

## 2013 Black Bear Harvest

Arkansas black bear hunters harvested 288 bears during the 2013 season. This seasons harvest was dramatically lower than previous years.

### Season Framework

Arkansas's 2013 black bear seasons were:

Bear zone 1 and 2

Oct. 1-Nov. 30	-- Archery
Oct. 19-27	-- Muzzleloader
Nov. 2-3	-- Modern gun youth hunt
Nov. 4-30	-- Modern gun
Bear zone 5	
Nov. 30 – Dec 8	-- Modern gun
Bear zone 5A	
Nov. 23-Dec. 8	-- Modern gun

As in previous seasons, the use of dogs to hunt bears was prohibited. Baiting was allowed on private land in zones 1, 2, 5 and 5A from 30 days before the opening of bear season until the end of bear season. The season bag limit was one bear by any method. Bear Zone 1 (including all WMAs within Zone 1) the quota was 165 bears for the month of October and 200 bears total for all seasons combined. Bear Zone 2 (including all WMAs within Zone 2) the quota was 125 bears for the month of October and 150 bears total for all seasons combined. In bear zone 5 the quota was 10 bears and in bear zone 5A the quota was 5 bears.

### Results

Two hundred eighty eight (288) bears were legally harvested during the 2013 season. One hundred eighty four males (64%) and 104 females (36%) were harvested statewide. About half of the bears were harvested with archery equipment at 134 (47%) followed by modern gun 112 (38%) and muzzleloader 42 (15%).

Bear zone 1 produced 201 (69%) of the total harvest (Table 1). There were 126 males and 75 females harvested in Zone 1. Bear zone 2 provided 25 percent (73) of the total harvest. There were 53 males and 20 females harvested Bear Zone 2. Bear zones 5 and 5A produced 14 bears or 5% of the total harvest.

Ninety six bears (33%) were killed on public land and 192 (67%) were killed on private land. The top five counties for bear harvest were Johnson, Van Buren, Madison, Newton and Searcy (Figure 1).

### Discussion

The 2013 statewide bear harvest was drastically lower than previous years. The lower than average harvest was directly related to the bumper mast crop throughout the state. Bear zones 1 maintained a harvest quota of 200 bears total (165 Archery, 35 Modern Gun). Bear Zone 2 quota was re-instated to provide protection of more females in the harvest. Since bear zone 2 moved to the September 15 opener, percent of females in the harvest has increased dramatically from a

norm of 35% to close to 50% of the total zone harvest. Most bear populations will not sustain a female harvest rate of over 45%. Those quotas were lifted in 2006 after several years of harvest numbers that fell shy of the quota. However, during 2008 and 2009, bear zone 1 has consistently exceeded the previous quota causing some concern for possible overharvest. Possible overharvest coupled with a decline in reproduction over in 2007-2009 prompted the need for some reduction in harvest strategies for bear zone 1. For 2010 season 200-bear quota was re-instated. Also, the Bear Zone 1 quota was rationed out to a monthly framework. For the months of September and October the zone 1 quota was 165 bears and 35 bears for the modern gun season.

Bear zone 2 has consistently shown lower than desired harvest numbers. In 2009-2010, bear hunters in zone 2 were once able to use modern guns during the first two days of the September season which accounts for Zone 2 harvesting about 50% of the statewide harvest in 2009 and 2010. However by increasing the harvest on the front end of the season that inadvertently increased the percentage of females in the harvest dramatically.

**Figure 1. Arkansas black bear harvest by county, 2013.**

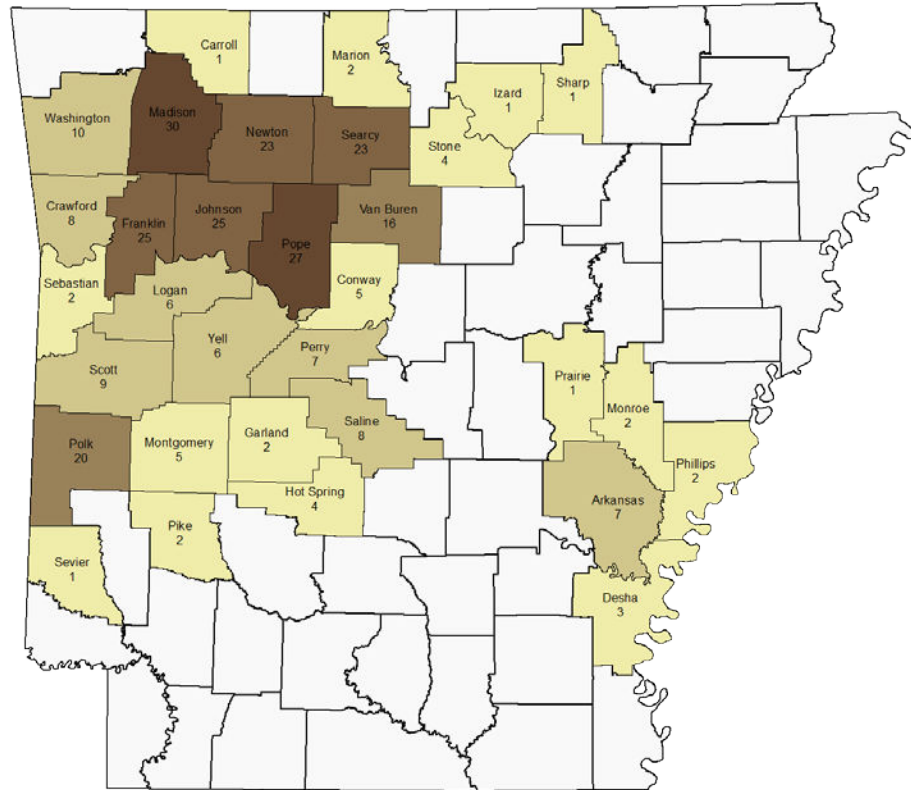
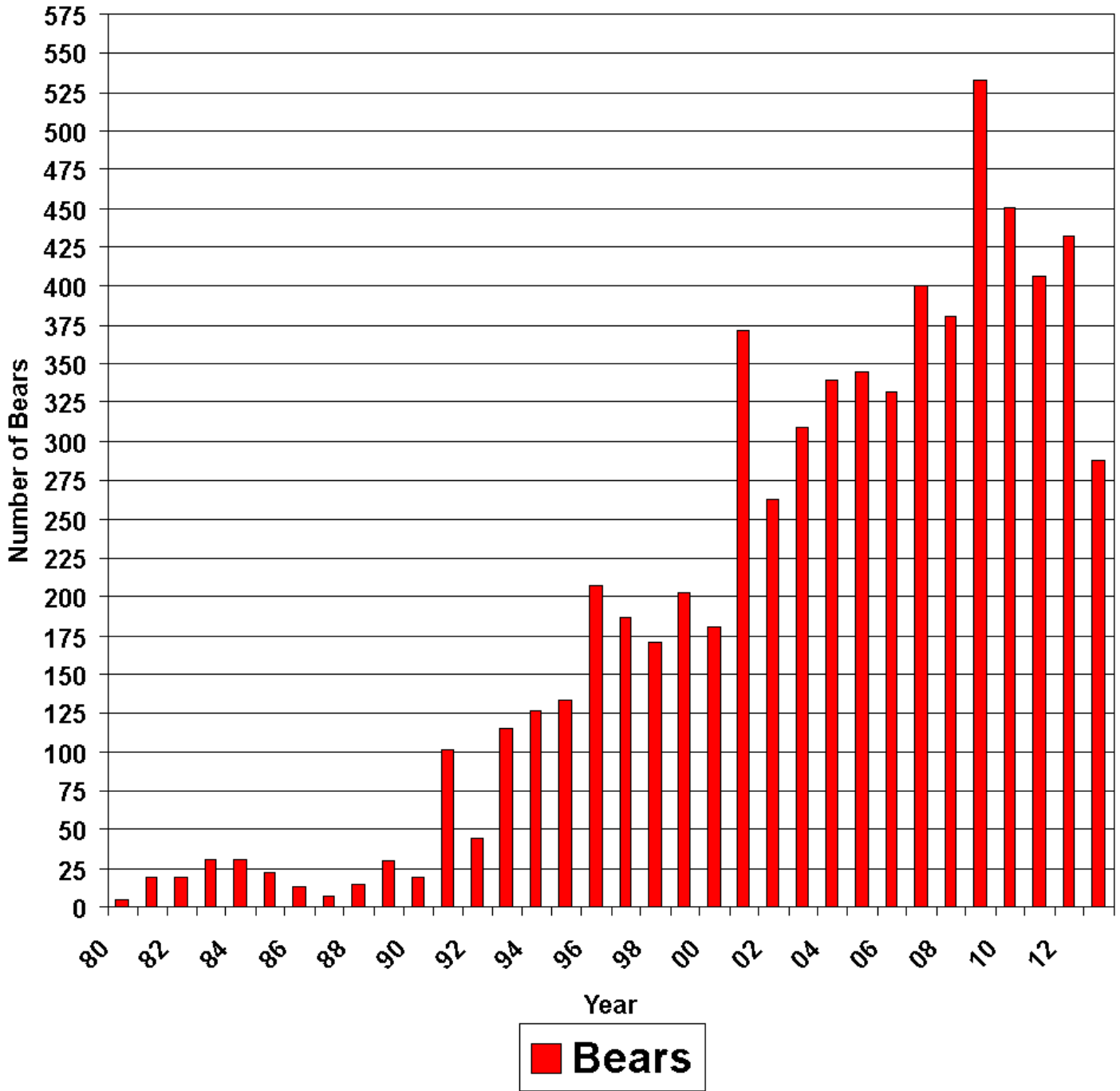


Figure 2. Arkansas black bear harvest, 1980-2013.



**Table 1. Arkansas black bear harvest by bear zone, sex, and method, 2013.**

	<i>Total Harvest</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Archery</i>	<i>Muzzle-loader</i>	<i>Modern Gun</i>
<i>Zone 1</i>	<b>201</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>73</b>
<i>Zone 2</i>	<b>73</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Zone 5</i>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Zone 5A</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

**Table 2. Arkansas black bear harvest by county and method for 2013.**

<i>County</i>	<i>Total Harvest</i>	<i>Archery</i>	<i>Muzzleloader</i>	<i>Modern Gun</i>
<i>Arkansas</i>	7	0	0	7
<i>Carroll</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Conway</i>	5	4	0	1
<i>Crawford</i>	8	4	1	3
<i>Desha</i>	3	0	0	3
<i>Franklin</i>	25	8	6	11
<i>Garland</i>	2	1	0	1
<i>Hot Springs</i>	4	3	0	1
<i>Izard</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Johnson</i>	25	13	6	6
<i>Logan</i>	6	1	0	5
<i>Madison</i>	30	20	3	7

<i>Marion</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Monroe</i>	2	0	0	2
<i>Montgomery</i>	5	1	1	3
<i>Newton</i>	23	10	2	11
<i>Perry</i>	7	3	2	2
<i>Phillips</i>	2	0	0	2
<i>Pike</i>	2	0	1	1
<i>Polk</i>	20	9	6	5
<i>Pope</i>	27	6	8	13
<i>Prairie</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Saline</i>	8	5	1	2
<i>Scott</i>	9	5	1	3
<i>Searcy</i>	23	10	2	11
<i>Sebastian</i>	2	2	0	0

<i>Sevier</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Sharp</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Stone</i>	4	2	0	2
<i>Van Buren</i>	16	12	1	3
<i>Washington</i>	10	5	1	4
<i>Yell</i>	6	4	0	2