

Black Bear Legislation 2012-2022

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Issue

Describe legislative proposals concerning black bears that were the subject of a public hearing since 2012.

Summary

Since 2012, the Connecticut legislature has held public hearings on 10 bills that concerned, at least in part, black bears. The bills generally concerned (1) euthanizing black bears wounded in motor vehicle collisions, (2) limited bear hunting, (3) feeding bears on private property, (4) penalties for illegally taking (e.g., trapping or killing) bear, and (5) taking nuisance wildlife. None of the bills became law and only four were taken up by either chamber.

The following table lists the bills along with a brief description of each proposal and the bills' last action by the legislature.

Table 1: Connecticut Legislative Proposals Concerning Black Bears, 2012-2022

Year	Bill Number	General Concept	Last Action
2012	SB 264	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to authorize veterinarians to humanely euthanize wildlife (explicitly including black bear) wounded by a motor vehicle collision 	Public Hearing
2013	HB 6654	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires DEEP to (1) sell bear hunt lottery permits for \$10 each and (2) charge \$200 per bear hunt license Specifies that the DEEP commissioner designates the manner of the hunt, but the location must coincide with deer management zones 	Referred from the House to the Finance Committee, which voted out a substitute without the bear hunt provisions

Table 1 (continued)

Year	Bill Number	General Concept	Last Action
2016	HB 5315 , as amended by House "A"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations to ban or restrict feeding black bears on property not owned by the state Provides warnings and educational materials for first-time, de minimis violations, other violations are infractions 	House passed, as amended by House "A"
2017	SB 522 , as amended by Senate "A" and "B"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorizes regulations on hunting black bear in Litchfield County, subject to certain restrictions Requires a report from DEEP on the number of (1) issued black bear hunting licenses and (2) bears killed by hunting 	Senate amended the bill with Senate "D" which struck the bear hunt provisions
2017	SB 832	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On private property: (1) prohibits feeding, attracting, or enticing certain animals, including black bears, and (2) allows for regulations on unintentional feeding 	Public Hearing
2018	HB 5358	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authorizes regulations on hunting black bear in Litchfield County, subject to certain restrictions Requires a report from DEEP on the number of (1) issued black bear hunting licenses and (2) bear taken by hunting 	Vote failed in Environment Committee
	HB 5469	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases the penalties for illegally taking bear 	Public Hearing
2019	SB 586	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expands the circumstances under which the DEEP commissioner may issue permits to landowners or lessees for taking nuisance wildlife by including when there is unreasonable damage to livestock, poultry, or bees, instead of only agricultural crops 	Vote failed in Senate
	SB 894	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires the DEEP commissioner to report to the Environment Committee on the best nonlethal management practices to deter black bear from habituating in areas densely populated by people 	Senate passed
2020	HB 5455 , § 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows local, state, or conservation police, or a veterinarian to euthanize deer, moose, or black bear seriously wounded by a motor vehicle collision 	Public Hearing set but not held*
2022	SB 244	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expands the circumstances under which the DEEP commissioner may issue permits to landowners or lessees for taking nuisance wildlife by including when there is unreasonable damage to livestock, poultry, or bees, instead of only agricultural crops 	Vote failed in Environment Committee

*The bill was scheduled for hearing, but the hearing was not held due to the legislature's closure from COVID-19 concerns.

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