



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEEK-LONG BEAR HUNT BEGINS MONDAY IN NORTH JERSEY
COINCIDES WITH OPENING OF THE STATE'S DEER HUNTING SEASON STATEWIDE

(13/P110) TRENTON –The Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Division of Fish & Wildlife today announced the state’s weeklong black bear hunting season will begin at sunrise on Monday morning and continue through sunset on Saturday, December 14 in portions of six North Jersey counties. The season runs concurrently with the six-day firearm deer hunting season.

DEP biologists anticipate the outcome of this year’s hunt to be similar to 2012, when 287 bears were harvested in hunting zones in Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren counties, plus a very small area of western Bergen County.

“We are prepared for another safe and professionally managed black bear hunt, which is just one component of the state’s comprehensive efforts to manage the bear population,” said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. “Our goal is to reduce the number of black bears, to a sustainable number, while improving public safety by reducing bear encounters with people”

In addition to hunting, the state’s comprehensive policy includes a common sense mix of bear management tools, including public education, research, bear-habitat analysis and protection and non-lethal bear management techniques, and a bear feeding ban, all geared towards reducing bear-human encounters. The Division of Fish and Wildlife has partnered with Untamed Science to offer New Jersey teachers and students black bear education materials via on a new bear education website (http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/bearfacts_curriculum.htm).

The early results of DEP’s comprehensive approach, which was established in 2010 by the state’s Fish and Game Council, show a reduction in the estimated number of black bears living in North Jersey and a continuing decline in bear-human incidents. North Jersey has a robust black bear population, with scientifically calculated and conservative estimates showing some 2,500 to 2,800 black bears living in the hunting area north of Route 78 and west of Route 287. That is down from an estimated 3,400 bears in 2010.

Reported black bear sightings in North Jersey this year are down 21 percent, damage and nuisance complaints are down 20 percent, and Category One calls (dangerous bear incidents) are down by 3 percent, to slightly more than 100, through the end of October, compared to the same period in 2012. That follows marked declines in 2012 when reported bear sightings dropped 34 percent, damage and nuisance complaints declined 26 percent, and Category One calls fell off by 43 percent.

Black bears have been observed in all 21 counties in New Jersey, but the number of bears living outside of the northwestern portion of the state remains low, with no population data available.

Black bear hunting is taking place this week in portions of a 1,000-square-mile area north of Route 78 and West of Route 287. It is complemented by black bear hunts that occur each autumn in neighboring Pennsylvania and New York State, where 3,632 and 1,337 bears were harvested in 2012. Bears living in the North Jersey also traverse parts of neighboring states.

Nearly 7,000 hunters have obtained bear hunting permits for the upcoming New Jersey hunt, with a maximum of 10,000 permits to be allocated.

For information on New Jersey's 2013 black bear hunt, including bear permit availability, and information on the 2010, 2011 and 2012 bear harvest results, visit:
http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/bearseason_info.htm

Information on the numbers of bears accumulated will be posted on line at http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/bearseason_info.htm on Monday evening, as soon as possible after the 7:00 p.m. closing of the five check stations. On subsequent days, postings will occur by 8:00 a.m. the next morning.

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