



County	Total
Androscoggin	1
Aroostook	882
Cumberland	9
Hancock	105
Hancock	169
Kennebec	4
Oxford	269
Penobscot	353
Piscataquis	334
Somerset	379
Waldo	0
Washington	348
York	18
Knox	0
Lincoln	0
Sagadahoc	0
State	2871

Male	1582
Female	1265
Unreported	24

By Hunter Residence	
Residents	906
Nonresidents	1965

2007 Bear Harvest by Town

Maine's 2007 Black Bear Season

The general hunting season for black bear in 2007 opened August 27 and closed November 24. Hunters were allowed to hunt bears near natural food sources or by still-hunting throughout this 3-month period. Hunting over bait was permitted from August 27 through September 22. The hound season overlapped the bait season, opening September 10 and closing October 26. The bear trapping season opened September 1 and closed October 31.

The 2007 harvest of 2,871 bears marks the 3rd straight year of a harvest just below 3,000 bears, when previous harvests averaged 3,700 bears. In 2007, 2,301 bears were taken over bait (80%), 352 bears were taken by hound hunters (12%), 56 bears were taken in traps (2%), 119 were taken by unreported methods (4%), and 43 bears (2%) were harvested by deer hunters. Most bears were taken early in the season, with 2,658 bears (93%) harvested before the end of September. Reports indicate that late fall natural food levels were low this year following several years of moderate to abundant crops. Heavy beechnut crops provide an abundant fall food source for bears, which delays their entry into dens and leads to a higher harvest of bears by deer hunters. The low availability of late fall natural food crops this year resulted in low harvest rate by deer hunters and an increase in bears harvested over bait (73% in 2006).

Geographic Distribution of the Harvest

Bears were harvested in 26 Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs). No bears were taken in WMDs 22, 24, 25, and 30. The density of harvest expressed as the number of bears killed per 100 square miles of habitat (forested land) was greatest in WMD 28 at 27 bears/100 mi² followed closely by WMDs 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 18 with 23 to 15 bears harvested/100 mi². In all other WMDs, hunters harvested less than 15 bears/100 mi² (statewide average of 9.4 bears/100 mi²). Bears were harvested in 12 of the State's 16 counties. Most bears (882) were harvested in Aroostook county accounting for 31% of the harvest. No bears were taken in Knox, Lincoln, Waldo, and Sagadahoc counties.

Residence of Successful Hunters

Maine's reputation for producing high-quality bear hunting is reflected in the harvest distribution by hunter residency. Visitors to Maine killed 1,965 bears (68%) of the 2,871 bears tagged during 2007. Non-resident hunters shot most of the bears (71%) taken over bait and with the use of hounds (68%), although bait hunting remains popular amongst resident hunters with 73% of successful resident hunters taking their bear over bait. Although few bears are taken during the deer season or in traps, Maine residents accounted for the majority (72% and 82%, respectively) of the bears taken during these seasons.

Assistance by Registered Maine Guides

In 2007, guides helped take 83% of bears harvested over hounds, 73% of the bears taken over bait, 21% of trapped bears, 27% of the bears for which method of take was unreported, and 5% of the bears taken by deer hunters. Guides assisted 218 residents (25%) and 1,779 nonresidents (92%) with their successful hunts in 2007.

Sex and Age Distribution of the Harvest

Males made up 55% (1,582 bears) of the 2007 harvest. Adult bears accounted for 92% (2,647 bears) of the harvest and sex and age were not reported for an additional 24 bears (<1%).

Prospects for the 2008 season

The Department has adopted a generic bear season framework to maintain consistent hunting periods, unless management concerns require changes to the lengths of hunting or trapping periods. In 2008, the season will remain similar to those in recent years. Under our current bear season framework, the season begins on the last Monday in August and closes on the last Saturday in November, generally a 13-week period (August 25-November 29, 2008).

In accordance with our management goal, Maine's bear population estimate remains near 23,000 bears. Thus the current bear season framework and hunter participation rates provide the opportunity to obtain harvest levels of over 3,500 bears in 2008. However as evidenced in recent harvests, hunter success is influenced by additional factors, such as weather and natural foods.