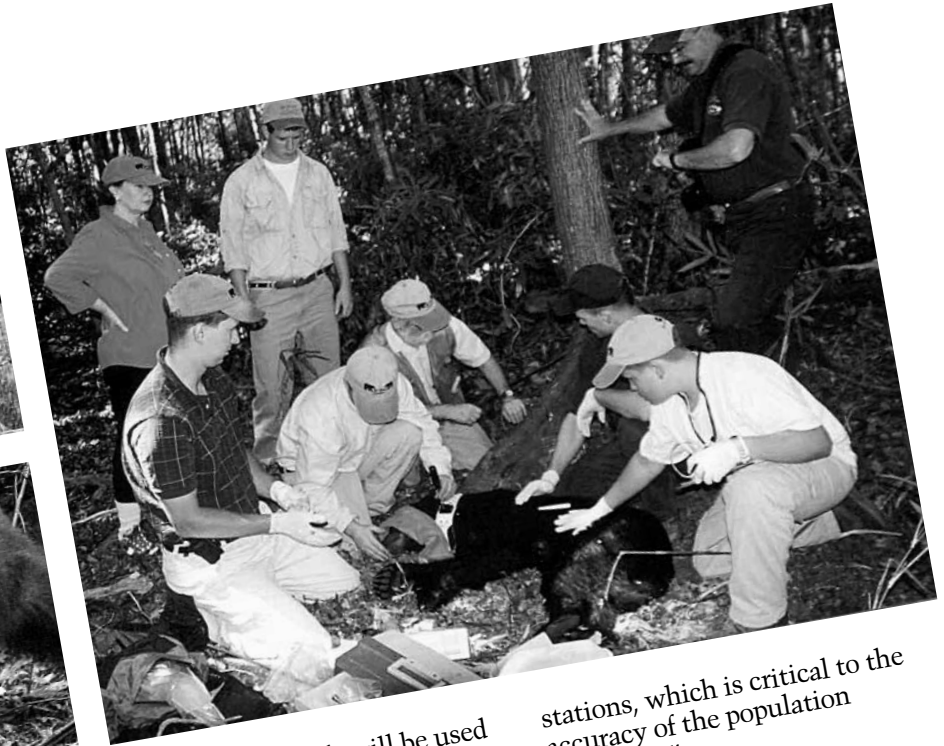


Making a Difference for Wildlife

Hundreds of local conservation projects are undertaken annually by SCI Chapters. They are reinforced by many notable conservation initiatives funded by the SCI Foundation.



North Carolina Triangle Black Bear Research
North Carolina, USA
Total Funds: \$5,400, including matching grant



"THERE ARE MORE BEARS in North Carolina today than at any other time since colonists settled the state," said Mark D. Jones, NC Wildlife Resource Commission black bear biologist, with some males growing as large as 800 pounds. The coastal plain bruin population is estimated at 7,000, with an additional 4,000 in the Tar Heel State's western mountains.

With help from SCI's North Carolina Triangle Chapter, the Wildlife Resource Commission and North Carolina State University biologists will be able to refine that estimate, and also learn more about what habitats bruins use and how they spend their time. The project is being led by Tim Langer, a North Carolina State doctoral student.

This project, which will be used to improve bear management, uses a combination of DNA sampling and GPS-satellite collars. The DNA is collected through hair traces left by the bears at scented bait stations, allowing individual bruins to be recognized at the lab without having to capture and mark large numbers of animals with ear tags, tattoos or collars.

The GPS collars note bear position every hour and collect up to 4,000 readings before falling off bears typically within nine months. SCI North Carolina Triangle funded two of the study's 19 GPS satellite collars.

"Biologists in other states are using hair samples to estimate bear population sizes, but we are the only ones using GPS satellite collars as well," said Langer. "The collars provide great insight into bear movement while we are collecting hair samples at bait

stations, which is critical to the accuracy of the population estimates."

The project's goal is to improve population estimation techniques and enable managers to use these estimates in managing bear populations. Over 50 landowners and 200 donors also helped make the project possible.

To help fund this and other meaningful wildlife conservation initiatives, contribute to the SCI Foundation. Call 800-377-5399 or visit www.sci-foundation.org.