

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Bear Hunting Areas, Seasons, Rules and Bag Limits (LAC 76:XIX.109)

Notice is hereby given that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission proposes to adopt a Louisiana Black Bear hunting season for the 2024 hunting season. The department manages the take of resident game, outlaw quadrupeds and migratory birds in Louisiana and this action defines legal participants, sets the legal season bag limits along with legal methods of take and hunting season dates for the Louisiana Black Bear during 2024 hunting season.

The Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the commission to promulgate and effectuate this Notice of Intent, including but not limited to, the filing of the Fiscal and Economic Impact Statement, the filing of the Notice of Intent and compiling public comments and submissions for the commission's review and consideration. In the absence of any further action by the commission following an opportunity to consider all public comments regarding the proposed rule, the Secretary is authorized and directed to prepare and transmit a summary report to the legislative oversight committees and file the final Rule.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part XIX. Hunting and WMA Regulations

Chapter 1. Resident Game Hunting Season

§109. Bear Hunting Areas, Seasons, Rules and Bag Limits

A. Bear Hunting 2024

1. Hunting only allowed in Bear Area 4 and shall be still hunt only.
2. Bear season will be from the first Saturday in December to the Sunday following the third Saturday in December. Harvest limit is one bear per season.
3. The use of dogs when hunting bear is prohibited.
4. Cubs and females with cubs are not legal to harvest. A cub is defined as any bear less than or equal to 75 pounds.
5. Bear hunting is restricted to bona fide resident hunters who are properly licensed, hunter safety certified, and selected by lottery. Successful applicants will be issued permits. The number of bear harvest permits issued will be determined based on Bear Area specific population estimates and vital rate data acquired at regular intervals. The number of bear harvest permits issued at any given time during the season shall not allow the harvest to exceed the number of female or male bears in any Bear Area that would compromise the long-term sustainability of the Bear Area population.
6. Harvest of bears without a permit is prohibited. Bear hunting permits will consist of three types: Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Private Landowner, and General.
 - a. WMA Permits will authorize bear harvest for specified WMAs.
 - b. Private Landowner Permits will be allocated to qualifying private landowners, or their designee, in Bear Areas with an open season for that permit year. To qualify for a Private Landowner Permit, applicants must provide evidence of qualifying acreage (40+ contiguous acres), proof of ownership, and payment of property taxes for property within the Bear Area for which they apply.
 - c. General Permits authorize hunting on private property, with landowner permission, within Bear Areas with an open season for that permit year. Individuals

receiving a General Permit are responsible for coordinating with landowners to gain permission and access to hunting on their property.

7. Permits shall only be issued by lottery. Applicants shall apply to LDWF on department-approved applications prior to each season. Applicants not chosen will be given preference points in following years. Successful applicants are not allowed to apply for another bear permit for two years after being drawn. All applications require a non-refundable application fee. Consult the regulations pamphlet or contact any department office for details.

8. Transferability of bear permits: Only the private landowner permits are transferrable. Transferees must be a properly licensed Louisiana resident age 18 and over. Permits being transferred must be arranged **prior to** the mandatory training session. A permit may only be transferred one time. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall be notified once a permit has been transferred and provided the transferees name, address, and phone number.

9. Bear hunter training: All successful applicants or transferees will be required to attend a department bear hunter training course prior to going afield. Individuals not attending a department bear hunter training course will be prohibited from hunting. Successful youth applicants must attend bear hunting training with a properly licensed adult. The adult attending the training is responsible for supervising the youth during the bear hunt and must be within arm's reach or within the same stand or blind as the youth.

10. Baiting and scent attractants: Baiting allowed two weeks prior to season opening to the day the season closes. Hunting over specified unprocessed bait, specified processed bait, and the use of a scent lure is allowed. Unprocessed bait is defined as any raw product legal for baiting bears. Legal specified unprocessed baits are raw meat and fish, grains,

nuts, and fruits where legal. Specified processed bait is defined as any baked or cooked product legal for baiting bears. Legal processed baits are donuts and like pastries (e.g., cinnamon rolls, honey buns, muffins). Use of chocolate is prohibited as bait or scent. Scent lure is any non-food product that is used as a scent attractant legal for use in Louisiana.

11. Harvested bears must be tagged immediately upon harvest and prior to being moved from site of harvest. All successful bear hunters must immediately contact their designated department biologist (see permit) to report their kill and schedule biological data collection.

12. Hunter Orange or Blaze Pink: Any person hunting bears shall display on his head, chest and/or back a total of not less than 400 square inches of “hunter orange” or “blaze pink”. Persons hunting on privately owned land may wear a “hunter orange” or “blaze pink” cap or hat in lieu of the 400 square inches. These provisions shall not apply to persons hunting bear from elevated stands on property that is privately owned or to archery bear hunters hunting on lands where firearm hunting is not allowed by agreement of the landowner or lessee. However, anyone hunting bear on such lands where hunting with firearms is allowed shall be required to display the 400 square inches or a “hunter orange” or “blaze pink” cap or hat while walking to and from elevated stands. While a person is hunting from an elevated stand, the 400 square inches or cap or hat may be concealed. Warning: bear hunters are cautioned to watch for persons hunting other game or engaged in activities not requiring “hunter orange” or “blaze pink”.

13. All successful bear hunters are required to remove the edible portions of meat from the bear. “Edible portions” include, at a minimum, all four quarters, all backstraps and tenderloins along the backbone.

14. Methods of take:

a. Bear may be taken with the following firearms, any of which may be fitted with a magnified scope:

i. Centerfire firearms .25 caliber or larger, rimfire firearms .30 caliber or larger, and shotguns 10 gauge and smaller using slugs, all of which must load exclusively from the breech.

ii. Rifles and pistols, .44 caliber or larger, or shotguns 10 gauge and smaller, all of which must load exclusively from the muzzle, use black powder or approved substitute only, take ball or bullet projectile only, including sabot bullets.

b. Bear may be taken by legal archery gear with a minimum draw weight of no less than 30 pounds, including traditional bow, compound bow, crossbow, or any bow drawn, held or released by mechanical means.

c. All other methods of take are prohibited.

B. Description of Bear Areas

1. Area 1

a. All of the following parishes:

i. Acadia, Assumption, Cameron, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lafourche, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Vermillion.

b. Portions of the following parishes:

i. Allen—that portion south of US 190 and east of US 165;

ii. Ascension—that portion west of the Mississippi River;

iii. Calcasieu—that portion south of Interstate 10;

iv. Iberville—that portion south of Interstate 10 and west of the Mississippi River;

- v. Jefferson—that portion west of the Mississippi River;
- vi. Orleans—that portion west of the Mississippi River;
- vii. Plaquemines—that portion west of the Mississippi River;
- viii. St. Charles—that portion west of the Mississippi River;
- ix. St. James—that portion west of the Mississippi River;
- x. St. John the Baptist—that portion west of the Mississippi

River;

- xi. St. Martin—that portion south of Interstate 10;
- xii. West Baton Rouge—that portion south of Interstate 10.

2. Area 2

- a. All of the following parishes: Pointe Coupee, West Feliciana.
- b. Portions of the following parishes:
 - i. Iberville—that portion north of Interstate 10;
 - ii. St. Landry—that portion east of Interstate 49;
 - iii. St. Martin—that portion north of Interstate 10;
 - iv. West Baton Rouge—that portion north of Interstate 10.

3. Area 3

- a. All of the following parishes: Avoyelles, Concordia, LaSalle.
- b. Portions of the following parish:
 - i. Catahoula—that portion west of US Highway 425.

4. Area 4

- a. All of the following parishes: East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, West Carroll.

b. Portions of the following parishes:

i. Ascension—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

ii. Iberville—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

iii. Jefferson—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

iv. Orleans—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

v. Plaquemines—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

vi. St. Charles—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

vii. St. James—that portion east of the Mississippi River;

viii. St. John the Baptist—that portion east of the Mississippi River.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:115, R.S. 56:109(B) and R.S. 56:141(C).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR

Family Impact Statement

In accordance with Act 1183 of 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Poverty Impact Statement

This proposed Rule will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S. 49:973.

Provider Impact Statement

This proposed Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of 2014.

Small Business Analysis

This proposed Rule has no known impact on small businesses as described in R.S. 49:965.2 through R.S. 49:965.8.

Public Comments

Interested persons may submit written comments relative to the proposed Rule until February 5, 2024, to John Hanks, Office of Wildlife, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, P. O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 or via e-mail to jhanks@wlf.la.gov.

Andrew J. Blanchard

Chairman