Wisconsin BEAR HUNTING Regulations

2019 BEAR HUNTING REGULATIONS

People born on or after January 1, 1973 must present their Wisconsin Hunter Education Certification or proof of a hunter safety course recognized by the department from another state, province or country, or a Wisconsin hunting license from a previous year bear harvest season to be considered for a Class A bear license.

License Conditions

Class A License Cost: Residents $49, Non-residents $251

Mentored License Cost: Resident and Non-resident $7

Class A bear licenses can be transferred to a person who is at least age 18, has held a valid A or D license for 10 years, and has never been convicted of a Class A or D misdemeanor.

Applicants must submit applications online at www.dnr.wi.gov. An additional 1.75% convenience fee applies if paying online with a credit card. There is no fee for paying with a checking account.

License Issuance

The number of Class A bear licenses available per management zone is based upon previous hunter success rates and current bear population estimates.

Holders of a Class A license must carry proof of their license while engaging in any of the activities requiring the license and display it to a warden upon request. See www.dnr.wi.gov and search “Go Wild!” for acceptable forms of proof of issue of original license issued at the point of sale. In addition, you must carry your paper carcass tag while engaged in hunting activities.

Hunters are selected using a cumulative preference point system. Applicants receive a preference point every year they apply and accumulate until they receive a Class A license. For each zone, applicants with the greatest number of preference points are chosen first to receive a Class A license. Up to 4 hunters may apply as a group. Hunters who apply as a group will enter the drawing with the preference point total of the group member with lowest preference. Hunters must apply for a license or preference point at least once every 3 years to retain their preference points.

Bear Transfer Applications and Information can be found at dnr.wi.gov keywords “bear transfer” or at DNR Service Centers.

Bear Registration

• Registration is mandatory.
• Successful hunters must electronically register bear harvest in the county of kill or an adjoining county, by 5 p.m. the day after recovery. Register a bear in one of three ways:
  Go to genrecry.wi.gov (fastest and easiest method).
  Call 844-426-3734 (844-GAME-REG).
  Visit an in-person station. Go to dnr.wi.gov and search “registration stations” to find a list.
• Once registration is complete, the GameReg system will issue a confirmation number for the hunter’s records.
• Once the bear is registered, keep the carcass tag with the meat and all meat and hide products.

Submitting Bear Tooth Samples

• Successful hunters are required to provide TWP upper procing teeth from hunting in 2019. One will be used to determine age, and one will be used for DNA sampling to support development of a statewide bear population estimate. Instructions for collection of the teeth will be mailed to hunters who receive a Class A licenses, and is also available at dnr.wi.gov, keyword “bear processing.” Hunters will be notified of the bear’s age after samples are analyzed.
• If the tooth is not provided, hunters should write their name, customer ID number and registration confirmation number on a piece of paper and affix the paper with a rubber band to an envelope and mail to: Bear Tooth, 107 Stuff Avenue, Rhinelander, WI 54501.

Questions?

Contact the DNR Call Center

888-WI-DNR (888-943-6741) or DNR W.I.G.O

TTY Access via relay – 711

Spanish and Hmong speaking representatives are available.

Report Natural Resource Violations

CALL OR TEXT 888-TIP-IN-WI (888-847-4694)

Toll Free • Statewide • 24-Hour • Confidential

Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

For more information, call 888-943-6743.

REMINDERS FOR 2019!

• Submission of two teeth from harvested bears is mandatory.

• A person of any age may acquire bear preference points or apply for a Class A bear license.

• Hunters should note the following:

  – Curass tags are required and are printed on registration station receipts when a license is purchased in person, at a DNR service center or at a license agent. Reprinting tags at a license agent incurs a $2 processing fee.

  – Tagging requirements have changed. Tags are now voided by removing the bottom portion of the tag. See “Validation and Tagging” section for details.

  – While bear hunting, hunters must carry one of the following accepted forms of proof of their Class A bear license. See second item in “Licensing Requirements” section.

  – A person of any age may acquire bear preference points or apply for a Class A bear license in 2020, an applicant must pay a $4.50 application fee and provide zone preference to the license agent at the time of purchase. Application closes in March and the application deadline is 11:59 p.m., Dec. 10, 2019. If you select a zone at the time of purchase and you are selected in the drawing, your preference points will be reset to zero even if you do not purchase a Class A license. Unsuccessful applicants automatically receive one preference point.

  – Applicants who do not wish to bear hunt in 2020 but would like a preference point should inform the license agent at the time of purchasing their original license.

  – Applicants may submit applications online at www.dnr.wi.gov. An additional 1.75% convenience fee applies if paying online with a credit card. There is no fee for paying with a checking account.

  – Non-residents may purchase Class A licenses at the resident rate if they are current active duty members of the U.S. Armed Forces and were Wisconsin residents when they enlisted.

  – Hunters drawn for a Class A license may purchase their license at any time beginning March 2019. However, licenses purchased after Sept. 5, 2019 are not valid until three days after the purchase. For example, a license purchased on Monday is valid on Thursday.

  – Anyone charging a fee to provide bear hunting services must possess a guide license; a guide license does not grant Class A privileges.

Class A Bear License Transfer

• A person may apply to transfer their Class A license to a person younger than age 18, a person holding a valid Class A or D license, an active duty military member of the U.S. Armed Forces or a Purple Heart recipient. Documentation is required.

• Preference points or Class A bear licenses can be transferred to a minor from a customer who is deceased.

• The Class A bear license must not be transferred unless both the transferee and transferrer are eligible to use the approval.

• Transfer recipient will retain his/her accumulated preference points.

• Transfer application shall be submitted at least 15 days prior to the start of the bear season.

• Upon request, the DNR will deliver the use of a Class A bear license approval for members of the Armed Forces or National Guard who are on active duty and unable to hunt.

Highly Visible Clothing Requirement

During the 2-day youth and mentored hunt on Oct. 5, 6 and Oct. 26, 2019, hunters killed a bear.

Bear shooting and dog training hours are 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, but may be shorter due to 20 minutes after sunset during the bear harvest season.

The table below lists these times for Zone A. To determine opening (AM) and closing (PM) times for other zones, add the minutes shown on or marked left or right of times listed in the table below. Prior to the harvest season, when training dogs between July 1 - Aug. 31, these hours do not apply.
Firearm and Archery Restrictions

It is illegal to:

- hunt bear with any rimfire rifle, air rifle, centerfire rifle less than .22 caliber, .410 shotgun, handgun loaded with .410 shotgun ammunition, fully automatic firearm or with ammunition loaded with non-expanding type bullets;
- use handguns that are not muzzleloading handguns unless they are loaded with centerfire cartridges of .22 caliber or larger; and
- hunt bear with a muzzle length of 3 inches or less measured from the muzzle end of the barrel, not including attached muzzle break, to the firing pin with the action closed;
- use a muzzleloading handgun unless it fires a single projectile weighing not less than 138 grains and is at least 44 caliber with a minimum barrel length of 7 inches measured from muzzle to breech;
- use a muzzleloader, unless it is a smoothbore muzzleloading firearm of .45 caliber or larger;
- hunt bear with a bow having a pull of less than 30 pounds. To be legal, broadheads must be made from metal or hardened steel, be at least 2 3/8" wide, and be kept sharp. Stone arrow heads may be used.
- possess any poisoned, drugged or explosive-tipped arrow while hunting;
- hunt bear with a crossbow, unless it has a minimum draw of 120 pounds, a workable safety and uses a 1-inch long bow or arrows equipped with broadheads. Compound bows equipped with a drawstop mechanism that is capable of holding the bow in full draw are considered crossbows, which are exempt from the 100-pound requirement but must meet the draw weight minimum.
- possess in a vehicle or transport in or on a moving vehicle any firearm (other than a handgun) or bow without it being unloaded and decocked or unloaded and enclosed within a vehicle or backpack;
- load a firearm or gun while in a vehicle;
- hold two or more firearms in the vehicle;
- transport any firearm in a vehicle while the vehicle is being driven or operated;
- possess in a vehicle or transport in or on a moving vehicle any firearm (other than a handgun) or bow unless it is unloaded and decocked or unloaded and enclosed within the vehicle or backpack; or
- transport a firearm in a vehicle or on a moving vehicle unless it is unloaded and decocked or unloaded and enclosed within a vehicle or backpack.

It is legal to:

- hunt within 50 feet of the roadway's center;
- discharge a firearm, shoot an arrow from a bow or a bolt from a crossbow, from or across a highway within 50 feet of the roadway's center. This prohibition applies to all public roads which are either paved or indicated on the current Department of Transportation county highway map.

(Bear Management Zone and Game Management Units that appear on this license are not necessarily the same as the bear management zone and Game Management Units that appear on the current Department of Natural Resources information. It is illegal to hunt if you are not sure which zone you are hunting in. Be aware of where you are hunting. Successful hunters will use the area surrounding the Mondeaux Flowage Recreation Area is closed to all forms of bear hunting and dog training from April 1 to September 30. This area is bordered by the following roads: County D on the north, County E on the west, FR 102 on the south, and FR 104 and FR 106 on the east. For details, visit dnr.wi.gov or call (715) 746-4875.

Black Bear Management Zones/Units Map

Hunters may only hunt in the zone indicated on their license. Bear Management Zone and Game Management Units that appear on this map are intended to help successful hunters register their bear.

Other Restrictions

It is illegal to:

- shoot or molest any bear in a den, hunt bear in any dump or sanitary landfill or kill a cub or any adult bear accompanied by a cub or cubs. An adult bear is defined as a bear 42 inches or greater in length, as measured in a straight line from the tip of nose to the base of the tail. Hunters concerned with distinguishing a cub from an adult bear should consider laying a 42" log next to their bait to assist in determining the size of a bear. If you’re not sure, don’t shoot!
- sell, buy, trade, or barter bear hides unless the claws, head, and teeth are attached. Bear claws and teeth may not be sold, purchased, traded, or bartered when separated from the hide. The sale of other bear parts is also prohibited.

Transport

While afield, no person may possess or transport another hunter’s bear, even after it has been registered, unless accompanied by the person who issued the carcass tag which is attached to the bear, except that anyone may still transport another person’s registered bear on a public road or possess it at a residence, camp or business.

Dog Training and Use

Dogs may be trained statewide by pursuing bear from July 1 through Aug. 31. It is legal to train dogs in Zones A, B, and E during the open season for hunting bear. In illegal to:

- hunt or train dogs to pursue bear before or after established shooting hours (except when training dogs from July 1-Aug. 31, these hours do not apply);
- hunt bear with dogs in Zone C;
- hunt, train dogs, or pursue a dog that is not tethered or that is not wearing a collar bearing the owner’s name and address;
- hunt, train dogs or pursue bear with more than 6 dogs in a single pack, regardless of the number of bear hunters or the dog’s ownership.

(Dog tags that fall out of the chaise may be replaced, but no more than six dogs may be used to pursue bear)

- allow the dogs to kill any wild animal;
- hunt or pursue any free-roaming wild animal with the aid of any dog. May 1 to June 30 north of the highways shown on the map below for approved dog trials and training on free-roaming rabbits or raccoons under a hound dog trial or trapper permit.

Find Land Open to Hunting

Nearby 7 million acres of land are open to public hunting in WI. Visit dnr.wi.gov and search keywords “find land open to hunting”.

Baiting With Chocolate

Solid blocks of chocolate for bear baiting. Chocolate can be toxic or lethal to bears and other wildlife, especially cubs.

Validation and Tagging

- The hunter is required to possess a paper carcass tag while bearing hunting. Electronic copies of carcass tags are not accepted.
- Immediately upon killing a bear, validate the paper carcass tag by removing the bottom portion (the “validation stub”).
- If you leave it, tag it! You may not leave the bear carcass unless the validated carcass tag is attached to it. Either write the tag as soon as you plan to leave the carcass. Attach the tag with string or other fastener.
- Carcass tags must be kept intact and legible; consider protecting the tag inside a zip-top plastic bag.
- No person may possess, or transport a bear carcass unless it is in possession of the legally killed bear corresponding to it.
- No person may possess, while hunting or afield, more than one copy of a unique carcass tag; no person, bought, another’s license, permit or tag.
- If a backup shooter kills a bear that is shot, but not killed, by the Class A bear license holder, it is still the Class A bear license holder’s responsibility to validate that carcass tag.

Field Dressing

- A bear may be divided into not more than five parts, not including the hide, only to facilitate removal from the field. The hunter may divide the carcass prior to registering the bear. The head and neck shall remain attached to one of the other parts of the animal, not including the hide. A person who divides the bear while afield;
- may not allow the bear to be stored or transported with any other bear that has been divided prior to registration;
- may not divide any bear in a manner that does not keep one part of the bear intact to allow it to be measured in a straight line from the tip of nose to the base of the tail to determine it as an adult bear of 42 inches or greater;
- must retain all parts from the field except the entrails.

Baiting Near Roadways

It is illegal to:

- hunt within 50 feet of the roadway’s center;
- discharge a firearm, shoot an arrow from a bow or a bolt from a crossbow, from or across a highway within 50 feet of the roadway’s center. This prohibition applies to all public roads which are either paved or indicated on the current Department of Transportation county highway map.

(Note: Class A and certain Class B disabled permit holders are beyond portions of this requirement when hunting from a stationary vehicle. Contact the DNR for more information.)

Baiting

1. Bait may be placed and used for the purpose of hunting bear or training bear dogs, except it is illegal if any person to place, use or hunt over bait placed for bears for:
   - the beginning of the bear season closes and continues through the following April 14;
   - in excess of 10 gallons of bait at any site;
   - that is not totally enclosed in a hollow log, a hole in the ground or on a platform raised 100 yards or more above ground or on a platform raised 100 yards or more above ground.

(Note: Liquid scent used for hunting bear or training bear dogs does not need to be enclosed, but is part of the 10-gallon limit.)

2. No person may place, use, or hunt over bait or scent that:
   - contains any animal part or animal by-product. Animal part or by-products includes, but is not limited to, honey, beeswax, fish, meat, hickory nut, bacon, cheese, animal carcass, or pup; or
   - contains any liquid scent or scent that does not keep one part of the bear intact to allow it to be measured in a straight line from the tip of nose to the base of the tail.

3. In use of any of the site is not allowed on lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

4. No person may place, use, or hunt over bait or scent that:
   - contains any animal part or animal by-product. Animal part or by-products includes, but is not limited to, honey, beeswax, fish, meat, hickory nut, bacon, cheese, animal carcass, or pup; or
   - contains any liquid scent or scent that does not keep one part of the bear intact to allow it to be measured in a straight line from the tip of nose to the base of the tail.

5. In use of any of the site is not allowed on lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Note: The area surrounding the Mondeaux Flowage Recreation Area is closed to all forms of bear hunting and dog training from April 1 to September 30. This area is bordered by the following roads: County D on the north, County E on the west, FR 102 on the south, and FR 104 and FR 106 on the east. For details, visit dnr.wi.gov or call (715) 746-4875.

Buildings, vehicles, or other man-made objects may be used to create a location for raising and training bear dogs.

While afield, no person may possess or transport another hunter’s bear, even after it has been registered, unless accompanied by the person who issued the carcass tag which is attached to the bear, except that anyone may still transport another person’s registered bear on a public road or possess it at a residence, camp or business.