

Citizen Resolution # 130823



Prohibit Chocolate Bear Baits

Issue: Any amount or type of chocolate may legally be used as bear bait. Ten gallons of bait are allowed at a single bear bait site. The number of bait sites per person is not restricted. Necropsy reports revealed a cub died in Bayfield County after eating a mix of corn, molasses, cookies, blue-frosting and chocolate shavings. Theobromine and caffeine concentration levels from the chocolate shavings examined in the cub's liver fell within the range toxic to bears. This illustrates why unregulated use of chocolate bear baits is not best management practice. Although the DNR discourages the use of dark chocolate and solid blocks of chocolate, milk chocolate may also be fatal depending on a number of factors including but not limited to size and weight of the animal as well as their unique metabolic rate, but also the amount and concentration of caffeine and theobromine in the chocolate itself. Analysis of bear tissues from a cub who died from ingesting chocolate bait suggests that bears are as sensitive or more sensitive than dogs to chocolate. For example, a 30-lb. cub could become ill from ingesting 5 oz milk chocolate, seriously ill from 9 oz and possibly die from 22 oz. A 30-lb. cub could become ill from ingesting as little as 2 oz of semisweet chocolate, seriously ill from 4 oz, and possibly die from 9 oz. Trail camera recordings show that animals other than bear visit bear bait sites. Other wildlife sensitive to chocolate may also become ill or die. Bait suppliers sell plenty of effective and alternative baits. Therefore, the use of chocolate is not necessary to attract bears. New Hampshire and Michigan banned chocolate bear bait. Their state's black bear kill numbers were not impacted by chocolate's absence. North Carolina doesn't allow any processed bear bait.

Resolution: Eliminate the use of chocolate bear bait to prevent future occurrences of theobromine poisoning in wildlife. Do you support a prohibition on chocolate bear baits?

Additional Information provided by author:

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/01/23/us/bears-overdose-on-chocolate-irpt/index.html>

<https://mucc.org/bear-hunters-asking-dnr-ban-chocolate-bait/>

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/About/documents/082814-process-food-products-resolution.pdf>

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/hunt/bear>

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1533&context=hwi>

https://www.academia.edu/64207216/Theobromine_intoxication_in_a_red_fox_and_a_European_badger_in_Sweden

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Dane County

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