




# Bear Hunting Season Information

-  Bears are emerging from their dens and actively foraging for food – Avoid attracting bears. [Learn More >](#)
-  DEP outreach campaign offers bear safety tips this spring. [Learn More >](#)
-  To report black bear damage and nuisance, call the DEP's 24-hour, toll-free hotline: **1-877-WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337)**



## New Jersey Hunting & Trapping Explorer

**BLACK BEAR**


[Black Bear Management FAQs](#)
[Black Bear Harvest Data](#)

## Important 2022 Season Information

On November 15, 2022, the Governor enacted a new Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policy (CBBMP) through emergency rulemaking. An approved CBBMP is required for a bear hunt to occur. The action is due to increasing public safety concerns associated with the growing bear population. These concerns are based on a 237% increase in bear damage and nuisance reports, received by the DEP between January 1, 2022, and October 21, 2022, compared to the same time period in 2021. As a result of this action, a bear hunt will occur for Segment B (December 5 – 10) of the 2022 bear season. At the same time, the Fish and Game Council (Council) reviewed and approved changes (below) to the Game Code relating to New Jersey's bear season.

State lands will also be reopened to bear hunting. You may hunt bears on any State, private, municipal, county, or federal land open to bear hunting and for which you have permission.

## Regulation Changes

- Hunters may NOT attempt to take or kill a black bear weighing less than 75 pounds (live weight), or less than 50 pounds dressed.
- Hunters may NOT attempt to take or kill an adult black bear that is in the presence of cub(s) (bears weighing less than 75 pounds).
- Hunters may NOT attempt to take or kill a black bear or have a loaded weapon within 300 ft. of a baited area when hunting bears.

For more information, please view [Hunter Guidance for the 2022 Bear Season Regulation Change](#) (pdf).

It is important to note that the CBBMP and the Game Code changes were filed through emergency rule procedures, and as such are only valid for 60-days. To make the changes permanent, the Governor's Office and the Council filed a concurrent proposal which will appear in the NJ Register on December 5, 2022. This will begin a 60-day public comment period where the public may submit written comments. A public hearing will also be scheduled in January to take oral comments. After December 5, 2022, comments may be submitted online through DEP's rulemaking comment page at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/comments/>.

## 2022 Black Bear Season Dates

**Season Dates:** December 5 -10, 2022 (Segment B), Shotgun/Muzzleloader ONLY

**Hunting Hours:** Legal hunting hours for black bears shall be ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

**Season Bag limit is one bear over 75 pounds live weight, or 50 pounds dressed,** per hunter, regardless of the number of permits the hunter holds.

**Season Changes:** Following the start of the black bear season, the Assistant Commissioner of NJDEP Fish and Wildlife may announce closure of the entire season or extension of Segment B of the season based upon harvest data.

If the cumulative harvest rate reaches 30% of bears tagged in 2022 the season will be closed. In the event of a season closure, notification will be on our website and via the NJ Hunting E-mail list. A season closure, if announced, will become effective 24 hours from the daily legal closing time of the day on which the decision is made.

If the harvest rate does not reach 20% during this period, the hunt will be extended to Wednesday, December 14th through Saturday, December 17th, 2022. Hunting regulations for the season extension will be the same as those during the regular part of Segment B. **Only those permit holders with a valid permit(s) for Segment B who did not harvest a bear during the regular part of Segment B may hunt during the Segment B extension.** The notification number for season closure will be announced by news release, radio and Fish and Wildlife's website [NJFishandWildlife.com](http://NJFishandWildlife.com).

## Firearms and Ammunition Legal for Bear Hunting

# Black Bear Hunting Permits

A total of 11,000 black bear hunting permits, allocated by bear management zone, will be available to properly licensed hunters and farmer hunters. Permits are zone specific, and only valid for the specific zone you are hunting in. Hunters may purchase up to two permits, each for a different zone, but may ONLY HARVEST ONE BEAR (see Regulation Change above) during the entire season regardless of the number of permits purchased. Bear Management Zone boundary information is available on Fish and Wildlife's website (Hunting/Bear Regulations) or using the Hunting Explorer app at <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/bearzones/>. Permits are available online through New Jersey's electronic licensing system at <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/hunting/buy-a-license/> or in-person at license agents (<https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/licenses-and-permits/license-agents/>).

Note: Black bear management zones are different from deer management zones. Choose carefully when purchasing a black bear permit, as permits are not refundable. For the 2022 season, only zones 1-5 are open for bear hunting.

**Apprentice License holders are not eligible to hunt black bear.** The skills necessary to hunt black bear are not commensurate with an introductory hunting experience that the apprentice license program is intended to provide.

**Special permit requirement:** All black bear hunters must have a current and valid Firearm or All-Around Sportsman hunting license and a special Black Bear Hunting Permit issued by Fish and Wildlife. Black Bear permits are specific to, and only valid in the zone designated on the permit. See map of Black Bear Management Zones at <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/bearzones/>.

**Youth Bear Hunters:** Youth hunters with a valid firearm hunting license must also possess a black bear hunting permit. Youth hunters aged 10 through 13 on or before October 11, 2022, must be under the direct supervision of a properly licensed adult (21 years of age or older) while bear hunting. The adult must also possess a black bear hunting permit. Direct supervision means the youth hunter and the supervising adult are together at the same location. The youth hunter may not hunt independently of the adult.

## Additional Regulations

- Firearm black bear hunters must wear a hat of solid fluorescent hunter orange or an outer garment containing at least 200 square inches of fluorescent orange material visible from all sides at all times while bear hunting and all bear hunters must follow the fluorescent orange requirements pertaining to hunting from a ground blind.
- It shall be illegal to use dogs to pursue or run black bears.
- No person shall attempt to take or kill a black bear or have in their possession or control any firearm, within 300 feet of a baited area. On National Wildlife Refuges and at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the distribution of bait and/or hunting over bait is prohibited. Hunters should also check with the landowner or administrative agency before placing bait on any hunting area.
- Allowable hunting methods: stand hunting, still hunting, or drive hunting.
- Hunters using or possessing any shotgun slug in the field during the bear seasons must have a shotgun with adjustable open iron or peep sights or a scope affixed to the shotgun.
- Telescopic sights of any magnification (scope power) are permitted for bear hunting on all firearms (including muzzleloading rifles).
- Shotgun shells containing single spherical projectiles referred to as pumpkin balls are prohibited.
- While bear hunting with a shotgun, it is illegal to have in possession any ammunition not authorized for bear hunting.
- Only one muzzleloader rifle may be in possession while bear hunting.
- All firearms must be cased and unloaded while being transported in vehicles.
- It is illegal to take or attempt to take a bear in a den structure.



## After Harvesting a Bear

**Mandatory Bear Check Requirement** Properly licensed hunters who harvest a black bear shall immediately complete and affix to the bear hide the Black Bear Transportation Tag from their Black Bear Hunting Permit. When field dressing a black bear, leave the sex organs intact, attached to the body. A harvested black bear may be quartered and brought out of the field in sections.

Hunters MUST report to a mandatory [bear check in station](#) (pdf). These include five locations in three counties: Pequest Trout Hatchery in Warren County, Whittingham and Flatbrook WMAs in Sussex County, and Green Pond Golf Course and Black River WMA in Morris County. Check stations will be open from noon to 7pm for Segment B & Extension throughout the December bear hunting season. (**Note:** the Black River check station is open only on December 5 and 10, 2022.)

Hunters shall surrender the black bear transportation tag and will be issued a legal possession seal. Any legally killed black bear recovered too late to be brought to a check station by closing time on the date of the kill must be reported immediately by telephone to the Northern Region Office, Bureau of Law Enforcement (908) 735-8240. On the telephone message recording device, hunters must leave their name, address, and a telephone number where they can be reached. The hunter will be contacted with instructions for the bear to be registered and to receive a legal possession seal. To protect the meat from spoilage, the hunter may retain only the head and hide for checking the next day.

Within 48 hours after a bear is checked, a hunter may be required to produce the meat of the bear or produce records relating to the location of the meat, such as a butcher shop, upon request of a Conservation Police Officer. After Saturday during the regular season segments or Saturday during a season extension (if announced), hunters reporting a bear harvest via the Law Enforcement recorder will be contacted by a Fish and Wildlife biologist on Sunday to legally check the bear and to collect biological data.

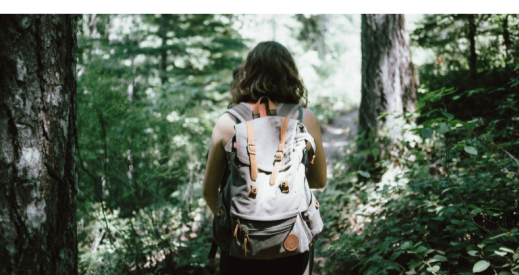
## Black Bear Game Care

**It is critical to remove the hide and cool the bear immediately after checking the bear. Cooling a bear with ice from inside the body cavity is inadequate to prevent the meat from spoiling. If the hide remains on overnight, the meat may be unsuitable for consumption.**

As when cooking any raw meat, care must be taken to prevent exposure to disease when consuming wild game. Black bear are known to carry Trichinella, a parasite commonly associated with pork. States nationwide report incidents of bears infected with Trichinella and New Jersey is no different. A Trichinella infection (Trichinellosis) is a risk only if the meat is cooked improperly. To ensure bear meat is safe to eat, be sure it's cooked to an internal temperature of 170 degrees for at least 15 seconds. Toxoplasmosis, most commonly associated with cats, is another parasitic disease that may be transmitted to humans if meat is not handled properly. To eliminate any health risks associated with Toxoplasmosis make sure no one who may be pregnant handle raw bear meat and always cook the meat thoroughly as you would for Trichinella. If you follow these simple guidelines, you can enjoy your bear meat without any concern for exposure to Trichinella or Toxoplasmosis.

## Bear Resources

### Bear Safety Tips



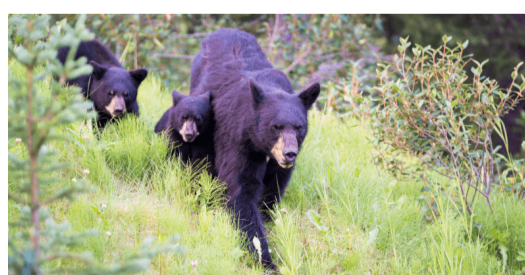
<a href="#">Bear Encounters</a>
<a href="#">Homeowners</a>
<a href="#">Hikers and Campers</a>
<a href="#">Businesses</a>
Townships / Law Enforcement

### Prevent Bear Damage



<a href="#">Avoid Attracting Bears</a>
<a href="#">Garbage Management</a>
<a href="#">Pet Owners</a>
<a href="#">Feeding Birds</a>
Beehives / Crops / Livestock

### Bear Basics



<a href="#">Natural History</a>
<a href="#">Biology and Behavior</a>
<a href="#">Bear Research</a>

### Other Resources



<a href="#">Bear Facts for Kids</a>
<a href="#">Publications &amp; Materials</a>
<a href="#">Activity Reports</a>
<a href="#">YouTube Bear Safety Video</a>
Black Bear Education

**Fish & Wildlife**

---

- Home
- About NJFW
- News
- Events
- Jobs
- Licenses & Permits
- Freshwater
- Marine
- Hunting
- Destinations
- Conservation
- Wildlife
- Education
- Contact Us

**Environmental Protection**

---

- Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette
- DEP Home
- Press Releases
- About DEP
- Topics
- Programs/Units
- DEP Online
- Contact Us

**Statewide**

---

- Governor Phil Murphy
- Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver
- NJ Home
- Services A to Z
- Departments/Agencies
- FAQs
- Contact Us
- Privacy Notice
- Legal Statement & Disclaimers
- Accessibility Statement



Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023  
Department of Environmental Protection  
P. O. Box 420  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
609-777-3373

Last Update: December 13th, 2022