Humane World for Animals™

Formerly called the Humane Society of the United States

Black bear trophy hunting

An investigation into the scale and consequences of a quarter century of black bear hunting. Oct. 2025

Photo by Bill Lea

Abstract

Newly compiled data by Humane World for Animals show 1.2 million American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) were hunted for trophies in the U.S. and in Canada during comparable quarter-century periods. In the U.S. alone, more than 1 million bears, 1,014,773**,** were legally hunted between 2000 and 2024. At the global scale, the American black bear was the No. 1 imported mammal trophy listed by CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna). Nearly all imported bears came from Canada and were hunted by Americans. Between 1999 and 2023, 175,438 bears were traded on the global market (92.5% of which were imported into the U.S.). The combined total of black bears hunted in the U.S. and imported from Canada is estimated at 1,190,211 for comparable 25-year periods. Not counted in these figures are the cubs who died because their mothers or fathers were killed, bears who were killed for so-called “conflict prevention,” and bears struck by vehicles or felled by poachers.

The three deadliest states for American black bears are Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Maine, each responsible for the deaths of more than 80,000 bears. Following closely are North Carolina, Minnesota, Alaska and Idaho, each with more than 65,000 bears killed.

States frequently suggest they need bear hunts to keep people safe, although there is scant evidence supporting this hypothesis. In fact, the data we compiled show that hunting bears does nothing to make people safer, whereas using commonsense precautions such as securing attractants away from wildlife prevents drawing in bears to human communities, and without the violence.

American black bears are greatly valued by most Americans, Canadians and international visitors who take trips to view or photograph them. American voters, by supermajorities, do not want black bears trophy hunted.

Despite these values, our research also reveals a troubling trend: Black bear trophy hunting is on the rise. Worse, certain states permit hunters to practice cruel and controversial methods such as baiting, which paradoxically contributes to bear population growth, increasing hunting tolls and contributing to dangerous bear encounters.

Biologists have compared black bears’ intelligence to that of great apes, which makes the trend in black bear hunting especially vexing. In addition to baiting, additional inhumane methods to hunt bears are permitted by many states, including bowhunting, hounding, foot-hold traps and springtime hunts that target starving bears emerging from hibernation.

These data underscore the urgent need for policy reform and greater oversight of hunting practices that could pressure black bear populations and undermine wildlife conservation efforts.

Tallying the toll: American black bear trophy hunting

Newly compiled data by *Humane World for Animals* reveal a staggering toll on American black bears from trophy hunting across North America over the past quarter-century. Between 2000 and 2024, state agencies individually reported the trophy hunting of more than 1 million black bears across the United States. Figures 1 and 2. We offer a clear view of the scale and geographic distribution of these hunts. While the numbers speak for themselves, they also raise important questions about wildlife management priorities, long-term ecological costs and the values that guide our treatment of wild carnivores.

When combined, the number of bears hunted in the U.S. and those imported from Canada reached 1,190,211 individuals over comparable 25-year periods.

Globally, the American black bear ranks as the most imported CITES-listed mammal trophy and the top mammal trophy imported into the U.S. (mostly from Canada), with about 6,000 imported each year. This quantity is over 13 times greater than the next most imported species, Chacma baboons. Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows the enormous scale at which American black bear trophies are killed in the U.S. and imported, especially in comparison to other species that Americans trophy hunt. From 1999 to 2023, 175,438 black bears were traded internationally, adding to the cumulative toll. The U.S. was responsible for 92.5% of those imports. Figures 2, 3 and 4. Combined, the number of bears hunted in the U.S. and those imported from Canada tally 1,190,211 individuals over comparable 25-year periods.[1] Most, 99.99%, of black bears imported into the U.S. originated from Canada. These numbers underscore the scale of bear hunting as a sanctioned activity, often framed as wildlife management or recreation.

These numbers do not account for additional bear deaths from indirect causes—such as orphaned cubs who perished after their parents were killed, bears euthanized under the guise of “conflict prevention,” those struck by vehicles, or victims of poaching. Thus, the true threat to black bears is even greater.

Certain states stand out for their particularly high kill rates. Over the 25 years, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Maine each accounted for more than 80,000 bear deaths, with North Carolina, Minnesota, Alaska and Idaho each exceeding 65,000 kills. Figures 5 and 6. These numbers reflect the policies and practices that enable such high mortality. Despite small black bear populations, due to habitat loss and human persecution, Southeastern states are now getting in on the action, too: In 2021, Missouri opened a bear hunt over the strong objections of the state’s residents; in 2024 Louisiana commenced a bear hunt; and in August 2025 the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission announced it will open a bear hunt starting this December.

Photo by Bill Lea

Figure 1: Numbers of American black bears trophy hunted in the U.S. by year (2000-2024)

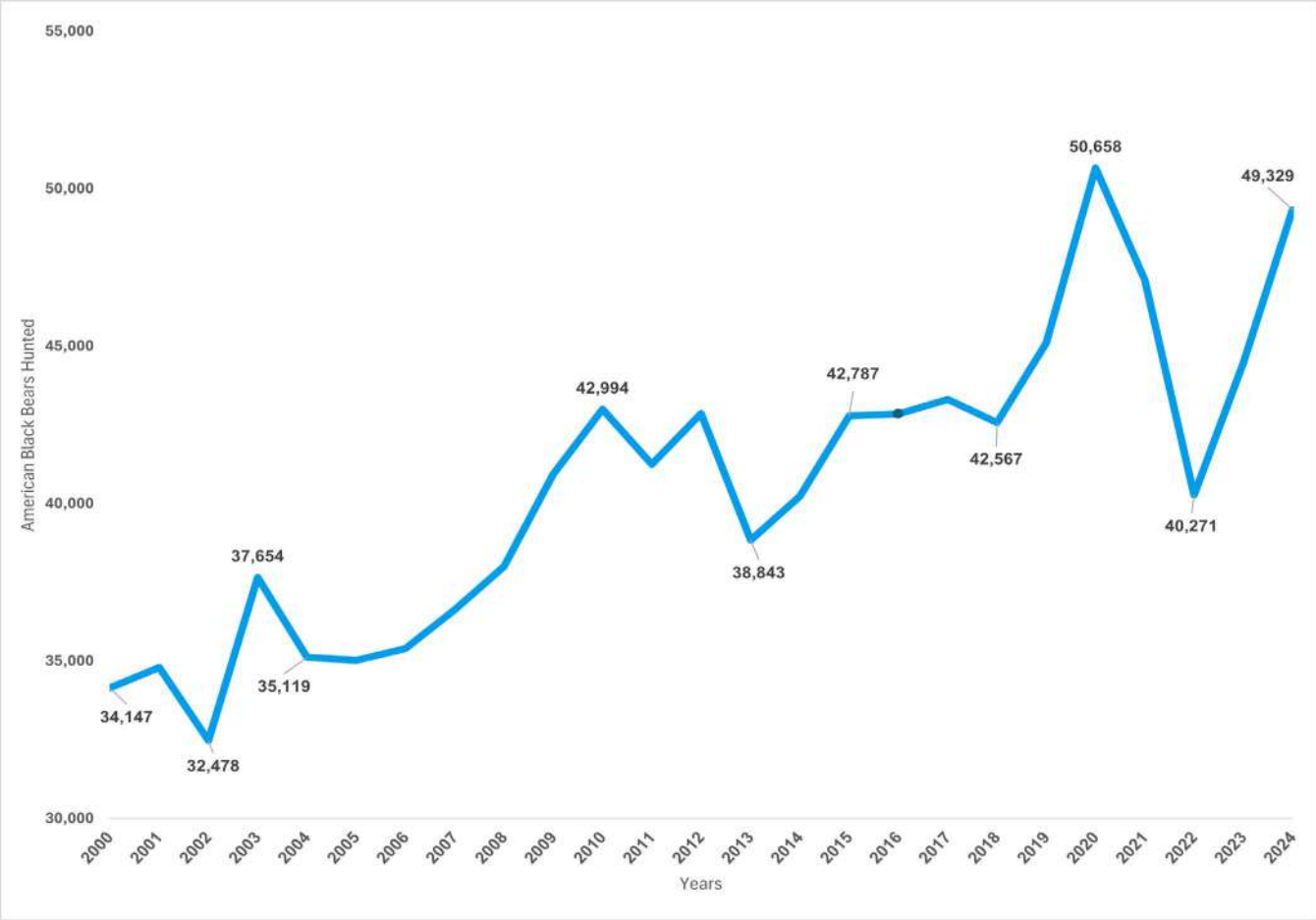


Photo by Wendy Keefover, Humane World for Animals

Figure 2: Number of black bears trophy hunted in the U.S. compared to the top CITES-listed mammal trophies imported to the U.S.

Photo by Troy Harrison/Getty Images

Figure 3: CITES-listed mammal trophies imported to the U.S. by species (1999-2023)

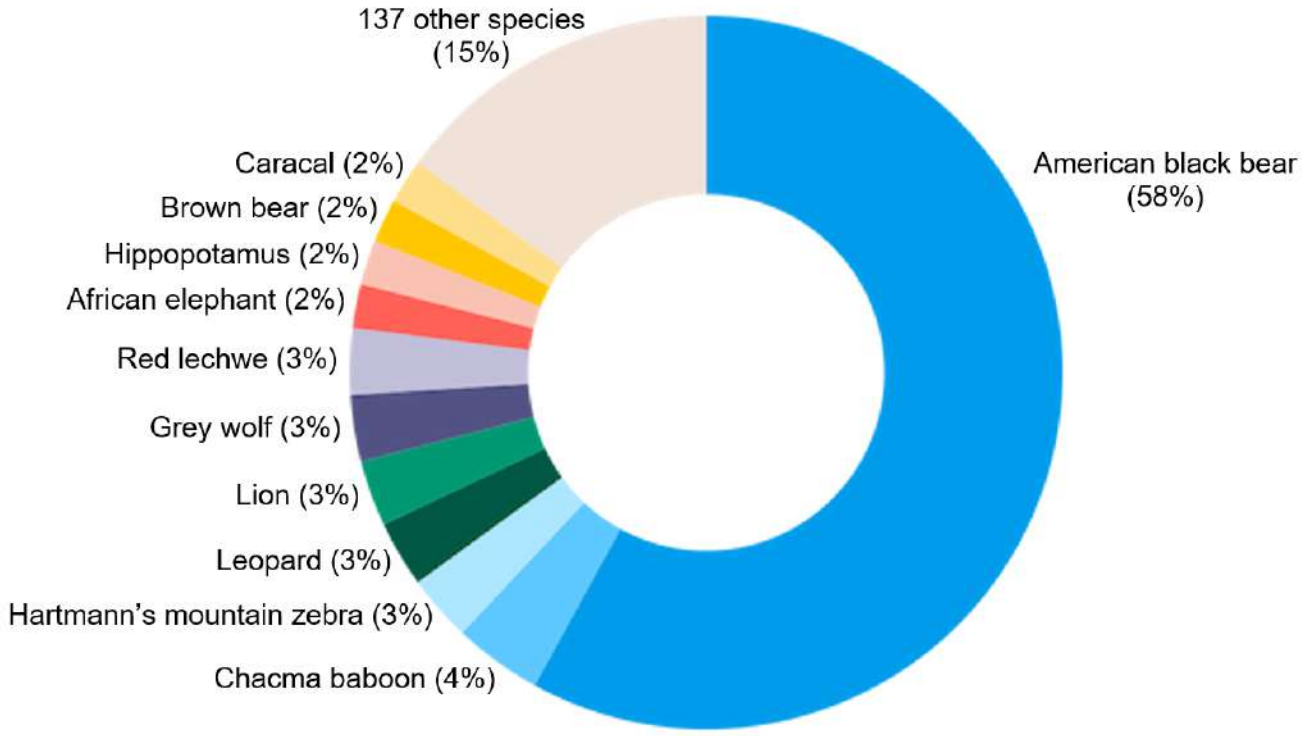


Figure 4: Global importers of American black bear trophies

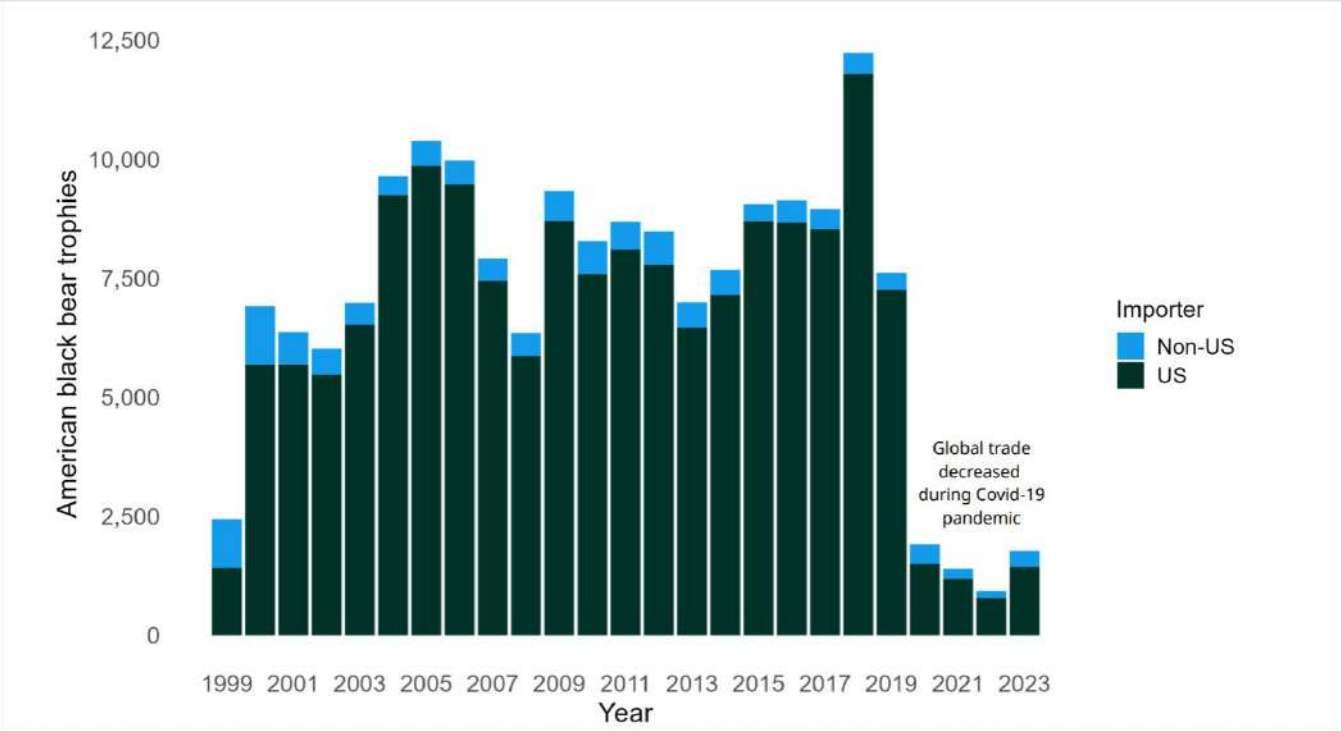


Figure 5: States ranked by American black bear-hunt totals in 3-D excluding Alaska (2000-2024)

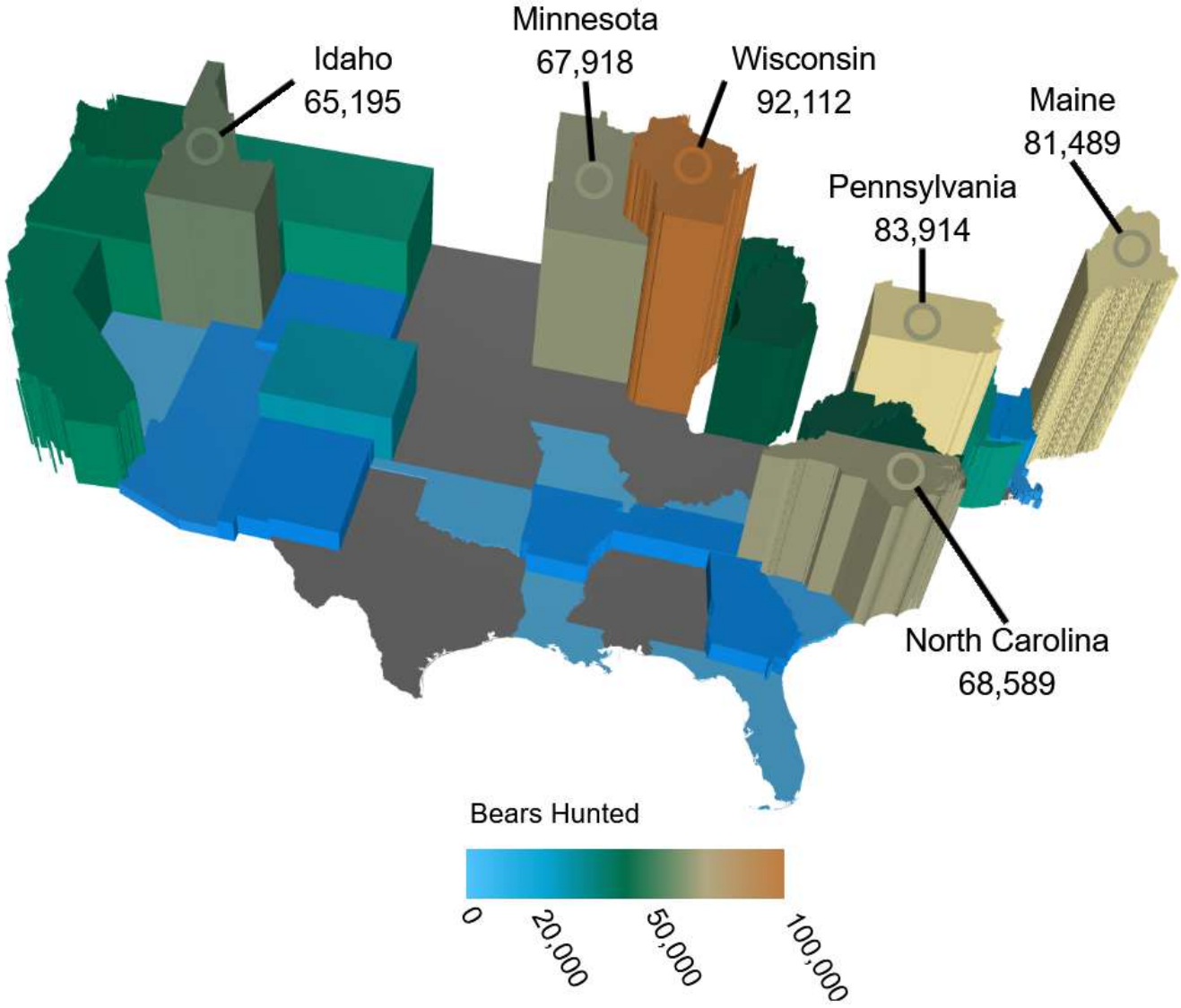
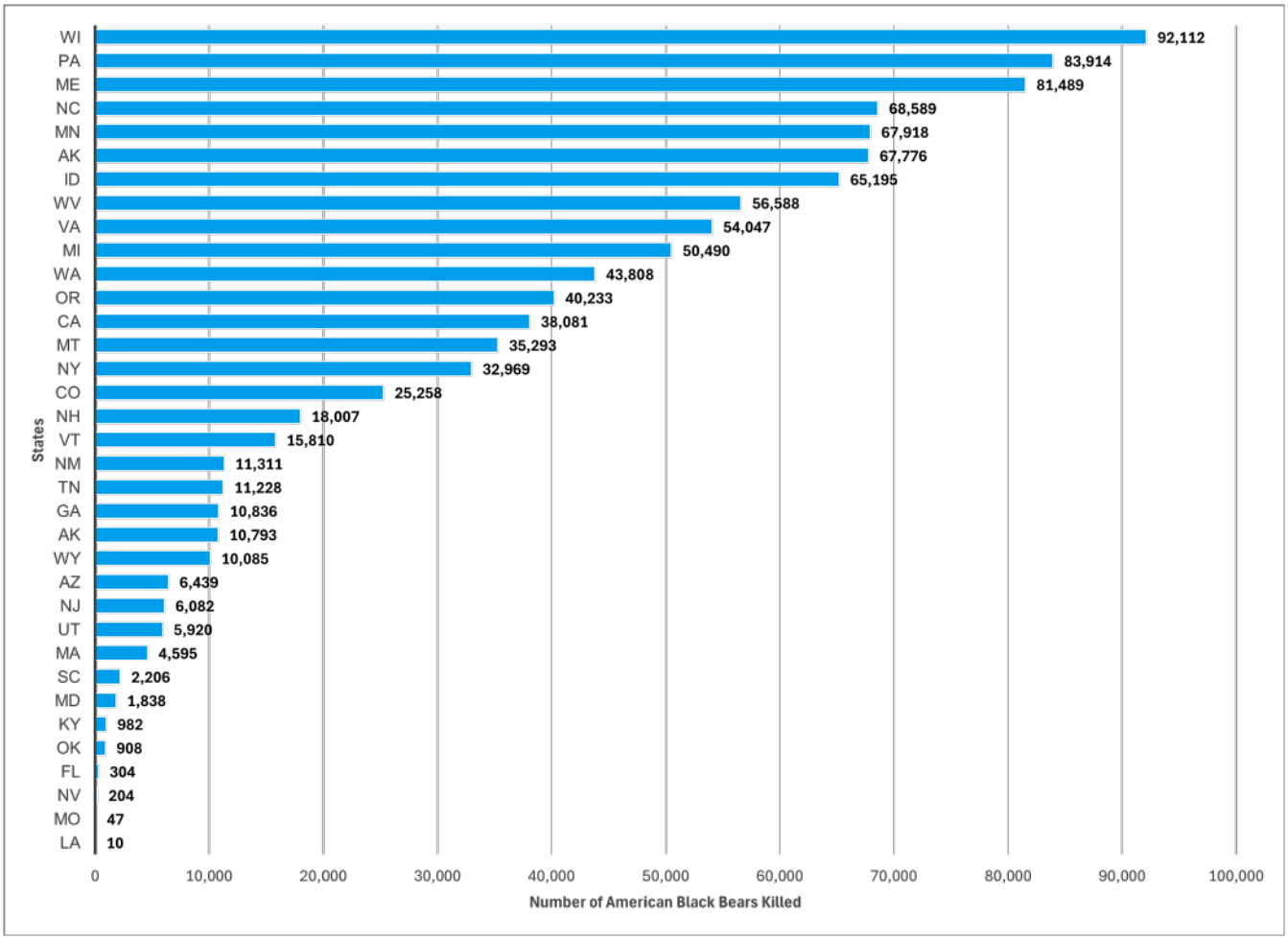


Photo by Paul Souders/Getty Images

Figure 6: States ranked by American black bear-hunt totals (2000-2024)



*Alaska does not count all black bears hunted by residents, so its reported figure is an undercount.

States cannot kill their way to human-bear coexistence

Lethal strategies such as indiscriminate trophy hunting do not address the root causes of human-bear conflicts. Decades of research and wildlife management experience have shown that the primary drivers of these encounters are unsecured human food sources—especially garbage, bird feeders, pet food and compost piles. In semirural and exurban areas, poorly protected chicken coops and beehives also serve as enticing attractants. When bears access these easy food sources, they quickly learn to associate human settlements with meals, increasing the likelihood of repeated visits and escalating interactions. Without addressing these attractants through proactive measures—such as bear-resistant containers, electric fencing and community education—conflicts will persist regardless of hunting pressure. In fact, hunting may remove non-problematic individuals while leaving food-conditioned bears behind, further undermining public safety and conservation goals. The science is clear: The root cause of bear conflicts comes from food attractants.[2] Wildlife management agencies often wrongly presume that an increase in human-bear conflicts is a result of a growing bear population, but bears may simply be modifying their behaviors to seek out easy food sources, especially if they are losing natural habitat or nutrition sources.[3]

Lackey et al. (2018) found that more bears can mean more conflict—but the relationship isn't straightforward. Reducing a population near carrying capacity by 20% may not lessen conflicts, and even small bear populations can generate significant conflict if natural food is scarce and anthropogenic food is abundant.[4]

Unsecured food sources are the root cause of negative human-bear interactions. Garbage, bird feeders and pet food lure bears into neighborhoods, while rural attractants such as chicken coops and beehives can be easily secured with electric fencing. These conflicts drain agency resources, but preventing conflicts before they start protects bears, property and people.

Northrup et al. (2023) found that a new spring bear hunting season resulted in a "significant" increase in "harvest," but "there was no concomitant reduction in interactions or incidents and, in fact, these [interactions or incidents] were higher in areas with the new spring season relative to control areas."[5] In a nationwide analysis of bears killed via hunting and bear attacks on humans from 2000 to 2017, Keefover and Murphy (2023) found that despite a ~3% average annual increase in the number of bears killed by hunters across the U.S., those increases had no influence on the frequency or distribution of bear attacks on humans (i.e., killing more bears did not reduce the number of bear attacks).[6]

In fact, numerous other studies cite the fact that killing bears does not stop human-bear conflicts, even as it radically reduces bear populations.[7] And trophy hunting bears does not make people safer, because hunters are not killing the bears attracted to people's yards because of unsecured garbage, bird feeders, pet food, animal feed, chicken coops and beehives.

Photo by Margocat/Alamy Stock Photo

Bear biologists Obbard et al. (2014) write: "We found no significant correlations between [black bear] harvest and subsequent HBC [human-bear conflicts]. Although it may be intuitive to assume that harvesting more bears should reduce HBC, empirical support for this assumption is lacking despite considerable research."[8] Obbard et al. (2014) cite six studies in addition to their own findings (Garshelis 1989, Treves and Karanth 2003, Huygens et al. 2004, Tavss 2005, Treves 2009, Howe et al. 2010, Treves et al. 2010). Since Obbard et al. (2014) published, many other biologists, who are cited here, have also confirmed that trophy hunting bears does not reduce conflicts with humans, but it can harm bear populations.[9] For example, Khorozyan and Waltert (2020) analyzed 77 cases from 48 studies to compare how well different methods worked to prevent bears from causing damage.[10] The most effective solutions are electric fences, which reduce damage by 79% to100%. Deterrents, such as noise or lights, had mixed results, reducing damage by anywhere from 13% to 79%, so Khorozyan and Waltert recommend using these methods during times when bears are most active. Shooting and killing bears had a short-term benefit, but its effectiveness dropped significantly over time.[11]

Human-bear conflicts are a "people problem," not a bear problem, and can be resolved and prevented through education and the application of simple nonlethal techniques such as using bear-resistant trash cans, removing bird feeders while bears are out of the den, keeping dogs on leashes, and protecting farm animals (e.g., electric fencing). In a study by bear biologists and social scientists in Durango, Colorado, when people received bear-resistant trash cans with automatically self-locking lids, residents drastically increased compliance with trash ordinances. **With automatically locking trash containers, residents followed ordinances banning food attractants for bears by 92%,** compared to only 39% compliance for trash containers with manually locking lids.[12]

In sum, the science is clear: More bear hunting has not reduced attacks.[13] On the other hand, a study found that *increased* hunting resulted in *more* conflicts. Using tools such as bear-resistant trash cans with automatically locking lids, removing bird feeders and fencing chicken coops and beehives does work. These methods are also align with today's social values, discussed next, which disfavor killing bears involved in conflicts.

Social costs of bear hunting

Public opinion consistently shows that supermajorities of American voters oppose the "recreational" or "trophy hunting" of black bears. A 2022 national poll by Remington Research Group, for example, found that 76% of American voters disfavor black bear trophy hunting.[14] Yet, many states continue to permit controversial and inhumane hunting methods to hunt black bears, including baiting, which paradoxically can increase bear populations and amplify human-bear conflicts,[15] as well as hounding; bowhunting; spring hunts that target emerging, lethargic bears; and the use of foothold traps and snares.

The trophy hunting of bears disrupts family groups, leading to additional bear mortalities. One possible mechanism by which this occurs is sexually selected infanticide (SSI)—that is, when trophy hunters kill dominant males of a species, immigrating males will kill the dominant male's young in attempts to mate with the females. Studies of brown bears (*Ursus arctos*) show that trophy hunting disrupts their family structures, lowering survival and birth rates and weakening the overall health of populations.[16] Biologists have documented instances of infanticide in black bears,[17] though it is understudied, given that black bears are wary and difficult to observe in the wild. While more research is needed, this potential harm from trophy hunting should be considered by states where bear hunting continues to be popular.

In short, trophy hunting often removes the oldest, largest and most fit, breeding-age animals.[18] In other words, the very bears who are vital for social stability and healthy cubs. When dominant males are killed, infanticide of cubs can increase. Young males will kill cubs to gain mating opportunities with the females. This raises cub deaths, slows population growth and forces mothers to become more aggressive and forage less, further reducing reproductive success.[19]

The value of black bears

Black bears are intrinsically valuable

Black bears hold "intrinsic value," meaning they have worth just for existing and not because they offer benefits to humans (e.g., being hunted, photographed or studied, or for their ecological benefits). Bears have a right to live freely in their habitats without being persecuted. As with all animals, black bears are far from senseless. They are in fact highly intelligent and have the largest brain size of any carnivore relative to their body size.[20] Their intelligence has been compared to that of great apes; they are able to count.[21] Black bears are also family oriented. Mothers will spend up to two years patiently raising, provisioning and forming close social attachments with their cubs.[22] Further, bears engage in playful behaviors, such as between cubs or even males with one another.[23]

Given that biologists have compared black bears' cognitive abilities to those of great apes, the widespread use of cruel hunting methods is especially troubling. The data presented here call for urgent policy reform and stronger oversight of hunting practices that threaten black bear populations and undermine broader wildlife conservation goals.

Black bears are ecologically valuable

In addition to their intrinsic value, bears also hold important value to their ecosystems. While they are mammalian carnivores, black bears mainly eat plants. For instance, they eat fruits and deposit seeds across long distances (and mice assist by removing the seeds from bear feces, where they would otherwise mildew, and caching them in soil, where some grow).[24] Black bears disperse more seeds than birds.[25]

Bears cause small-scale ecological disturbance to the canopy by breaking branches when feeding; that allows sun to filter to the forest floor, creating greater biological diversity.[26] They also break logs while grubbing, which helps the decomposition process and facilitates the return of nutrients to the soil, and they recycle carrion.[27]


Photo by Jos Bakker

In one study, researchers found that black bears were the dominant species moving salmon from streams into riparian zones. Bears ate about half of the salmon, leaving remnants that contributed to greater tree ring growth.[28] Researchers also found higher plant growth along the riparian areas where bear trails existed and where bears' urine deposits were high.[29] When black bears are out of the den, they also protect gray foxes from competition with coyotes and bobcats, as they avoid bears.[30] So in this way, bears create a nonlethal "trophic cascade"—meaning that bears indirectly benefit gray foxes. By changing the makeup of the smaller carnivores in the ecosystem, bears in turn can affect rodent populations and seed dispersal.[31]

Black bears are economically valuable

Black bears provide economic value to local communities. Americans, Canadians and world travelers flock to black bear viewing hot spots such as Canada's Great Bear Rainforest[32] or America's Yellowstone National Park and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.[33] In British Columbia, economists reviewed a host of other monetary studies that found that wildlife watchers' spending far exceeds that of trophy hunters—from whale watching in 31 countries (far more profitable than whaling) to African lion and elephant watching and even shark watching.[34] They also noted that bear watching in British Columbia was 12 times more lucrative than trophy hunting those bears.[35] The Great Bear Rainforest, located on the western coast of British Columbia, is home to both grizzly bears and black bears. It is also the only place on Earth where the *Kermode* or *Spirit Bear* (*Ursus americanus kermodei*) lives, an extremely rare genetic variation that makes a small, constrained population of black bears white.[36] Spirit Bears are culturally important to some First Nation peoples.[37]

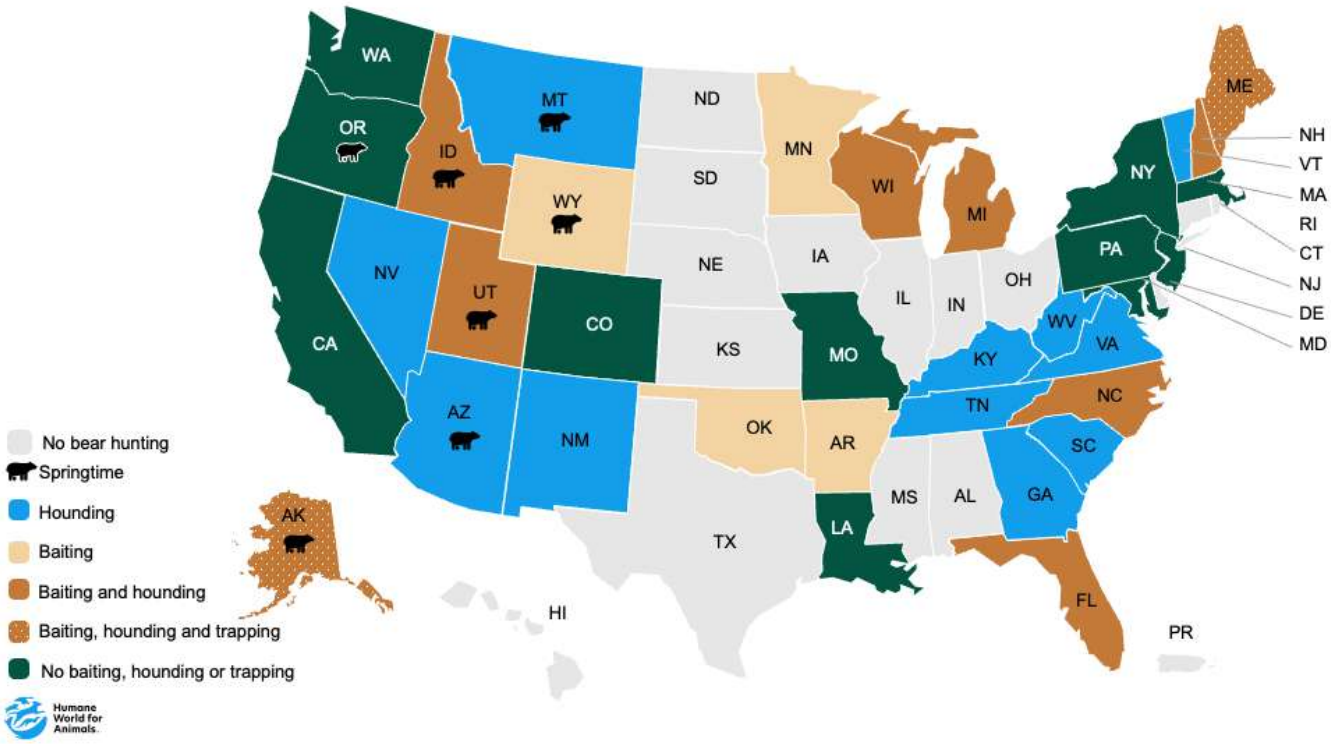
In the U.S., when Yellowstone National Park contemplated moving roadside bears, researchers found that visitors to the park would be willing to pay extra entrance fees to ensure that they could still see roadside bears.[38] That study also found that the loss of roadside bears would result in the loss of 155 jobs in the local economy, or a decrease of $10.1 million annually.[39] Of the Yellowstone visitors they surveyed, Richardson et al. (2014) found that 81% of visitors included bears on their top five most-sought-after animals to view in Yellowstone National Park.[40] A whopping 98.8%[41] of visitors surveyed stated that it was "important" that they see a bear in Yellowstone National Park, while only 1.2% expressed no opinion or felt seeing a bear was unimportant.[42]

In sum, bears hold intrinsic, biological and social values that far exceed the costs associated with trophy hunting bears to society.

Legalized cruelty: Bear-hunting methods in America

Black bears are remarkably intelligent, emotionally complex animals capable of feeling pain, fear and distress. Yet across the U.S., many states permit some of the most inhumane hunting practices imaginable. Hunters are allowed to bait bears with piles of sugary, toxic or rotting foods; unleash packs of radio-collared hounds to chase them for miles; shoot them with arrows that cause slow and agonizing deaths; trap them in cable snares; and kill them during the vulnerable spring season when mothers are nursing cubs. These methods not only inflict immense suffering but also betray the dignity and welfare of one of North America's most iconic wild carnivores. Figure 7. The ubiquitousness of this cruelty is nearly as shocking as the sheer volume of bears killed annually, which averaged 46,362 bears in the last five years. Most Americans have told researchers that they do not want wildlife cruelly treated, and most want black bears protected—even if they have attacked someone.[43]

Figure 7. States' legal American black bear-hunting methods



Baiting. Experts agree that baiting bears (or other species) invariably increases dangerous human-bear conflicts. These sites can put recreationists and nearby residents in danger by attracting and food-conditioning bears. Bait sites also aggregate animals, which spreads disease between bears and other species. Larger bears may also prey on smaller bears drawn to the same sites. Spoiled food, such as rotting meat, or baits high in sugars and fats, create additional health risks by exposing bears to toxic substances such as theobromine and caffeine, and accelerating cellular aging and tooth decay. Smaller carnivores, such as badgers, weasels, martens and coyotes, may also become reliant on bait sites to hunt smaller prey. This dependency can create an ecological trap for species at lower trophic levels. Please see our analysis on baiting bears for more depth and study citations.[44]

Jessie Ventura, the 38th governor of Minnesota, stated the following when describing bear baiting: "Going out there and putting jelly doughnuts down and Yogi comes up and sits there and thinks he's found the mother lode five days in a row—and then you back-shoot him from a tree? That ain't sport—that's an assassination."[45]

Bowhunting. Bears are particularly difficult to kill "cleanly"—meaning achieving a killing shot to a vital organ—because arrows must be able to penetrate their thick hides, massive muscles and heavy bones. Arrows can leave wounded animals to die slowly and painfully. Most famously, Cecil, the African lion who was baited from a national park and shot by an American trophy hunter, died this way.

A study of modern archery equipment found up to 27% of deer shot by archers die slowly rather than from quick, clean kills.[46] In September 2022, during California's bear archery season, residents reported that a bear was seen moaning in distress in a backyard with an arrow sticking out of the bear's side. Officials with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife were unable to locate the wounded bear.[47] In New Jersey, a veterinarian removed an arrow that pierced a bear's mouth and head but did not kill the animal.[48]

Hounding. Some states permit the use of packs of radio-collared, trailing hounds to chase bears across wildlands. Chasing bears is stressful to bears and hounds alike and can result in cruel fights between species, causing injuries or mortalities to either.[49] *Wisconsin Examiner* reporter Henry Redman interviewed retired

veterinarian Dave, who also once chaired the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, about the extreme behaviors of Wisconsin bear houndsmen. Clausen told the reporter:

> "During the bear training season and the hunting season, when I was taking my own emergencies, it was not uncommon to see one or two dogs *a weekend* that had been in a tussle with a bear. ... Some of them were minor cuts and that type of thing, although a lot of the bear hunters carried suture material and they sewed their own dogs up. I've seen dogs with collapsed lungs, fractured ribs, massive abdominal hernias. There can be some pretty severe injuries. ...My primary concern was to try to save the life of the dog and my job wasn't to think about all of that part of it, it was to care for the animal. ...But as time went on I came to the conclusion that this was not a humane pursuit at all and basically it's animal fighting."[50]


Photo by Don Despain/Alamy Stock Photo

Hounds can injure and kill nontarget bear cubs, wolves and pups, mountain lion kittens, deer fawns and ground-nesting birds.[51] A 2018 investigative video captured by then-Florida attorney general Pam Bondi and state law enforcement into an illegal hounding operation graphically shows the violence involved in hounding.[52] Hounds chase wildlife onto private and public lands where they are not permitted.[53] In northern Wisconsin, large groups of houndsmen have reportedly trespassed, damaged property, and intimidated rural residents, with little intervention from law enforcement.[54]

Hounds or bears could be subject to vehicle collisions if they cross roads, or hounds may attack pets, people or domestic livestock. Under-performing hounds are often abandoned or dumped into animal shelters. Many hounds are kept in deplorable conditions without adequate nutrition, sanitation or proper veterinary care.[55] If pursued by hounds, a mother bear will leave her cubs in a tree to evade the hounds.[56] Even when states prohibit the take of nursing females, hunters may still kill them unintentionally.[57]

Springtime hunts. Springtime bear hunts occur when bears are physically stressed from months of fasting during hibernation. In springtime, bears are in "declining physical condition" and are especially vulnerable to hunter "harassment," especially from packs of hounds.[58] Bears are lethargic for the first few weeks after they emerge from the den, and because vegetation is sparse in springtime, bears are easy targets for hunters.[59] Springtime hunts subject bears to the stress of being chased and harassed while they are in poor physical shape—a practice that would be condemned as cruel and unsporting for other big game species such as deer or elk.[60]

At the 5th Western Black Bear Workshop, Thomas Beck and other biologists from Western wildlife agencies stated:

> The biggest issue [re: bear hunting] is the killing of nursing female black bears. There is no way to prevent this from happening in a spring bear season. ...Nursing female black bears often forage at great distances from their cubs. When pursued by hounds, the female bear usually leaves the cubs in a tree and continues eluding the hounds. When she trees, she is seldom with her cubs. Many nursing females do not bring cubs to bait sites.[61]

Black bear cubs, usually born between December and February, generally emerge from hibernation with their mothers in April and May, depending upon latitude and food availability.[62] Springtime bear hunting occurs when cubs are a handful of months old and still nursing, or yearling cubs living as part of a family group that consists of siblings and their mother.[63] Despite state officials' attempts to ensure otherwise, hunters will kill nursing mothers, which orphans cubs and leaves them to suffer from starvation, predation or exposure.[64] Hunters who often have little patience can shoot a mother bear before cubs before waiting to see if she has cubs, and even cautious hunters trying in good faith not to kill females with cubs can mistakenly shoot a lactating mother, as cubs can be

Photo by Wendy Keefover, Humane World for Animals

hidden for significant amounts of time while the mother feeds. In Oregon, where spring bear hunting is permitted and hundreds of bears are killed each spring, state biologists suggest that hunters "[w]atch bears feeding near timberline even longer (up to an hour), as any cubs could be well-hidden among the trees."[65]

Trapping. In a 2006 survey of more than 3,000 wildlife management professionals, most respondents indicated they favored a ban on trapping, and this finding was upheld by subsequent study.[66] Professionals cited pain, stress and harm to nontarget species as the primary reasons for their decision, but wildlife professionals were also concerned about trapping's unsporting nature, that it conflicts with the public's values, and its lack of necessity.[67] A 2019 national survey of Americans by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and Responsive Management found that trapping is the most controversial of practices it surveyed and is disliked even more than trophy hunting—which itself is supported by only about one-third of Americans.[68] A February 2024 nationwide poll by Remington Research found that 58% of Americans support a ban on predator control on national wildlife refuges (with 29% opposing and 13% who were unsure).

Bear biologists have found that using invasive capture techniques (e.g., traps) on their research bears can cause severe injury, trauma and death to the bears as well as to nontarget species.[69] Bears, especially young individuals, suffer immensely when captured in snares as they struggle vigorously to escape.[70] Trapped bears and nontarget animals experience pain, shock and dehydration until they are killed.[71] Injuries include broken limbs, broken teeth, dislocated shoulders, hemorrhage, claw removal, tendon or ligament lacerations, fractures, joint dislocation, amputation of digits and/or limbs, physiological stress and or pain, dehydration and exposure to inclement weather.[72]

Traps are notorious for both their cruelty and for capturing nontarget species, including federally protected species and domestic dogs and cats.[73] Humane trapping standards, including the U.S.'s so-called best management practices, or "BMPs," are woefully outdated by two decades and far from humane.[74]

Restraining traps hold animals until the trapper comes to kill the animal.[75] If restraining traps are improperly set and not checked frequently, animals overexert themselves[76] and can sustain debilitating injuries such as broken bones and teeth; cuts to mouth and gums; dislocated shoulders; lacerations; fractures; amputation of digits, paws or whole legs; physiological stress; and/or pain, dehydration and exposure to inclement weather.[77]

Wendy Keefover, Humane World for Animals

In sum, across North America, some of the cruelest methods to hunt bears are permitted. It is nothing more than legalized cruelty and is completely out of step with the values of the majority of Americans.

Conclusion: Toward humane and effective bear management

Cruel, ubiquitous bear hunting methods—such as archery equipment, baiting, hounding, springtime hunting and trapping—do nothing to solve human-bear conflicts and may instead exacerbate conflicts. These inhumane methods undermine ethical wildlife stewardship at a time when societal values toward wildlife are changing. A growing body of social science research and polling surveys show that, in today's society, the inhumane treatment of wildlife is unacceptable.

To protect black bears and promote coexistence, states should ban these inhumane practices and invest in science-based, nonlethal management strategies. This includes educating communities to secure attractants and promoting electric fencing and bear-resistant containers. A humane, proactive approach not only reduces conflict but also reflects the values of a society that respects wildlife and prioritizes coexistence and ecological integrity.

The constant killing of black bears in North America and the resulting deaths of 1.2 million bears must prick our consciousness. The next quarter century for black bears must align with current values and break the constant cycle of death for this species so highly valued by the public.

Photo by Jos Bakker

Endnotes

[1] This is an approximation. The number of American black bears killed in the U.S. is based on state-issued permits. Whereas the number of American black bear trophies imported to the U.S. is an estimate based on importer reports to the CITES Trade Database. This number was calculated by adding the number of American black bear bodies, rugs, skeletons, skins, skulls, and trophies imported for hunting trophies purposes, in addition to the number of trophies imported for personal purposes.
[2] Joseph M. Northrup et al., "Experimental Test of the Efficacy of Hunting for Controlling Human–Wildlife Conflict," *The Journal of Wildlife Management* (2023); C. W. Lackey et al., "Human-Black Bear Conflicts: A Review of Common Management Practices. Human-Widlife Interactions," *Monograph* 2 (2018); M. E. Obbard et al., "Relationships among Food Availability, Harvest, and Human-Bear Conflict at Landscape Scales in Ontario, Canada," *Ursus* 25, no. 2 (2014).

[3] H. E. Johnson et al., "Human Development and Climate Affect Hibernation in a Large Carnivore with Implications for Human-Carnivore Conflicts," *Journal of Applied Ecology* 55, no. 2 (2018); H. E. Johnson et al., "Shifting Perceptions of Risk and Reward: Dynamic Selection for Human Development by Black Bears in the Western United States," *Biological Conservation* 187 (2015); Obbard et al., "Relationships among Food Availability, Harvest, and Human-Bear Conflict at Landscape Scales in Ontario, Canada.""

[4] Lackey et al., "Human-Black Bear Conflicts: A Review of Common Management Practices. Human-Widlife Interactions."

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