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Update: Handgun or Pistol Against Bear Attack: 93 cases, 97% Effective

Ammoland Inc. Posted on March 25, 2020 by Dean Weingarten



Handgun or Pistol Against Bear Attack: 93 cases, 97% Effective

U.S.A. —(Ammoland.com)- In January, 2018, I published some original research on the efficacy of handguns in stopping bear attacks. It started with this observation:

On the Internet, and in print, many people claim that pistols lack efficacy in defending against bear attacks. Here is an example that [occurred on freerepublic.com](#):

“Actually, there are legions of people who have been badly mauled after using a handgun on a bear. Even some of the vaunted magnums.”

OK, give us a few examples. As you claim “legions”, it should not be too hard.

I never received a response. I believe the claim was made in good faith. There has been much conjecture about the lack of efficacy of pistols for defense against bears. A little searching will find a plethora of fantasy, fiction, mythology, and electrons sprayed about the supposed lack.

In the original article, there were [37 instances of bear attacks](#) where people attempted to defend themselves or others from a bear or bears, with a handgun. Of the 37 attacks, there was only one failure, giving a success rate of 97%.

The criteria for inclusion in this study is a pistol had to be fired to defend against a bear or bears. If a handgun was not fired, the incident was not included. If the use of the handgun stopped the attack, it was a success whether the bear was killed immediately, or left the scene, as long as it stopped attacking.

All methods of defense against bears have similar problems of access. A failure to use a handgun or bear spray in a pack, or a rifle slung over the shoulder without a round in the chamber, should not be counted as a failure of the method to defend against bears. All of the methods can be carried for easy access. It is not a fault of the method if the user did not have the item available for use, or if the attack was too quick to allow use.

I and colleagues have searched for instances where handguns were used to defend against bears. By the time of the original article, I and my associates found 37 instances that were fairly easily confirmed.

By March of 2019, our renewed efforts had found another 26 instances. **The 63 incidents** had 3 failures, for a 95% success rate. The incidents are heavily weighted toward the present. The ability to publish and search for these incidents has increased over the years.

By August of 2019, we have found ten more cases, **making 73 cases**, with three failures, for a success rate of 96%.

As of March 2020, we have found 20 more handgun cases, for a total of 93 cases, with three failures, for a success rate of 97%.

In addition to the handgun defenses, there are four more instances where handguns were used in combination with long guns, bringing the total to eight; one where a pistol was used on an aggressive bear hit by a vehicle, two examples where pistols were present but not used, one indeterminate case, and two examples of unconfirmed incidents. All of these

additional incidents are referenced but are not included in the 93 cases or the 97% success rate.

You need not rely on my judgment or that of my colleagues. Read of the successes and failures for yourself. Make your own judgments. Some links may not work. Sources on the Internet often go dead after a few years.

Bear and human populations are increasing. Reliable and powerful handguns have become popular and legal to carry in more bear country. Handguns are more commonly carried for self-defense.

The handgun calibers, when known, range from .22 rimfire to .460 Smith & Wesson Magnum. The most common are .44 magnums with 28 cases, all successful. There were 2 combinations of .44 magnum and .357 magnum cases. Six of the combination handgun and long gun cases involved .44 magnum revolvers.

For this update, we found another .22 rimfire case, two additional 9mm cases, another .38 special case, three additional .357 magnum cases, another 10mm case, five additional .44 magnum cases (included in the 28 total .44 magnum number), another .45 ACP case, another .454 Casull case, four more cases where the caliber was unknown, and one more case where both .357 and .44 magnum revolvers were used. All 93 cases are referenced below, as well as the combination cases and examples of incidents that were not included, in the interest of transparency and completeness.

Here are the cases, sorted by caliber and date. Additions since the last update in August of 2019, are referenced with the word **Addition** after the number.

We found six cases involving a .22 rimfire pistol. Five were successful, against black bears. One failed against a polar bear.

1. 1936, Alaska: From More Alaskan Bear Tales Page 267 .22 Rimfire Reference January 31, 1936 black bear

A black bear with cubs had chased Mr. Nutter up a tree. When the sow came after him, he was able to shoot and kill it with a .22 pistol.

2. Addition 1960 .22 black bear, Lake north of Minto, Alaska

In 1960 Francis Cannon and her two friends flew into a lake a little north of Minto, Alaska. They were on a fishing trip. After fishing, they sat down to lunch when they were attacked by a black bear, who rushed out of the brush and grabbed Francis. From Alaskan Bear Tales pages 107-108:

Johnson picked up a stick, and pummeled the brute, and the bear dropped the woman and charged him. It was waylaid by the lunch, which it began to devour.

In the meantime, Fletcher got a .22 pistol from the plane, walked to within a few feet of the animal, and killed it.

I suspect it was not a casual stroll to the plane or a slow walk back to the bear.

3. 1971, Idaho: From Guides tales of Adventure,.22 rimfire page 62 black bear

Walt Earl was a government trapper and hunter who also guided hunters. He had to kill a black bear and cubs in a depredation hunt. The hunter forgot his ammunition for the hunter's .44 magnum. Walt took refuge on the trunk of a huge pine that had blown down. The sow came after him.

She climbed up and walked straight down the trunk toward me and my pea shooter.

Her head swaying and teeth popping, I held my shot. From behind the flimsy barricade of twigs, I took aim for her throat, and yelled for the dogs to take her. They moved but didn't answer the challenge.

She stood 20 feet away, with all her attention focused on my throat. I had, in a way, brought a knife to a gunfight.

With eight rounds left in my 10 round clip, I pulled the trigger with my sights on the swaying bruin's throat.

One. Two. Three. Four. If anything, these rounds just angered her more.

Five. Six. Seven. Eight.

Click...

On the eight shot, something happened. Rocket, that old redbone hound, charged up into the bear, sinking his teeth into the sow's side. They both went flying from the log, claws flying and teeth snapping in midair.

As the dogs fought the sow, Earl reloaded. Then, as the sow came at him again, he fired 10 more shots from his Ruger .22 pistol. The dogs distracted the sow once more. The fight moved into a thicket. The sow was found there, dead from two .22 rounds that had reached her vitals. There were 14 .22 caliber holes in her. A bio of Walt Earl is included at the end of the book.

4. August, 1995, Norway, Svalbard Archipelago, .22 rimfire, Failure Polar Bear, From Spitsbergen: Svalbard, Franz Josef, Jan Mayen, 3rd Brant travel Guide, by Andres Umbreit

Update:

Kiepertoyo Hinlopen Strait, August, 1995

Another five people of the crew set out separately with only a .22 pistol and a flare gun. After an hour's march, the second party were met by a bear, 75m away and openly aggressive. The bear was distracted neither by warning shot nor flare and attacked one of the party. As he did so, he was shot, from a range of only 15m and turned against the man who had fired at him. This man tossed the gun to the first, who shot again. The process was repeated, with first one man being attacked and then the other. By the time the pistol was emptied and a knife drawn, one man was dead and another badly injured. The survivors retreated to the ship.

(snip)

On examination, three shots to the head were discovered, none of them piercing the cranium.

The victim had three years experience with the Origo, with many bear observations, and there were sufficient weapons on board to equip everybody.

Older Reference, Polar Bears: Proceedings of the Twelfth Working Group, same incident.

On 1 September, 1995, two male tourists were attacked by an adult male bear on a remote island in eastern Svalbard. The two tourists defended themselves with a .22 calibre pistol which proved ineffective. One man was killed, the other injured. Police later shot the bear.

5. 24 June 2012, Arizona, Ponderosa Campground, .22 rimfire, black bear, azgfd.net (caliber previously unknown)

The bear had entered the man's tent and attacked him. His fiancée and a one-year-old child were also in the tent and were able to escape unharmed and sound the alarm to other campers in the nearby area.

Reports indicate that another camper at a nearby campsite shot at the bear several times with a handgun at close range after the attack. The bear left the area, and it is unknown at this time if or how many times the bear was hit.

.22 caliber mentioned at fox10phoenix story

6. 25 July, 2016, New Mexico, Silver City, .22 Rimfire, black bear.

The startled cubs bawled out for their mother, which came running around the corner. The woman fled into her house, but her dogs slipped out the open door. A fight ensued between the adult bear and the dogs, during which the woman attempted to scare the bear away. The woman's husband arrived armed with a .22-caliber pistol and fired a single shot in the bear's direction, Peralta said.

The bear ran off and collapsed about 40 yards away, dead from the gunshot wound, Peralta said. One of the cubs was found near the house and the other was found in a tree.

We found one case involving a .380 pistol. It was successful.

1. 14 April, 2006, Tennessee: From ljworld.com .380 defense against 350 lb+ black bear

The bear had killed a six-year-old girl and mauled her mother and brother. The attack occurred on Friday, 14 April in 2006, in the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee.

The bear bit the boy's head, then went after the child's mother after she tried to fend off the attack with rocks and sticks, Hicks said. The animal picked up the woman with its mouth and dragged her off the trail.

The girl apparently ran away, and almost an hour passed before rescuer Danny Stinnett found the bear hovering over her body about 100 yards off the trail.

Stinnett, a county fire and rescue chief, said he approached and was about 25 feet away when the bear charged him on all fours. He said he fired at the bear twice with his .380-caliber pistol, scaring it off.

"I know I hit it," Stinnett said. "It reared up on its hind legs. It was as big as you and me."

We found seven cases where 9 mm pistols were used to defend against bears. All were successful.

1. 17 August, 2002, Alaska, Russian River, Grizzly Charged Fishermen, 9mm

But then the bear turned, looked up at Brenner and lunged, said Lewis, who interviewed the three men Saturday.

Brenner fired twice at the center of the hulking shape closing to four or five feet away. The sow, estimated at 400 to 450 pounds, went down. Brenner then put three more bullets into her head.

He used a 9 mm semiautomatic pistol. Lewis said such a low-caliber gun ordinarily doesn't pack enough punch to kill a bear. But Brenner loaded the pistol with full-metal-jacket bullets that penetrated to the bear's vital organs, he said.

2. 31 August, 2004, Colorado: Black Bear Charged John Tietbohl, 9 mm, Bachelor Gulch

BACHELOR GULCH – The Aug. 31 shooting of a bear in Bachelor Gulch still echoes among residents in the upscale enclave. The Colorado Division of Wildlife continues to investigate the incident, in which homeowner John Tietbohl shot and wounded a bear outside his Daybreak Ridge home. Tietbohl told officers the bear had been trying to get into his home, then charged him as he was getting into his car that evening. Tietbohl, who had been carrying a 9-millimeter pistol as a sidearm to protect himself from the bear, shot and hit the animal, which left a trail of blood as it ran off. Earlier in the day, Bachelor Gulch security officers had repeatedly sprayed pepper spray at the bear near Tietbohl's house, but the animal stayed around. The bear also reportedly slipped into Tietbohl's garage in the days before it was shot.

3. Addition 26 August, 2005 Selkirk Manitoba, RCMP handgun, Black Bear

After a black bear attacked and killed Harvey Robinson, 68, his family and RCMP officers were searching for Robinson. They found his body. The bear came running at the officer.

Later in the afternoon, RCMP searched the area with family members and found Robinson's body.

While the searchers were talking at the scene, a bear suddenly came running out of the bush and an RCMP officer fired two shots at it with his 9-mm handgun, Colwell said.

From another source:

RCMP Sergeant Steve Colwell tells us it happened just after 3:30 P.M. Selkirk RCMP went to the scene and an officer found the man. The bear then came at the officer, who fired two shots with his revolver and turned the bear away.

After a search of the area, using a helicopter, the dead bear was found about 45 yards from where it had been shot. While the second source says "revolver" the RCMP had been issued 9 mm handguns for 50 years at the time of this bear attack.

4. 20 April, 2009, Germany, Kassel, Brown Bear Spiegel.de, 9mm Sig is police issue

However, one of the bears attacked the cop and bit him twice on the left calf. The injured policeman shot the 180-kilogram (397-pound) bear five or six times with his service pistol. The circus director was sharply critical of the police action, which he described as "out of proportion."

5. Last week in July, 2016, Alaska: Guide Kills Attacking Grizzly with 9mm

In the last week in July, 2016, Phil Shoemaker had use a 9mm pistol to kill a grizzly that was threatening his clients and himself. It worked.

6. 6 October, 2017, Montana: Bowhunters, Spray Failed, 9mm, Grizzly, account from two sources, Todd Orr, and Eye-witness, Beaver Creek

I interviewed both sources. The attack was reported to Fish and Game but was not published the consistent incident **recorded in USGS database.**

It was at the end of the day and was getting dark. Two bow hunters were returning from their bow hunt. They both had bear spray and pistols. They had agreed that if forced into defending themselves, one would use spray, the other would back up the spray with his pistol.

The grizzly bluff charged several times, blocking their return to camp.

Warning shots were fired in the air with a 9 mm pistol. The bear ran off, then came back. Bear spray was utilized but only extended 10 feet into a light headwind and did not reach the bear. The bear would not disengage. It kept coming back and getting closer. The aggressive bear was finally shot with the 9 mm pistol at close range. It ran off. The report was made to Fish and Wildlife, and the bear was found dead the next day. Eye-witness believes it was one shot to the chest of the bear.

7. Addition September 16, 2019, Gravelly Mountains, Montana, Grizzly Bear 9mm pistols.

The second attack happened about 6:30 p.m. as two archery hunters from Washington were walking north toward Cottonwood Creek. They said they heard a noise and saw a bear charging at them. The bear struck one of the men, who initially fell face-down. During the mauling, the man ended up laying on his back with the bear on top of him. The man's hunting partner shot at the bear with a pistol, and the bear stepped away but did not leave initially.

The bear charged two more times but did not make contact with the hunters again as both hunters fired shots at it until it departed. It's unclear how many shots were fired or whether any of them hit the bear.

Go fund me for Donovan Campbell by Chris Gregersen.

[Link to Ammoland article on this case](#)

We found one case involving a 9.3 x 18 Makarov pistol, in Russia.

1. 2010, Russia: 9.3 mm Makarov (most likely) Police attempting to control bear.

Brown bear shot by policemen after attack on veterinarian police s uses, at that time (2010) 9mm Makarov, I'm pretty sure about 95% it was basic FMJ (Full metal jackets) They shot around 8-9 shot, no one can tell how many actually hit the bear



We found three cases involving a .38 revolver, probably .38 S&W special. One was successful against a grizzly. Two were against black bears. One was a failure, one a success.

1. Addition 1947 Chickaloon River, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, grizzly bear .38 revolver, 158 grn bullet. Page 95-105, "Narrow Escapes", Ben East, first published by Outdoor Life, 1960.

After 35 days of backpacking in pursuit of moose photos, Cecil Rhodes was confronted by a big grizzly at 11 feet. He shot the bear deliberately off-center in the head with the .38, fearing the bullet would glance off the skull, and it "slumped", but did not go down. The bear retreated, he heard cubs and knew the bear was a sow.

The bear came back and paused at 20 feet away. He shot her in the head again. She "slumped" again, then came slowly past him at about 15 feet. He had a clear shot at the side

of her head but decided not to fire. She acted as if she did not notice him. After she passed he heard the cubs again, and by squatting down was able to see there were three cubs.

He climbed a tree, and shot her a third time, between the shoulders at 25 yards. She rolled downhill. The next day, he trailed her in the snow for 2.5 miles but did not find her.

2. May, 2013, Missouri, Rodgersville, .38 revolver, ozaksfirst.com, black bear

“The bear was being really aggressive and foaming at the mouth,” something a game warden told him happens when bears become angry. “At that point I shot the bear.”

The bear was hit three times in the chest and then ran away, climbed up a tree, and the fire department had to cut the limbs to get him down. The bear eventually died.

(skip)

“I brought a 38 pistol to scare it more than anything.”

When it fought back and became aggressive, he knew he had to take action, “it was self defense.” Since the incident he’s gotten angry emails.

3. 6 September, 2015, New Mexico: Failure, .38 revolver Ocate, black bear

The hunter received bite injuries to his foot through his boot as he climbed a tree to try to escape the bear. He was taken to Alta Vista Hospital in Las Vegas, N.M., where he was treated and released.

(snip)

In Thursday’s attack, the hunter told officials he was eating lunch under a tree when he spotted the bear and her cub in a watering hole. He took photographs and started shooting video of the animals when the mother bear got angry and charged. The hunter, who officials did not identify, climbed the tree to escape.

At one point, the hunter fell 15 feet from the tree and then managed to climb back up.

He fired his pistol into the air and at the female bear in attempt to scare it, but the animal didn't leave. He then radioed for help. His guide told officers he found the hunter clinging to the tree nearly 50 feet from the ground.

Investigating officers did not find any blood at the scene. Two bullets were recovered at the base of the tree. I interviewed Clint Henson, one of the investigating officers. In the official report, obtained by a public information request, the revolver was identified as a .38. Only five shots were recorded. The revolver was placed in the archery hunter's pocket, so it was likely a 2" barreled 5-shot revolver.

One warning shot was fired in the air as the bear approached. The bear continued to advance, so the defender put the pistol in his pocket and climbed the tree. The bear came up the tree and bit him in the foot. He fired four more times at the bear as it climbed the tree toward him. Two of the times, the bear backed down the tree. He continued to yell at the bear, and it eventually left with the cub.

We have found eight cases where .357 magnum revolvers were used to defend against bears. Seven were successful, one was unsuccessful.

1. September of 1956 or 1957 Highland Valley, Geologist Alex Burton, Highland Valley, British Columbia, .357magnum Colt revolver, Black Bear.

I interviewed Alex Burton. The details of his cases are at the link on Ammoland.

When Alex arrived at the scene, the Cook had gone back to the dump. Alex had to retrieve his 357 Colt revolver, unlock the box it was in, retrieve ammunition from another box, and load it. While he was doing this, the Cook came running back from the dump, with the bear chasing him. Alex shot the bear from about 100 feet away. The bear ran into the dense woods. Alex was obligated to follow it up, and, fortunately, found it dead a short ways into the woods.

2. Addition 15 September, 1985, near Healy, Alaska Ruger single action .357 magnum, grizzly, Ben Moore: Bear Attacks of the Century: True Stories of Courage and Survival P. 23-24

The shots were slightly delayed because the revolver was a single action

The bear charged him. His first shot was from about 5 feet, into the chest. The bear grabbed him by the leg and threw him, then picked him up again. Ben missed a shot, then managed to get a shot into the bear's stomach. The bear dropped him, then grabbed him by the head, shook him, and dropped him again. He shoved the pistol and both hands into the bear's mouth, and fired.

The bear moved back, shook its head, took a swipe at Ben with its paw, leaving a sliver of claw through Ben's thumb.

Then it walked off. The attack was finished.

Ben required reconstructive surgery for his face, but fully recovered.

3. Addition August, 1986, Tsiu River south of Cordova, Alaska, .357 magnum revolvers, grizzly bear

A group of seven people on a fishing trip, with a guide and a cook, had to deal with an increasingly aggressive grizzly over several days. The group included Bob and Marietta Herron and their friend, Bill. They kept a watch at night, and repeatedly drove off the bear with warning shots. About 1 am on the fourth day, the bear ignored warning shots and came within 15 yards of the group. During more warning shots, the guide's .30-06 rifle misfired, and one member fired at the bear, with his .357. The bear moved off. After the sun came up, the group found the bear, dead, with two .357 slugs in it. Page 312-313 Safe with Bears.

4. 26 June, 1987, Montana: Grizzly Bear Killed After Biting Warden in Montana Forest .357 magnum

[Pictures at Field and Stream Article here](#)

"I wouldn't want to have another go-round," the 60-year-warden, Lou Kis, said from his hospital bed after undergoing surgery for the bite, which was so powerful that it broke the leg bone below the knee.

Mr. Kris, a warden captain here for 22 years, killed the 400- to 500-pound bear with six shots from his .357 caliber Magnum revolver as it bit him.

5. June or July, 1991, Ontario, Canada, Garden Lake, black bear, .357 magnum (Colt Python) Mentioned in Comments on Ammoland.

I interviewed George Scott in 2019.

Government geologist George Scott had an ATC (Authority to Carry) while in the performance of official duties. A black bear raided coolers and ate steaks and pork chops, punctured all coke cans. The next morning, it was foggy and Scott went out fishing, leaving his Colt Python Stainless steel revolver in the holster, loaded, in the cabin. He heard gunshots and returned to the cabin. His partner had fired at the bear, but had missed. The next morning, approached the outhouse with toilet paper in one hand and the Python in the other. The bear came out from behind the outhouse when he was 20 feet away. He fired one shot, and the bear ran 40 feet and expired.

6. Addition July, 1992, near the town of Central, Alaska, Grizzly, .357 revolver.

A 600 lb grizzly breaks into a mining claim trailer. 14-year-old Clint Reynolds shoots the bear seven times with a .357 revolver. The bear leaves the trailer via a window. There were three shots to the chest of the bear with the .357. The bear died outside the trailer. Anchorage Daily News, as reported by Craig Medred, J-8, 1992 as reported in Safe with Bears, page 314.

7. June 20, 2010, Alaska: Geologist Pistol Defense failure Grizzly Bear, .357 Magnum

Miller managed to pull out his .357 Magnum revolver and squeeze off a shot, possibly grazing the animal. Then he fell onto his stomach, dug his face into the dirt and covered his neck.

The bear went for his exposed right arm, gnawing and clawing it and chipping the bone off the tip of his elbow. The attack lasted 10 to 15 seconds, then the animal lumbered away.

As Miller rolled over and was getting to his knees, the bear, only about 40 yards away, came at him again.

He managed to fire two more shots, but with his right arm badly injured he thinks he missed the bear. Then he lay still as the animal gnawed and clawed at him.

After the second attack, Miller played dead again, lying still for three to five minutes. He tried to move and realized he couldn't. He was too badly injured.

"I was just hoping my radio was still in my vest pocket and it was," he said. "I got it out and started radioing mayday, which nobody answered."

8. 26 July, 2014, Montana: Glacier National Park: Bear first sprayed, then shot with a .357, grizzly bear

Murphy first sprayed bear spray at the bear when it was 15 to 25 feet away, firing one shot from his .357 revolver when the bear had approached to within 7-10 feet. The bear was charging uphill at the time. He only fired one round at the bear, which fell back and stopped moving when shot. Many have suggested that he should have continued firing, but it is hard to argue with success.

We have found four cases where .40 caliber pistols were used to defend against bears. All were successful.

1. 2 June, 2006, Alaska: Black Bear broke into Anchorage home, AK Glock .40

A large black bear broke into an Anchorage home early this morning, rummaged around like a burglar and feasted on a box of chocolates before the homeowner shot him dead with a Glock.

(snip)

Knowlton said the bear started back up the stairs toward his son. He shot the animal multiple times and it went back downstairs.

2. 23 September, 2008 .40 caliber Black bear bit deputy in Morrow County Ohio, near Gilead. 500 lb Black Bear.

MOUNT GILEAD, Ohio, Sept. 23 (UPI) — Authorities in Morrow County, Ohio, said a deputy shot and killed a 500-pound black bear that had bit him on the leg.

Another mention, Deputy Stuart Mattix the deputy.

One of his deputies was bitten on the leg by an escaped bear in September. Deputy Stuart Mattix shot and killed a nearly 500-pound black bear that had been kept at a home on County Road 24, just south of Mount Gilead.

email from Sgt Lance Plough/964 Morrow County Sheriff's Office

Deputy Mattix is the one who shot the bear while it was biting his leg. He was carrying a Glock 23 .40 caliber with Winchester Ranger hollow points. He shot 9 rounds which were mainly to the bears head and neck. A few of the rounds glanced off the head. This particular incident took place early afternoon.

3. 20 October, 2011, Ohio: Zanesville, escaped bear, duty pistol, .40 caliber (from Muskingum County Sheriff's Office)

But soon, he was facing another, much larger, problem. His commanding officer told him a lion had been cornered back at the Thompson home. He headed back, but instead of finding a lion, he was confronted by an angry bear.

"The black bear turned in my direction and ran directly towards me," Merry told ABC News. "I fortunately was able to pull my duty pistol, fired one shot, killing the animal instantly. The black bear fell approximately fell seven feet in front of me."

(snip)

Fred Polk watched in disbelief as he watched the bear charge Merry and a lion leap over a fence into his yard about 5 p.m. Tuesday night.

“One of the bears charged the deputy and the deputy shot it. After that one of the lions jumped the fence come down here and the deputy shot it in my front yard,” Polk said.

4. May 13, 2017, New Hampshire: Bristol, Officer shoots, kills Aggressive Black Bear with .40 cal Glock

Police Chief Michael Lewis said Thursday that, on May 13 at 12:25 a.m., officer Thomas Seager responded to a 911 call from a resident on Riverdale Road about a bear breaking into a garage.

When the bear advanced toward Seager, he fired a “scare” shot, causing the bear to leave the area, Lewis said.

Seager reported the incident to the state’s Fish and Game Department but, nine minutes later, the property owner called to say the bear was back and up in a tree.

The second time the officer responded, the bear came down out of the tree and advanced on Seager again, according to Lewis.

“One round was fired, terminating the bear,” Lewis said.

The animal was killed with the officer’s .40-caliber Glock handgun.

We have found three cases where a 10 mm pistol was used to defend against bears. Both were successful.

1. 29 July, 2016, Alaska: Kim Woodman Kills Charging Grizzly with 10 mm

*On 29 July, 2016, about 4 p.m. **Kim Woodman was attacked by a sow brown bear at Humpy Creek.***

Kim had a Glock model 20 10 mm pistol with him. He was able to stop the attack by shooting the bear as it charged at him. While backing away from the charging bear, Kim tripped and fell backward. He instinctively attempted to fend off the bear with his foot, while he concentrated on firing the shots that saved his life. The last shot was just short of contact. It probably hit the bear in the chest, but also took off the tip of one of Kim's toes.

2. 25 July, 2018, New Mexico: Man stops New Mexico bear attack with 10mm Glock 20

Bridger Petrini is attacked by a near 400 lb cinnamon black bear. He kills the bear with his Glock 20 10mm during an extended fight. I interviewed Bridger. The case is detailed at the link.

3. Addition 18 September, 2018 Alaska, 10mm Grizzly Bear Pictures Defense on Archery Moose Hunt, Anthony Reyna Relates story, "Jimmy" is the shooter.

At this point we haven't spotted the moose yet but has seen the crows kick up, and less then a second after that you hear the roar, from our 12 o clock, and boom freaking 7 1/2 foot brown bear yards 10 yds away and full charge, my buddy Jimmy who was leading yells ever so calmly "Oh fuck bear" draws his Glock 20 and without hesitation drives two bullets into the charging bore at roughly 10 feet from him. One to the head, one to the chest "Perfect." At this point, and it being so fast it's hard to comprehend what had just happened.

Immediately afterward I call fish and game, and report that we had to drop a brownie by self defense and nobody is injured, while on the phone my friend Ron had located my moose. Completely buried, ear ripped off, stomach and genitals ripped open. But from what we could tell all meat looked salvageable.

200 grn HSN Bear loads 200 grains round nose flat point, hard cast, 1041 fps.

We have found two cases where .41 magnum revolvers were used to defend against bears. Both were successful.

1. last week of June, 2003, Montana: Grizzly Bear attacked, man mauled, used .41 Mag

to stop second attack

Bozeman daily Chronicle

Then the bear attacked again, he said, moving incredibly fast, and that's when Johnson, still on his back, reached for the pistol he wore in a holster on his belt.

"I had my hand by my side," he said. "I pulled the gun and went boom. Tell me how fast that is."

The bullet struck the bear just below the snout and it collapsed immediately and almost landed on him, he said. Then he rose to his feet and put three more 240-grain slugs in it.

2. 19 July, 2009, Wyoming: Clark, .41 Magnum, Grizzly

Jerry Ruth saw the grizzly for just a fraction of a second before it was on him.

Within seconds, the 275-pound animal had crushed the Wyoming man's jaw when it bit him in the face, fractured his rib and punctured his lung and left deep bite wounds in his calf and scratches across his back.

After the attack, the bear left him for her three cubs that Ruth saw for the first time as he lay bleeding on the dirt. When it reached the cubs about 15 yards away, the bear turned toward him again, "squaring off" as if to charge, Ruth recalled Friday.

Ruth grabbed for the .41-caliber magnum revolver he was carrying in a hip holster and relied on his training and experience as a police officer to save his life. He fired three times, saving three bullets in case his first shots failed.

But the bear dropped and didn't move, ending the furious encounter as swiftly as it started.

We have found one case, which was successful, where a .44-40 Ruger revolver was used to defend against a bear.

1. 16 July, 2002, Seneca Lake, San Carlos Indian Reservation, Arizona, .44-40 Ruger Vaquero, black bear.

My name is Rod Black. Last month I was fishing with my brother at Seneca Lake Arizona, on the San Carlos Indian Reservation. Just after midnight on the 16th of July, 2002, a bear wandered into my camp and attacked me while I slept. He clawed my head open, severing a small artery, and bit me on the back before throwing me off my cot onto the ground.

I found myself on the dirt, in the dark, with blood gushing and literally squirting from my wounds. I was in a state of absolute panic and horror. I had a Ruger Vaquero by my cot, but in the chaos and confusion I could locate neither the revolver nor my glasses, and could see or hear nothing. I was paralyzed by fear and terrified that the bear would come back from out of the darkness and resume his attack on me at any moment.

After what seemed like an eternity, but was perhaps less than a minute, my brother could see the dark form of the bear moving and began to scream. I realized that we were going to die if I didn't come to my senses, and I fell to the ground and located my shooter in the dirt. I asked my brother to try to make it to the pickup and turn on the lights. (He could not find the flashlight, as the bear had knocked it on the ground before the attack.) Without my glasses and in such darkness, I was nearly blind.

After repeatedly asking my brother to go, he somehow made it to the truck and turned on the lights. (Later, I realized that by asking my brother to go into the dark to turn on the lights, I might have sent him to his death – that will haunt me forever.)

The lights came on and revealed my worst nightmare: Not three to four feet away and looking straight at me was the bear. The bogeyman. The thing that goes bump in the dark. This thing had come to kill me and eat my flesh that night... and I knew it.

When he turned for an instant to look at the light, I wiped the blood from my eyes and fired my first shot from the caliber .44-40 Vaquero. I was painfully aware that if my first round was not a good one, I may not have a chance for another. In all my life, I will never forget the sound of the blast or the acrid smell of the gunpowder. The bear was knocked from his feet and hit the ground hard. He thrashed about while I fired again

and again – and cursed him while I did – until I was hammering on empty cartridges.

Article from The Blue Press November 2002 Issue #125.

We have found twenty-eight (updated 8 March 2020) cases where .44 magnum revolvers were used to defend against bears. All were successful.

1. late 1960s, Alaska: From More Alaskan Bear Tales Page 270, .44 magnum, Alaska Magazine, January, 1980 black bear

The bear started to enter his shed. He took an aggressive stance and told her to get out. The bear showed no signs of leaving, so he stomped on the floor toward her. . Vic said, " Her front bows moved like black lightning... the staccato of her claws rebounding off the door and frame.... The speed at which she could move was frightening. She was too fast for me to see the movement."

She ground her teeth, and in a blur she came for him. He popped a cap and dropped the bear. What would have happened had Vic not had a pistol?

2. Spring of 1969, Alaska: Grizzly killed in self-defense by "Dolly" Walker

Spring of 1969 as detailed in [Year of the Bear](#). Nizina Valley east of McCarthy in Alaska. Shot by Beverly "Dolly" Walker. Picture of Dolly with bear that attacked her. She is holding the Smith & Wesson .44 magnum she used to defend herself at the Alaskan homestead.

3. Fall, 1970, Alaska: From More Alaskan Bear Tales Page 269 grizzly

In the fall of 1970, Al and his hunting partner Ron Trumblee had gone waterfowl hunting with their shotguns. Knowing there were bears in the area, they packed their .44-magnum handguns as defense against a possible bear attack.

The men heard brush breaking nearby and were soon face-to-face with an angry mother brownie. As she charged, Albert leveled his pistol and fired. He said, "She shook her head and kept coming. When she was about ten feet away, Ron drew and

fired his pistol from the hip and the bear fell dead four feet in front of me.” Alaska Magazine, September 1971.

4. 1978-79, summer, Cootenays Mountains, British Columbia, Grizzly Bear, .44 magnum, Alex Burton

I interviewed Alex Burton. The details of his cases are at the link on Ammoland.

Alex rounded a turn in the trail he was on to see a grizzly bear only 25 feet away. Alex drew his revolver as the bear stood up and roared. The bear dropped down and started running toward him. Alex fired a shot into the ground in front of it. The bear stopped, turned around, and walked away. Alex reloaded his revolver to ensure he had a full six rounds available and gave the bear a chance to put some distance between them. After a few minutes, Alex continued down the path.

5. 1978-79, summer, Cootenays Mountains, British Columbia, Black Bear, .44 magnum Alex Burton

About 15 minutes later, Alex heard crashing in the brush and woods above the path. He thought he had crowded the grizzly bear by following too closely, and wished he had waited a more extended period. It wasn't the grizzly. It was a black bear sow with cubs. The cubs were some distance off and above the trail. The bear ran between the cubs and a bank above the trail. Alex fired a shot in front of the sow as it approached the bank. That was sufficient. The sow turned around and took off with her cubs.

6. Addition 29 July, 1994, Moose International Airport Camp, 70 miles southeast of Cordova, Alaska, Grizzly, .44 Magnum page 127, Ellie Florance, Some Bears Kill, Larry Kanuit.

The bear, a three year old female, broke into Elconora's tent. She was able to access a .44 mag, but was unwilling to fire. Mike Herder, a commercial fisherman was awakened by Elconora's screams. He came running, and fired a shot with his .44 magnum over the bear. It started to move away, then began to return. Mike shot it in the chest, causing it to run off. Mike followed it, and picked up a 12 gauge shotgun from the office. When the bear turned again, Mike finished it off.

7. 28 July, 1996, Arizona: .44 Magnum used to stop black bear attack, AZ Republic, page 39 -Newspapers.com,

Comprehensive article from Gun Watch published in 2017

Jul 28, 1996 The 16-year-old counselor, Anna – *Knochel*, was in critical condition. Brett Kramer drove away the 340-pound male bear by shooting it twice with a .44 Magnum pistol.

8. July-August 2000, Dawson City, Yukon, Geologist with Authority to Carry, Black Bear, .44 Magnum

I interviewed Alex Burton. The details of his cases are at the link on Ammoland.

Alex was setting up a tent to be used in the exploration. Other members of the team were sent ahead to clear a trail for smaller vehicles. While encumbered with the tent and ropes, in the process of finishing setting up the tent, he saw a black bear stalking him, low to the ground, about 20 feet away. Alex was in a tent. He said if he had been armed with a rifle or shotgun, he would have left it hanging at the entrance to the tent. He drew his pistol and shot the bear when it was only 5-6 feet from him. The bear was knocked down, then jumped up and climbed a large aspen tree, where it died.

Upon examination, the bear was old and in poor condition. It was thin, its teeth were black and broken.

9. July-August 2000, Dawson City, Yukon, Geologist with Authority to Carry, Black Bear, .44 Magnum

A month later, in another tent erected a short distance away. Alex found himself spending the night alone close to the location of the first shooting. He had disrobed and was in his sleeping bag next to the tent wall. His revolver and a light were laid nearby, easily available. In the middle of the night, he heard heavy breathing and felt a body press against him from the outside of the tent. He exited the sleeping bag, naked, accessed his revolver and light, and crept to the tent entrance. Upon exiting, he saw a black bear at the corner of the tent, less than 10 feet away. The bear sat

down, as a dog sits, facing Alex. Alex admonished the bear not to disturb his sleep. The bear started to move toward Alex, and he shot it with the S&W 629 .44 magnum. The bear was knocked down, then ran off. It was found, dead, the next morning.

10. Addition July, 2002, Alaska, Mantakusa River Cabin 100 miles east of Anchorage, Alaska, Brent Hughes, .44 magnum S&W, black bear. Page 160-161 of Safe with Bears, by Larry Kanuit 2018

Brent had several encounters with bears at the remote location. One bear viewed him as prey, and would not leave. He was forced to kill the bear with a shot from the .44 magnum S&W model 29.

11. Addition 2003 Alaska published 1 June, 2003, Black bears, .44 magnum in Anchorage Daily News, republished [here](#), also mentioned in Safe with Bears, page 182.

The first warning shot sent one bear scurrying several feet up a tree, Leslie said, but the others appeared unfazed. They just kept watching him.

“There were not scared of me one bit,” he said. “I had the wind at my back. I was making all kinds of noise. They knew it was me. I thought I was going to be dinner.”

The bear that had gone up the tree climbed down. Then all three started advancing on Leslie again.

“They didn’t make a sound,” he said. “They just started walking right at me. There was no huffing, no snapping of jaws, no bluff charges. They just kept walking at me, and I kept slowly backing down the trail.”

When the bears got inside of 100 feet, Leslie fired another warning shot with his handgun.

This time, he said, one bear jumped off the side of the trail, and a few moments later the others seemed to take that as their sign to leave.

12. 24 September, 2004, Alaska: Muldoon, Hiker Kills Charging Brown Bear from 20 feet with .44 Magnum,

Original story from Anchorage Daily News

"I fired the first shot, and I aimed at its shoulders. When the first shot didn't faze it, I fired the second time, and it turned into the ditch, and I shot three more times, and it went down," said Boyd.

Boyd was down to one remaining bullet in his .44-caliber Magnum when he called Anchorage police for assistance. State trooper Kim Babcock helped Boyd finish off the bear with her shotgun.

13. Addition, July, 2005, Russel Gillespie, Seward, Alaska, as emailed to Larry Kanuit on 22 May, 2007.

Two bears charging emerged from the brush at 25-30 feet near the side of the trail, roaring and moving fast at Russel and his dog, Thelma. He fired two warning shots, one in front of each bear. One bear stopped, the other continued charging. He fired three more shots at the charging bear, stopping the charge at 15 feet. He fired one more shot into the lungs of the downed bear, which rendered his revolver empty. Page 314 Safe with Bears.

14. 7 September, 2006, Alaska: Grizzly attacked Moose Hunters, Alaska, .44 magnum, The Longest Minute

When Reed distracted the bear from its attack on me, I had time to concentrate on the holster. I saw a buckle with a strap running through it. I could not figure out how it held the gun in place, so I grabbed the buckle and attempted to rip it off. To my surprise, the buckle was actually a snap and the strap peeled away. As I pulled the revolver out, a sudden calm came over me, and I knew everything would be fine. I looked in the direction of Reed only to once again see the bear charging at me. He was about ten feet away coming up and over the initial log that I had tripped over.

That was when I pointed the revolver and fired at center mass. The .44 magnum boomed in the night and the boar fell straight down, his head three feet away from where I stood. As he fell, he bit at the ground and ended up with a mouthful of sod. I stood in a dumbfounded stupor. I had no expectation that the pistol would kill the bear. My hope was that the shot would sting the bear and help scare him away along with the flame and loud report. As his head sagged to the ground, I shot him three more times in quick succession, out of fear and anger.

15. 17 September, 2007, Wyoming: Flying H Ranch, Bowhunters Attacked by 600 lb Grizzly, Stopped Charge with .44 Magnum

Byrum started to pull his .44 Magnum pistol out of his holster. After bumping into Byrum, Hambelton dove to the ground and curled into a ball, with his backpack facing the bear.

"I just gritted my teeth expecting the bear to bite me," Hambelton said.

With the bear closing to within six feet, Byrum fired a shot into the bear's neck.

"I kept telling myself, don't shoot in the head," said Byrum, fearful that a bullet to the head would glance off the bear's skull.

As the pistol fired, Byrum tripped over a tree stump behind him. With Byrum on his back, the bear fell in front of his hunting boots.

"I thought, 'Oh no, this is going to be bad,'" said Byrum, who could see smoke coming out of the bear's fur where he had shot him.

16. October 6, 2007, Montana: From bozemandailychronicle.com: (Tom Miner Basin), .44 Magnum grizzly

It attacked a pair of bow hunters early Saturday afternoon. One of them used bear pepper spray and halted a charge within nine feet, but the grizzly turned and charged a second time. That's when the second hunter shot it twice with a .44 magnum pistol.

17. 2009 Nevada City Nevada, .44 magnum, black bear,

Reported by Nevada Bear Biologist Carl Lackey

Lackey said one resident reported shooting the bear right between the eyes with a .44 Magnum after the hungry giant lifted a sliding-glass door off the tracks and started toward him. The bullet glanced off and sent the bear whirling around the kitchen, and a second shot prompted him to scramble out the back door, according to local newspaper accounts.

18. Addition 31 May, 2010, Eagle River, Alaska, .44 Magnum, Safe with Bears, p. 231.

When a grizzly bear charged Michael Weiman's wife, Marianne, and their dog, Mojabe, Michael heard the screams and rushed to her aid with a .44 magnum. Three warning shots into the ground near the bear drove it off sufficiently for the couple and dog to escape into their house.

Later the bear returned. Weiman then killed it with one shot from a .30-30 rifle.

19. June 2010, Canada, British Columbia: A Grizzly Bear, a .44 magnum, and a brush with death

He kept one hand on the tripod and drew the other to his holster, pulling out the gun he'd never had to use. The grizzly zigzagged toward him, roaring the whole time.

Mr. Lorenz lifted the gun and set it off, just four feet above her head. The shot was enough to startle the bear and make her turn in the opposite direction.

"This was something that she wasn't expecting, to get blasted in the face; that was enough to put a damper on killing me," he said. "If I didn't have the gun, I would have been dead."

20. 2010, Wyoming, Paint Creek, Shoshone National Forest, Bowhunter shot Charging Grizzly with .44 magnum

Paint Creek reenactment

A bow hunter reenacts for investigators how he fired a .44 Magnum revolver at a grizzly bear near Paint Creek in the Shoshone National Forest in 2010. Investigators followed a blood trail for half a mile, but could not locate the wounded bruin.

21. July 24, 2014, Alaska: Eagle River, 200 pound Brown Bear Sow, .44 Magnum Revolver

"This is not in an Anchorage subdivision," Battle said. "This is out in the big woods."

Battle said the sow attacked the man, who in turn fired at it three times with a .44 Magnum.

"The last time, I think, he got it through the lung," Battle said. "It ran back into the alders and he could hear it wheezing."

22. 19 March, 2015, Norway: Polar Bear attack stopped in Svalbard island, with .44 magnum handgun.

*On Thursday, 19 March, 2015, a woman with a .44 magnum stopped a polar bear from attacking Jakub Moravec, 37, in the Svalbard archipelago. Polar bear attacks are expected there, and tourists are not allowed unless **they carry a high powered firearm**. In this case, the rifles were left outside the tents, but inside the protective alarm wire. The armed woman, mother of Zuzanna Hakova, shot the bear three times with the revolver.*

23. 21 June 2015, Alaska: Details on Charging Kodiak stopped with a .44 Mag Revolver

The bear was roughly 9 feet tall and started its charge at about 20 yards away. The man shot the bear by the time it moved half that distance, Svoboda said.

"It all happened in really tight quarters," he said. "He shot at it five times before it finally stopped and then once it was on the ground, it was still moving. So he shot it one more time and then it died."

24. August 15, 2015, Wyoming: Grand Teton National Park: Fisherman fires warning shots with .44 Magnum, Deters Grizzly Bear Attack

According to the angler's report, he was fishing when he heard a noise behind him. He turned around to see three grizzly bears, one adult and two cubs, coming toward him. The adult bear stood on its hind legs, at which point the fisherman fired one shot into the ground to the side of the bear. The bears then turned around and departed the area. The fisherman noted that he was near the "worm hole" area of the Snake River located approximately three quarters of a mile downriver from the Jackson Lake Dam.

25. 31 August, 2015, Idaho: Bear Attacked Bow Hunter, Could not Reach Bear Spray, Drove off Bear with .44 Magnum pistol shots grizzly

The hunter reportedly was carrying bear spray, but apparently couldn't access it when the attack occurred. Fish and Game officials said the man was able to scare the bear off after he tried to shoot her several times with a .44 magnum revolver pistol at point-blank range.

The archer sustained injuries to his hand and wrist, but hiked out under his own power and was transported by ambulance to Madison County Hospital in Rexburg.

26. 7 August, 2016, Alaska: Successful Grizzly Bear Attack Defense with .44 Magnum

"We immediately found ourselves in a confrontation," Kluting said. "She ended up turning around and for a split second we thought she would leave – but then she turned back and came at us full charge."

Kluting fired off a warning shot into the creek. At that point the sow was 15 yards away.

"She ran through that without even flinching," he said.

So Kluting aimed in the middle of the brown blur, now about 3 yards away.

"I barely had time to get the hammer back for another shot before she reached me," he said.

She collapsed in the river about 5 feet – two steps – away from them.

27. 24 September, 2017 Montana: Father Uses .44 Magnum to Shoot Grizzly Bear off Son

Dave had closed to within six feet of Rory and the bear. Not wanting to hit Rory, hoping to get the bear to release his son, he shot the bear in the hip.

It worked. The bear dropped Rory and spun toward him. His next round was meant for the bear's shoulder. The situation was dynamic. The 240 grain slug went through the bears neck.

With the bear coming at him, the bear's mouth was within two feet of his .44 Taurus when he fired the last shot. The bullet went alongside the bear's head, into its neck, penetrating the chest cavity.

28. 24 September, 2018, Montana: Bow hunter used handgun to stop grizzly bear attack .44 Magnums

Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Director Dona Rutherford says the man killed the moose on Monday and was preparing to move the animal when he was attacked by the bear.

Rutherford says bow hunters are allowed to carry guns and the hunter shot the bear with a handgun.

Detailed article [From Rural Montana Magazine December, 2018](#)

We have found eight cases where .45 caliber pistols were used to defend against bears. All were successful.

1. Alaska: Skilak Lake, Kenai Peninsula, From More Alaskan Bear Tales page 271, Maurice Goff and Jack, detailed account without date.

Between bear raids, both men yelled and frantically sought the pistol (having forgotten the shotgun). Finally, Maurice found the pistol, pulled it from its holster and emptied the gun into the charging hulk.

The bear altered its course, and Maurice scrambled for a tree. He begged Jack to do likewise, but Jack refused to do so until he got his hands on the scattergun. Moments later Maurice felt the barrel of the shotgun and discovered Jack was on his way up the foot-thick cottonwood.

The next morning, the approximately 800 lb bear was found dead, about 1/2 mile away.

2. August 22, 2009, Montana: Grizzly shot with 9 rounds of .45 from a Glock 21 from gunnerforum.org reported

There was not much news coverage of my friends incident up on his place in Marias pass area here in Montana. The proper agencies investigated and found him to have defended himself against this 400 lbs sow grizzly with 2 cubs.

*Roy was up on the edge of his property tending his fence line, when out of the brush she was a coming straight at him with her ears back. Roy drew and put 3 **rounds** of 230-gr FMJ in her neck shoulder area, then took off away from the trail about 5 yards. Roy said the bear was still coming at him, and he fired 3 more **rounds** into her frontal area. And again took off another 5 yards off in another direction. The sow continued to follow coming at him, so Roy fired 3 more rounds into her frontal area and she dropped taking a dirt nap.*

*Roy called to report the incident, and they came out and brought a metal detector to locate spent extracted shell casings. Roy was found acting within his right to protect himself against the grizzly bear **attack**. But they said, they wished he would have used Counter Assault Bear Spray. Roy did not have any, so they gave him a can, plus some 12 ga cracker shells, and some other **12 ga shells** will rubber bullets in them.*

*Roy came into town and purchased a Glock 20 10mm auto now.
I'm glad Roy is okay.*

3. May 28, 2010, Alaska: Denali National Park: Backpacker Stops Grizzly attack with .45 pistol

*A grizzly bear that emerged from a thicket and charged two backpackers in the backcountry of **Denali National Park and Preserve** was shot and killed by one of the two who was carrying a .45-caliber semi-automatic pistol, according to park officials.*

The killing Friday is believed to be the first instance of a hiker killing a grizzly in the park's wilderness. The killing occurred in the original Mount McKinley National Park portion of the Denali, which was expanded by two-thirds in 1980.

4. 2 July, 2010, California, Yellow Jacket Campground .45 ktvn.comh black bear

Officials say the camper woke up to hear the bear going through an ice chest. He confronted the animal, and it charged and scratched the man's face.

The man shot the bear, but it got away.

Wildlife rangers tracked the bear down and killed it late Friday.

Department of Fish & Game leading the investigation attack at 2 a.m.

From pirate4x4 quote:

The man went out with a gun and tried to shoo the bear away, Macintyre said. The bear charged the man, knocking him to the ground and scratching his face.

The bear left with food, Macintyre said. The man tried to shoo it away again, but the bear charged and knocked him down again.

Macintyre said the man then fired a shot from a .45-caliber pistol, and the animal ran away.

5. 7 July, 2014, Alaska: .45 vs 9-Foot Brown Bear, .45 semi-auto

Many people claim that handguns are useless for protection against bears. Numerous examples have shown that this is a false notion. Handguns may not be ideal as defensive weapons for bears, but they can be effective. In a defensive situation, you have to use what is available. In this case, a homeowner in Alaska used a .45 against a brown bear that was trying to get into his house on July 7th of this year. He and his son were in the home. He had scared off the animal with some warning shots just three hours before.

6. 6 September, 2015, Colorado, Winter Park .45 handgun (Mike Porras) cbslocal.com and Mike Porras CO Fish and Game, black bear

According to Mike Porras with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the bear came into the family's campground while they were present and went after some food that was out.

An armed adult attempted to scare the bear by firing two shots but the bear didn't show any fear and wouldn't leave. The camper then shot and killed the bear and immediately reported the shooting to wildlife officers.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife has determined the shooting was justified and no charges or citations will be brought against the camper.

7. 25 June, 2019, Washington State, Petit Lake, .45, Glock 21 black bear

U.S.A. --(Ammoland.com)- On 25 June 2019, a black bear charged a man, chased his dog, then pursued him up a tree until he shot and killed it with a pistol. The attack occurred in Pend Oreille County, Washington State, near Petit lake. The defender fired a shot in an attempt to scare the bear away, but that did not work.

8. Addition 7 November 2019, Gatlinburg Tennessee, .45 ACP, Gregg Sapp, black bear at Motel 6

He turned around, and looked. There, no more than 20 feet away, its feet on a tipped over trash can, was a huge black bear. The bear did not notice him immediately.

But Greg's dog had come out, and peaked around the corner. It growled and emitted

a bark, Grrrr..ru..ruff! The bear jumped over the downed trash can, landed with a Woof!, and charged directly at Greg.

*Everything happened extremely fast, but Greg had moved into the psychological **state of tachypsychia**, where everything seems to slow down. This is a common effect when a human perceives a deadly threat. The effect also distorts distance, and can cause tunnel vision, focused on the threat.*

*Greg said: Oh f*ck! The .45 Kimber appeared in his hand and he was firing, with the bear taking up his whole field of vision. Greg told me:*

“Everything went into like, time lapse.” “It seemed like it took forever!”

In Greg’s heightened state of awareness, he could hear the first three bullets hit.

Thunk, thunk, thunk.

Then his ears were ringing. The bear dropped its head down as he fired the last three shots at extremely close range, Greg said it was three feet or less

The bear hit the railing of the walkway two feet from him, turned left, and went down the walkway away from Greg, who had the empty Kimber in his hand.

We found that one of the previous .45 cases was done with a .45 Colt/.410 revolver, the Taurus Judge.

1. October, 2015, Idaho: Bear Attack on Sleeping Man Stopped with a .45 Colt/.410 revolver, black bear

Steven Vouch reached for his gun when he realized he was being attacked, but it wasn’t there. That is when his friend shot the bear with a .45. Vouch is on the left in the Cowboy hat.

More extensive account in Field and Stream [Here](#). The pistol was a Taurus Judge

I yelled and started reaching for my pistol, but the bear had shoved it out of reach while rummaging around. But then Bobby woke up and saw him standing over me and grabbed his Judge revolver. He lifted the tarp to see and then, sticking the gun right above my head, shot the bear in the face from, like, a foot away.

We have found one case where .45 Super pistol was used to defend against a bear. It was successful.

1. 6 Oct. 2017, Wyoming: .45 Super Stops Grizzly Bear Charge

The hunters jumped up and separated. The bear momentarily halted. Kelley fired a warning shot from his .45 Super. The bear moved away a little, behind some fire killed trees and brush, then came in again, fast. Kelly fired again, and the bear went down, rolled down slope and came to a halt, motionless.

We have found three cases where .454 Casull revolver was used to defend against a bear. They were successful.

1. About 1993, Alaska, Kenai peninsula, .454 Casull, Craig Medred Grizzly Field & Stream February, 2003 Letters. (numerous mentions in Medred's columns)

And here I thought the Kenai Peninsula brownie I shot off my foot with a .454 Casull about 10 years ago got the worst of it.

2. Addition 30 December 2007, Kodiak Island, Alaska, brown bear, .454 Casull revolver.

A rabbit hunter had a .22 rifle for rabbits and a .454 Casull revolver for bear protection. The bear got up near him. The sow kept coming toward him, even after he fired shots in the air with the .22 rifle. He shouted and waved his arms and drew the pistol. The sow kept coming. He shot her and 15 yards. Safe with Bears, page 324.

Additional source,

From seattletimes.com:

ANCHORAGE — A rabbit hunter fired his pistol at a charging grizzly bear on Kodiak Island, badly wounding the old sow, which was later killed, as were her three cubs.

The hunter, whose name is not being released, was hunting rabbits near the American River on Friday about 15 miles outside Kodiak when the sow charged him, said John Crye, a wildlife biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, on Monday.

The hunter, who was carrying two weapons, shot the bear when it was about 10 yards away. It was the second time in a week that hunters had encountered the family of bears. The last time it was one of the cubs that charged a father and son out duck hunting as the mother and the other cubs slept nearby.

3. 2 August, 2009, Alaska: Kenai Peninsula, Charging Brown Bear Stopped with Ruger .454 Casull,

Because of many bear-related incidents in this area, Brush always has brown bears on his mind...even when walking a well-maintained road. On just such a road, less than 500 yards from his house, Brush stopped when he heard a twig snap behind him. Turning his head toward the sound, Brush saw a monstrous brown bear charging toward him. "There was no warning," he stresses. "None of the classic teeth-popping or woofing, raising up on hind legs, or bluff-charging that you read about. When I spotted him he was within 15 yards, his head down and his ears pinned back. He was coming like a freight train...in total chase-mode."

Brush instinctively back-pedaled to avoid the charge, drawing the Ruger from its holster. "I fired from the hip as he closed the distance," Brush recalls. "I know I missed the first shot, but I clearly hit him after that. I believe I fired four or five shots. "

Brush finally fell on his back on the edge of the road. Miraculously, the bear collapsed a mere five feet from his boot soles, leaving claw marks in the road where Brush had—only seconds before—been standing. The bear was moaning, his huge head still moving, as Brush aimed the Ruger to fire a finishing shot. "By then my gun had jammed," Greg says. "I frantically called my wife on my cell phone and told her to bring a rifle. When she arrived I finished the bear."

We have found one case where a .460 Smith & Wesson magnum was used successfully.

1. May 18, 2018, Wyoming: Cora, 460 Smith & Wesson magnum Grizzly.

The two men with bear spray had fallen 50 yards behind. The dog alerted on something. Noah thought it was some sort of big animal. Then he saw the bears, a grizzly sow and cubs, uphill. He yelled at the dog, but it was too late. The dog came running back. The sow grizzly charged, moving extremely fast. His friend from Chicago bolted back down the trail. Noah had his revolver out, as the bear came to a stop, just a dozen feet away

We have found thirteen cases where the handguns used to defend against bears were not identified. All were successful.

1. 2 August, 2005, Maine, Rangeley, Unknown pistol, black bear policeone.com

On Saturday night, a bear wandered into town and wouldn't leave, even after Officer Brian Hughes tried to scare it away by clapping his hands and firing his gun into the ground, Weymouth said. The bear then snarled and hissed before charging Hughes, who shot it with a handgun.

The animal ran off and was found dead the next day behind the town offices.

2. October 6, 2007, Montana: (Tom Miner Basin) and pistol defense of Roman Morris From mtstandard.com grizzly bear:

"It charged down the hill and just drilled me," said Morris, 21, of Whitewater.

Over the next 30 to 45 seconds, Morris fought with the bear as it bit and clawed, severed his left hamstring, punctured his shoulder, chomped at his head and tossed him around.

"I thought the whole time, This is so messed up. I'm going to die, I'm going to die," said Morris, a pre-med major.

The bear ran off after a friend fired a pistol. Morris underwent surgery at a Livingston hospital and was recuperating Monday at his brother's house in Helena.

3. Addition 26 September, 2009, Lake Mary, California, unknown caliber, black bear, from thesheetnews

California Dept. of Fish and Game Lt. Marty Markham told The Sheet the shooting occurred at approximately 5 p.m. on Forest Service land. Markham said the man was picnicking with others when a black bear approached.

The picnickers retreated to their car while the bear soon began feasting on their food left near the shoreline. An unidentified person managed to haze the bear away, but after the group returned to the picnic, the bear returned once more.

This time, the man, apparently concerned about several "items" at the scene, retrieved a "large caliber handgun" and fired a single shot from approximately 20 yards away, killing the bear.

This example is somewhat controversial. An **LA times article** has a quote saying the shooting was "unprovoked".

The bear drove the humans from their food and possessions. They then drove the bear back away from their possessions. The bear returned, continuing the threat. The bear was only 20 yards away. Bears that associate humans with food to this degree are inherently dangerous, as recognized by all authorities forced to deal with problem bears.

4. December, 2010, Alaska: Video of the event posted

Described as an archery float hunt in Alaska. Video posted in Dec. 2010. A revolver was used to stop a charge by a sow with three cubs. The muzzle blast and splash from the bullet stopped the charge from 8 feet out.



5. Addition, 6 September, 2011, Gravelly Mountains, Montana, Grizzly, unknown pistol

A sow grizzly bear was shot with a pistol and killed after an encounter with bow hunters in the Gravelly Mountains on Tuesday morning.

The two men who were hunting said the sow had charged them, said Ron Aasheim, spokesman for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The sow had two large cubs that were likely 2 years old.

6. Nov 2014, Massachusetts: Unknown Handgun, Defense against black bear

***WEST SPRINGFIELD** – A Sikes Avenue man **shot and killed a black bear** with single pistol-shot to the head Friday night after it started to go after his small dog, police said.*

7. October, 2015, Colorado, Rockrimmon, unknown pistol, kktv.com 550 pound black bear

But likely not an incident that will result in any charges: officials say that based on the investigation, the man who fired the weapon acted in self-defense.

According to CPW spokesperson Kyle Davidson, a man living in the Rockrimmon

area shot the bear after it broke into his backyard. The man told authorities that he tried to shoo it away by banging pots and pans and throwing things at it, but nothing worked.

That's when he said he grabbed his pistol.

"It was a very small backyard. The bear broke through his fence...the homeowner tried to scare the bear away, get the bear away from his house. When those efforts didn't work, he felt he needed to protect his home and his family at that point," CPW Wildlife Officer Steve Cooley explained.

Cooley said the homeowner fired at the bear once, fatally injuring it. After the shooting, the man called 911 and reported the incident.

8. Sept, 2016, Arizona: Bow Hunter Uses Handgun to Stop Unprovoked Bear Attack

PAYSON, AZ – Authorities found two bear cubs after an archery deer hunter fatally shot an adult female bear with a handgun when it charged him in the Payson area.

9. 14 December, 2016, California: Deputy Shot Aggressive black bear in Live Oak Canyon

The family exited their vehicle and were walking up the driveway when they rounded a corner of the home and saw three bears near trash cans. One of the bears began to charge at them, according to the release.

"Fearing for his life, and the lives of his children, the deputy fired several rounds from a handgun toward the bear," the release stated.

The apparently injured bear and the two other bears fled into the nearby brush.

10. 26 September 2018, Montana: bow hunter stopped attack by sow grizzly and nearly grown cub

A spokesman for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks told the Associated Press that the

bow hunter was in thick brush on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front when he came across the bears at the Blackleaf Wildlife Management Area.

The hunter shot both with a pistol. The adult female bear was killed and the 2-year-old cub was wounded and had to be put down. It was unclear what led up to the shooting

11. 27 May, 2019, Alaska, Turnagain Arm Trail, Pistol, caliber unknown, Black Bear

"Just coming straight at them with its head down, not phased by yelling, waving arms, or even the dogs barking at it. It just kept coming," Battle said. "Didn't have any vocalizations or anything that would indicate defensive behavior. And that's the kind of thing that concerns us with black bears."

The second report happened on Monday, closer to McHugh. Battle says in that case, hikers reported seeing a bear above them on a hill. It reportedly circled around and got close to their dog. One of the hikers fired a warning shot with a pistol, driving the bear off.

12. Addition 27 June, 2019, Colorado, Castle Pines. Unknown handgun, black bear

CPW investigators say the man shot the bear because he feared the sow was trying to get inside his home at around 1 a.m. They say the homeowner left the kitchen window open during the night and then heard a noise.

He walked to the kitchen and saw the sow standing on the other side of the window with her paws on the sill as if she was about to come inside. The homeowner got a handgun and shot at the bear from inside the kitchen in hopes of scaring it off.

The sow ended up running away, but the cubs stayed behind. That's when investigators say the homeowner reloaded with rubber buckshot and fired two rounds at the cubs.

Officers found the cubs in a tree near where their mother's body was found.

Very likely a .410/.45 Colt revolver because, this [from coloradocommunitymedia.com](https://www.coloradocommunitymedia.com/):

The resident got a handgun from a nearby room and fired at the bear, which ran off. The cubs remained in the backyard. The individual reloaded the gun with rubber buckshot and fired at the cubs to scare them off, fearing the mother would return if they stayed, the release says. The resident did not believe the pellets used to shoot the adult bear would kill it, only scare it. They told CPW they didn't realize the bear died until June 28 when they came home to find a news reporter in their driveway who was investigating the shooting.

13. Addition: September 24, 2019 Coal Creek Drainage, Montana, Grizzly bear, unknown caliber pistol

The elk hunter from Ohio, who's name hasn't been disclosed, told FWP wardens and Madison County Sheriff's Deputies he was walking through blow-down timber when a bear attacked from a very close range. He said he fired multiple shots with a pistol at the bear until it left and was able to meet up with other members of his hunting party.

He was treated at the Ruby Valley Medical Center in Sheridan, Montana. FWP wardens and U.S. Forest Service law enforcement notified other hunters and campers in the area and began searching for the bear.

Likely same event, 24 September, 2019, GYE bear mortality database, attack on Archery hunter close range at Coal Creek BDNF-MT

There were eleven cases where combined arms were used to defend against bears. The eight with both long guns and handguns are included in the interest of complete data reporting. They are not used in the calculation of the success rate. One black bear was hit with an automobile, then shot with a pistol. The two cases with both .357 and .44 magnum pistols are included in the 93 pistol cases. All eleven cases were successful.

1. 26 April, 1993, Alaska: combination 30-06 rifle and .44 magnum revolver.

Rifle jammed, pistol did not. **From dailymail.co.uk:**

The hunter, now very much the hunted, shot into the bear's body, but the grizzly continued to attack him, breaking Bagley's jaw.

I could feel bones popping and breaking in my head, but I didn't feel any pain

Dale Bagley, attack victim

It bit him again, crushing Bagley's cheekbones, ripping out his entire top row of teeth from his head, and puncturing behind his right eye. Another bite pulled away at the top of Bagley's skull, and wrenched his entire body upwards.

That gave Bagley just enough room to let off more shots, and mercifully, the bear ran off.

2. Addition August, 1999 10 miles inside Canadian border on Yukon River, .44 mag and 12 gauge combined defense. RC Harrop, page 210, Safe with bears.

A very aggressive grizzly charged multiple times, and refused to back off from threatening a group of 35 adults and students on an extended canoe trip. The group had set up camp on an Island. The bear charged the group, then altered his attention to Harrop after Harrop fired a warning shot. Harrop's efforts were hindered by the necessity of loading the single-action .44, which had been kept unloaded and locked up. During the attack and defense, Harrop had the hammer fall on an empty chamber two times.

After being hit, in short order, with three 300 grain slugs from a .44 magnum Ruger Blackhawk, and four 600 grain slugs from a 12 gauge, the bear retreated. RC Harrop did not report the use of the .44 revolver, because the group was in Canadian territory when the incident occurred.

3. Addition 11 May, 2003 published 14 May, 2003, Combination .44 magnum and .30-06 Kenai Peninsula Anchorage Daily News as recorded in geocatching forum

Williams shoots a large cub with his .30-06, then dropped his rifle, but still had his .44

magnum to stop the sow from coming at him again.

Williams said he was trying to climb up the tree when the sow got to him.

“She grabs me and throws me down on the ground. She was on me,” Williams said. The bear gnawed and clawed at his hand, his arm, his legs and his face. He covered his neck and head with his hands.

Weaver fired a shot over the bear and it released Williams, who shouted at Weaver to keep shooting, that he was bit, Barto said.

The sow turned back toward Williams. He had dropped his rifle but now had his .44-caliber revolver out. He unloaded all six shots at the brown bear, which lumbered away.

4. Addition 9 October, 2003, Combination, Katmai National Park, Alaska, .40 caliber and 12 gauge shotguns. Timothy Treadwell and Amie Huguenard victims. Response by Park rangers. From Yellowstone-bearman.com:

Ranger Ellis was standing with ranger Gilliland and Willy Fulton to his left. Ranger Dalrymple was slightly ahead of Gilliland when Gilliland suddenly yells, Bear! while pointing to the right. Ranger Ellis states that he turned and “saw an adult bear moving toward the group about 20 feet away”. All four begin yelling in hopes that the bear would see them and move away. Ranger Ellis then states that he “perceived that the bear was well aware of their presence and was stalking them”. Ranger Ellis, armed with a 40 cal. handgun begins to fire at about the same time rangers Gilliland and Dalrymple, who were each armed with 12 gauge shotguns loaded with slugs also begin to shoot at the bear.

Ranger Ellis fires 11 times while rangers Gilliland and Dalrymple each fire 5 times, dropping the bear 12 feet away. “That was cutting it thin” stated Ellis. After about 10 seconds the bear dies and Willy Fulton then reportedly says “I want to look that bear in the eyes” and states that he is sure that this was the bear that chased him back to his plane earlier. (Ellis 2003, pg 3)

5. Addition 4 October, 2006 Combination, Afogak Island Alaska, Joe Monastra,.44 magnum and high powered rifle, injury to back. Grizzly Page 214-215 Safe with Bears.

Joe was answering a call of nature when he heard the bear coming. He dived forward with the rifle in hand and suffered only a claw wound to the back. The bear backed off a bit. Joe had scope covers on the rifle and fired from the hip. He emptied the rifle as the bear was running down the trail toward his partner, who encountered the bear running full at him. He fired six shots from a .44 magnum. The bear ran away, without evidence it had been hit. The incident was reported to the authorities.

6. 31 May, 2008, Oregon: Black Bear, wounded with .338 rifle; Glide, .45 pistol and .44 magnum revolver

GLIDE, Ore. — Aaron Wyckoff didn't start to panic until his .45-caliber pistol quit firing, and the bear kept chewing on his arm.

So, he recalls, he tried to pull the bear's jaws apart. Then he tried to roll down the ridge where he and the bear were wrestling. But the bear grabbed his calf, pulled him back and went for his groin.

Wyckoff said he countered by shoving his pistol and his hand into the bear's mouth. But by then, the struggle in the Cascade Range in Southern Oregon attracted the attention of Wyckoff's party, and other hunters rushed over.

Justin Norton fired a round from his .44-caliber pistol into the black bear's stomach, to no avail. He approached the bear, put the gun behind its ear and fired again. It finally rolled away.

"I walked right up to his head, and he didn't even look at me," said Norton, 26.

With the dying bear still struggling, a final round finished him off.

"He was dead. He just didn't know it," Wyckoff said. "It was just all adrenaline."

Wyckoff was helping friends track a wounded bear May 31 on the last day of the

hunting season.

Fifteen-year-old Chris Moen of Glide, who had drawn the tag, hit the animal in the shoulder with a .338-caliber rifle round, but he and his father couldn't pick up a trail of blood.

In this account, the pistol is revealed to be a Llama .45 with a 3.25 inch barrel. From shootersforum.com.

7. June 2010, Louisiana, Walker, Bear shot by officer with a .40 cal (9 mm?) after being hit by car. (combination)

A Walker Police Department officer arrived on the scene at Burgess Ave. near Tiffany St. around 11 p.m. to investigate the auto incident and determine what kind of animal the vehicle had struck. The driver was not able to identify the animal before it moved into a wooded area near the accident site. While searching the wooded area for the animal that was struck, the officer came upon the black bear, startling the injured bear and forcing the officer to react in self defense.

Dr. Jim LaCour, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) veterinarian, determined the bear had moderate to severe internal injuries from the vehicle accident, but could not determine if the bear would have survived those injuries.

The bear was an adult male weighing between 350 and 400 pounds. LDWF records indicate the bear was previously captured in 2008 in Patterson, but had not been reported as a nuisance bear since. Nuisance bears are captured, tagged and released using aversive conditioning in an effort to dissuade them from returning to residential areas.

The Walker Police department said the pistol at that time was most likely a .40 caliber, but might have been a 9 mm.

8. September 2010, Wyoming: Elk Hunters at Bruin Creek, Thorofare Country .44 magnums, .45-70 rifle

Ten minutes later another grizzly approached.

“The grizzly bear appeared to be heading towards the elk carcass and them, but they did not shoot at the time, instead they watched it in the hope it would go by the three of them,” the investigation said.

But the second grizzly, also a boar, didn’t veer away, the hunters reported. When it got within 10 feet of one of the men the entire party opened fire, letting loose nine rounds from two .44 magnum revolvers and the .45-70 rifle.

Only two of the shots connected, a necropsy would later determine.

9. September, 2013, Wyoming: Thorofare Country south of Yellowstone, Grizzly at 10 feet, .44 magnum and .357 magnum, (report from 2015)

Then at about 2:45 p.m., a collared boar grizzly identified as bear No. 764 came uncomfortably close. The group’s canister of bear spray was in a backpack by their horses. A warning shot went off, but the big grizzly didn’t turn back. “The bear stood up and growled, like something you would see in a movie,” an eyewitness later told investigators. From less than 10 feet away, the guide and camp worker drew their .44 and .357 magnum revolvers and together fired four times, ending the 17-year-old bear’s life.

10. May 22, 2016 Oregon, Shane Thomas, 30-06 Rifle, and semi-automatic pistol.

Finally, Thomas said he was able to kick the bear hard enough to knock him back and grab the pistol. Just as the bear went for his leg again, he fired two shots: the first did nothing, but the second pierced the animal’s gut and forced it to retreat.

Battered and bloodied, Thomas got to his feet and scrambled back to the top of the ridge where he could use his cellphone, which still worked despite being damaged.

11. Addition 4 August, 2019, Montana, Cabinet Mountains .357 and .44 magnum pistols, Grizzly

Two backpackers from Sanders County reported shooting an adult female grizzly bear in self-defense on a forested trail near Dad Peak in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness, wildlife officials said. The reported surprise encounter occurred along a section of trail with huckleberry bushes. The incident occurred Aug. 2 and the individuals notified authorities Aug. 4 after exiting the backcountry, according to a news release.

The incident remains under investigation.

Dillon Tabish, a spokesman for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, said the preliminary investigation determined the backpackers were not equipped with bear spray. He said they reported the grizzly charged them and they shot the bear with handguns.

“Each backpacker had a gun and each fired at the bear, based on the preliminary investigation,” he said.

.44 magnum 3 shots, .357 one shot to head, which stopped the charge. Personal communication with confidential source.

To summarize, we have found 93 verified cases where handguns were used to defend against bear attacks. In addition, for complete data reporting, are eight cases where bears were shot with both long guns and handguns, and one case where the bear was hit by a vehicle and shot with a handgun, making it difficult to determine the efficacy of handguns alone.

Of the 93 strictly handgun defense cases, three classified as failures. There was the use of a **.22 handgun against a polar bear in 1995**, in Svalbard, Norway. There was the use of a **.357 against an Alaskan grizzly** by a geologist on 20 June, 2010. It is likely the bear was not hit in that incident. The third was the 6 September, 2015, **New Mexico incident with a black bear sow and cubs**, where the defender climbed a tree and used a .38 revolver. An official reported the defender said he shot in the air and at the bear. The bear backed off twice but did not immediately leave.

There were five successful defenses with .22 rimfire. Four black bears were killed. One ran

off and was later killed by officials. One defense with a .22 rimfire against a polar bear was unsuccessful.

There was one successful defense with a .380 handgun. The black bear ran off.

There were seven successful defenses with 9 mm pistols. Four grizzly bears were killed, one grizzly ran off and was not recovered, one black bear was wounded and ran off, the other black bear was killed.

There was one successful defense with a 9.3X18 Makarov handgun. The grizzly was killed.

There was one failure and two successful defenses with a .38 revolver. One black bear was killed, the other was not captured or recovered. One grizzly ran off and was not recovered.

Seven of the eight uses of the .357 magnum were successful. One was against a grizzly that was stopped with one shot, but then escaped. One grizzly was killed with six shots fired, another with seven shots fired. Another grizzly walked off, and was found dead, two shots had connected. One was a failure against a grizzly bear. Two were successful against black bears; both were killed.

There were four uses of .40 caliber handguns, all against black bears, all successful, all of the bears were killed.

There were three uses of a 10 mm handgun, two against grizzly bears, one against a black bear (cinnamon color phase). They were successful and the bears were killed.

There were two uses of .41 magnum revolvers. Both were against grizzly bears, both were successful and the bears were killed.

There was one successful use of a .44-40 revolver against a black bear, which was killed.

There were twenty-eight uses of .44 magnum revolvers. All were successful. Eight were against black bears, one was mortally wounded but finished off with shotgun slugs, five were killed, another ran off, superficially wounded, the eighth ran from a warning shot. Nineteen were against grizzly bears. Ten were killed without assistance. Four were driven off with

warning shots. One was driven off, without evidence of being wounded. Two were wounded and not recovered. Two were wounded and finished off at the scene with a shotgun slug. One was against a polar bear. It was wounded and driven off, then euthanized by local authorities (most likely with a rifle).

There were eight uses of .45 caliber semi-auto pistols against bears. All were successful. Four were against black bears. Two were killed, one was killed later, with additional shots, by responding authorities. One was driven off and not recovered. Four were against grizzly bears. All were killed with multiple hits from the .45 caliber pistols.

There was one successful use of a .45 Colt/.410 revolver, the Taurus Judge. The black bear was driven off, fled up a tree, and was finished off with a rifle (the pistol was a Taurus Judge).

There was one use of a .45 Super pistol. It was successful. The grizzly bear was killed.

There were three uses of a .454 Casull revolver. All were grizzly bears. Two were killed without assistance, one while biting the victim's leg. Another grizzly was shot while charging. It was finished off at the scene with a rifle brought by the defender's wife.

There was one successful defense with a .460 Smith & Wesson magnum revolver, against a grizzly. The bear was killed.

There were thirteen cases of handgun defenses against bears where the handgun caliber was not identified. All were successful. Eight were against black bears. Six of those were killed, one ran off and was not recovered, one fled after a shot was fired. Five were grizzly bears. Three ran off and were not recovered. It was not determined if they were wounded or not. Two grizzly sows were killed. Two juveniles with one of the sows ran off; one two-year-old juvenile with the other of the sows was wounded and later euthanized.

There were two cases where both .357 magnum and .44 magnum revolvers were used. Both grizzly bears were killed.

Including the combined arms handgun cases, there were 39 defenses against black bears, 52 defenses against grizzly bears, and 2 defenses against polar bears.

Three failures out of 93 handgun cases where handguns (not handguns and long guns) were used to defend against bears translate to a 97% success rate for the use of handguns against bears.

Successful bear defenses with a handgun are probably under-reported, much like successful firearm defenses against criminals. If a predatory black bear is shot and runs off, there are strong incentives for the shooter to avoid reporting the incident. Incidents, where no human is injured, are seldom considered news. This creates a selection bias against successful handgun defenses against bears. There are numerous anecdotal accounts of successful handgun defenses against bears, which cannot be verified.

Predatory black bear attacks are the **most common fatal black bear attacks** in North America. 39 of the handgun defenses listed above are defenses against black bears, or 42%, the same percentage as the last update. I expect the percentage to rise. Black bear predatory attacks often give potential victims good opportunities to use a handgun effectively. There is a considerable incentive not to report such incidents.

We have several reported instances of successful bear defenses with handguns which we are working to verify. We have been able to add more details to some cases, such as the Timothy Treadwell case in October of 2003, and the polar bear defense with a .22 in the Svalbard archipelago in 1995.

The often-cited ***Efficacy of firearms for bear deterrence in Alaska*** by Tom S. Smith, Stephen Herrero, and others, included 37 instances with handguns.

The study includes incidents when **handgun use was attempted, even if the handgun was not fired** when a bear attacked a human. The instances collected were from 1883 to 2009. They recorded 6 failures to stop the attack out of the 37 instances. That is an 84% success rate. The different selection criteria (handgun fired v. handgun attempted to be used) can explain some of the differences in the Efficacy paper results and our ongoing research. The Efficacy authors limited their data to cases in Alaska. Our research looks at all cases that can be reasonably verified in print or video, or by interview. Handgun and ammunition technology have greatly improved since 1883.

Because the problems of accessing long guns, handguns, or bear spray apply to all three

defensive methods, the most reasonable comparison is to consider only those cases in which the firearm was fired or the bear spray sprayed.

All of the instances cited in this article can be verified independently.

Here are three famous cases that were **not included** as defensive uses of handguns in our research. Two were not included because no shots were fired. The third case (Sommers) was not included because it cannot reasonably be determined if it was a successful defense with a pistol.

The Todd Orr case was not included. It is likely Todd would have avoided injury if he had prioritized using his pistol instead of bear spray. He **did not fire his Rock Island 10 mm or attempt to do so**.

Tom Sommers attempted to use bear spray but was unable to make it work. The bear attacked him and he was unable to fire his pistol. His friend used bear spray and the bear stopped the attack. Tom fired a shot, and the bear did not come back. This case is not classified as either a handgun failure or a success.

The Mark Uptain case was not included. Mark Uptain's Glock 10mm was never fired because Cory Chubon did not know how to operate it. It was holstered without a round in the chamber.

The Orr, Uptain, and Sommers cases might have been considered pistol failures if they had been considered in the Efficacy paper. They were not in the Efficacy paper, because they did not happen in Alaska, and happened after the time period studied in the Efficacy paper.

Here are two examples of cases that sound authentic, but were not able to be documented. No date or location was included, or name of person involved. Several others have been found. Numerous other examples exist.

from S&W forum, includes a picture:

Originally Posted by grasshopper

It was many, many years ago, but a chance encounter I'll never forget, and meeting a bear was the last thing on my mind at the time. No way out so I had to pull the trigger.

.45 Colt Single Action loaded with 255 gr. lead SWC and 8.5 grains of dirty old Unique powder.

One lucky shot between the running lights & it was all over. And yes, I was scared shi*less.

From clipsoon.com:

I GUARANTEE you the trigger pull & recoil will be the LAST thing on your mind in an actual Griz attack! I lived AK bush for 27 yers & was bear attacked 4 times. When the SHTF your adrenalyn levels spike & your attention is on the BEAR, not the gun! You'll never feel the recoil nor hear the report. TOTAL focus is ON the BEAR!! BTW, my backup handgun was a 44 mag redhawk w full length bbl (7 1/4 inch) shooting 320 grain WFN Hard Cast @ 1200 FPS & THAT WAS MARGINAL!! Only shot one small 6 ft black bear directly in the chest w the muzzle pushing it back when the gun went off. Flipped it out of my video stand w the sternam, heart & backbone blown out its back. Hit the ground dead w the entire muzzle blast INSIDE the bear. Her jaws were 2 inches from my nose when the gun went boom. NOT a fun experience. When bears

attack its FAST!

We are continually working to increase the data set of handgun defenses against bears. If you have information about an incident outside of those shown, with locations and dates, please send it to us. There are obvious gaps in our data. There are likely many cases documented in books or local sources that are not easily available on the Internet. If you know of such a case, or one that can be supported with witnesses and/or pictures, but was not published, please submit it.

I urge people to send in all documented cases of pistol defense against bears, including all failures. If you have additional details about cases in this article, please contact us.

All cases we have been able to document, since 1936, where a pistol was fired in defense against a bear, are included in our database. Some cases are still in progress and will be included in the next update.

Three failures out of 93 incidents is a 97% success rate for pistol defenses against bears. Using a pistol to defend against bear attacks is a viable option.

About Dean Weingarten:

Dean Weingarten has been a peace officer, a military officer, was on the University of Wisconsin Pistol Team for four years, and was first certified to teach firearms safety in 1973. He taught the Arizona concealed carry course for fifteen years until the goal of Constitutional Carry was attained. He has degrees in meteorology and mining engineering, and retired from the Department of Defense after a 30 year career in Army Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation.

**Deplorable Bill**

2 years ago

The moral of the story is, drum roll please.....Firearms are like the American express card, DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT. I am all too certain that many of the situations that Dean researched for the well written article here, would have resulted in a mauling and quite possibly death had those under attack not been armed. A few years ago there was a VERY unwise bear lover named Treadwell. He had gone up to Ak. many times to live with brown bear. He did this for several seasons and he became very familiar with the bears to the point of... [Read more »](#)

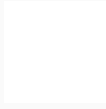
3

StWayne

2 years ago

Although the airbase is no longer active, I served a full year at a remote AFB called Galena, located above the Arctic Circle right on the Yukon. It was located in a bend along the river that needed a dike to surround it to keep safe and dry from spring breakup flooding. Bears, wolves, and moose were an everyday occurrence. If they wandered on the base (it was a very small one,) an alarm went out to shelter in place until it moved on. The bears were always roaming through our trash dumpsters, and could really lay a life-changing fear... [Read more »](#)

2



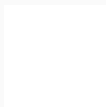
Dave in Fairfax

Reply to [StWayne](#) 2 years ago

StWayne, Galena is an interesting place. They got flooded out pretty well a few years back. Last I heard Phil Koontz was working on a power plant for them burning trash wood. He made great holdfasts, but I think he's quit doing as a business. Here are his old and

new styles. . Mine are cruder, but work better than the store bought things. You might be able to get some made up by Jake the Russian, if he hasn't gone off to Dainty Island.

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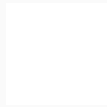


StWayne

Reply to [Dave in Fairfax](#) 2 years ago

@Dave — Galena. What a place! I was there as both a structural and crash firefighter in order to aid in the recovery of attack craft there to intercept the Russians during their flyovers of our airspace in their nuclear armed Bear and Backfire bombers. I was also Hydraulics Instructor, and Chief of the 911 Center. Part of the agreement we had with the citizens of Galena, was to also act as fire station central. They kept us busy. I had no idea you were keeping up with Galena, of all places, and makes me wonder what your attachment to... [Read more »](#)

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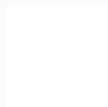


Dave in Fairfax

Reply to [StWayne](#) 2 years ago

StWayne, Non-military. The Old Tools culture is alive and well in all of the English speaking countries as well as the Nordic and Eastern European ones. It's also alive in the Asian ones, but they tend to be separate from the rest of us. It's fairly closely knit, and Phil is a respected member. My interest is more woodturning and 16-19th century tools, so I had to learn blacksmithing as well as other arcane arts. For decades I was a behind the scenes volunteer at a 1700s reenactment National Park that was self-funded unlike any other national park. The gov... [Read more »](#)

2



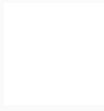
StWayne

Reply to [Dave in Fairfax](#) 2 years ago

Dave —

Ah, now the hold fast tools make sense. I know someone who is really well respected in the art of making knives, and handcrafts some of the finest edges in the world, with some even being made with actual meteorite. He worked all over the Middle East as a private military contractor, and has many kills under his belt. One dangerous dude for real. Like you, he's an artist in the metals, even calling his form of magic "alchemy."

0



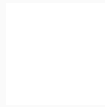
Knute

Reply to [Dave in Fairfax](#) 2 years ago

John Switzer in Colorado also has hold fasts available. Like anything hand forged, they cost, but they're still around.

https://www.etsy.com/listing/758723459/simple-workbench-holdfast-34-or-1-hole?ref=shop_home_active_3&frs=1&crt=1

👍 0 🗨️

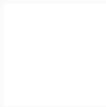


Dave in Fairfax

Reply to [Knute](#) 2 years ago

Knute, Those are nice. They look to have enough reach on them and I prefer the curved to the upset style, I think it holds better. The blacksmithing holdfasts have much less reach and don't work as well on wood.

👍 0 🗨️

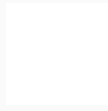


Knute

Reply to [Dave in Fairfax](#) 2 years ago

He used to have some wood ones with the leaf detail as well. And might put them up again. He also has a teaching channel on youtube. You can watch him work there. He's goooood. I wish I was half that good. As a gunsmith I have to do both metal and wood, but I prefer metal. As a blacksmith, I make a good machinist! I can get the job done, but plain and simple, and I always seem to need to do a bunch of filing or grinding anyway. But not Mr. Switzer. I swear as seldom as uses... [Read more »](#)

👍 0 🗨️



Dave in Fairfax

Reply to [Knute](#) 2 years ago

Knute, I know how you feel. The guy who started me out on it is half my age and about 50X my ability. He does architectural as well as decorative work for high priced people. My stuff works, but pretty it ain't.

👍 0 🗨️

Bluemax

2 years ago

Very informative article Dean. I live in an area where bears, cougars and wolves are present. My wife and I often walk a main road and have encountered bears. I can tell you it is very intimidating when you see bears close up without having the protection of a vehicle. I have loaded special ammo and now carry more firepower after those encounters.

👍 2 🗨️

JIAZ

2 years ago

That was an enjoyable read with reality based information. It's well worth reading again and keeping as reference material. Thanks for the time and effort putting it all together.

Sure, it's just a movie, but the "temperament" portrayed of a grizzly sow protecting her cubs was well done.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOIVRHsVzE4>

👍 2 🗨️

CMAenergy

🕒 2 years ago

The fish and wildlife of Canada are all brain dead and believe we should only use bear spray, But what they don't know won't hurt them

I wished every back packer would carry, not only for their benefit but for the safety of others

It is also hypocritical that the government are allowed to carry and feel safe, yet they don't want others to feel safe except by false pretenses !

👍 1 🗨️

Knute

🗨️ Reply to [CMAenergy](#) 🕒 2 years ago

Just more of the sheeple's favorite mantra: "It's OK for me... but not for thee"!

👍 1 🗨️

Jim

🕒 2 years ago

The video shows the moron after he gets in his car reaching through the window to antagonize the bear by head thumping him and when the bear starts in on him they have to kill it. Too bad in this case the bear didn't get a chance to take the dumb S.O.B. out of the gene pool first.

👍 1 🗨️

Driveway

🕒 1 year ago

Denali Nat Park, 1911 mag dump into a brown bear I believe. Bear found dead next day or so by park rangers. May/June 2010.

Here's a link.

<https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2010/05/grizzly-bear-shot-and-killed-hikers-denali-national-park-and-preserve5943?page=1>

👍 0 🗨️

bearkiller22

🕒 2 years ago

A .22 pistol is perfectly fine to carry in the woods. Also, never travel without a buddy. If a bear attacks run...you don't need to outrun the bear, just your buddy with an injured knee.

👍 0 🗨️

nobodyuknow

🕒 2 years ago

Ain't gonna' be carryin' no .22 in bear country! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND! I carry a S&W Model 629 Mountain Gun when in bear country. I carry 265 gr, Hornady soft points in a maximum pressure hand load of H-110. This is a bear to shoot (no pun intended) so I practice regularly to maintain accuracy. This load will penetrate 12 – 2×6's spaced 2 inches apart and stick in the 13th one. It WILL penetrate a bear's skull.

👍 0 🗨️

Bill

🕒 2 years ago

Super info! Conclusions: multiple shots can be needed; don't wait until the Bear is within 20 feet, if possible because momentum will continue into you; carry penetration ammo ; don't aim for the skull from the front with .22 or .380 caliber.

👍 0 🗨️

gooder12

🕒 2 years ago

Thank You! I skip a lot of gunner news now a days as it is way to much left and right stuff of which I have dealt with in 50 years of voting and 58 years of shooting. I lean mainly left, but I am a true gunner and would really like the right to get National Carry for US as I do a lot of hiking. Again Thank You for what I say is The Best Handgun Report I have ever seen. I own most and yes I shoot em hot as I can so I know a hair... [Read more »](#)

👍 0 🗨️

FI

🕒 2 years ago

As a forensic investigator I can tell you this is a dangerous and wholly ignorant and useless article you have published. Like most untrained investigators, you start with your conclusion and hunt the internet down for supporting data to endorse your incomplete investigation. This makes you no better than any common internet surfing gun grabber. If you look at all the wildlife threats including mountain lions, packs of wolves, lions, tigers, wild dogs, etc you will find that it is a wholly idiotic approach to think you will deliver a precise shot to multiple attackers coming at you at 40 miles... [Read more »](#)

👍 -3 🗨️



Knute

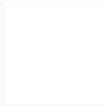
Reply to [FI](#) 2 years ago

FI) IF, as you stated, you truly ARE such a forensic expert, then why do you not know the difference between statistical analysis (this article) and forensic analysis (on-site evidence gathering and conclusions on same)?

Furthermore, your entire post is just a strawman, as NONE of what you stated was said in this article. In conclusion, lacking anything further from you that makes some form of logical sense, you should be ignored as just another online troll, sans brain.

Hope you have a nice day.

👍 2 🗨️

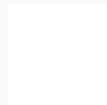


Wild Bill

Reply to [Knute](#) 2 years ago

@[Knute Knute](#), Knocked that forensic troll into next Wednesday. 😏

👍 1 🗨️

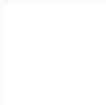


Knute

Reply to [Wild Bill](#) 2 years ago

Thanks. I do manage to hit one out of the park every once in a while. 😏

👍 1 🗨️



CMAenergy

Reply to [FI](#) 2 years ago

I have been attacked from behind by a cougar, fortunately it did not live had I had no gun, The outcome would be different – likewise if it was a bear. You also did not notice that most of these or a lot of these encounters there was contact from the bears relating to hand guns, in tents etc, And what are you supposed to do when the can of bear spray runs out and the bear keeps coming? This has happened to numerous back packers, Just look it up on line, Sure bear spray will stop a lot of... [Read more »](#)

👍 0 🗨

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