

# Say NO to the Hunt! Keep Florida Bears Protected

**Call Governor Rick Scott today:  
(850) 488-7146**

<http://www.flgov.com/contact-gov-scott/email-the-governor/>

Florida black bears were once at the brink of extinction from over-hunting and massive habitat loss. Today, most of us, including those who spend their tourist dollars in Florida, want to see this unique species protected and conserved. But the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) wants to allow trophy hunters to kill hundreds of bears each year, starting this October. **Don't let them silence you!**

**Ask Governor Scott to keep bears protected. Tell him you oppose the black bear trophy hunt proposal because it:**

## Ignores Your Voice.

- Craig Pittman of the *Tampa Bay Times* reports that “Despite opposition from 75 percent of the people who wrote and called, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted unanimously . . . to reopen bear hunting this fall. [T]he commissioners, all appointed by Gov. Rick Scott, chose to side with the hunters clamoring for a chance to pursue a top predator...**Wildlife commission chairman Richard Corbett, a Tampa mall developer, said the commission ignored the public opposition because ‘those people don't know what they're talking about. . . They think we're talking about teddy bears.’**”<sup>1</sup>
- A 2015 Remington Research poll confirmed that nearly two-thirds of Florida voters strongly oppose trophy hunting Florida's recovering black bears (61%), while only 25% would support it.
- Floridians overwhelmingly favor educational outreach (84%) and bear-proof cans (81%), and 87% of those polled agreed that neighborhoods located near areas where bears occur have a responsibility to avoid attracting bears by securing their garbage and other foods.<sup>2</sup>

## Ignores Science.

- The FWC voted to reopen bear hunting **even though they do not currently know how many bears live in Florida!** The most recent scientific bear population estimate is thirteen years old. An updated bear population study won't be completed until 2016.
- Research shows that trophy hunting simply does not reduce human-bear conflicts.<sup>3</sup>
- Diane Eggeman, Director of Hunting and Game Management Division, FWC: **“People who oppose the idea of hunting bears will point out that the published scientific literature—the published scientific research—has shown no evidence that hunting reduces human-bear conflicts, and that is true.”**
- Trash management, public education and enforcing feeding bans, securing garbage, and aversive conditioning effectively reduce conflicts with bears, as FWC's own research has shown.<sup>4</sup>



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## Ignores Responsible Management.

- The FWC plans to sell an unlimited number of permits and use a quota system, which could result in too many bears killed and increased poaching. Research shows that as many as 20% of hunters do not report bear kills.<sup>5</sup>
- The FWC has indicated that if it doesn't meet its goal of reducing certain bear populations by 20% annually, **it will consider other methods, which may include cruel and unsporting practices of bear baiting and hounding.** Bear baiters dump stale doughnuts and other human foods into the woods to attract bears, and then shoot bears while the animals are eating. Houndsmen release packs of radio-collared dogs into the woods to chase bears into trees for an easy shot. A 2015 Remington Research poll showed that an overwhelming majority of Florida voters oppose hunting black bears with dogs (84%) or bait (78%).



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**Speak Out. Don't let them ignore your voice, the science, and responsible management.  
Say NO to the HUNT – Keep Florida Bears Protected**



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## Sources:

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<sup>1</sup> Pittman, Craig. "State wildlife officials vote to bring back bear hunts." *Tampa Bay Times*. April 15, 2015. Accessed online April 28 at: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/wildlife/state-wildlife-commission-may-vote-to-bring-back-bear-hunts-banned-21/2225561>

<sup>2</sup> Remington Research Poll, January 2015. [http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press\\_releases/2015/02/poll-fl-bear-hunt-020315.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2015/02/poll-fl-bear-hunt-020315.html)

<sup>3</sup> Across eight scientific studies, researchers found no correlation between hunting and alleviating human-bear conflicts (HBC). Martyn Obbard et al. (2014) write: "We found no significant correlations between harvest and subsequent HBC. Although it may be intuitive to assume that harvesting more bears should reduce HBC, empirical support for this assumption is lacking despite considerable research (Garshelis 1989, Treves and Karanth 2003, Huygens et al. 2004, Tavss 2005, Treves 2009, Howe et al. 2010, Treves et al. 2010). Obbard, Martyn et al. "Relationships among Food Availability, Harvest, and Human-Bear Conflict at Landscape Scales in Ontario, Canada; Treves, A. K.J. Kapp, and D.M. MacFarland. 2010. American Black Bear Nuisance Complaints and Hunter Take. *Ursus* 21:30-42. & Treves, A. Hunting for Large Carnivore Conservation. 2009. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 46:1350-1356.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, Yosemite National Park, officials reported in 2014 a 92 percent drop off in human-bear conflicts as a result of public education campaigns and law enforcement practices. Paul Rogers, 2014 "Conflicts with Yosemite bears fall dramatically as people, bears learn new lessons"

[http://www.mercurynews.com/science/ci\\_26529196/conflicts-yosemite-bears-fall-dramatically-people-bears-learn](http://www.mercurynews.com/science/ci_26529196/conflicts-yosemite-bears-fall-dramatically-people-bears-learn) . See also: Barrett, M. A., D. J. Telesco, S. E. Barrett, K. M. Widness and E. H. Leone. "Testing Bear-Resistant Trash Cans in Residential Areas of Florida." *Southeastern Naturalist* 13, no. 1 (2014): 26-39.

<sup>5</sup> Koehler, G. M. and D. J. Pierce. "Survival, Cause-Specific Mortality, Sex, and Ages of American Black Bears in Washington State, USA." *Ursus* 16, no. 2 (2005): 157-166.



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