6-17-1960

Montana State University receives National Science Foundation grant

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY, JUNE 17

The National Science Foundation has awarded Montana State University a $19,400 grant for support of a five-year study of Ursus horribilis, better known as the Grizzly bear, being conducted by Dr. John J. Craighead, leader of the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at MSU.

The study is the first attempt to work out the population dynamics of a large long-lived carnivore like the Grizzly, Dr. Craighead said. He will study the species throughout its range in the United States but primarily in Yellowstone National Park.

The species, which has been declining in numbers, is threatened by the rising human population, Dr. Craighead pointed out. These great bears require large areas of wild country, he explained. The knowledge gained from this research project will be valuable in management of the species in national parks and wilderness areas.

Dr. Craighead and coworkers initiated the study last summer by trapping, immobilizing, color marking and releasing 27 bears. These marked bears will be observed within a wild population over a number of years, he said. An article describing these preliminary phases of the research will appear in the August issue of the National Geographic.

The work is being done with the cooperation of the National Park Service and Dr. Craighead is working closely with Yellowstone Park officials. In addition to the NSF grant, the project has been receiving financial support from the National Geographic Society.

Dr. Craighead is employed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Research Unit is a cooperative enterprise supported by the Wildlife Management Institute, the State Fish and Game Department, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana State University.

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