

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SECOND REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 2015

H.P. 1480 House of Representatives, January 11, 1988
Submitted by the Department of Inland Fisheries and
Wildlife pursuant to Joint Rule 24.

Reference to the Committee on Fisheries and Wildlife
suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk
Presented by Representative FARREN of Cherryfield.

Cosponsored by Senator ERWIN of Oxford, Representatives
CLARK of Millinocket and WEYMOUTH of West Gardiner.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHT

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AN ACT to Increase the Commissioner of
Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's
Authority to Manage Black Bear
Populations.

6 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as
7 follows:

8 12 MRSA §7451, sub-§1, ¶F is enacted to read:

1 F. Notwithstanding paragraph A, the commissioner
2 may establish, in conformity with the Maine
3 Administrative Procedure Act, Title 5, Part 18,
4 special bear hunting seasons at other times of the
5 year in any area of the State as necessary to
6 accomplish wildlife management objectives,
7 provided that:

8 (1) The demarcation of each area follows
9 recognizable physical boundaries such as
10 rivers, roads and railroad rights-of-way;

11 (2) The determination is made and published
12 at least 90 days prior to the start of any
13 special bear hunting season;

14 (3) The commissioner may establish the
15 number of bear hunting permits for any
16 special bear hunting season and may issue
17 those permits annually through random
18 selection; and

19 (4) The commissioner may adopt rules
20 necessary for the administration,
21 implementation, enforcement and
22 interpretation of this paragraph.

23 STATEMENT OF FACT

24 The State's black bear population is the highest
25 in recent history and is conservatively estimated to
26 exceed 21,000 animals. If current population trends
27 continue, the black bear population is expected to
28 continue to climb to more than 28,000 animals by 1990.

29 Recent studies conducted by the Department of
30 Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, together with a
31 substantial increase in the number of bear damage
32 complaints, indicate that the black bear population is
33 expanding beyond acceptable levels in many areas. At
34 the present time, the annual take of black bear from
35 all causes is not sufficient to stabilize bear

1 populations, and current law does not give the
2 department the necessary flexibility to keep black
3 bear populations at optimum levels.

4 The purpose of this bill is to provide the
5 commissioner with the authority to establish special
6 bear hunting seasons through the regulatory process,
7 in addition to the statutory 3-month fall season, as
8 necessary to maintain black bear populations at
9 desirable levels. This authority will allow the
10 commissioner to adjust the harvest of black bear on an
11 annual basis in accordance with black bear population
12 trends.

13 Under present conditions, this bill will result in
14 additional bear hunting opportunity and a reduction in
15 nuisance bear complaints and undesirable interactions
16 between bears and humans. It will also create a
17 positive economic impact in many areas of the State
18 where people are dependent on bear hunters as a source
19 of income.

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