

Government News: Federal/State File

New study documents southwest brown bears

State and federal biologists are about to conduct the first ever brown bear census in a roughly 1,000-square mile area at the southwestern end of the Kuskokwim Mountains.

John Coady, a regional supervisor with the AK Dept. of Fish & Game, says the study will be a joint effort between state Fish &

Game and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologists.

"We know very little about the density or overall number of brown bears in this area," Coady said today.

"What we do know is that brown bears in the area are hunted for sport and subsistence purposes and that a number are killed annually

in defense of life and property. Whether this is having a significant effect on the population is unknown."

Coady says radio collaring of the first 30 bears is scheduled to take place between May 23 and June 3, after bears emerge from their dens, but before they can hide under summer foliage.