

Report to  
Legislative Council Rules Clearinghouse  
NR 10, Wis. Adm. Code  
Natural Resources Board Order No. WM-01-19

Wisconsin Statutory Authority

Section 29.014 Stats. grants rule-making authority to the department to maintain open and closed seasons for game species in the state. Section 29.184 gives the department the authority to regulate and limit the number of bear hunters and bear harvested in any area of the state.

Federal Authority

Federal regulations allow states to manage the wildlife resources located within their boundaries provided they do not conflict with regulations established in the Federal Register. None of these rule changes violate or conflict with the provisions established in the Federal Code of Regulations.

Comparison of Adjacent States

Minnesota has 10 bear permit areas, though most of the state is a “no quota area,” including the western edge of the state and everywhere south of St. Cloud. Michigan has 10 bear management units, with six in the upper peninsula and three in the northern lower peninsula. Over half of the lower peninsula is closed to bear hunting.

To establish bear quotas, Minnesota has separate “quota” and “non-quota” zones. Quota zones define Minnesota’s higher-quality, heavily forested primary bear range in the northcentral and northeastern parts of the state. Quotas are established for each quota zone, with permit levels set using estimates of hunter success. No-quota zones are established outside of primary bear range, and permits are sold over the counter. They utilize population models to estimate bear population size and trend by zone. Models utilize age information derived from teeth submitted from harvested bears. In quota zones, information on trends in nuisance complaints and damage influence quota-setting decisions.

Michigan has separate zones and time periods. Quotas are established for each zone, with permit levels set using estimates of hunter success. Michigan utilizes population models to estimate bear population size and trend by zone. Models utilize age information derived from teeth submitted from harvested bears. Also derive some population metrics from hunter surveys. Information on trends in nuisance complaints and damage influence quota-setting decisions. This Michigan state bear plan states “Perceived and measured social tolerance is given strong consideration when making harvest recommendations.”

Neither Minnesota or Michigan has a waiting period for hunters who purchase their license during the bear season.

Illinois and Iowa do not have bear hunting seasons.

Court Decisions Directly Relevant

None.

Analysis of the Rule - Rule Effect - Reason for the Rule

The Natural Resource Board approved the 2019-2029 Bear Management plan in May of 2019. This rule will implement changes related to bear management and hunting regulations that have emerged from the Department's 2019 bear management plan. These changes include updating the bear management zone maps and changing how bear population management goals are established. This rule will also and remove the three day waiting period on bear licenses sold during the bear season.

Agency Procedures for Promulgation

The agency will hold hearings in November and request adoption by the Natural Resources Board. The agency will then obtain the governor's signature and then submit the rules to the legislature for review.

Description of any Forms (attach copies if available)

None

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