

Fall Black Bear

Stephanie Simek, PhD.

Carnivore, Furbearer, Small Game, Upland Bird
Section Manager, Wildlife Program





WAC 220-415-090 Fall black bear hunting seasons and regulations.

Status of Bear Hunting

Current Regulations

- August 1 – November 15
- Bear Management Units
 - » GMUs listed individually
- 2 bears per license year
- Area restrictions
 - » Bear Identification Test in certain GMUs
 - » Special deer permit GMU 485
- License
 - » Valid Big Game with bear, one transport tag/bear
- Method
 - » Lawful big game modern firearm, archery, or muzzleloader equipment



Proposal

Replace table in the WAC with this statement:

Fall black bear season dates: August 1 to
November 15.

Harvest season dates:

- Remain the same for all units



Proposal

Change Area Restrictions:

- Identify GMUs closed to bear hunting

Summary	
Current Regulations	Proposed
- August 1 - November 15	- Harvest dates: No change
- Bear Management Units GMUs listed individually	- Bear Management Units: No longer listed individually
- Bag limit: 2 bears per year	- Bag limit: No change
- Area restrictions: Bear Identification Test in certain GMUs Special deer permit GMU 485	- Area restrictions: Identified GMUs 151, 480 and 522 as closed
- License	- License: No change
- Method	- Method: No change

GMUs 157, ~~450490~~, and 522 are closed to fall bear hunting. Special deer permit required to hunt black bear in GMU 485. Hunters that choose to hunt in GMUs located in grizzly bear recovery areas, as identified by the department, must successfully complete the annual WDFW online bear identification test or equivalent test from another state and carry proof of successful completion.



Recommended Adjustment

Change Area Restrictions:

- Correct GMUs closed to bear hunting

GMUs 157, ~~450~~490, and 522 are closed to fall bear hunting. Special deer permit required to hunt black bear in GMU 485. Hunters that choose to hunt in GMUs located in grizzly bear recovery areas, as identified by the department, must successfully complete the annual WDFW online bear identification test or equivalent test from another state and carry proof of successful completion.



Public Comment

Comments Received

- Through online survey – 1,631
 - Agree 1234 (76%)
 - Disagree 104 (6%)
 - Neutral 293 (18%)
- Received questions for clarification through email and direct staff contact
 - Closure of GMU 450
 - General statement of closure around monuments
 - Will the rule be open in the future?



Public Comment

Comments Received

- Comments received by those that support
 - Overdue adjustment, make sense, support and no further questions.
 - Request to expand season to align with deer and elk hunting.
 - Request to expand methods to use hounds and bait.
- Concerns expressed by those opposed
 - Reduce bear hunting statewide – concern about overharvest.
 - Bear season starts too early – concern is overlap during hiking and recreation season and limiting those opportunities.
 - Desire to encourage wildlife viewing as recruitment, retention, and reactivation versus hunter.



Summary

Current Regulations

–August 1 – November 15

–Bear Management Units
GMUs listed individually

–Bag limit: 2 bears per year

–Area restrictions
Bear Identification Test in
certain GMUs
Special deer permit GMU 485

–License

–Method



Proposed

–Harvest dates: No change

–Bear Management Units:
No longer listed individually

–Bag limit: No change

–Area restrictions
Identified GMUs 157, 490 and
522 as closed

–License: No change

–Method: No change



Questions

