

Wisconsin Black Bear Harvest Report 2008

By Brian Dhuey, Linda Olver, and Keith Warnke

Abstract

Wisconsin bear hunters killed 2,955 black bears during the 2008 season. This was 6% higher than the 2007 kill of 2,797 bear. The 2008 kill was comprised of 55% males, and 45% females. The three leading counties of kill were Price, Bayfield, and Sawyer.

Background

Wisconsin requires non-Chippewa hunters to obtain a kill permit to hunt bears in the state. The state was divided into four Bear Management Zones (BMZ, Fig. 1) in 2008, and hunters were required to apply for a permit within one of those zones. Kill permits were distributed through a preference point system giving unsuccessful applicants who applied but did not receive a permit in previous years the first chance to receive a kill permit the following year. Each kill permit allowed the taking of one adult bear not accompanied by a cub or cubs in the specified zone. A permit to pursue bear was available to all unsuccessful kill permit applicants who requested it; however this permit did not allow the killing of a bear.

Wisconsin's bear season has opened on the first Wednesday after Labor Day since the 2000 season. The 2008 bear season ran from 3 September through 7 October (35 Days). In the northern 1/3rd of the state (BMZ A, B and D), hunting with the use of bait was allowed during 3-30 September while the use of dogs was allowed 10 September-7 October. Hunters in the southern 2/3^{rds} of the state (BMZ C), could hunt the entire 35-day season with the use of bait and all methods not utilizing dogs.

Methods

Wisconsin requires non-Chippewa bear hunters to register all bear at a designated WDNR registration station. An upper first premolar is collected at the time of registration for age analysis. Data on bear harvested by Chippewa tribal members on ceded lands were obtained from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). All kill data is entered into the DNR-UNIX computer by district personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

A total of 86,138 people applied for 4,660 Black Bear Kill Permits in 2008. The number of applicants increased by 7% and the number of permits increased 6% between 2007 and 2008 (Tables 1 and 10). A total of 4,660 permits were issued to hunters prior to the season.

During the 2008 season, 4,660 hunters killed 2,955 black bears (63.4% success rate), compared to 2,797 taken in 2007. Males comprised 55% (1,616), females 45% (1,324) of the harvest (Table 2, Fig. 2). The sex was not reported for 15 (0.5%) of the bears killed.

The Northern Region had the highest bear kill (2,236) followed by Northeastern (381), and West Central (335) Regions (Table 2). Most bears were shot in Zone A (1,033) followed by Zones B (668), C (643), and D (608) (Table 3 and Figure 1). The four leading counties of kill were Price (259), Bayfield (242), Sawyer (221), and Marinette (210) (Table 4, Fig. 3). Black bear kill by deer management unit can be found in Table 5 and Figure 4. A significant number of hunters reported multiple sightings of bears, and several large bear of over 500 pounds were killed.

The number of bear taken over bait alone (2,184; Table 6) was greater than the number shot over dogs (695; includes bear shot over dogs and bait). Thirty-four bear were taken without the use of dogs or bait. Gun hunters took a total of 2,314 bear, whereas archers killed 559; 40 bear were killed with unreported weapon type (Table 6). Table 7 and Figure 5 summarize the historical Wisconsin black bear kill from 1957 to 2008.

Chippewa hunters killed 42 bear in 2008 (Tables 8 and 9); this was less than the 85 killed in 2007. More information on the Chippewa bear kill can be obtained by contacting the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), P.O. Box 9, Odanah, WI 54861.

A total of 1,383 black bear complaints were filed from April-October 2008. This was up 20% from the number of complaints (1,156) filed in 2007. As a result, 728 bear were captured and relocated from problem areas. This was less than the 756 that were moved in 2007.

Fifteen nuisance bear kill permits were issued in 10 different counties during the late summer and fall of 2008. Fifty-five kill tags were issued to these permit holders, tag numbers ranged from 1 to 15 for each permit holder. Twenty-eight bears were killed under this permit system. Last year, eight nuisance bear kill permits were issued, with thirty-two bears being killed.

Weather conditions in the primary bear range (BMZ A, B, and D) were normal in the NW to dry in the NE during the 2008 bear season. Normal to slightly above average temperatures lasted throughout the season. Acorn crops varied by region, but most areas had normal to above average acorn drops. Bear visits to bait stations continued during most of the season. The central part of the state had better rainfall during the summer and average conditions for the season and a normal to above normal mast crop. While weather conditions were dry for most of the season, they were more conducive to hunter's pursuing bears with dogs than in 2007. The 2008 bear kill of 2,955 was very close to the WDNR harvest goal of 2,950 bears. Weather conditions for hunting were good during the season and hunter success was average to above.

WDNR established a harvest goal of 4,585 bears for the 2009 season. A total of 7,310 Black Bear harvest permits will be available to hunters to achieve this goal.

Table 1. *Harvest goal, number of permits issued, bear kill and percent success, by zone for the 2008 black bear season.*

Zone	Harvest Goal	Permits Issued	Black Bear Kill	Permit Success
A	1,100	1,440	1,033	72%
B	700	850	668	79%
C	600	1,650	643	39%
D	550	720	608	84%
Unknown			3	
Total	2,950	4,660	2,955	63%

Table 2. *Black bear kill by WDNR region, 2008.*

Region	Males	Females	Unreported	Total
Northeastern	211	170	0	381
Northern	1,230	995	11	2,236
West Central	175	158	2	335
Unknown	0	1	2	3
Total	1,616	1,324	15	2,955

Table 3. *Black bear kill by zone, 2008.*

Zone	Males	Females	Unreported	Total
A	587	440	6	1,033
B	341	325	2	668
C	351	288	4	643
D	335	270	3	608
Unknown	2	1	0	3
Total	1,616	1,324	15	2,955

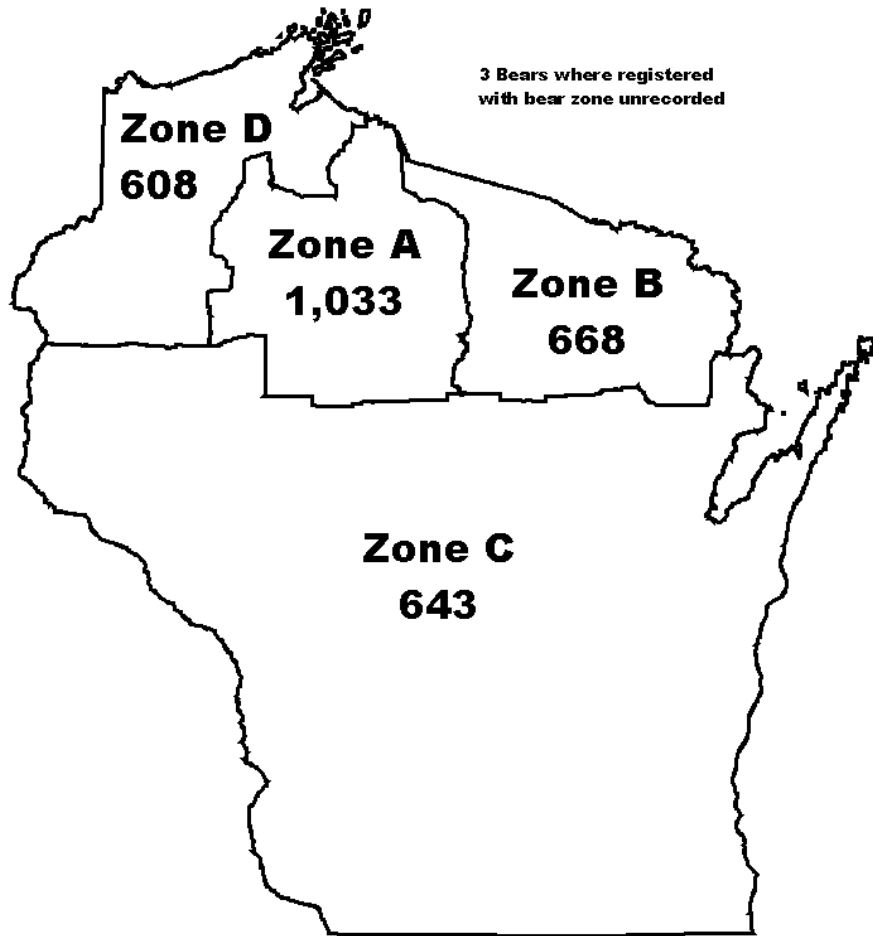


Figure 1. The 2008 black bear kill by zone.

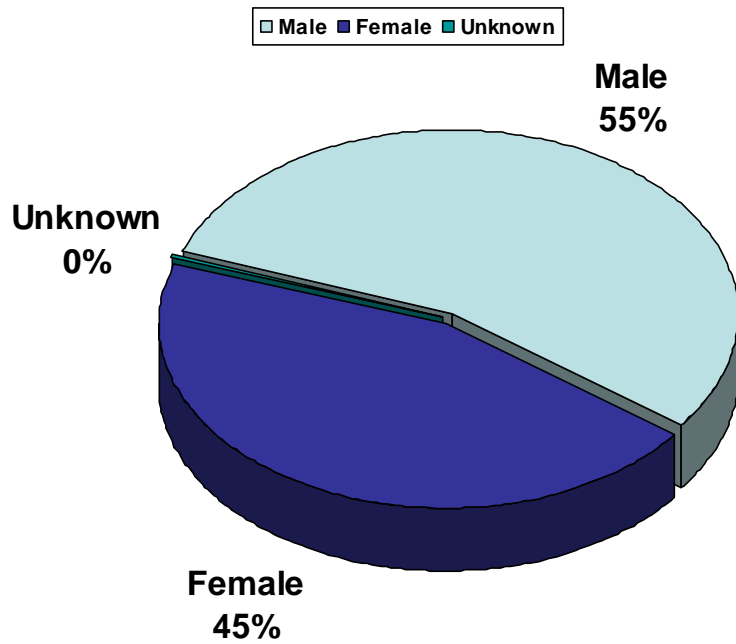


Figure 2. The 2008 black bear harvest by sex.

County	Males	Females	Un- reported	Total
Total	1,616	1,324	15	2,955

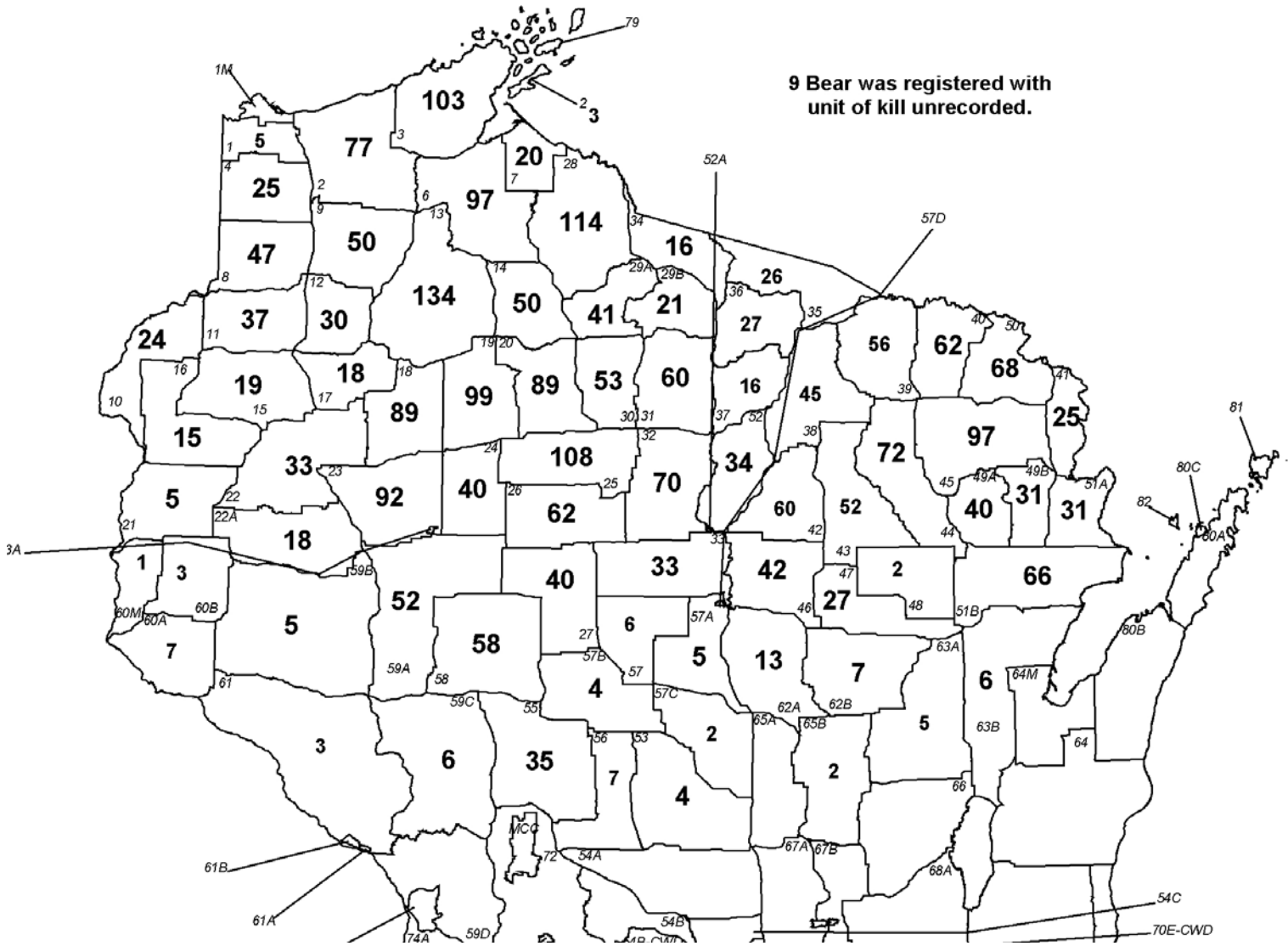


Figure 4. The 2008 black bear kill by deer management unit.

Table 5. *The 2008 black bear kill by deer management unit and sex.*

Deer Unit	Males	Females	Un-reported	Total	Deer Unit	Males	Females	Un-reported	Total
01	1	4	0	5	40	33	29	0	62
02	46	30	1	77	41	14	11	0	25
03	46	56	1	103	42	32	28	0	60
04	14	11	0	25	43	25	26	1	52
06	59	38	0	97	44	41	31	0	72
07	8	12	0	20	45	42	55	0	97
08	29	18	0	47	46	22	20	0	42
09	34	16	0	50	47	18	9	0	27
10	17	7	0	24	48	0	2	0	2
11	16	21	0	37	49A	17	23	0	40
12	17	13	0	30	49B	18	13	0	31
13	73	59	2	134	50	31	37	0	68
14	30	20	0	50	51A	22	9	0	31
15	10	9	0	19	51B	42	24	0	66
16	9	5	1	15	52	17	17	0	34
17	9	9	0	18	53	3	1	0	4
18	43	46	0	89	55	19	16	0	35
19	53	46	0	99	56	7	0	0	7
20	59	30	0	89	57	2	4	0	6
21	3	2	0	5	57A	2	3	0	5
22	14	19	0	33	57B	4	0	0	4
22A	10	8	0	18	57C	2	0	0	2
23	40	50	0	92	58	21	36	1	58
24	23	17	0	40	59A	28	24	0	52
25	64	43	1	108	59B	3	1	1	5
26	33	29	0	62	59C	3	3	0	6
27	19	21	0	40	60A	2	5	0	7
28	67	46	1	114	60B	3	0	0	3
29A	22	18	1	41	60M	0	1	0	1
29B	17	4	0	21	61	3	0	0	3
30	36	17	0	53	62A	10	3	0	13
31	26	34	0	60	62B	5	2	0	7
32	38	31	1	70	63A	4	1	0	5
33	21	12	0	33	63B	2	4	0	6
34	7	9	0	16	65B	2	0	0	2
35	16	10	0	26	78	2	0	0	2
36	16	11	0	27	Unk	6	1	2	9
37	11	5	0	16	Total	1,616	1,324	15	2,955
38	23	22	0	45					
39	30	25	1	56					

Table 6. *The 2008 black bear kill by hunting method and weapon type (does not include Chippewa harvest of 42 bear).*

Method	Weapon			Total
	Bow	Gun	Unreported	
Dogs	15	323	5	343
Bait	523	1,635	26	2,184
Dogs and Bait	13	335	4	352
None	8	21	5	34
Total	559	2,314	40	2,913

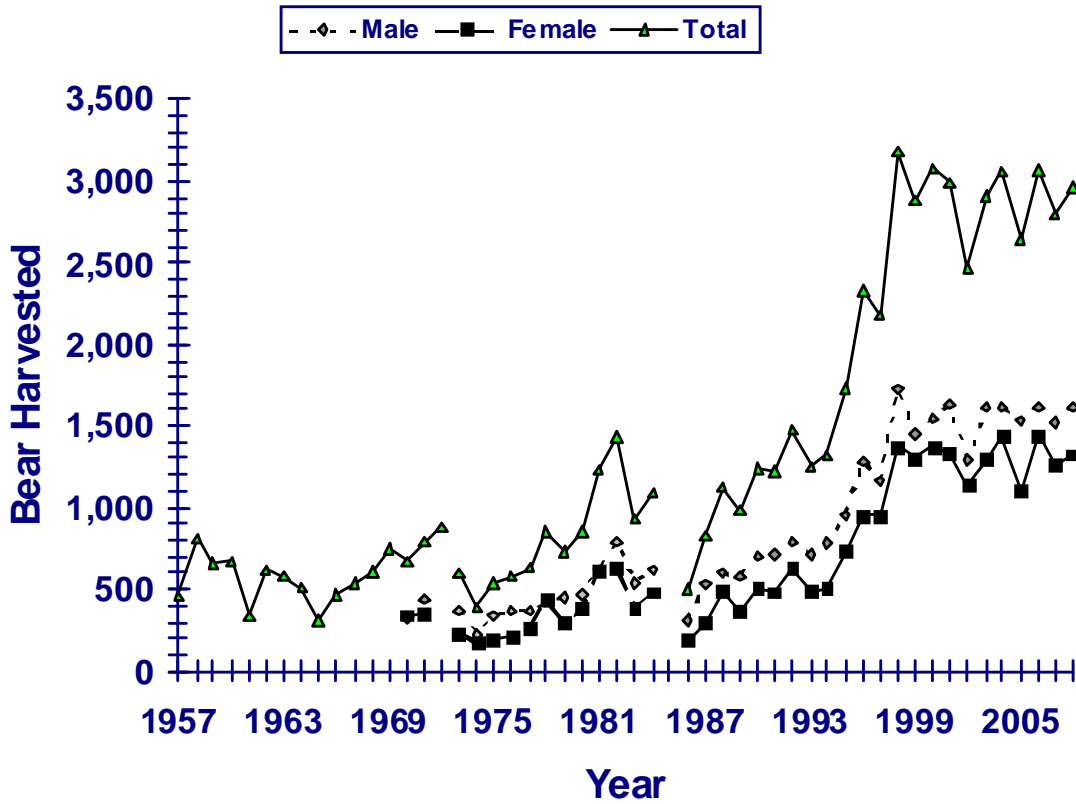


Figure 5. Black bear kill, 1957-2008.

Table 7. Black bear kill by sex, 1957-2008.

Year	Male	Female	Unk	Total	Year	Male	Female	Unk	Total
1957	---	---		460	1983	539	395		934
1958	---	---		811	1984	617	480		1,097
1959	---	---		665	1985	No Season			
1960	---	---		675	1986	308	195		503
1961	---	---		337	1987	533	304		837
1962	---	---		617	1988	601	494	30	1,125
1963	---	---		579	1989	584	375	19	978
1964	---	---		511	1990	705	501	41	1,247
1965	---	---		308	1991	715	480	24	1,219
1966	---	---		475	1992	789	631	54	1,474
1967	---	---		541	1993	715	494	49	1,258
1968	---	---		613	1994	781	513	34	1,328
1969	---	---		752	1995	953	735	49	1,737
1970	331	341		672	1996	1,288	955	82	2,325
1971	444	347		791	1997	1,165	950	63	2,178
1972	---	---		878	1998	1,727	1,378	79	3,184
1973	376	230		606	1999	1,456	1,301	124	2,881
1974	224	166		390	2000	1,543	1,376	156	3,075
1975	344	195		539	2001	1,632	1,336	18	2,986
1976	373	206		579	2002	1,290	1,143	38	2,471
1977	375	256		631	2003	1,613	1,288	4	2,905
1978	426	436	10	872	2004	1,618	1,433	12	3,063
1979	449	288		737	2005	1,537	1,107	1	2,645
1980	469	386		855	2006	1,615	1,448	5	3,068
1981	624	610		1,234	2007	1,528	1,261	8	2,797
1982	797	636		1,433	2008	1,616	1,324	15	2,955

Table 8. *The 2008 Chippewa black bear kill by deer management unit and sex¹.*

Deer Unit	Males	Females	Total
01	1	0	1
02	3	1	4
03	12	5	17
04	1	2	3
06	1	2	3
08	0	1	1
10	1	0	1
11	0	2	2
12	0	1	1
15	1	0	1
28	1	0	1
29B	1	0	1
31	1	0	1
37	1	0	1
38	1	0	1
43	1	0	1
44	1	0	1
45	1	0	1
Total	28	14	42

¹ These data are included in the statewide totals.

Table 9. *The 2008 Chippewa black bear kill by county and sex¹.*

County	Males	Females	Totals
Bayfield	13	7	20
Burnett	1	2	3
Douglas	5	4	9
Forest	2	0	2
Iron	2	0	2
Langlade	1	0	1
Oneida	3	0	3
Washburn	1	1	2
Totals	28	14	42

¹ These data are included in the statewide totals.

Table 10. *The number of black bear harvest permits issued and the number of applicants, 1974-2008.*

Year	Residents	Non-residents	No. Permits Issued	No. of Applicants
1974	3,459		3,459	3,459
1975	4,116		4,116	4,116
1976	4,899		4,899	4,899
1977	5,025		5,025	5,025
1978	6,283		6,283	6,283
1979	5,612	179	5,791	5,791
1980	6,352	171	6,523	6,523
1981	7,247	241	7,488	7,488
1982	8,142	224	8,366	8,366
1983	7,077	218	7,295	7,295
1984	6,439	320	6,759	6,759
1985		Season	Closed	
1986			840	8,289
1987			1,730	10,203
1988			1,663	10,208
1989			2,020	13,734
1990			2,825	15,988
1991			2,560	17,668
1992			2,620	19,415
1993			2,110	22,555
1994			2,175	25,799
1995			2,710	30,086
1996			4,570	35,356
1997			4,700	41,969
1998			5,860	44,928
1999			6,014	50,938
2000			6,598	50,601
2001			5,681	53,508
2002			4,985	54,879
2003			4,710	56,944
2004			4,741	61,726
2005			4,549	66,777
2006			4,277	68,821
2007			4,405	80,213
2008			4,660	86,138
2009			7,310	95,384