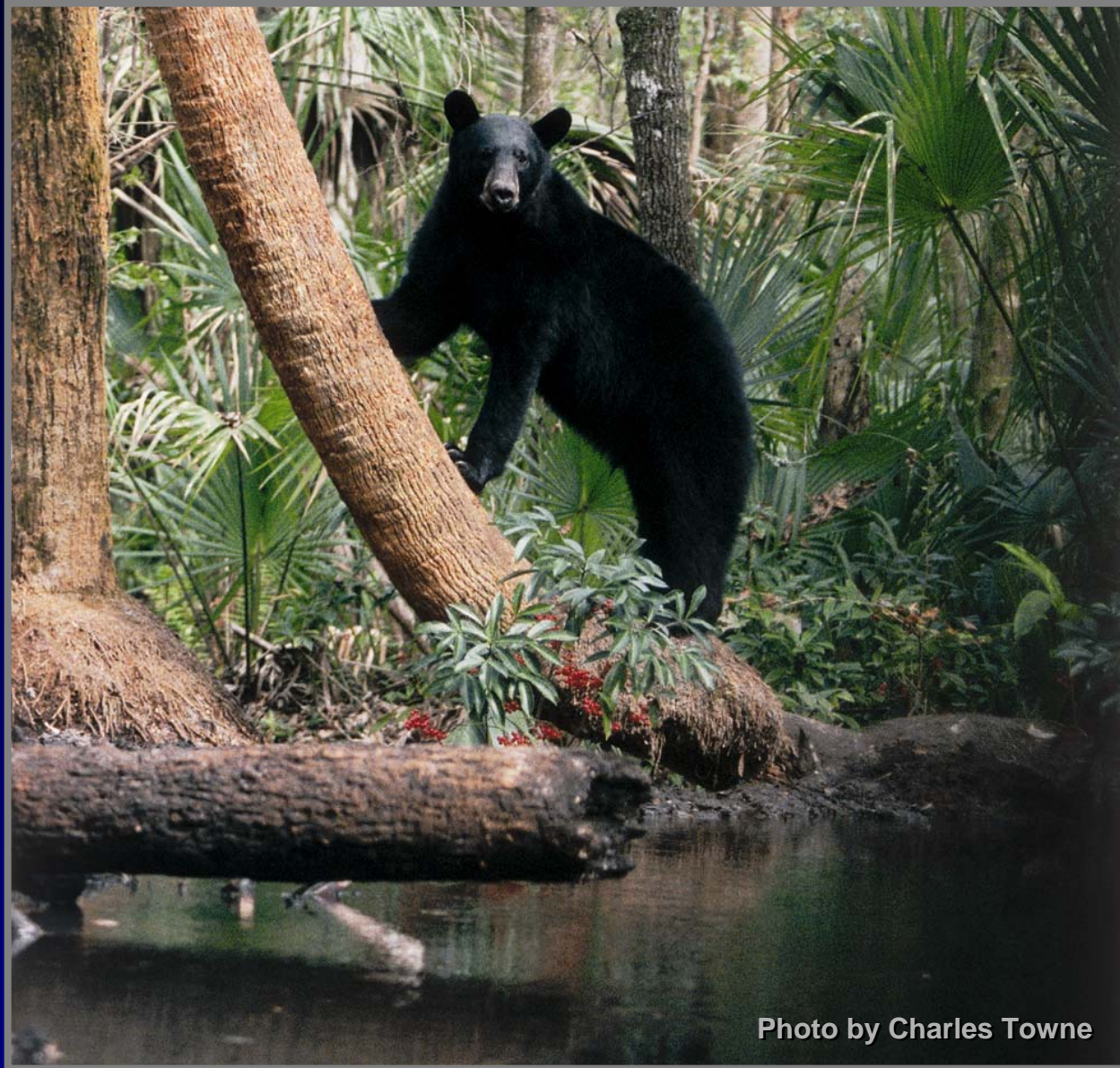
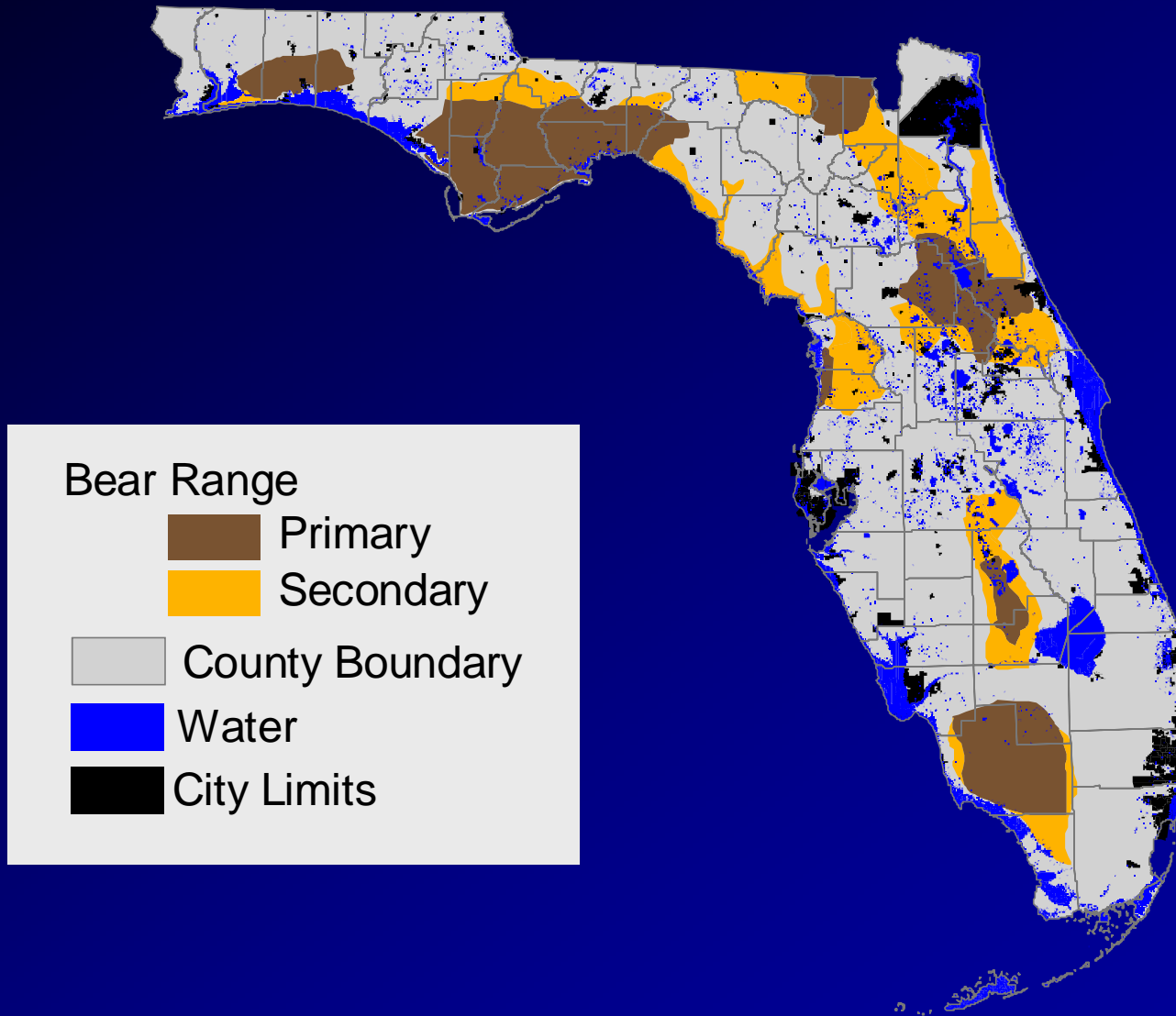


Photo by Charles Towne



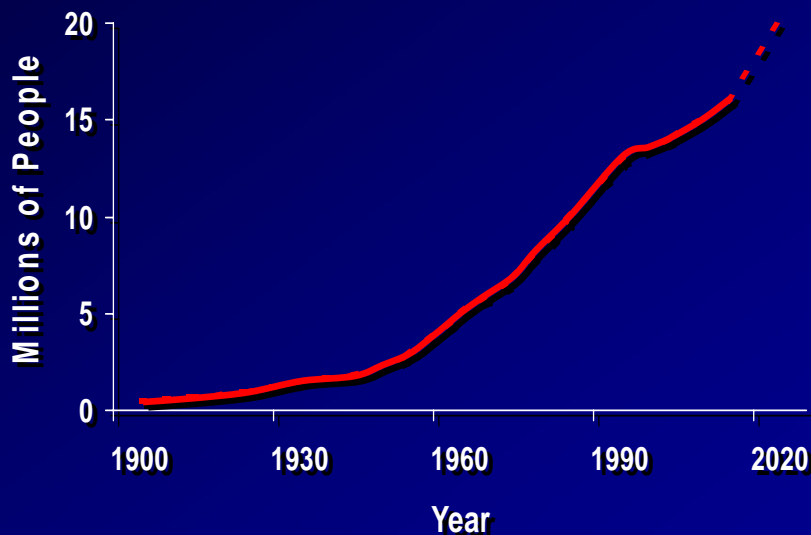
Current Bear Range in Florida



Florida's Growing Human Population



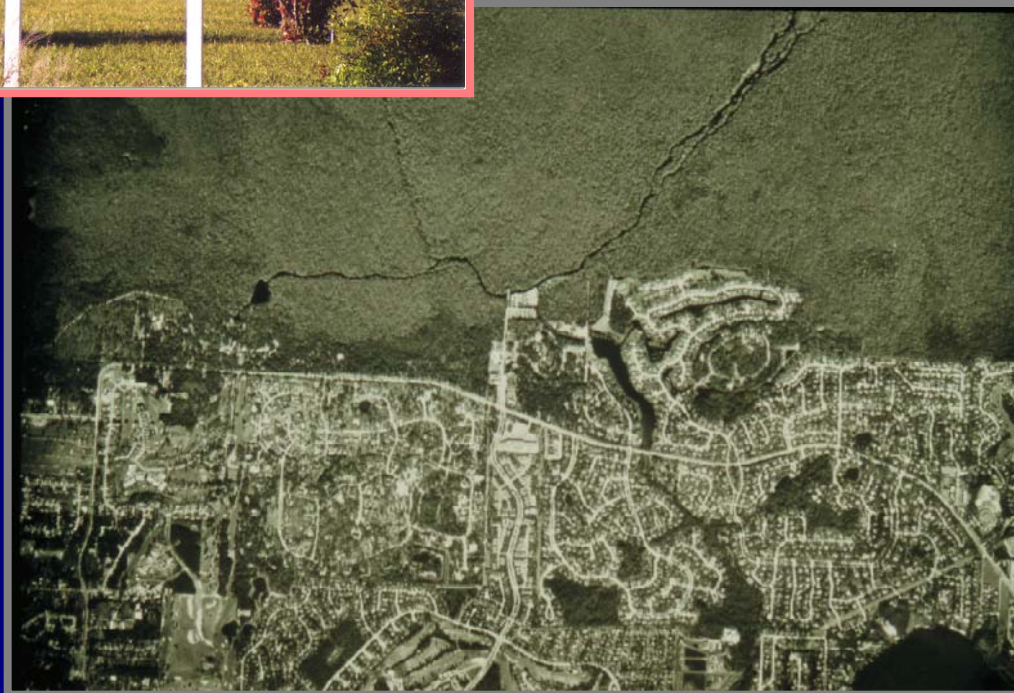
- Human Population
 - 7 16 million residents
 - 7 5 million visitors daily
- Future Projections
 - 7 20 million residents by the year 2020
 - 7 Continued development



Florida's Growing Human Population

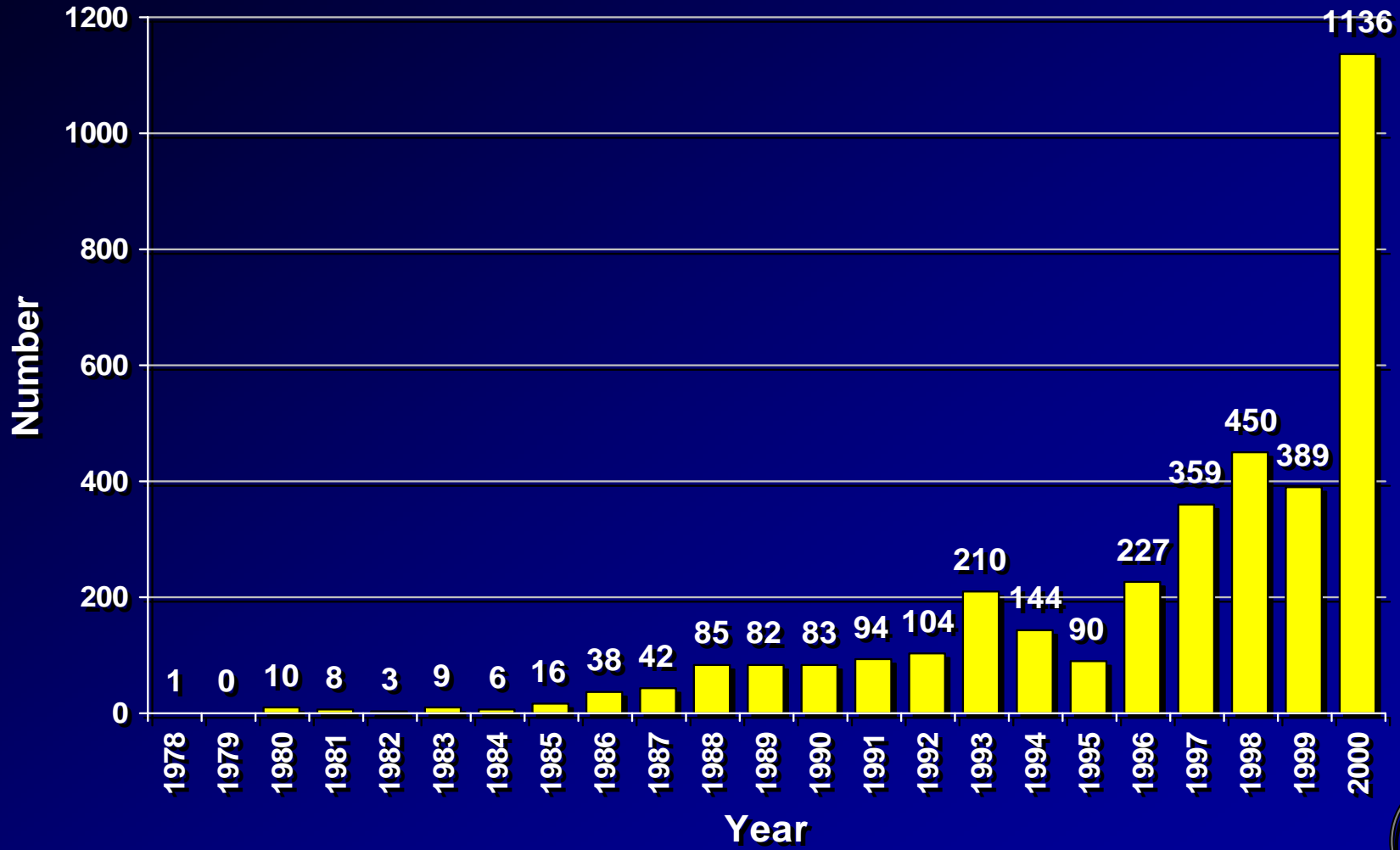


- Development
 - 7 Urban sprawl into historically remote areas
 - 7 New residents who are unfamiliar with Florida's native wildlife

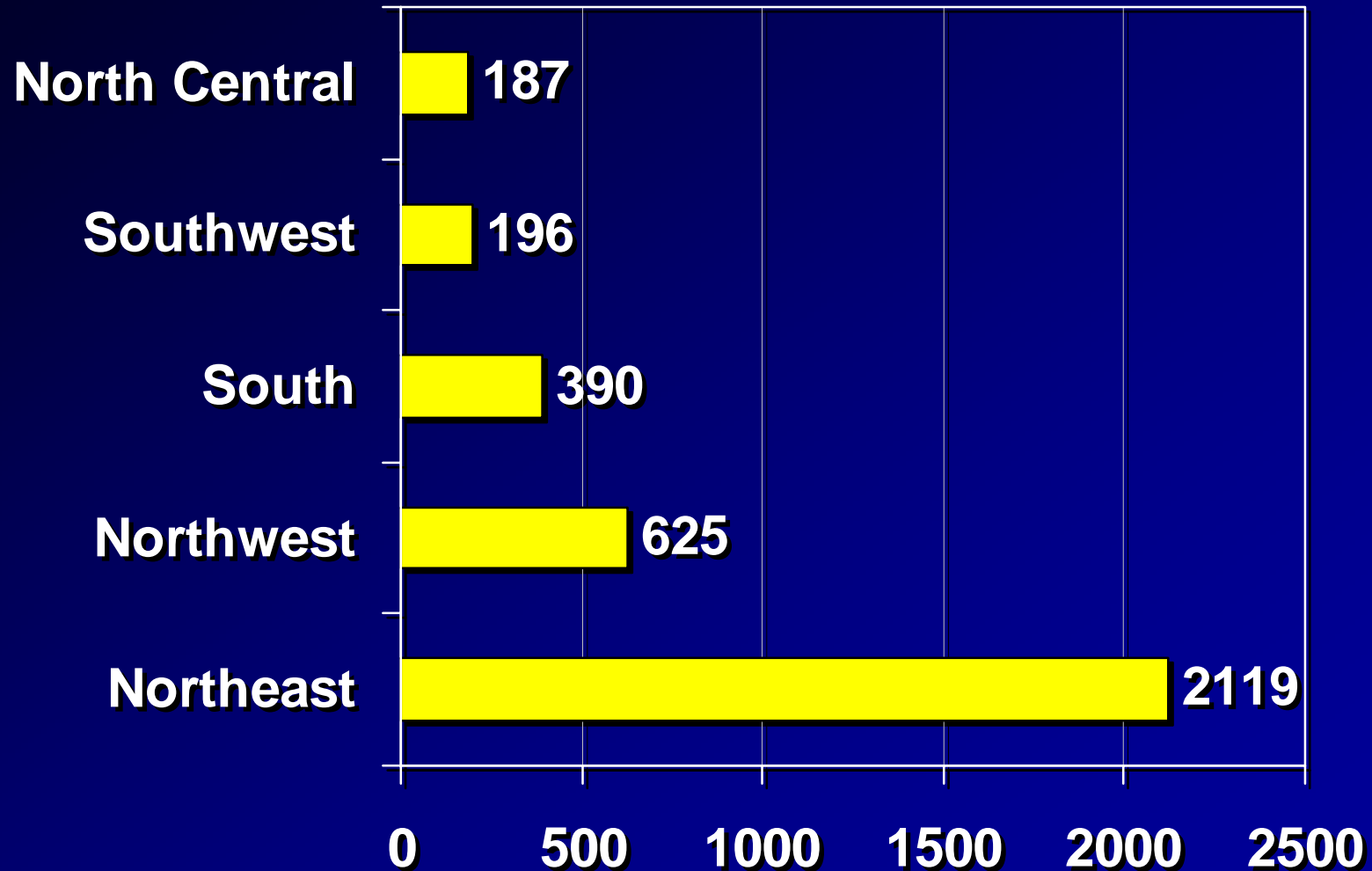


Human/Bear Interactions in Florida

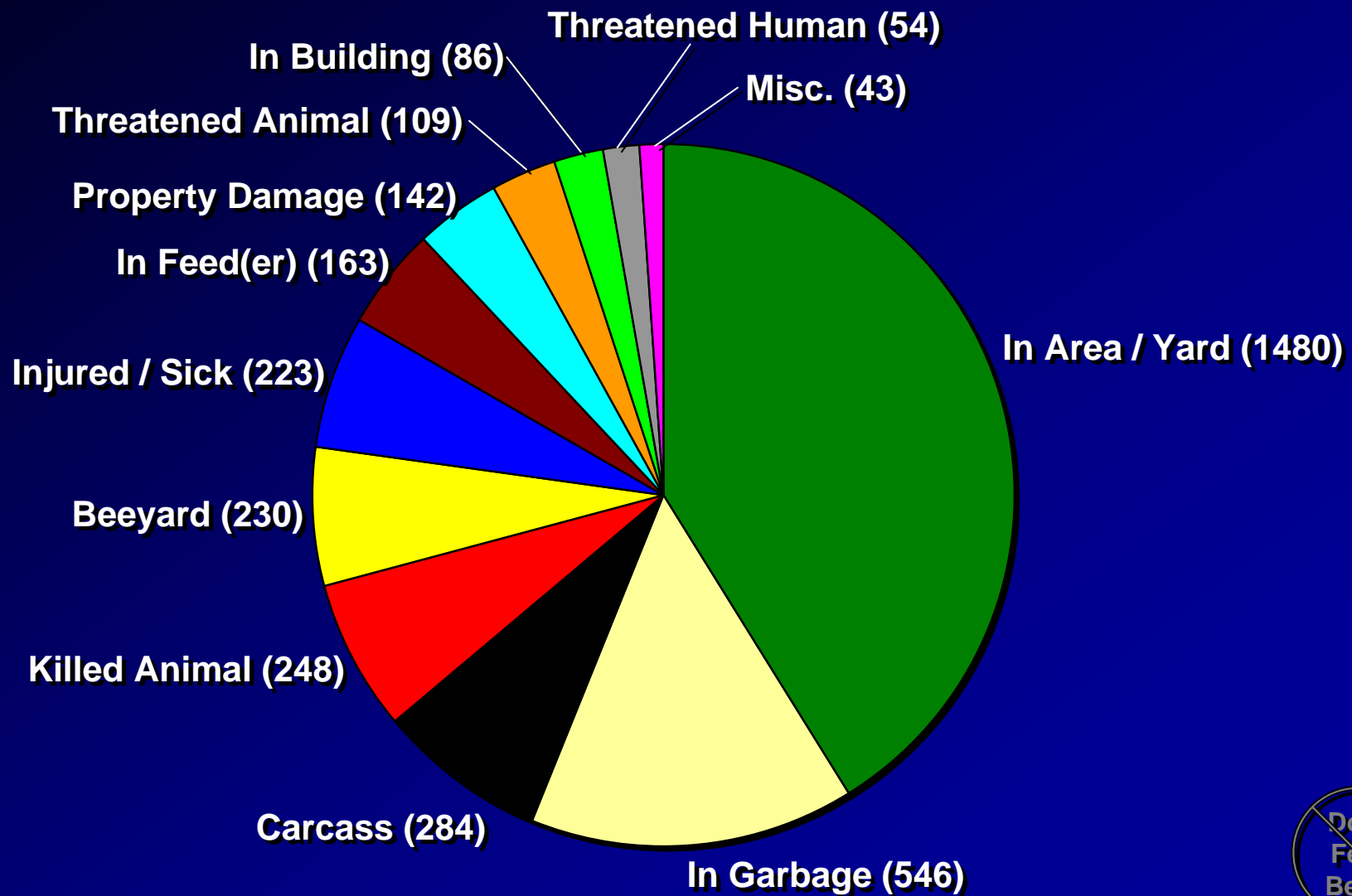
Number of Bear Calls Received by FWC



Bear Calls by Region, 1978 - 2000



Types of Human/Bear Conflicts in Florida (N = 3,608)



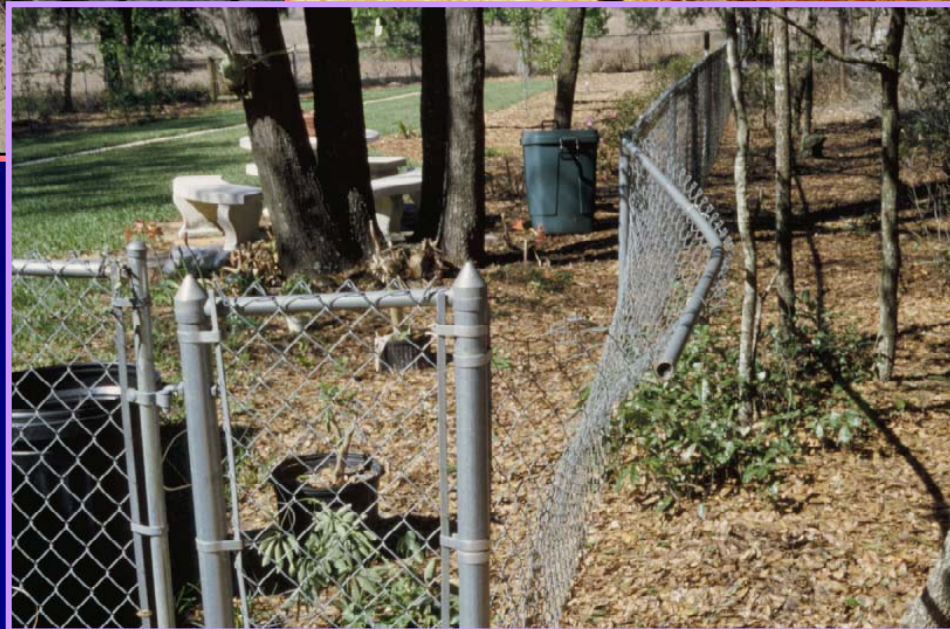
Bears in Town



Bears in Garbage



Property Damage by Bears



Gardens

Bird Feeders

Compost Piles

HUMAN FOOD SOURCES

Fruit Trees

Livestock

CAUSE

Garbage

Back Yard Grills

BEAR CONFLICTS!

Food Pantries

Freezers

Pet Food



Unprotected Garbage



Back Yard Bird Feeders



Photo by Milt Fox



Photo by Milt Fox



Pet Food and Other Items



Habituation and Loss of Fear

- Bears that consistently feed from human food sources will associate people with food and lose their natural fear of humans.
- Nuisance problems quickly follow.
- This pattern is difficult to break and property damage often results.
- Management action may become necessary.



Photo by Milt Fox



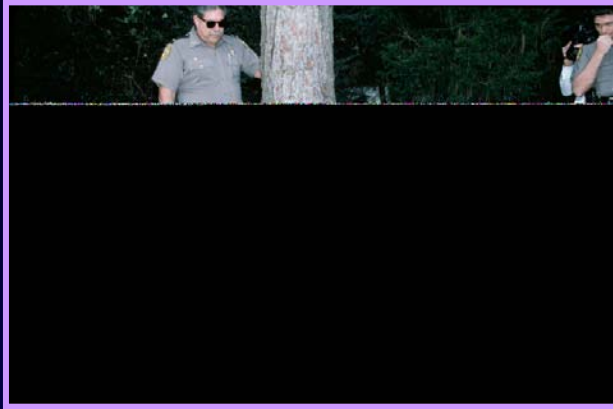
Management Options Are Limited



- Technical Assistance
 - 7 best option
 - 7 dependent on cooperation of land owner



Management Options Are Limited



- Trap and release on site
- Trap and relocate
 - 7 high mortality rates
 - 7 recidivism common
 - 7 no remote areas left
 - 7 moving problem to new area
- Euthanasia may become necessary to protect human safety



**The Key to Avoiding Conflicts
Is Making Human Food Sources
Unavailable to Bears**



Bear Proof Garbage Containers



Electric Fencing



Be Bear Aware

- If you are in bear country:
 - 7 Use bear proof garbage containers and put trash out the morning of pickup.
 - 7 Place electric fencing around gardens and other food sources.
 - 7 Remove pet food from outdoor areas.
 - 7 Remove bird feeders if bears in area.
 - 7 Clean grills and store in secure area.



FWC Cares About Bears . . . Do You?



- Remember to respect bears; do not fear them.
- With the proper understanding and precautions, humans and bears can coexist peaceably.

