

**SUBJECT:** Approval of bear harvest quotas for the 2010 season.

**FOR:** JANUARY, 2010 BOARD MEETING

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Keith Warnke, Big Game Biologist

**SUMMARY:**

The department recommends a bear harvest quota of 5,235 and an overall permit level of 8,910 for the 2010 season. In individual management units the recommended 2010 permit level is: A) 3,470; B) 1,440; C) 2,430; D) 1,570.

This permit level is 22% higher than 2009 and 91% higher than in 2008. The recommended harvest level is likely to result in slight population declines in all Bear Management Zones.

Regulated hunting is the primary management tool for Wisconsin's black bear population. Interest in bear hunting remains high as evidenced by the over 32,259 individuals who applied for a harvest tag in 2009. Harvest quotas are determined using the department's bear population model and various population indices to assess the effects of various harvest levels on the bear population estimate.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval of bear harvest quotas for the 2010 hunting season.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:**

- |    |                                     |   |     |                                     |          |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required                              | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Attached |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Background Memo                                       | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

**APPROVED:**

Tom Hauge  
Bureau Director, Tom Hauge

1/7/10  
Date

Laurie Osterndorf  
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf

1/7/10  
Date

Matt Frank  
Secretary, Matt Frank

1/8/10  
Date

cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/8  
Tom Hauge - WM/6

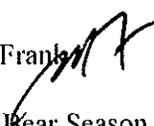
Keith Warnke - WM/6

Scott Loomans - WM/6

DATE: January 5, 2010

FILE REF: 2300

TO: Natural Resources Board Members

FROM: Matt Frank 

SUBJECT: 2010 Bear Season Quotas

**Recommendation**

The department recommends a statewide bear harvest quota of 5,235 and 8,910 permits for the 2010 season. The Department recommends that the Natural Resources Board approve the bear harvest quotas and permit levels in each Bear Management Zone as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. 2009 bear permits and harvest and proposed bear harvest quotas and permit levels for 2010.

Bear Management Zone	2009 permits	2009 harvest	Recommended 2010 harvest quota	Recommended 2010 permit level	% increase in permits
A	2,580	1,519	2,200	3,470	34
B	1,300	869	1,075	1,440	11
C	2,200	683	860	2,430	10
D	1,230	829	1,100	1,570	28
Total	7,310	3,900	5,235	8,910	22

**Background**

In 2009, hunters registered 1,519 bears in Zone A; 869 bears in Zone B; 683 bears in Zone C; and 829 bears in Zone D (Table 2). Interest in bear hunting continues to grow. The number of applicants for Class A (kill permits) was over 32,000 in 2009 and the total number of applicants (Class A and preference point applicants) increased by 11% in 2009 to over 95,000 (Figure 1).

Analyses of recently completed research along with evaluation of several other population indices we measure (including the bait station survey, hunter success rate, nuisance complaints, and time-to-kill statistics) indicates that the bear population has been increasing over the last decade. Considering this information, the DNR bear committee recommended an upward adjustment to the population model to an estimate of about 22,000 bears statewide. Effects of various harvest quotas were evaluated using population models specific to each Bear Management Zone. We apply a three-year average harvest success rate to the recommended harvest quota to determine the number of permits to make available. If met, the recommended harvest quota is likely to result in minor population declines in all Bear Management Zones.

Recent population modeling research concluded that there were more bears than our models suggested at that time. The population estimate has been adjusted to reflect this information. Over the next couple years we plan to develop new bear management plan goals in a process that involves stakeholder participation. We don't think it prudent to significantly reduce the bear population to current goals until we engage the public on this issue.

The Conservation Congress Bear Committee has reviewed the permit proposals and supports the recommended increase in quota and harvest permit levels. We have consulted with Voight Tribal Task Force representatives regarding bear harvest quota recommendations.

The 2010 black bear hunting season runs Sept. 8 through Oct. 12.

**Recommended Harvest Quotas and Permits**

**Zone A:**

The population in Zone A is estimated to be approximately 10,300. The population goal is 4,600. The 2009 harvest quota was 1,700. Registered harvest was 1,519 with 2,580 permits available; a 58.9% success rate. The 3-year average success rate is 63.4%. The recommended harvest quota for 2010 is 2,200 resulting in 3,470 permits (Table 1).

**Zone B:**

The population in Zone B is estimated to be approximately 4,240. The population goal is 2,200. The 2009 harvest quota was 1,075. Registered harvest was 869 with 1,300 harvest permits available; a 66.8% success rate. The 3-year average success rate for Zone B is 74.7%. The recommended harvest quota is 1,075, the same quota established for the 2009 bear season. Zone B permits have doubled from 2007 to 2009 and success rates have decreased. The decrease in the 3-year average success rate results in an increase in the number of permits available with a harvest quota unchanged from 2009 to 2010. A harvest quota of 1,075 will provide 1,440 permits (Table 1).

**Zone C:**

The population in Zone C is estimated to be approximately 2,560. The population goal is 1,200. The 2009 harvest quota was 860. Registered harvest was 683 with 2,200 harvest permits available, resulting in a 31.0% success rate. The 3-year average success rate for Zone C is 35.4%. The recommended harvest quota for 2010 is 860, which will result in 2,430 permits.

**Zone D:**

The population in Zone D is estimated to be approximately 4,800. The population goal is 3,300. The 2009 harvest quota was 950. Registered harvest was 829 with 1,230 harvest permits available, resulting in a 67.4% success rate. Success rates for Zones A and D were combined to calculate the 3-year average due to hunters with Zone A kill tags being able to also hunt in Zone D in 2007 (formerly Subzone A1). The 3-year average success rate for Zones A and D combined is 70.1%. The recommended harvest quota of 1,100 results in 1,570 permits for 2010.

Table 2. 2009 Black Bear Harvest by Bear Zone

Zone	Males Killed	Females Killed	Unknowns Killed	Total Kill
A	786	718	15	1,519
B	441	419	9	869
C	405	271	7	683

D	437	382	10	829
Unknown	1	1	5	7
Total	2,070	1,791	46	3,907

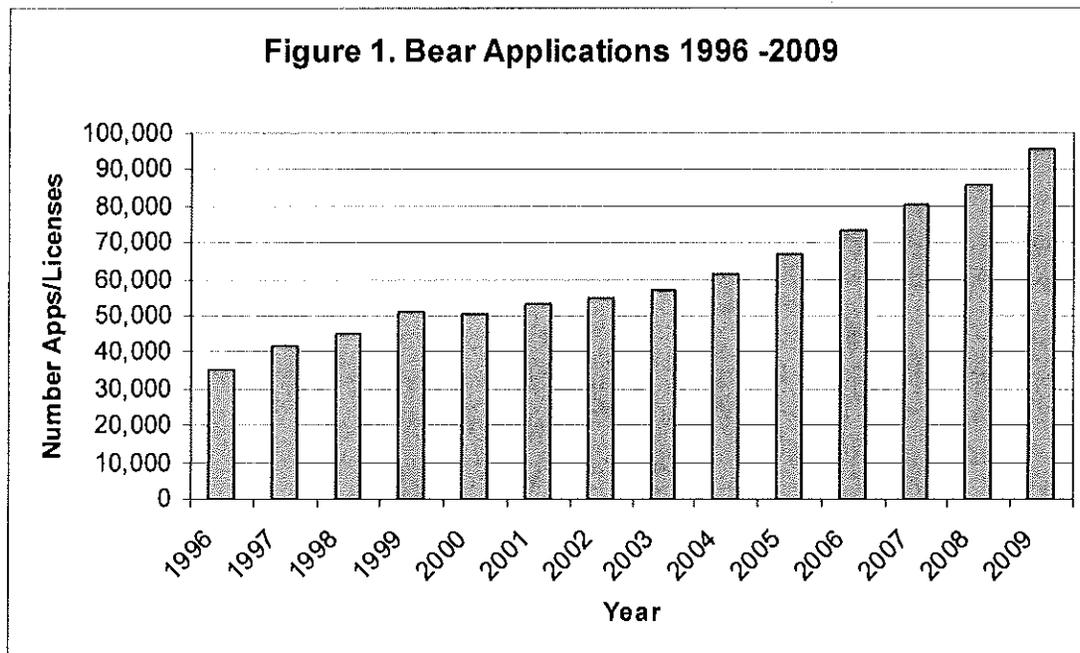


Figure 2. Bear Management Zones.

