

# 2022 Spring Black Bear Permits Decision March 18, 2022

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# Introduction

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- Brief background
- Proposed rule changes
- Public comment
- Recommendation



# Background

- ❑ In response to a request from the Fish and Wildlife Commission
- ❑ Mandate (RCW 77.04.012) and the WDFW Game Management Plan (2015-2021)
  - ❑ Provide stable, regulated hunting opportunity
  - ❑ Protect, sustain, and manage wildlife



# Background

## ❑ Black bear management guidelines

Parameter	Harvest		
	Liberalize	Acceptable	Restrict
% Females	<35%	35-39%	>39%
Median age of Females	> 6 years	5-6 years	< 5 years
Median age of Males	> 4 years	2-4 years	< 2 years

## ❑ Include and use density estimates and other data where available



# Additional factors



- Require mandatory harvest inspection for all successful permit hunters
- Require mandatory bear species identification test



# Proposed Rule Changes

## WAC 220-415-080

### Spring Black Bear Special Permits



# Spring black bear special permits:

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## If the motion is to adopt:

- Remove the year from the title and adjust the season dates to May 1 – June 15
- Reduce the permits in GMU 684 to 6
- Add provision prohibiting harvest of offspring and female black bear accompanied by offspring



# Spring black bear special permits

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## **If the motion is to adopt:**

- Define offspring as less than one year old or less than 50 pounds.
- Add language requiring hunters to call within 72 hours of harvest to schedule the inspection and to bring an unfrozen pelt and head with evidence of sex and head attached.

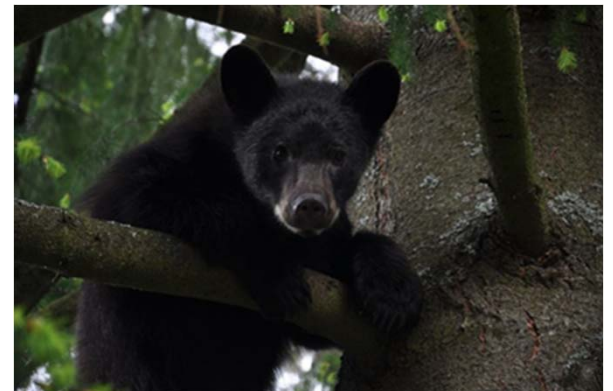




# Summary

## The spring bear special permit season

- Supports the mandate of the department, the commission, and the director
- Allows the department to use recreational hunters as a management tool
- Maintains Washington's hunting heritage
- Supports conservation of wildlife



# Summary

## **If adopted as proposed, the spring bear special permit season would:**

- Provide an annual, limited opportunity spring black bear special permit season
- May 1- June 15
- Offering 664 permits in 23 GMUs
- Improve human safety in GMU 684
- Add protection of offspring and females with offspring
- Aid in directing hunters on reporting requirements



# Public Comment

Over 26,000 comments  
through:

- Online/paper survey
  - Letters (electronic)
  - Emails
  - Voice message
  - FWC briefing
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- Comments received from individuals, organizations, and groups of individuals



# Public Comment

- ❑ Comments received from individuals, organizations, and groups of individuals
- ❑ In addition to public comment, the department received comments from our Tribal co-managers



# Public Comment

## Common Themes

- Oppose bear hunting or spring bear hunting
- Oppose hunting in general
- Possible cub orphaning/mortality and lethargy
- No/lack science to support the hunt
- Desire to have no spring hunting
- Trophy hunts and unethical



# Public Comment

## Common Themes

- Family experience, traditions, and heritage
- Benefit for wildlife (bears and other wildlife)
- Sustainable, robust population, science supports it
- North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
- Provide food for families
- Limited and regulated



# Comment

## Additional comments:

- Removing the year from the title
- The process that has occurred
- Intent of RCW 77.04.012
- Understanding wildlife management
- Losing hunting heritage
- Environmental condition impacts
- Timber damage
- Human-bear conflict



# Recommendation: WAC 220-415-080

-Request to consider a motion

## Motion Language:

I move to adopt the recommended rule changes as presented by Department staff.

Is there a “second”?

