

**2015 Black Bear Game Code/ CBBMP Amendment Comment Summary
(7:25-5.6; 5.24; CBBMP)**

Total comments received on amendments as of July 17, 2015:

Oral:	21
Email:	1,502
Form Letters:	3,343
Petition:	218
Post Cards:	4,854
Mail:	204
Total:	10,142

Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy

Comments in support of entire policy:	390
Comments opposed to entire policy:	6,635
Comments in favor of all amendments:	19
Comments opposed to all amendments:	7

Game Code Sections 5.6 and 5.24

Comments in favor of all amendments:	172
Comments opposed to all amendments:	249

**Note: Only comments specific to proposed amendments are counted below.
Only proposals that received comments are contained herein.**

N.J.A.C. 7:25-5.6

Bear and bobcat

(a) Additional hunting season days in October and four additional December days, based on harvest rate

Comments in favor: 439
Comments opposed: 2,898

Most of those opposed simply stated they were not in favor of any bear hunt expansion. A few commenters added that our population data and complaint data was inaccurate, so season dates should not be expanded. There was one comment stating that bear hunting season days in October would disrupt bird migration patterns.

(b) Criterion for closure of the bear hunting season (30% harvest rate)

Comments in favor: 0
Comments opposed: 1,357

Commenters opposed stated a 30% harvest rate was too high, again pointing to a lack of accurate population data. Some felt that New Jersey was an outlier in using a 30% harvest rate to cut off the season. Some stated that there would not be enough lead time to close the season, should a 30% harvest rate be reached.

(c) Use of archery equipment during the bear hunting season

Comments in favor: 144

Comments opposed: 534

A few commenters opposed stated that archery equipment was insufficient to hunt bears without wounding them, and some also stated that hunters should be required to take a proficiency course before hunting bears with bows.

(d) Provision for take of a second bear

Comments in favor: 78

Comments opposed: 462

All of the commenters opposed stated they were opposed to the taking of a second bear.

(e) Expansion of the hunt area (BMZ 5)

Comments in favor: 0

Comments opposed: 1,637

Most of those opposed stated they did not want to see any expansion of the black bear hunting area. Some commenters felt the bear season should be expanded to the entire state, not just a portion of the state and not just in areas with bear/ human interactions.

(f) Increase in permits from 10,000 to 11,000 (additional 1,000 permits allocated to BMZ 5)

Comments in favor: 0

Comments opposed: 3

Those opposed stated they did not wish to see any additional permits allocated for bear hunting.

N.J.A.C. 7:25-5.24

Bow and arrow, general provisions

(a) Addition of "bear" to list of species with archery seasons

Comments in favor: 0

Comments opposed: 1

Additional comments concerning the Game Code:

Some commenters asked that changes/ additional restrictions be placed on the bear seasons, such as adding a spring archery hunt; allowing only New Jersey hunters to take part in the early segment; ability to hunt from an elevated position within 300 feet of a baited area; carrying a sidearm and loading more than three shells in a shotgun while hunting for protection; including 00 and 000 buckshot as legal ammunition for bear hunting; various safety recommendations such as requiring hunters to wear orange on every part of the body; a permit fee of \$20 should be instituted.

APPENDIX: Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy

Comments in favor: 390

Comments opposed: 6,635

Supporters of the CBBMP stated that the policy was based on sound science and management and that hunting was the best management tool for controlling the bear population. Many offered that a bear hunt would reduce human/ bear interactions and damage to agricultural crops. Some stated that bears are a threat to human safety.

The majority of commenters opposed to the policy stated that the use of nonlethal techniques should be increased as they "are the only effective solution." Many commenters also stated that nonlethal bear management techniques have never been implemented in any serious manner by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, and also stated that New Jersey's bear hunts are entirely recreational and political and have no impact whatsoever in reducing human/ bear interactions. Many felt that more education was needed to better inform the public about garbage management techniques. Many felt there should be fines for improper garbage handling and wanted better enforcement of the feeding statute. Commenters suggested that the State's bear category system (Black Bear Rating and Response Criteria) sensationalized normal bear behavior and often resulted in the deaths of bears. Some questioned why complaint numbers began to rise again despite several hunting seasons, or questioned why the number of bears taken in the season was dropping.

Many commenters in opposition to the policy stated that bears were only a problem because their habitat was shrinking or being developed, and that bears should be relocated to solve the population increase.

Many of those opposed stated that Conservation Officers should be employed to handle nuisance bear complaints or that Military police, police officers, sharpshooters, "professional hunters," etc. should be mobilized to control the bear population as they are capable of a "fast, humane kill."

Some commenters felt that bear hunting was simply a "trophy hunt" and was also a threat to human safety. Many commenters were opposed to the killing of pregnant female bears or female bears and cubs or were opposed to the baiting of bears, stating the use of bait was conditioning bears to humans:

Additional comments in opposition of the CBBMP:

Use of contraceptive drugs and sterilization should be employed to reduce the bear population.

New Jersey should have trail signage about bears and bear behavior.

There is no proof that a human was killed by a black bear in 2014 and therefore this information should not have been included in the policy.

Bear hunts only eliminate woodland bears.

Bears without access to un-natural foods will not gain as much weight and will have lower reproductive rates.

Only bears that are not afraid of humans should be killed.

Only the December season is necessary to control the bear population.

I would love to have our energy placed into planting wild berries & fruit trees for the bears to eat in park areas which are frequented by hikers.

Since they represent a small minority of people who most New Jersey citizens disagree with maybe it's time to let another organization oversee and implement programs that affect these animals.

The DEP's draft plan fails to include a means for the taking of wildlife, in this case bears, by persons not allowed by law to possess or use firearms or other weapons.

Bears are allowed to roam free at Great Adventure because the experts know that black bears are not aggressive animals. Great Adventure could be subject to several lawsuits if it allowed bears to roam free if they were dangerous.

There have been numerous studies that show that populations of wild animals do not decline after hunting is instituted because the species will reproduce to replace the lost members.

The bear hunt should take place every 2 yrs. Then the hunters will be happy and the anti-bear hunt people will be happy.

The bibliography shown by vicious NJDFG is weak, antiquated and obsolete.

Oppose the Division's bear education proposal because education by the Division tends to portray bears as dangerous and hunting as safe.

Oppose additional funding for the Division's bear management

DFW should provide no assistance to farmers/landowners UNTIL they have carried out reasonable self-protective measures such as fencing, dogs, noise, etc. to protect livestock and bees.

Instead of collaring/ tagging bears in the den, kill them, eliminating a sow plus 2.7 cubs!

A more humane method might be to "steal and euthanize" one cub from every den entered.

Instead of improving forest quality, remove the most productive sections or trees, or access to them, thus reducing the food supply.

Begin noise generation during prime breeding period. This may reduce opportunities for mating.

Research trapping of hundreds of bears annually is unnecessary, inhumane and unethical.