

2014 Black Bear Harvest

Arkansas black bear hunters harvested 353 bears during the 2014 season.

Season Framework

Arkansas's 2014 black bear seasons were:

Bear zone 1 and 2

Oct. 1-Nov. 30	– Archery
Oct. 18-26	-- Muzzleloader
Nov. 1-2	-- Modern gun youth hunt
Nov. 3-30	-- Modern gun

Bear zone 5

Nov. 29 – Dec 7	-- Modern gun
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Bear zone 5A

Nov. 22 -Dec. 7	-- Modern gun
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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

Three hundred fifty three (353) bears were legally harvested during the 2014 season. Two hundred thirty nine males (68%) and 114 females (22%) were harvested statewide. Most of the bears were harvested with archery equipment at 255 (72%) followed by modern gun 72 (20%) and muzzleloader 26 (7%).

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.

Seventy bears (20%) were killed on public land and 282 (80%) were killed on private land. The top five counties for bear harvest were: Newton, Madison, Polk, Johnson and Van Buren (Figure 1).

Discussion

The 2014 statewide bear harvest significantly improved than the previous year. The increased harvest was more than likely due to a decrease in hard mast availability from the previous year. Bear zone 1 maintained a harvest quota of 200 bears total (165 Archery, 35 Modern Gun). Bear Zone 2 maintained a 150 bear quota with 125 for the month of October and 25 for the remainder of bear season. 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 month of 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, 2014.

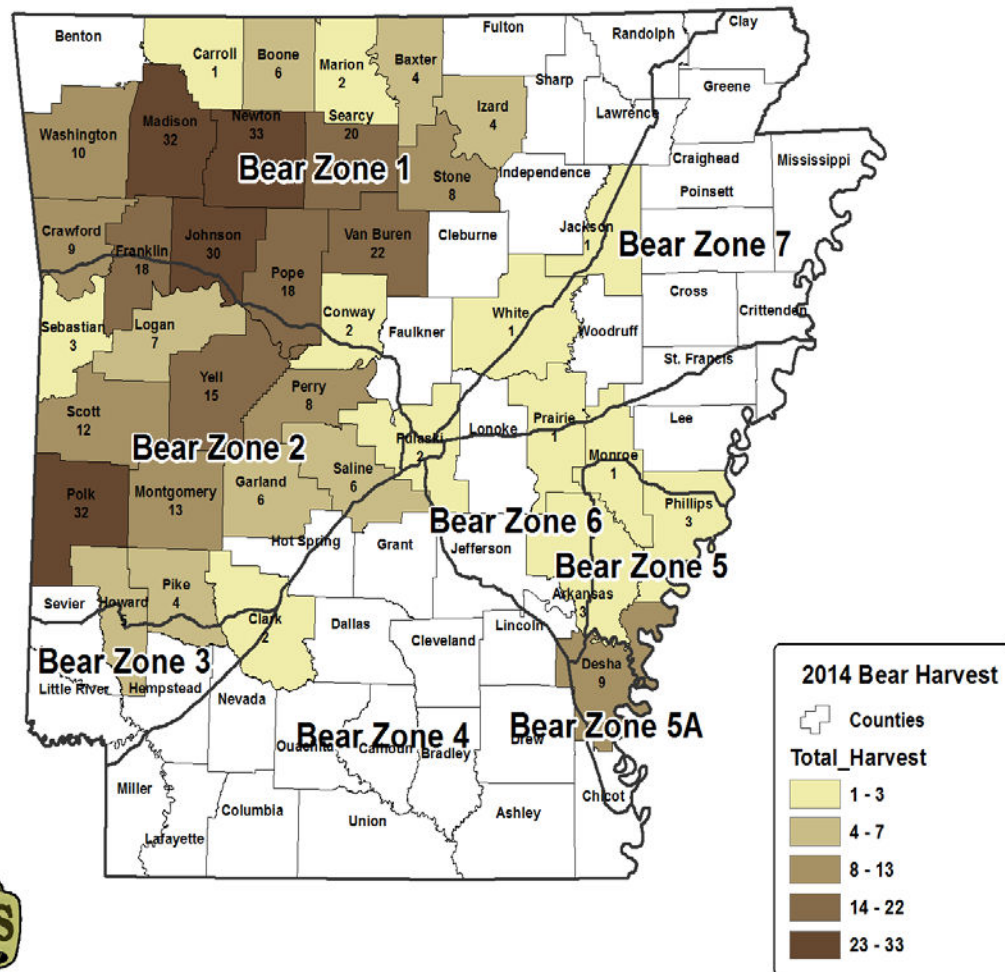


Figure 2. Arkansas black bear harvest, 1980-2014.

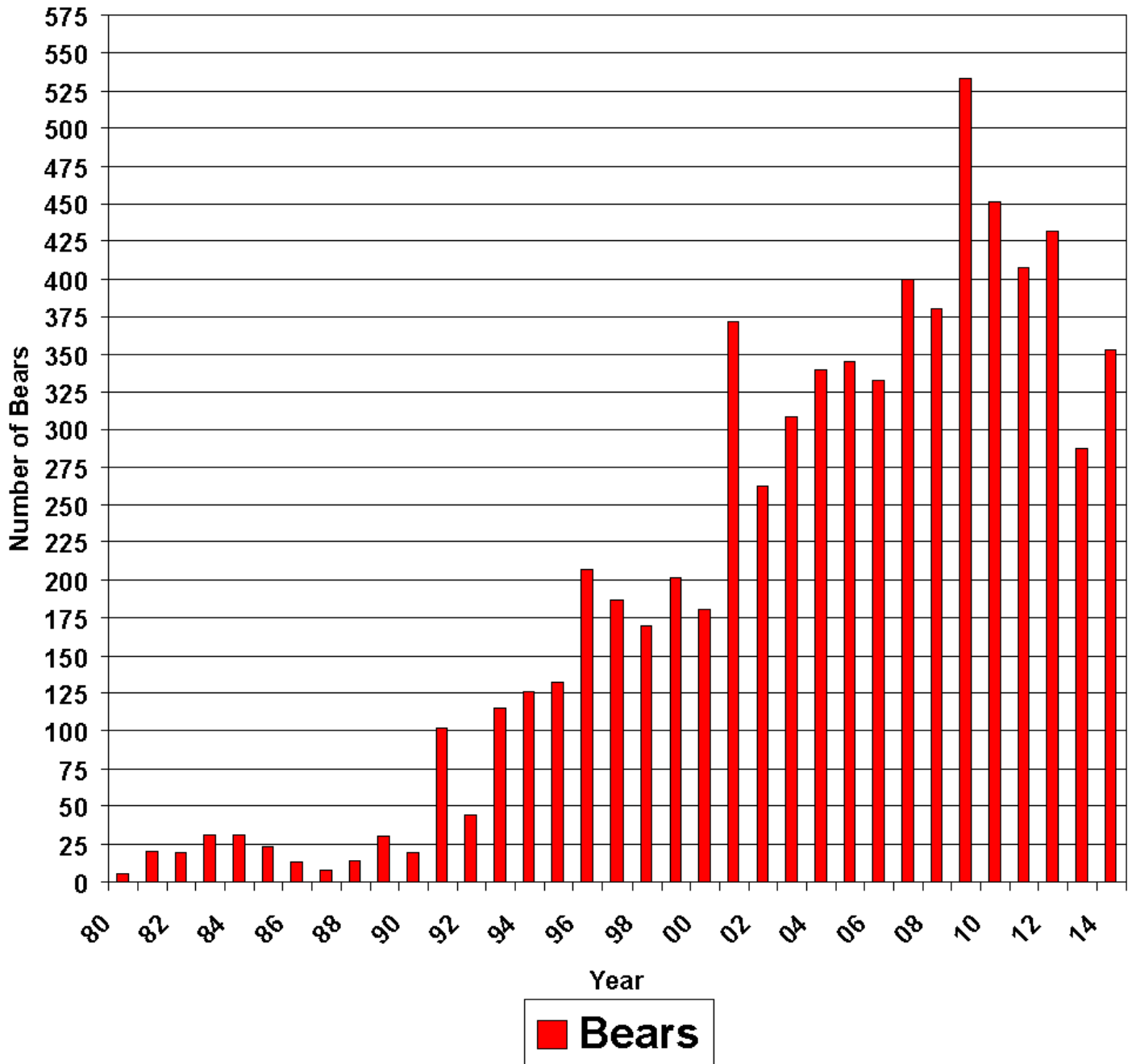


Table 1. Arkansas black bear harvest by bear zone, sex, and method, 2014.

	<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>	214	150	64	182	2	30
<i>Zone 2</i>	123	84	39	73	24	26
<i>Zone 5</i>	10	2	8	0	0	10
<i>Zone 5A</i>	6	3	3	0	0	6

Table 3. Arkansas black bear harvest by county and method for 2014.

<i>County</i>	<i>Total Harvest</i>	<i>Archery</i>	<i>Muzzleloader</i>	<i>Modern Gun</i>
<i>Arkansas</i>	3	0	0	3
<i>Baxter</i>	4	4	0	0
<i>Boone</i>	6	6	0	0
<i>Carroll</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Clark</i>	2	0	1	1
<i>Conway</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Crawford</i>	9	6	0	3
<i>Desha</i>	9	0	0	9
<i>Franklin</i>	18	13	1	4
<i>Garland</i>	6	3	1	2
<i>Howard</i>	5	4	1	0
<i>Izard</i>	4	3	0	1

<i>Jackson</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Johnson</i>	30	24	2	4
<i>Logan</i>	7	5	1	1
<i>Madison</i>	32	27	0	5
<i>Marion</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Monroe</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Montgomery</i>	13	4	3	6
<i>Newton</i>	33	31	0	2
<i>Perry</i>	8	3	3	2
<i>Phillips</i>	3	0	0	3
<i>Pike</i>	4	3	0	1
<i>Polk</i>	32	22	3	7
<i>Pope</i>	18	15	0	3
<i>Prairie</i>	1	0	1	0

<i>Pulaski</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Saline</i>	6	4	2	0
<i>Scott</i>	12	9	1	2
<i>Searcy</i>	20	14	1	5
<i>Sebastian</i>	3	1	1	1
<i>Stone</i>	8	7	0	1
<i>Van Buren</i>	22	21	0	1
<i>Washington</i>	10	8	0	2
<i>White</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Yell</i>	15	9	4	2

