

# Citizen Resolution # 210123



## Ban on Use of Chocolate and Cocoa Derivatives in Bear Baiting

Per the Wisconsin Black Bear Plan "Currently, it is legal to bait black bears with chocolate in Wisconsin. Chocolate contains theobromine, a compound known to be toxic to a wide diversity of wildlife species, including black bears (1). Chocolate consumed at bait sites has caused the deaths of one black bear cub in Michigan and two cubs, one subadult female, and one adult female in New Hampshire. Theobromine toxicity was also the presumptive cause of death for one cub (Bayfield County), and the probable cause of death for two other cubs (Washburn County), submitted for necropsy in Wisconsin in 2011. In response to concerns about theobromine toxicity, Wisconsin has included a warning about the toxic effects of chocolate in the Bear Hunting Regulations since 2013, and no mortalities due to theobromine toxicosis have been verified since. However, undetected mortality may be occurring. Theobromine can have sublethal impacts on bear health (1) and impacts on other species that may ingest chocolate at bear baits have not been examined in Wisconsin." (2, p. 22)

The two additional states cited by the WI DNR who also had bear deaths attributed to chocolate in bait piles (MI and NH) have both banned the use of chocolate for this purpose (3, 4). As recently as 12-03-2022, the WCC Bear Committee rejected resolutions to ban chocolate in bear bait. However, with this rejection, it is not clear if there was consideration of the impact smaller amounts of chocolate in bear bait can have related to sublethal doses to bears as well as other wildlife feeding at these piles (5). Therefore, based on the toxic effects chocolate can cause (illness and death) to not only to bears but also other wildlife (where smaller amounts can have a significant impact), chocolate and cocoa derivatives should be banned from bear baiting in Wisconsin.

### Would you support banning the use of chocolate and cocoa derivatives (known toxins to wildlife) in bear baiting?

Additional Information provided by author:

1. Beringer, J., A. Timmins, and T. L. Hiller. 2016. Unintentional toxicosis from methylxanthines in chocolate-based baits consumed by American black bears. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 40:380-383.
2. Wisconsin: <https://p.widencdn.net/wzas7l/bearplan>
3. Michigan: [https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/dnr/Documents/LED/digests/Bear\\_Hunting\\_Digest.pdf?rev=8d3ee14411c74864a83de2f224db7b80](https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/dnr/Documents/LED/digests/Bear_Hunting_Digest.pdf?rev=8d3ee14411c74864a83de2f224db7b80)
4. New Hampshire: <https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/hunting/bear-baiting-choc.html>
5. WCC Bear Committee Minutes: [https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/About/WCC/2022/221203\\_Bear\\_M.pdf](https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/About/WCC/2022/221203_Bear_M.pdf)

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