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Attention Bear Hunters: You Are Now Required to Submit a Tooth From Your Bear When You Register It

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

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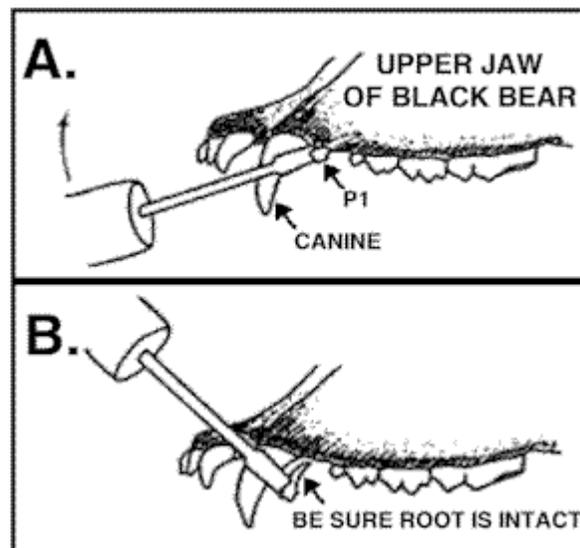
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Attention bear hunters: You are now required to submit a tooth from your bear when you register it.

We have provided hunter check stations with the information for submitting a tooth.

The **store clerk or agent will provide you with a tooth envelope** and it is the **bear hunter's responsibility** to:

- Fill out the information on the tooth envelope
- Remove the **first upper premolar** located the canine tooth on the upper jaw.
- Cut the gum tissue around the tooth with a knife.
- Insert the knife or a screwdriver under the front edge of the tooth, and
- Pry the premolar out of the socket using the large canine tooth for leverage.
- We need the root to estimate the age of your bear.
- **If you broke the root, try to remove the other upper premolar.**



- Place the tooth in the envelope, seal the envelope, and give the tooth envelope to the agent/store clerk.
- The agent/store will mail the tooth to MDIFW.
- Bear age's will be posted on this website the next summer. *THANK YOU* for your help!

Why is the Department Collecting Teeth from Black Bears?

Beginning in 2008, MDIFW asked bear hunters to voluntarily submit a tooth from the bear they harvested. We greatly appreciate the help of bear hunters, check stations, and guides that assisted with providing teeth from bears. Since 2008, bear tooth submissions have been declining from 41 to 23% of the harvested bears. During the 2011 season, bear hunters will be required to submit the bear's first upper premolar when they register their bear.

We are collecting teeth from black bears to help us track the number of bears in Maine and adjust bear hunting regulations when necessary. Our current management goal is to stabilize the population at 1999 levels (23,000 bears). Like counting the rings on a tree stump, we can estimate how old each bear is by counting the rings on a cross-section of their tooth. By knowing the age of the bears harvested, we can estimate how many bears were present in previous years. For example, a 10-year old bear harvested in 2010 was alive for the preceding 9 years and can be added to the population estimate for each year. By repeating this process for each bear, we can reconstruct the population. Although this method provides a minimum estimate of the number of bears, it may be more useful at monitoring whether the population is increasing, decreasing, or stable.

2008 Bear season

In 2008, we received teeth from 1,061 hunters which equates to 41% of the hunters who harvested a bear in 2008. The oldest bear was a 28 year-old female, while the oldest male bear was 20 years old. Like most hunted populations, older bears made up a smaller proportion of the harvest with just over a third of the bears over 3 years old. The lab was able to identify the age of most bears, however the root of a few teeth were damaged and an age could not be determine. We were not able to identify the names of 12 hunters due to recording errors on tooth envelopes.

Hunters who voluntarily submitted a tooth in **2008** can learn the age of the bear they harvested. We received 24 additional teeth after the teeth were shipped to the lab. We were able to determine the age of these 24 bears additional bears harvested in 2008

2009 Bear Season

Hunters who voluntarily submitted a tooth in **2009** can learn the age of the bear they harvested. Initially, we received teeth from 971 bears harvest in 2009 (28%). Like last year, some teeth arrived late and the ages from these bears will be provided as soon as they are available. Thus far the oldest bear was a 25 year-old female, while the oldest male bear was 20 years old. Like most hunted populations, older bears made up a smaller proportion of the harvest with just over a third of the bears over 3 years old. Although the lab was able to identify the age of most bears, the root of a 13 teeth were damaged and an age could not be determined. We were not able to identify the names of 19 hunters due to recording errors on tooth envelopes.

2010 Bear Season

We received a tooth from 690 bears that were harvested during the 2010 bear season (23%). We were able to estimate the age of 684 bears and the oldest bear was a 29 year old female. The oldest male bear was 25 years old. The

majority of bears (78%) were between 1 and 5 years old. Although the lab was able to identify the age of most bears, the root of a 6 teeth were damaged and an age could not be determined. We were not able to identify the names of 3 hunters due to recording errors on tooth envelopes. You can learn the [age of the bear you harvested](#) in 2010.

NOW AVAILABLE 2011 Bear Tooth Ages

You can learn the [age of the bear you harvested in 2011](#). We received a tooth from 1,914 bears that were harvested during the 2011 bear season (80%). We were able to estimate the age of 1,868 bears and the oldest bear was a 29 year old female. The oldest male bear was 23 years old. The majority of bears (74%) were between 1 and 5 years old. Although the lab was able to identify the age of most bears, the root of 48 teeth were damaged and an age could not be determined. We were not able to identify the names of 18 hunters due to recording errors on tooth envelopes (<1%).

We greatly appreciate the help of bear hunters, check stations, and guides that assisted with providing teeth from bears harvested in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. These teeth will help us learn more about Maine's bear population.