2022 Spring Black Bear Permits
Decision
March 18, 2022

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Introduction

• Brief background
• Proposed rule changes
• Public comment
• Recommendation
Background

- In response to a request from the Fish and Wildlife Commission

- Mandate (RCW 77.04.012) and the WDFW Game Management Plan (2015-2021)
  - Provide stable, regulated hunting opportunity
  - Protect, sustain, and manage wildlife
### Black bear management guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberalize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Females</td>
<td>&lt;35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of Females</td>
<td>&gt; 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of Males</td>
<td>&gt; 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Females</td>
<td>35-39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of Females</td>
<td>5-6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of Males</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restrict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Females</td>
<td>&gt;39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of Females</td>
<td>&lt; 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age of Males</td>
<td>&lt; 2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Include and use density estimates and other data where available.
Additional factors

• Require mandatory harvest inspection for all successful permit hunters

• Require mandatory bear species identification test
Proposed Rule Changes
WAC 220-415-080
Spring Black Bear Special Permits
Spring black bear special permits:

If the motion is to adopt:

• Remove the year from the title and adjust the season dates to May 1 – June 15
• Reduce the permits in GMU 684 to 6
• Add provision prohibiting harvest of offspring and female black bear accompanied by offspring
If the motion is to adopt:

• Define offspring as less than one year old or less than 50 pounds.

• Add language requiring hunters to call within 72 hours of harvest to schedule the inspection and to bring an unfrozen pelt and head with evidence of sex and head attached.
Summary

The spring bear special permit season

- Supports the mandate of the department, the commission, and the director
- Allows the department to use recreational hunters as a management tool
- Maintains Washington’s hunting heritage
- Supports conservation of wildlife
Summary

If adopted as proposed, the spring bear special permit season would:

- Provide an annual, limited opportunity spring black bear special permit season
- May 1 - June 15
- Offering 664 permits in 23 GMUs
- Improve human safety in GMU 684
- Add protection of offspring and females with offspring
- Aid in directing hunters on reporting requirements
Public Comment

Over 26,000 comments through:

• Online/paper survey
• Letters (electronic)
• Emails
• Voice message
• FWC briefing

• Comments received from individuals, organizations, and groups of individuals
Public Comment

- Comments received from individuals, organizations, and groups of individuals.

- In addition to public comment, the department received comments from our Tribal co-managers.
Public Comment

Common Themes

• Oppose bear hunting or spring bear hunting
• Oppose hunting in general
• Possible cub orphaning/mortality and lethargy
• No/lack science to support the hunt
• Desire to have no spring hunting
• Trophy hunts and unethical
Public Comment

Common Themes

- Family experience, traditions, and heritage
- Benefit for wildlife (bears and other wildlife)
- Sustainable, robust population, science supports it
- North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
- Provide food for families
- Limited and regulated
Comment

Additional comments:

- Removing the year from the title
- The process that has occurred
- Intent of RCW 77.04.012
- Understanding wildlife management
- Losing hunting heritage
- Environmental condition impacts
- Timber damage
- Human-bear conflict
Recommendation: WAC 220-415-080

- Request to consider a motion

Motion Language:

I move to adopt the recommended rule changes as presented by Department staff.

Is there a “second”?