

Originating Committee: Big Game, Turkey, and Furbearers Committee

Authors: Hannah Persell, Kaci Persell, Mariah Arrocha, Carter Stoelzel, Emma Haenchen, and Owen Steins (CLC)

Intended Recipient: Missouri Department of Conservation

Support for Science-Based Management of Black Bears

WHEREAS, black bear populations in Missouri have been increasing by an average of nine percent each year over the last ten years and continue to increase and disperse throughout the state due to high survival rates; and

WHEREAS, this increase in Missouri black bear numbers has resulted in an increase in bear sightings, including in urban areas near major roads; and

WHEREAS, at least two interactions already have required the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to intervene for the welfare of bears and humans; and

WHEREAS, the public is not accustomed to these greater numbers of black bears and might not be prepared for increased interactions with black bears if population growth is left unchecked; and

WHEREAS, states with sufficient populations of black bears have successful hunting seasons without negatively affecting the viability of bear populations; and

WHEREAS, MDC’s proposed plan includes three bear hunting management zones, each re-evaluated annually to determine the maximum potential harvest quota per zone; and

WHEREAS, the hunting season outlined in MDC’s Black Bear Management Plan will last ten days or until the maximum quota is reached; and

WHEREAS, MDC has used science-based management practices since 1937, and this is important to uphold the MDC black bear management program’s goal to “use science-based methods to manage a self-sustaining population of black bear, a native species, increase bear awareness, minimize human-bear conflict, and provide recreational opportunities for all Missourians”; and

WHEREAS, these science-based practices have included measurable objectives, evidence, transparency, and independent review; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled this 6th day of March, 2021, strongly supports the Missouri Department of Conservation’s science-based management of black bears, including carefully regulated hunting to maintain a healthy bear population at levels that are biologically sustainable, and urges the Missouri Department of Conservation to continue educating the public about hunting as part of black bear management.

Searchable Keywords: black bear, hunting, season, sustainable, management, science-based.

Expires: March 6, 2026