

Wickman, Erik

From: Connie Poten <rattlefarm@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 10:14 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Spring Bear Hunts

FWCOMM@mt.gov

DATE: November 20, 2023

TO: Montana Fish and Wildlife Commissioners

RE: Black Bear Season and Regulations Proposal for 2024 and 2025

Dear Commissioners:

In the spring it is impossible to know from a distance if a bear is a female and has cubs. The eventuality of a female bear with cubs being killed is high. Because it is illegal to kill bears with cubs, it stands to reason that a number of hunters do not report cubs. Black bear cubs are dependent on their mothers for at least 1.5 years after birth. If reported, cubs orphaned or killed are not recorded. Spring bear hunting is a glaring example of lack of management at best, and willful mismanagement at worst.

The **hound training season**, which allows hounds to chase, tree and kill them May 26-June 15 is debilitating, deadly harassment of bears for recreation. **We request that you deny extending the spring black bear season in Region 1 BMUs 140, 141, 150, 170 to April 15-June 15.**

Please consider putting a stop to Hound Training Season altogether. This recreational harassment and killing is simply an extension of hound hunting bears at their most vulnerable time.

All spring bear hunts are solely for the pleasure of bear hunters and hound hunters and are particularly inhumane and destructive. They defy **the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation** which FWP is pledged to uphold:

- a) **Wildlife Should Only be Killed for a Legitimate Purpose:** Individuals may legally kill certain wild animals under strict guidelines for food and fur, self-defense, and property protection. Laws prohibit the casual killing of wildlife merely for antlers, horns or feathers or the wanton waste of game meat.
- b) **Scientific Management of Wildlife:** The best science available will be used as a base for informed decision-making in wildlife management.

Spring bear hunts threaten public safety. These frivolous hunts occur when more and more people get outside after a long winter to hike and boat. People do not expect hunters and hunting hounds in the spring. The public and their dogs are put in unnecessary danger.

As Commissioners, you have a responsibility to uphold the public trust, and for proper management of publicly owned wildlife. Spring bear hunts undermine both these mandates. Please work to limit and end this activity

for the good of wildlife and of the public. Black bears are classified as game animals. Like other game animals, they should be hunted in the fall. Thank you for considering reasonable hunting season times and lengths.

Sincerely,

Constance J Poten for the Board of Footloose Montana

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Missoula, MT 59807
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406-274-4791

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Wickman, Erik

From: Pavao, Courtney on behalf of FWP General
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 3:22 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Bear Hunting

Courtney Pavao
Administrative Assistant
Information Desk
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Montana FWP | Montana Outdoors Magazine | Montana WILD

-----Original Message-----

From: Roger Holtom <holtom@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 3:21 PM
To: FWP General <fwpgen@mt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bear Hunting

I may not have the correct e-mail address for my comment. If you could pass it on as appropriate. Thanks.

Choosing the least awful of the two proposals — Alternative B.

I also recommend:

No hound hunting of bears. Why turn the hounds loose on bears when it is illegal for folks out with their dogs for an everyday excursion to allow the dogs to chase wildlife.

End all spring hunting of black bears. Some hunter kills a female black bear in the spring and likely leaves 1, 2, or even 3 newly born cubs to die. Or, maybe even a person simply out hiking and enjoying the spring weather gets shot. It won't hurt hunters to put the rifles away for a few more months out of the year. Maybe they will discover a less bloody, cruel hobby to pursue.

Use valid scientific research to make wildlife management decisions.

Linda Holtom



Stephen V. Mayernik
128 Lone Spring Rd.
Stockett, MT 59480

NOV, 14, 2023

FWP Wildlife Division:

Re: 2024-2025 proposed hunting regulations (specifically HD 413)

Since mule deer in HD 413 are as thick as flies and annually do significant damage to haystacks (There have been late season damage hunts authorized recently and also damage tags issued to landowners), I have two suggestions as to how to adjust season structures for the 2024-2025 seasons.

- ① Return to allowing hunters in HD 413 to harvest mule deer does with their general deer license (previously "A" tag)
- ② Increase the number of "B" tags for mule deer does in HD 413 (Quota range allows up to 500)

By not allowing mule deer does to be harvested with a general license, this puts more pressure on yearling bucks in the last days of the general season when some hunters who might harvest a doe for meat would, as a last resort, harvest a yearling buck rather than go skunked for the season. This, in turn, would in the long run reduce the number of mature bucks in future years, possibly having a detrimental effect on population diversity.

Sincerely,

Stephen V. Mayernik

PS, Also, it seems that Bull Elk regulations for HD 413 for 24-25 could return to what they were in 2021 - I have watched (in the distance) 200 to 300 Elk wintering for several months,