

# 2020 Wisconsin BEAR HUNTING Regulations



Photo: Sam Redden

Nick Parins, 17, of Land-o-Lakes, successfully harvested this 170-pound black bear in September. After a tough year battling cancer, this hunt was one Nick and his family won't soon forget. He spent the previous year in Madison getting treatment, but he was able to get out in the woods to bear hunt in 2019, successfully harvesting this bear in Vilas County on Sept. 6.

## 2020 Season Dates

### Zone A, Zone B, Zone D

September 9 to September 15

- with all legal methods not using dogs

September 16 to October 6

- with all legal methods, including bait and dogs

October 7 to October 13\*

- with dogs only  
\*Bait may be used to locate bear to hunt with the aid of dogs.

### Zone C

September 9 to October 13

- with all legal methods not using dogs

## Register a bear harvest with GameReg

Online: [gamereg.wi.gov](http://gamereg.wi.gov)

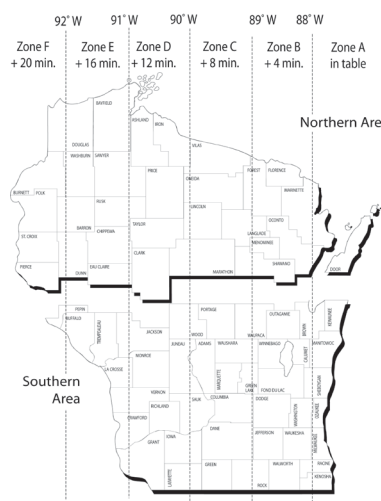
By phone: 1-844-426-3734 (1-844-GAMEREG)

In person: Find a list of stations at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), search "registration stations"



Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707  
(888) 936-7463

## Shooting and Bear Dog Training Hours



Bear shooting and dog training hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to 20 minutes after sunset during the bear harvest season. The table below lists these times for Zone A. To determine opening (AM) and closing (PM) times for other zones, add the minutes shown on map at left to the times listed in the table below. Prior to the harvest season, when training dogs between July 1 - Aug. 31, these hours do not apply.

	Southern Area Hours		Northern Area Hours		
September 2020	Date	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
9	5:54	7:31	5:52	7:32	
10	5:55	7:29	5:53	7:30	
11	5:56	7:27	5:54	7:28	
12	5:57	7:26	5:55	7:26	
13	5:59	7:24	5:57	7:24	
14	6:00	7:22	5:58	7:22	
15	6:01	7:20	5:59	7:20	
16	6:02	7:18	6:00	7:18	
17	6:03	7:16	6:02	7:16	
18	6:04	7:15	6:03	7:14	
19	6:05	7:13	6:04	7:12	
20	6:07	7:11	6:05	7:10	
21	6:08	7:09	6:07	7:09	
22	6:09	7:07	6:08	7:07	
23	6:10	7:05	6:09	7:05	
24	6:11	7:04	6:10	7:03	
25	6:12	7:02	6:12	7:01	
26	6:13	7:00	6:13	6:59	
27	6:15	6:58	6:14	6:57	
28	6:16	6:56	6:15	6:55	
29	6:17	6:54	6:17	6:53	
30	6:18	6:53	6:18	6:51	
October 2020	Date	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	6:19	6:51	6:19	6:49	
2	6:20	6:49	6:20	6:47	
3	6:21	6:47	6:22	6:45	
4	6:23	6:45	6:23	6:44	
5	6:24	6:44	6:24	6:42	
6	6:25	6:42	6:26	6:40	
7	6:26	6:40	6:27	6:38	
8	6:27	6:38	6:28	6:36	
9	6:29	6:37	6:29	6:34	
10	6:30	6:35	6:31	6:32	
11	6:31	6:33	6:32	6:31	
12	6:32	6:32	6:33	6:29	
13	6:33	6:30	6:35	6:27	

## Bear Registration

- Registration is mandatory.
- Successful hunters must electronically register bears they harvest, in the county of kill or in an adjoining county, by 5 p.m. the day after recovery. Register a bear in one of three ways:
  - Go to [gamereg.wi.gov](http://gamereg.wi.gov) (fastest and easiest method).
  - Call 844-426-3734 (844-GAME-REG).
  - Visit an in-person station. Go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "registration stations" to find a list.
- Once registration is complete, the GameReg system will issue a confirmation number for the hunter's records.
- Once the bear is registered, keep the carcass tag with the meat until all meat has been consumed.

## Submitting Bear Tooth Samples

- Successful hunters are required to provide TWO upper pre-molar teeth in 2020. One will be used to determine age, and one will be used for DNA sampling to support development of a statewide bear population estimate. Instructions for collection of the teeth will be mailed to hunters who draw Class A licenses, and is also available at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), keyword "bear registration." Hunters will be notified of the bear's age after samples are analyzed.
- If hunters do not have DNR-provided materials, they should write their name, customer ID number and registration confirmation number on a piece of paper and affix the tooth to it with tape. Enclose this in an envelope and mail to: Bear Tooth, 107 Sutliff Avenue, Rhinelander, WI 54501.

## Questions?

Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keyword "bear."

Buy your licenses online at [GoWild.wi.gov](http://GoWild.wi.gov)

Or buy from one of our license agents. To find an agent near you, visit the [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) website and search keywords "license agents" or call 1-888-WDNR-INFO (1-888-936-7463)

TTY access via relay - 711

## Report Natural Resource Violations

CALL or TEXT  
(800) TIP-WDNR  
(800-847-9367)

Toll Free • Statewide • 24-Hour • Confidential

This pamphlet is a summary of Wisconsin's bear hunting laws and regulations. For a complete set of laws and regulations, please refer to the Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 29 or Chapter 10 of Administrative Code of the Department of Natural Resources. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Chief, Public Civil Rights, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240. This publication is available in alternative format (large print, Braille, etc.) upon request. Please call the Accessibility Coordinator at 608-267-7490.

## REMINDERS FOR 2020!

- Submission of two teeth from harvested bears is mandatory for 2020.
- A person of any age may acquire bear preference points or apply for a Class A bear license.
- 2021 bear applications are expected to be available in summer 2020, pending legislative review of rulemaking to implement the bear management zone structure identified in the recently-approved Wisconsin Bear Management Plan. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), keyword "bear" or log into [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov) for updates.
- Hunters should note the following:
  - Carcass tags are required and are printed on regular paper at home, at a DNR service center or at a license agent. Reprinting tags at a license agent incurs a \$2 processing fee.
  - While bear hunting, hunters must carry one of the accepted forms of proof of their Class A bear license. See second item in "Licensing Requirements" section.

## Licensing Requirements

Class A License Cost: Residents \$49, Non-residents \$251  
Mentored (under 12 years old) License Cost: Resident and Non-Resident \$7

A valid Class A license is required to shoot and tag a bear. Hunters may only hunt in the management zone indicated on their license.

### License Issuance

The number of Class A bear licenses available per management zone is based upon previous hunter success rates and current bear population estimates.

- Holders of a Class A license must carry proof of license while engaging in any of the activities requiring the license and display it to a warden upon request. See [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "Go Wild" for acceptable forms of proof in lieu of original license issued at the point of sale. In addition, you must carry your paper carcass tag while engaged in hunting activities.
- Hunters are selected using a cumulative preference point system. Applicants receive a preference point every year they apply and are not drawn for a Class A license. For each zone, applicants with the greatest number of preference points are chosen first to receive a Class A license. Up to 4 hunters may apply as a group. Hunters who apply as a group will enter the drawing with the preference point total of the group member with lowest preference. Hunters must apply for a license or preference point at least once every 3 years to retain their preference points.

- A person of any age may acquire bear preference points or apply for a Class A bear license.
- To be considered for a Class A bear license in 2021, an applicant must pay a \$4.50 application fee and provide zone preference to the license agent at the time of purchase. Applications go on sale summer 2020, pending legislative approval of bear management zone modifications. The application deadline is 11:59 p.m., Dec. 10, 2020. If you select a zone at the time of purchase and you are selected in the drawing, your preference points will be reset to zero even if you do not purchase a Class A license. Unsuccessful applicants automatically receive a preference point.
- Applicants who do not wish to bear hunt in 2021 but would like a preference point should inform the license agent at the time of purchase.
- Drawing winners will be notified by mail in February, however, it is the hunter's responsibility to determine if he or she was selected in the drawing. Hunters may check their drawing status via their online Go Wild customer account. Preference points will not be reinstated for hunters who were unaware of their drawing status.
- Applicants may submit applications online at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov). An additional 1.75% convenience fee applies if paying online with a credit card. There is no fee for paying with a checking account.
- Non-residents may purchase Class A licenses at the resident rate if they are current active duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces and were Wisconsin residents when they enlisted.
- Hunters drawn for a 2020 Class A license can purchase their license at any time beginning March 2020.
- Anyone charging a fee to provide bear hunting services must possess a guide license; a guide license does not grant Class A privileges.

## Class A Bear License Transfer

- A person may apply to transfer their Class A license to a person younger than age 18, a person holding a valid Class A, B, C or D disabled permit, an active duty military member of the U.S. Armed Forces or a Purple Heart recipient. Documentation is required.
- Preference points or Class A bear licenses can be transferred to a minor from a customer who is deceased.
- The Class A bear license may not be transferred unless both the transferrer and transferee are eligible to use the approval.
- Transfer recipient will retain his/her accumulated preference points.
- Transfer application shall be submitted at least 15 days prior to the start of the bear season.
- Upon request, the DNR will defer the use of a Class A bear license approval for members of the Armed Forces or National Guard who are on active duty and unable to hunt.
- Bear transfer applications and information can be found at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) keywords "permit transfer" or at DNR Service Centers.

## Highly Visible Clothing Requirement

During the 2-day youth gun deer hunt on Oct. 10 and 11, 2020, bear hunters afield must wear blaze orange or fluorescent pink.

## Hunter Education Requirements

Persons born on or after January 1, 1973 must present their Wisconsin Hunter Education Certificate or proof of a hunter safety course recognized by the department from another state, province or country; or a Wisconsin hunting license from a previous year that has the hunter safety number printed on it; or proof of successful completion of basic training in the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves or National Guard to purchase a Class A bear license. If a person has not completed hunter education, that hunter may only obtain a license that requires hunting with a mentor in compliance with the Hunting Mentorship Program requirements.

## Youth-Specific Information

- In order to possess a firearm and harvest a bear under a Class A license or serve as a backup shooter in the presence of a Class A license holder, youth must meet these requirements:
  - Youth under age 12 must be in compliance with all the Hunting Mentorship Program requirements.
  - Youth ages 12-13 who have not yet completed hunter education must be in compliance with all the Hunting Mentorship Program requirements. Youth ages 12-13 who have completed hunter education must be under adult supervision, within visual and voice contact of the adult.
  - Youth ages 14-17 who have completed hunter education may hunt bear without being accompanied by an adult and do not need to be in visual or voice contact with an adult while in possession of a firearm.
- It is illegal to hunt with a handgun, including muzzleloading handguns, if under age 18 (see firearm and archery restrictions).

## Hunting Mentorship Program

Under this program, a person may obtain a Class A hunting license without first completing hunter education certification. Individuals utilizing this program are required to hunt within arm's reach of a mentor, and both the mentor and mentee may possess a weapon as long as the mentor also holds a valid hunting license. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) keyword "mentored hunting" for more information.

## Backup Shooters

Backup shooters must adhere to the following rules:

- may only shoot if the Class A bear license holder possesses an unused bear carcass tag valid for the zone being hunted;
- may only shoot for the purpose of killing a bear that was shot, but not killed, by a Class A bear license holder;
- may only shoot if killing the bear is necessary to protect the safety of the members of the hunting party or others.

## Firearm and Archery Restrictions

### It is illegal to:

- hunt bear with any rimfire rifle, air rifle, centerfire rifle less than .22 caliber, .410 shotgun, handgun loaded with .410 shotgun ammunition, fully automatic firearm or with ammunition loaded with non-expanding type bullets;
- use handguns that are not muzzleloading handguns unless they are loaded with centerfire cartridges of .22 caliber or larger. These handguns must have a minimum barrel length of 5½" measured from the muzzle end of the barrel, not including attached muzzle breaks, to the firing pin with the action closed;
- use a muzzleloading handgun unless it fires a single projectile weighing not less than 138 grains and is at least .44 caliber with a minimum barrel length of 7 inches measured from muzzle to breech;
- use a muzzleloader, unless it is a smoothbore muzzleloading firearm of .45 caliber or larger, or a rifled muzzleloading firearm of .40 caliber or larger;
- hunt bear with a bow having a pull of less than 30 pounds. To be legal, broadheads must be at least 7/8" wide and kept sharp. Stone arrow heads may be used;
- possess any poisoned, drugged or explosive-tipped arrow while hunting;
- hunt bear with a crossbow, unless it has a minimum draw of 100 pounds, a workable safety and uses at least 14-inch long bolts or arrows equipped with broadheads. Compound bows equipped with a drawlock mechanism that is capable of holding the bow at full draw are considered crossbows, which are exempt from the 100-pound requirement but must meet the 30-pound minimum;
- possess in a vehicle or transport in or on a moving vehicle any firearm (other than a handgun) or bow unless it is unloaded\* or any crossbow unless it is unloaded and decocked or unloaded and enclosed within a carrying case;
- load a firearm other than a handgun while it is in a vehicle, or discharge any firearm in or from any moving vehicle\*\* or a stationary motorized vehicle except for certain disabled hunters with proper permits.

\*A loaded firearm can be placed on, but not in, a vehicle which is stationary. \*\*A person may load and discharge a firearm, bow or crossbow from a stationary, non-motorized vehicle which is not attached to a motor vehicle.

## Hunting Near Roadways

### It is illegal to:

- hunt within 50 feet of the roadway's center;
- discharge a firearm, shoot an arrow from a bow or a bolt from a crossbow, from or across a highway or within 50 feet of the roadway's center. This prohibition applies to all public roads which are either paved or indicated on a current Department of Transportation county highway map.

(Note: Class A and certain Class B disabled permit holders are exempt from portions of this requirement when hunting from a stationary vehicle. Contact the DNR for more information.)

## Baiting

1. Bait may be placed and used for the purpose of hunting bear or training bear dogs statewide, except that **it is illegal** for any person to place, use or hunt over bait placed for bears:

- beginning the day after the bear season closes and continuing through the following April 14;
- in excess of **10 gallons** of bait at any site;
- that is not totally enclosed in a hollow log, a hole in the ground or stump which is capped with logs, rocks, or other naturally occurring and unprocessed substances **which prevent deer from accessing the material**.
- unless, when bait site is checked or re-baited, all bait that has been uncovered is again enclosed and made inaccessible to deer.

(Note: Liquid scent used for hunting bear or training bear dogs does not need to be enclosed, but is part of the 10-gallon limit.)

(Note: There is no limit to the number of bear bait sites a person may establish.)

(Note: Baiting of any sort is not allowed on lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.)

2. **No person may** place, use, or hunt over bait or scent that:

- contains any animal part or animal by-product. Animal part or by-product includes, but is not limited to, honey, bones, fish, meat, solid animal fat, bacon grease, animal carcass, or parts of animal carcasses, but does not include liquid scents or cheese. Attracting bears by the methods commonly referred to as 'honey burns' or 'bacon burns' is not legal;
- contains or is contained within metal, paper, plastic, glass, wood or other similar processed materials. This does not apply to scent materials, and does not prohibit bait from being placed in hollow logs or stumps;
- is contained in or deposited by a feeder that is designed to deposit or replenish bait automatically, mechanically or by gravity;
- is located within 50 yards of any established and maintained trail, road, or campsite used by the public or within 100 yards of a roadway having a posted limit of 45 MPH or more.

3. **No person may** hunt over bait for bear without possessing a valid, unused Class A bear license and carcass tag.

4. **No person may** place bait material for non-hunting purposes.

(Note: You may hunt over material deposited by natural vegetation or found solely as a result of normal agricultural practices.)

5. **No person may** hunt or train dogs over a bait site that is in violation of these regulations unless the area is completely free of bait material at least 10 consecutive days prior to hunting, pursuing animals or dog training.

(Note: Removal of unlawfully placed bait or feed material does not preclude the issuance of a citation for the original placement of the unlawful baiting or feeding material.)

## Finding Land Open to Hunting

Nearly 7 million acres of land are open to public hunting in WI. Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search keywords "public lands".

## Black Bear Management Zones/Units Map

Hunters may only hunt in the zone indicated on their license. Bear Management Zone and Game Management Units that appear on this map are intended to help successful hunters register their bear.

## Black Bear Management Zones and Game Management Units



Note: The area surrounding the Mondeaux Flowage Recreation Area is closed to all forms of bear hunting and dog training from April 1 to September 30. This area is bordered by the following roads: County D on the north, County E on the west, FR 102 on the south, and FR 104 and FR 106 on the east. For details, visit [fs.usda.gov/cnnf](http://fs.usda.gov/cnnf) or call (715) 748-4875.

## Baiting With Chocolate

Solid blocks of chocolate should not be used. Chocolate is toxic and can be lethal to bears and other wildlife, especially cubs.

## Validation and Tagging

- The hunter is required to possess a paper carcass tag while bear hunting.** Electronic copies of carcass tags are not accepted.
- Immediately upon killing a bear, validate the paper carcass tag by removing the bottom portion (the "validation stub").
- If you leave it, tag it!** You may not leave the bear carcass unless the validated carcass tag is attached to it. In other words, attach the tag as soon as you plan to leave the carcass. Attach the tag with string or other fastener.
- Carcass tags must be kept intact and legible; consider protecting the tag inside a zip-top plastic bag.
- No person may possess or transport a bear carcass unless also in possession of the validated carcass tag.
- No person may possess, while afield, a validated bear carcass tag unless that person is also in possession of the legally killed bear corresponding to it.
- No person may possess, while hunting or afield, more than one copy of a unique carcass tag; nor possess, borrow or loan another's license, permit or tag.
- If a backup shooter kills a bear that was shot, but not killed, by the Class A bear license holder, it is still the Class A bear license holder's responsibility to validate that carcass tag.

## Field Dressing

- A bear may be divided into not more than 5 parts, not including the hide, only to facilitate removal from the field. The hunter may divide the carcass prior to registering the bear. The head and neck shall remain attached to one of the other parts of the animal, not including the hide. A person who divides the bear while afield:
  - may not allow the bear to be stored or transported with any other bear that has been divided prior to registration;
  - may not divide any bear in a manner that does not keep one part of the bear intact to allow it to be measured in a straight line from the tip of the nose to the base of the tail to determine it was an adult bear of 42 inches or greater;
  - must remove all parts from the field except the entrails.

## Other Restrictions

### It is illegal to:

- shoot or molest any bear in a den, hunt bear in any dump or sanitary landfill or kill a cub or any adult bear accompanied by a cub or cubs. **An adult bear is defined as a bear 42 inches or greater in length, as measured in a straight line from the tip of nose to the base of the tail.** Hunters concerned with distinguishing a cub from an adult bear should consider laying a 42" log next to their bait to assist in determining the size of a bear. *If you're not sure, don't shoot!*
- sell, buy, trade, or barter bear hides unless the claws, head, and teeth are attached. Bear claws and teeth may not be sold, purchased, traded, or bartered when separated from the hide. The sale of other bear parts is also prohibited.

## Transport

While afield, no person may possess or transport another hunter's bear, even after it has been registered, unless accompanied by the person issued the carcass tag which is attached to the bear, except that anyone may still transport another person's registered bear on a public road or possess it at a residence, home, camp or business.

## Dog Training and Use

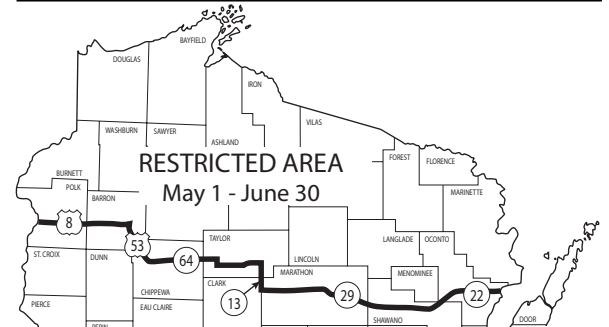
Dogs may be trained statewide by pursuing bear from July 1 through Aug. 31. It is legal to train dogs in Zones A, B, and D during the season when hunting bear with aid of dogs is open. While hunting bear, or training dogs to pursue bear during the open season for hunting bear, **it is illegal to:**

- hunt or train dogs to pursue bear before or after established shooting hours (except when training dogs from July 1 - Aug. 31, these hours do not apply);
- hunt bear with dogs in Zone C;
- hunt, train dogs, or pursue bear with a dog that is not tattooed or wearing a collar displaying the owner's name and address;
- hunt, train dogs or pursue bear with more than 6 dogs in a single pack, regardless of the number of bear hunters or the dog's ownership;

(Note: dogs that fall out of the chase may be replaced, but no more than six dogs may be used to pursue bear.)

- allow the dogs to kill any wild animal;
- hunt or pursue any free-roaming wild animal with the aid of any dog, May 1 to June 30 north of the highways shown on the map below, **except** for approved dog trials and training on free-roaming rabbits or raccoons under a hound dog trial or training license.

## Dog Training Restrictions Area Map



## Bear or Wolf Conflicts

Those experiencing conflicts with bears or wolves in Wisconsin should contact USDA Wildlife Services:  
(800) 228-1368 in northern Wisconsin  
(800) 433-0663 in southern Wisconsin.