

NY Big Game,

The 2010 black bear harvest numbers are now available at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/42232.html. Check out the PDF version of the 2010 Bear Harvest Summary for the harvest breakdown by WMU, county and town, and much more.

The press release is copied below.

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Big Game Biologist

Bear Harvest numbers were strong again this year in New York State, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joe Martens announced today. In 2010, bear hunters took more than 1,060 bears in the state.

“New York has excellent bear habitat and vast, accessible public lands that offer exciting opportunities for bear hunting,” said Commissioner Martens. “Black bears are thriving in New York, and they represent a great resource for all New Yorkers.”

Statewide, hunters took 1,064 black bears this past fall, similar to harvest levels of 2005-2007. While overall population size plays a large role in harvest totals, annual variations in take are also strongly influenced by environmental factors that affect bear activity and hunting pressure such as natural food availability and snow fall.

In the Southeastern bear hunting area, hunters took 401 bears, with roughly half of the harvest occurring during the bowhunting season and half during the regular firearms hunting season. In the Central-Western bear hunting area, hunters took 142 bears, with bowhunters responsible for about 65% of the harvest. Harvest in both areas was down approximately 20% from 2009.

In the Adirondack bear hunting area, the take of 521 bears was down approximately 35% from 2009, but is consistent with the long-term average for that area. Bear harvest in the Adirondacks seems heavily influenced by variations in key food resources, and this year’s harvest follows those trends. In years when soft mast (apple, cherry, raspberry) is abundant, bear harvest during the early season tends to decrease. Cherry and raspberry were widely available in September and October, and bear take during the 2010 early season dropped approximately 40% from 2009, which was a year with a poor soft mast crop and high early season bear harvest. Conversely, in years when beech nuts are abundant, bear take tends to increase during the regular season. This past fall was lacking for beechnut production, and bear take during the regular season dropped about 25% from 2009.

Hunters play a pivotal role in bear management through reporting their bear harvests. Hunters also are asked to submit a tooth sample from their bear for DEC to determine the age of harvested bears. To encourage participation, DEC issues a New York State Black Bear Cooperator Patch to all hunters who reported their harvest and submitted a tooth. More than 550 patches will be distributed for the 2010 hunting season. Eligible hunters will receive their patch

in late summer 2011 when all the age data has been processed. The average age of bears harvested is typically 3-4 years old in the Southeastern and Central-Western areas, while bears harvested in the Adirondacks average about 5 years old.

In addition to harvest totals, DEC uses a variety of indices to measure bear populations. Taxidermists and DEC wildlife personnel collect age and sex information from harvested bears, as well as movement data from tagged bears. This information is used to help DEC biologists manage bear populations and establish future hunting regulations to assure the management of black bears in New York State is at a level that is compatible with human interests.

A complete summary of the 2010 bear harvest with breakdown by county, town, and Wildlife Management Unit is available at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/42232.html on the DEC website.