

Citizen Resolution # 680123



Adjust the Time Period Bear Baiting Is Allowed

The Wisconsin DNR estimates more than 4 million gallons of bear bait are placed each year, mostly high-calorie human junk food, including fryer grease, frosting, caramel, syrup, and chocolate.

Black bears are hunted in 30 states, including 12 that allow baiting, on average 23 days prior to hunting season. In Wisconsin, baiting is allowed for 145 days before hunting season, from mid-April through early October, the entire active period for bears.

One study estimated that bait now makes up 40% of the diet of Wisconsin black bear. *

Researchers worry this amount of high-calorie food could boost the region's bear population above its natural carrying capacity, harm their nutrition, shorten their denning periods, make them dependent on food subsidies and increase the chance of conflicts with humans if the bait is removed.

Since feeding wild animals is prohibited for the general public, this excessive time and amount of baiting defies conventional wisdom.

Trail cameras show other fur bearing animals frequenting bait piles, most importantly wolves.**

Wolves protecting these sites leads to increased conflicts with hounds that are let loose near the bait sites to track bear.

Would you support the WCC work with the DNR to develop a plan to safely and gradually decrease the number of days that bear bait may be placed, to reach a goal of 30 days?

Additional Information provided by author:

Sources: Journal of Wildlife Management Study 2017

* <https://wildlife.org/jwm-study-bait-is-major-food-source-for-northern-wisconsin-bears/>

** <https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jwmg.21304>

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