



# Bears in Santa Rosa County

*Kaitlin Goode*

*Bear Management Program*

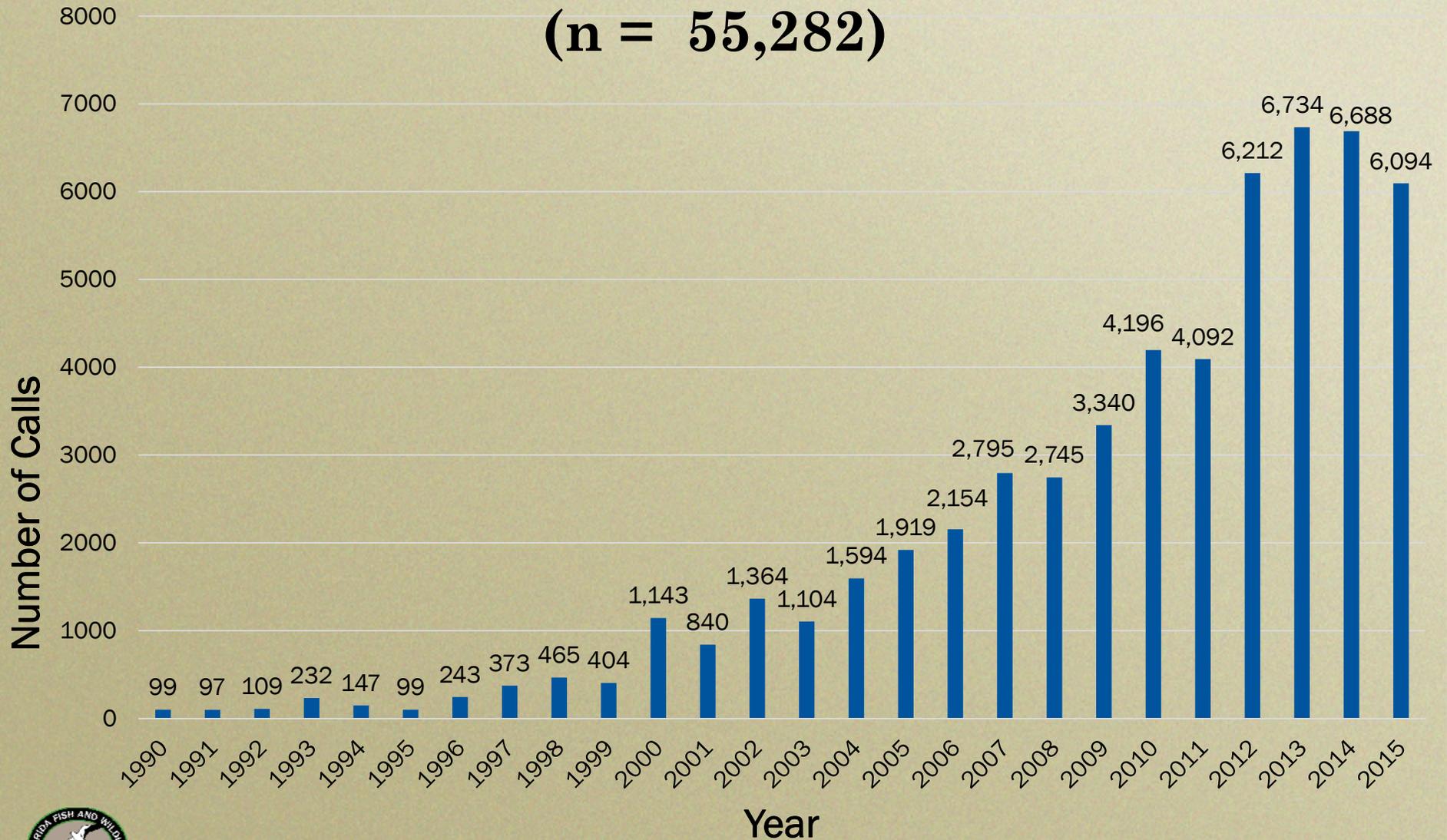
# Conservation to Management

- Conservation success: 300 bears in 1970's to over 4,000 today
- With success comes responsibility
- Human-bear conflicts increased 400% over the past 10 years
- 4 people seriously injured by bears over last few years



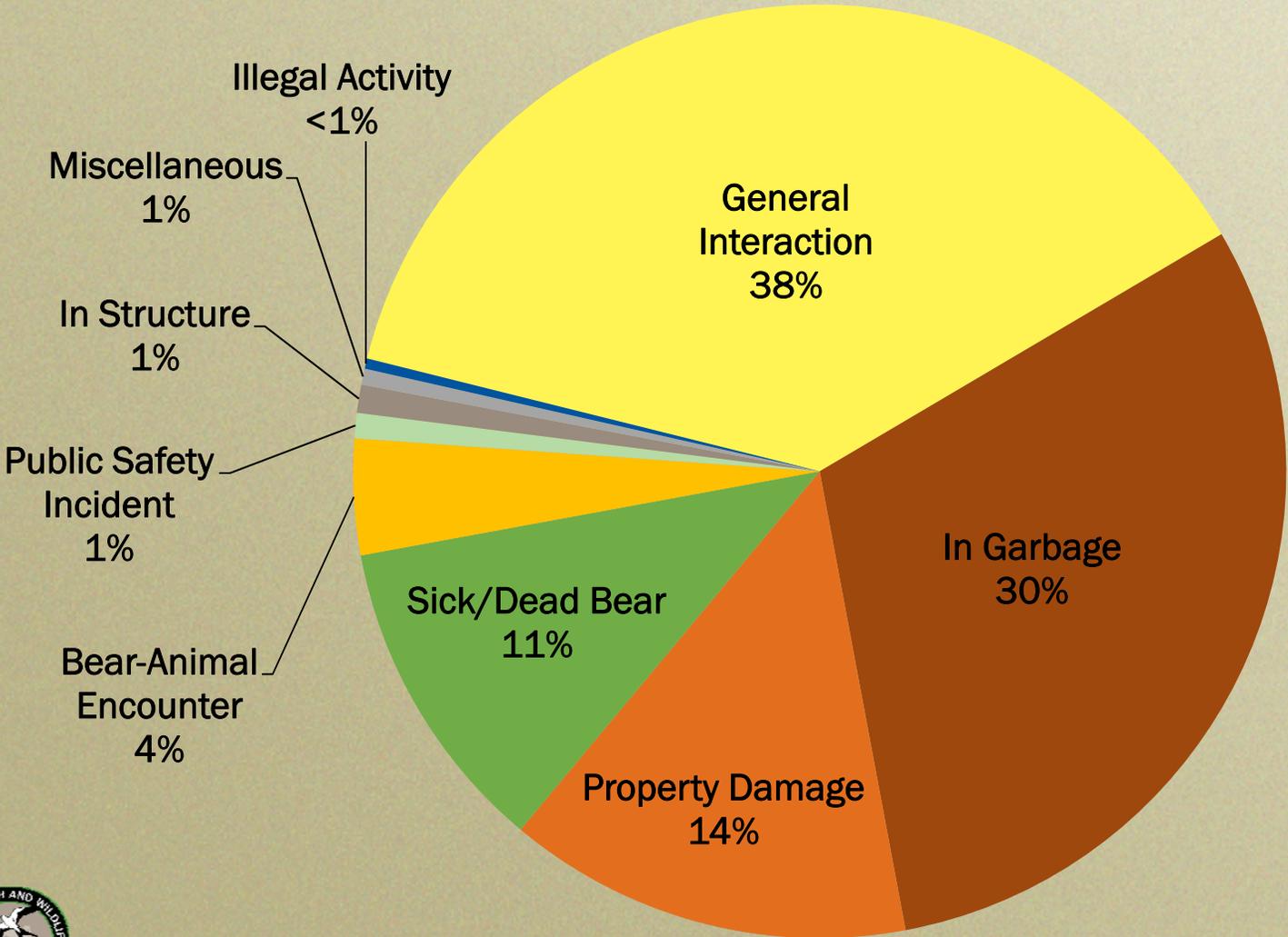
# Statewide Bear Calls 1990 – 2015

(n = 55,282)

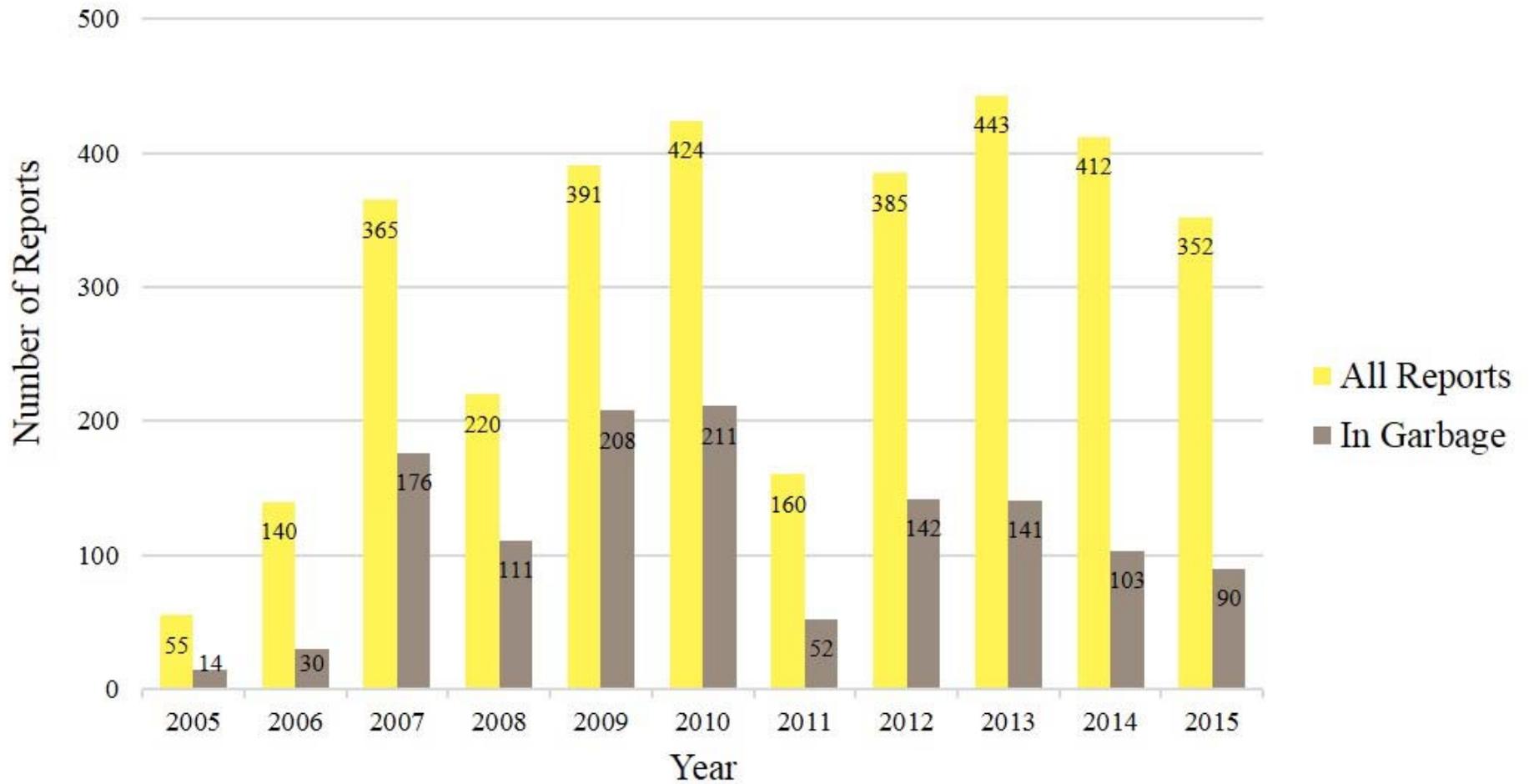


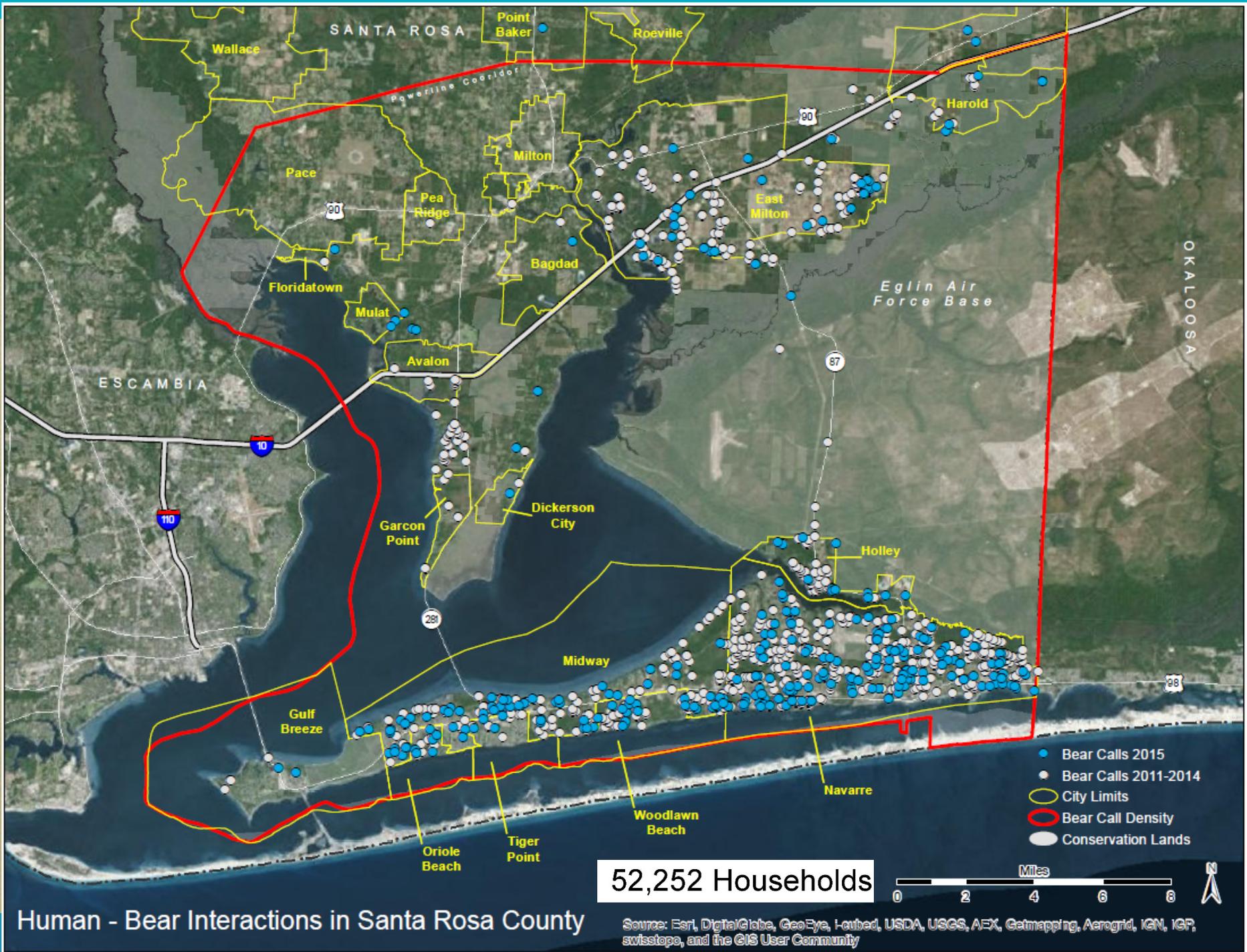
# Statewide Call Types 1990 – 2015

(n = 55,282)



# Santa Rosa County Bear Calls 2005 - 2015 (n = 3,347)





## Human - Bear Interactions in Santa Rosa County

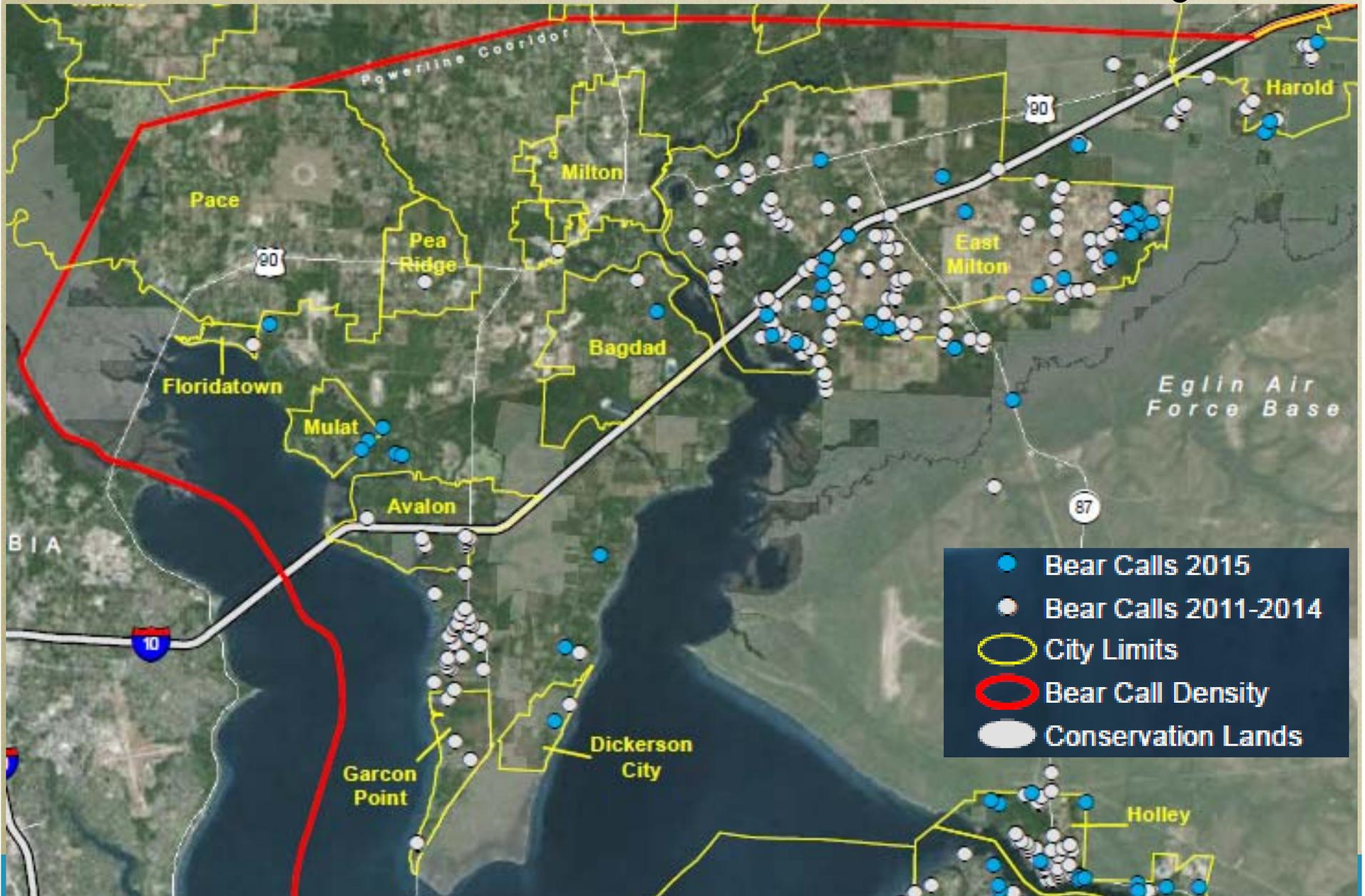
# South Santa Rosa County



- Bear Calls 2015
- Bear Calls 2011-2014
- City Limits
- Bear Call Density
- Conservation Lands



# Central Santa Rosa County



# What is FWC's approach?

- More aggressive removal of bears that may pose risk
- Increased hazing and depredation options
- Initiated hunt to stabilize bear population numbers



# New Bear Feeding Rule

- Intentionally feeding bears is prohibited
- Placing food or garbage that attracts bears AND is likely to create a nuisance is prohibited AFTER receiving prior written notification.



Lynn Rogers



# New Feeding Penalties

- All feeding rules (except Marine Fish)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Offense = Non-criminal, \$100 fine
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense = 2<sup>nd</sup> degree misdemeanor
    - Up to \$500 fine
    - Up to 60 days in jail
- Bears and Crocodilians ONLY
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense = 1<sup>st</sup> degree misdemeanor
    - Up to \$1,000 fine
    - Up to 1 year in prison
  - 4<sup>th</sup>+ Offense = 3<sup>rd</sup> degree felony
    - Up to \$5,000 fine
    - Up to 5 years in prison



# Incentive Programs

- Working with 14 counties with the most conflicts
- Conserve Wildlife Tag grants

\$220,000 to 12 counties

(\$20,000 to Okaloosa to try out bear-resistant cans)



# Local Government Role

- Waste services and public safety
- FWC Commissioner Resolution identifies roles
- Community wide effort requires ordinance



# Elements of an Ordinance

- Increases participation to get community-wide effect
- Does not require specific equipment:

**“All garbage containers must be either wildlife resistant or securely stored until 6:00 A.M. or later on the morning of scheduled pick up”**

- Hurlburt Air Field Ordinance – 10,000 people
- Seminole County Ordinance – 40,000 people



# Why Santa Rosa County?

- 6% of all calls statewide from Santa Rosa
- > 52,000 households in high conflict area
- Conflicts are concentrated in relatively small area



# Why Now?

- Cost-Share Funding available July 1
  - Legislature appropriated \$500,000
    - \$375,000 from Bear Permits + \$125,000 SGTF
  - Conserve Wildlife Grant for \$325,000
- 60% of funds reserved for areas with ordinances



# The End

