



State of Utah

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board

FROM: Darren DeBloois, Predatory Mammals and Furbearer Program Coordinator

DATE: November 16, 2023

SUBJECT: 2024 BLACK BEAR PLAN REVISION AND RULE AMENDMENT

2024 Black Bear Plan Revision

In 2023 DWR recommended and the Wildlife Board adopted amendments to the Black Bear Management Plan. One of those changes was to eliminate a statewide requirement for certain numbers of units to be in one of the three management strategies (light, moderate or liberal harvest). This change gives district biologists, regional wildlife managers and the program coordinator more flexibility to recommend management strategies to address bear population needs on a unit by unit basis, including responding to drought, human conflict, agricultural damage, and potential impacts to mule deer populations.

After the process and reviewing the current plan, we realized that the requirement for a statewide rollup of all harvest parameters fall within the moderate harvest range is incompatible with the objective of the change adopted last year. We are recommending removing that requirement from the plan. This means removing the following language from the Black Bear Management population objectives.

The statewide rollup of harvest variables (adult male 5 years and female in the sport harvest category) will not be outside the performance target ranges identified in the moderate harvest strategy. Additional adjustments at the unit level may be necessary to move variables within normal range during the following three-year recommendation cycle. This will be accomplished by adjusting permits an additional $\pm 10\%$ at the unit level.

a. Predator management plan units will not be considered as part of the statewide rollup.



2024 Black Bear Rule Amendment

Last year the Wildlife Board directed DWR to continue to require a bear hunting orientation course, but to require it after a person had drawn their permit rather than before they put into the drawing. DWR is recommending a change to the Taking Bear Rule (R657-33) to allow for this change. The changes will be made to R567-33-3(5) as follows:

- (5)(a) A person must complete a mandatory orientation course before ~~hunting in applying for or obtaining~~ a limited entry, harvest objective ~~season~~, or ~~pursuing a bear using a~~ bear pursuit permit.
- (b) A person must possess a certificate of completion of the mandatory orientation course while hunting of pursuing black bear.
 - (bc) The orientation course is not required to receive a bear control permit under Subsection R657-33-23(4).
 - (ed) The orientation course shall include training on hunter ethics.

The certificate of completion can be printed and carried while afield, or downloaded to the DWR's application along with any other licenses the hunter may have.

2024 Permit Numbers and Seasons

2024 is the final year of the three-year management cycle for black bears approved by the Wildlife Board in 2021. DWR is not recommending any changes to permit numbers, and season dates will be adjusted for the calendar year.

