

Ministry of Natural Resources

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SUBJECT: Black Bear Harvest Management in Ontario

Greetings,

I am writing to inform you that the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is seeking feedback on proposed policy and regulatory changes to black bear management. The proposal has been posted to the Environmental and Regulatory Registries for 45 days for public review and comment, closing on January 5, 2026. You can access the proposal and submit feedback here:

English: [Proposal to update the province's black bear management approach | Environmental Registry of Ontario](#)

French: [Proposition visant à mettre à jour l'approche de gestion de l'ours noir de la province | Registre e...](#)

Summary of Proposed Changes

1. Black Bear Population Objectives: Population objectives, described as ranges with defined upper and lower limits, will guide management decisions. Preliminary Population Objective Ranges (PORs) are proposed, based primarily on ecological data. We are seeking public input to help incorporate social, cultural, and economic considerations to refine the final objectives.
2. Harvest Management Guidelines: Final PORs will serve as benchmarks for assessing the status of black bear populations and guide harvest management decisions. New adaptive management tools are proposed (e.g., a resident draw to be used in areas of concern), alongside harvest sustainability indicators to support sustainable management. A defined allocation process will improve transparency and equitability in allocation between harvest sectors.

3. Regulatory Amendments: Proposed regulatory changes will extend protections for cubs and females with cubs into the fall and clarify the prohibition on the possession of bear bile to further promote long-term sustainable black bear management.

If the guidelines and final Population Objective Ranges are approved, the ministry has proposed a 5-year province-wide transition plan. During this transition period, harvest management decisions will not be applied based on the final Population Objective Ranges, except as a pilot on the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, where unique concerns about the small, isolated population require immediate attention. The transition plan will allow the ministry to complete necessary preparations for implementation of the new guidance.

Black bears are an important part of Ontario's ecosystem and natural heritage. These proposed changes aim to support responsible black bear management, taking into account ecological considerations, public interests, and the diverse perspectives of all Ontarians. We encourage all interested individuals and organizations to review the proposal and share your perspectives. Your feedback will help inform decisions and ensure that a wide range of views are considered in the development of black bear management approaches.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss the proposed changes further, please contact wildlifepolicy@ontario.ca.

Thank you,

Stephen Casselman
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Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

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