

## 2015 Black Bear Harvest

Arkansas black bear hunters harvested 393 bears during the 2015 season.

### Season Framework

Arkansas's 2015 black bear seasons were:

Bear zone 1 and 2	
Sept. 26 - Nov. 30	-- Archery
Oct. 17-25	-- Muzzleloader
Nov. 7-8	-- Modern gun youth hunt
Nov. 1-6, 9-30	-- Modern gun
Bear zone 5	
Nov. 28 – Dec 6	-- Modern gun
Bear zone 5A	
Nov. 21 -Dec. 6	-- 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 205 bears for the months of September and October and 250 bears total for all seasons combined. Bear Zone 2 the quota was removed. In bear zone 5 the quota was 10 bears and in bear zone 5A the quota was 5 bears.

### Results

Three hundred ninety three (393) bears were legally harvested during the 2015 season. Two hundred fifty six males (65%) and 137 females (35%) were harvested statewide. Most of the bears were harvested with archery equipment at 302 (77%) followed by modern gun 72 (18%) and muzzleloader 19 (5%).

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.

Fifty seven bears (15%) were killed on public land and 336 (85%) were killed on private land. The top five counties for bear harvest were: Searcy, Madison, Van Buren, Newton and Polk (Figure 1).

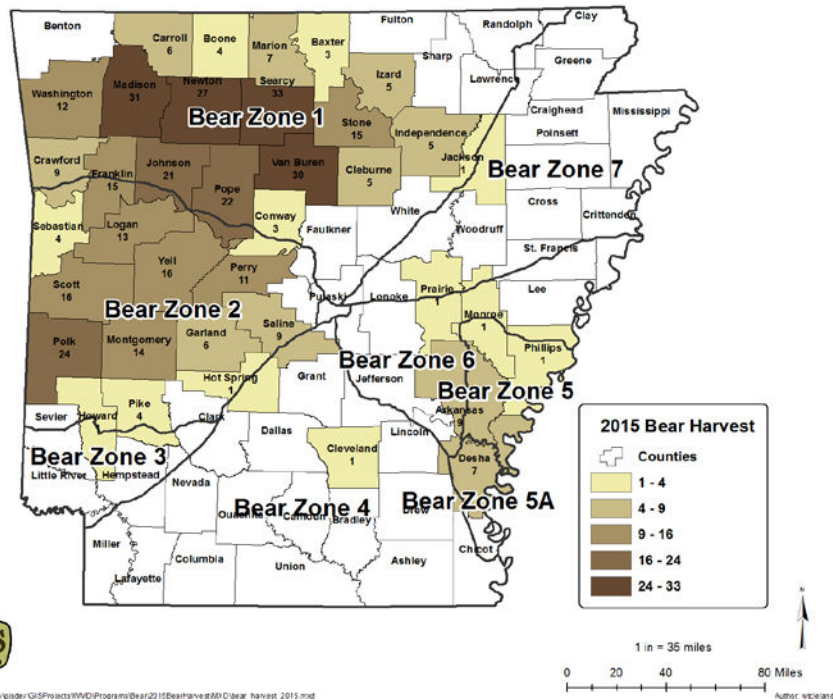
### Discussion

The 2015 statewide bear harvest slightly improved from 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 250 bears total (205 Archery, 45 Modern Gun). The bear zone 2 quota was removed. Bear Zones 1 and 2 moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in September as the archery opener. The earlier opener on a Saturday probably provided better hunter success

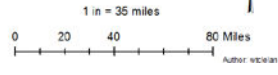
early. Since bear zone 2 moved off the September 15 opener, fewer adult females were harvested in zone to and put the percent of females harvested back into the normal range.

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**Figure 1. Arkansas black bear harvest by county, 2015.**

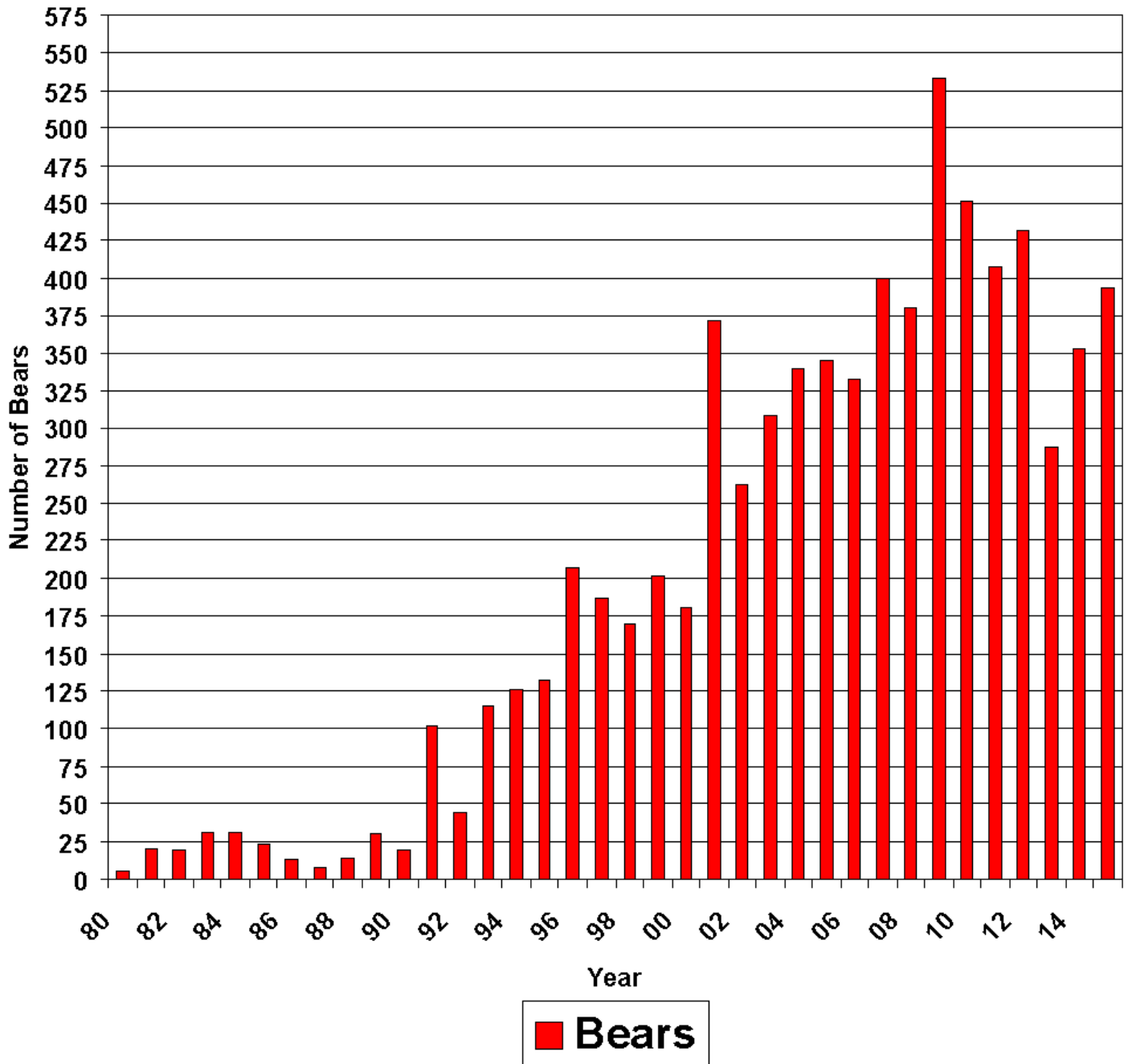


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Figure 2. Arkansas black bear harvest, 1980-2015.



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**Table 1. Arkansas black bear harvest by bear zone, sex, and method, 2015.**

	<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>248</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>Zone 2</i>	<b>126</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Zone 5</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>Zone 5A</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

**Table 3. Arkansas black bear harvest by county and method for 2015.**

<i>County</i>	<i>Total Harvest</i>	<i>Archery</i>	<i>Muzzleloader</i>	<i>Modern Gun</i>
<i>Arkansas</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Baxter</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>Boone</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>Carroll</i>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>Cleburne</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Cleveland</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>Conway</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Crawford</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Desha</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Franklin</i>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Garland</i>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>Hot Springs</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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<i>Howard</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Independence</i>	5	4	0	1
<i>Izard</i>	5	5	0	0
<i>Jackson</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Johnson</i>	21	20	0	1
<i>Logan</i>	13	11	1	1
<i>Madison</i>	31	29	0	2
<i>Marion</i>	7	4	0	3
<i>Monroe</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Montgomery</i>	14	10	2	2
<i>Newton</i>	27	23	1	3
<i>Perry</i>	11	7	2	2
<i>Phillips</i>	1	0	1	0
<i>Pike</i>	4	4	0	0

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<i>Polk</i>	24	16	3	5
<i>Pope</i>	22	16	0	6
<i>Prairie</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Saline</i>	9	6	3	0
<i>Scott</i>	16	12	0	4
<i>Searcy</i>	33	30	1	2
<i>Sebastian</i>	4	3	1	0
<i>Stone</i>	15	12	0	3
<i>Van Buren</i>	30	24	1	5
<i>Washington</i>	12	8	0	4
<i>Yell</i>	16	9	3	4

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