



DEC Announces 2016 Bear Harvest Results

Hunters in NYS took 1,539 black bears during 2016 hunting seasons Bear hunters in New York State took 1,539 black bears during the 2016 hunting seasons, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced today.

“New York has excellent bear habitat and vast, accessible public lands that offer exciting opportunities for bear hunting,” said Commissioner Seggos. “Black bears are thriving in New York currently, and are a great resource for both out-of-state and local hunters.” Hunters took a total of 1,025 black bears in the Southern Zone, about 10 percent fewer than in 2015, but slightly more than the recent five-year average. Nearly equal numbers of bears were taken during the bow season, 379 bears, and regular season, 398 bears. The early season, which occurs only in a handful of management units in the Catskill region, yielded 228 bears. In the Northern Zone, 514 bears were harvested, approximately 12 percent fewer than in 2015, but on par with the historical average. Bear harvest in the Northern Zone tends to alternate between strong harvests during the early season one year, followed by strong harvests during the regular season the next year, based primarily on cycles of food availability. In 2016, hunters were most successful during the early season, taking 238 bears, while the regular season produced 167 bears.

New in 2016, junior hunters were allowed to take black bears during the Youth Firearms Big Game Hunt over Columbus Day weekend. That hunt overlapped with the early bear season in the Northern Zone. Ten junior hunters in the Southern Zone were able to take advantage of the new opportunity and harvest a bear.

2016 Black Bear Harvest & Recent Trend Comparison

2016 Black Bear Harvest & Recent Trend Comparison				
	2016 Total	2015 Total	Recent 5-year Average (2011 - 2015)	Historical Average (1991 - 2000)
Northern Zone	514	583	472	515
Southern Zone	1,025	1,132	987	207
Statewide	1,539	1,715	1,459	722

NOTABLE NUMBERS

* **One bear per 3.3 square miles** --- by Wildlife Management Unit (WMU), the greatest bear harvest density occurred in WMU 3K, which includes portions of Sullivan and Orange counties. However, the town of Minisink in Orange County (WMU 3M) produced one bear for every 1.9 square miles.

* **107** --- the greatest number of bears reported taken on any one day, the opening day of the regular firearms season in the Southern Zone.

* **555 pounds** --- the heaviest dressed weight bear reported to DEC in 2016, taken in the town of Brandon, Franklin County. A 540-pound dressed weight bear was reportedly taken in the town of Walton in Delaware County, and seven bears were reported with dressed weights between 400-500 pounds. Scaled weights of dressed bears were submitted for 22 percent of the bears taken in 2016.

* **25** --- the number of tagged bears reported in the 2016 harvest. These included six bears originally tagged in Pennsylvania, five from New Jersey, and one from Vermont. The remainder were originally tagged in New York for a variety of reasons including research, nuisance response, relocated urban bears, or released rehabilitated bears.