CONNECTICUT FOR ANIMALS
Education Fund 501(c)(3)

BLACK BEAR HUNTING

THE PROBLEM

There is a risk that black bear hunting will be legalized in the state of Connecticut.

Hunting black bears is not legal in CT, but some residents would like to see that change. They point to hunting as the way to curb the growing number of human-bear interactions in the state. However, it is not the size of CT's black bear population in CT that is leading to more negative encounters with humans and hunting them is not the answer.

Human practices are luring bears closer

"The primary contributing factor to bear problems is the presence of easily accessible food sources near homes and businesses," according to the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) website.

Black bears who eat food associated with humans (e.g., birdseed, trash, pet food) on a regular basis become comfortable near people and associate humans, houses, and neighborhoods with food. Negative interactions with bears decline when attractants are removed. These habituated bears are the most likely to cause human-bear conflicts, not necessarily those who would fall victim to being hunted. It's counterproductive to kill bears in their natural habitat exhibiting normal behaviors and teaching their cubs to do the same. It's essential that humans realize the responsible role they play.

Bears can be legally killed in the state of Connecticut

CT law already allows qualified state agents to capture or kill a bear when there is a public health or safety threat. Additionally, in 2023, the Connecticut General Assembly passed, and the governor signed into law, Senate Bill 1149/Public Act 23-77 to provide creative strategies to address increasing conflicts involving Connecticut's expanding black bear population. The Act allows individuals to request permits to take bears when bears are damaging agricultural crops, livestock, or apiaries, and non-lethal responses are unreasonable or ineffective; bans the intentional feeding of potentially dangerous animals (including bears); and establishes the right to use deadly force to defend oneself, other people, and one's pets if attacked, in certain circumstances. This law went into effect on October 1, 2023.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Provide education on proven non-lethal strategies that allow people and bears to peacefully co-exist.

These strategies include:

· Never intentionally feed bears.

· Purchase a bear-resistant trash can or store your trash cans in a garage or shed and bring your garbage to the curb on pick up day.

· Remove bird feeders from March through November.

· Remove unsecured food attractants around your home, including garbage, pet food, and greasy outdoor grills.

· Protect beehives, chicken coops and similar attractants with electric barriers.

· Make loud noises with an air horn, handclapping or yelling to make bears feel unwelcome. That, along with a lack of food will teach bears to avoid the area.

· Keep pets in enclosed areas, and when hiking, keep dogs on a leash.

RESOURCES

CT Coalition to Protect Bears: www.ctbears.org

Get BearSmart: https://www.bearsmart.com/

American Wildlife Values Study (2018):
https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/wildlifevalues/

Bear Law FAQs (ct.gov)
https://portal.ct.gov/deep/wildlife/bears/bear-law-faqs

Frequently Asked Questions About Black Bears (ct.gov)
https://portal.ct.gov/deep/wildlife/bears/frequently-asked-questions-about-black-bears

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