



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

Decision date:

10/12/2024

Agenda item:

Petition to open rulemaking for a management-based black bear season to address human-bear conflict.

Presenter(s): Stephanie Landry, Carnivore Section Manager, Game Division

Background summary:

The petitioner has asked for a "Management Hunt" for black bear to be created by the Department based upon a statement made by a Commissioner that said "...reducing that conflict is a critical piece Of WDFW's mandate". He asked the Director to follow the agency's mandate based on what the Commissioner stated by opening rulemaking and to have the Department come up with a black bear season that could be permit based that addresses human-wildlife conflict as a management need. The Commissioner referred to specific black bear conflict mitigation that is occurring in the Methow using deterrence methods rather than hunters, so the petitioner would like the Department to consider a black bear hunt that would manage the conflict instead of costly deterrence methods. The department already has a black bear hunting season that is part of the three-year season setting process, but that season is not based on human-bear conflict incidents.

Staff recommendation:

The department recommends denial of the petition for the following reasons:

- 1) A general black bear hunting season is already available (August 1- Nov 15) and hunters can hunt in areas where conflict with humans may exist when not conflicting with local ordinances. Any additional opportunity would be in a spring season which the commission has asked us to avoid.
 - 2) Black bears that come into conflict with people are generally occupying areas where firearms are not allowed or their use is unsafe, and therefore, hunters can't hunt due to human safety concerns. Thus, an additional management season is unlikely to target conflict bears any more than the current season is capable of.
 - 3) The cause of most human-bear conflict are attractants, such as bird feeders and unsecured trash in neighborhoods and public areas. Not correcting the root cause of the issue, the attractants, will only bring more bears even after individual bears have been removed from the area. Therefore, hunting is not the most recommended tool for human-bear conflict situations.
-

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Draft motion language:

Post decision communications plan:

Form revised 1-20-21