

Proposed Regulation Changes for Bear Season

Coastal Bear Management Unit (CBMU) Regulation Proposal:

The [N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission](#) is proposing changes to the CBMU to support the Commission's goals and objectives set in the [2012 Black Bear Management Plan](#). The Commission is proposing these changes after evaluating habitat and biological data from across the CBMU and public input from two rounds of public forums.

In 2016, the Commission held public forums, [Status and Management of Black Bears in NC](#), at seven sites across the state to review the NC Black Bear Management Plan; share data and information about NC bear populations; describe the development of zones in the CBMU; discuss the status and opportunities regarding bear hunting rules, seasons, future needs and desires, and get input from constituents on the future of bear management.

Based on input received from the 2016 forums, the Commission conducted a second round of public forums at five sites across the state in 2017. In these forums, [Aligning Coastal Bear Seasons to Biological Zones](#), Commission staff presented information specifically focused on the CBMU and potential season options for each of the CBMU zones and received input from hunters that resulted in the development of the proposed CBMU seasons being presented at the January 2018 public hearings.

Mountain Bear Management Unit (MBMU) Regulation Proposal:

The 2016 and 2017 bear forums focused primarily on the CBMU, therefore, the MBMU was only touched on briefly during the presentations in 2016. However, the Commission recognized that concurrent proposed changes to [deer hunting seasons](#) would have direct impacts to bear hunters in the MBMU.

Bear hunting season and gun deer season overlap in the CBMU but currently do not overlap in all portions of the Mountain Bear Management Unit (MBMU). The proposed changes to deer seasons in the mountains would make the western deer and bear hunting seasons overlap in the MBMU during the December bear hunting season. In July 2017, the Commission held a meeting in Clyde, NC with 54 bear hunters, most of whom represented larger bear hunting groups, to discuss the challenges and opportunities with overlapping seasons.

Based on discussion and input, the Commission found those in attendance preferred keeping the current bear season as structured resulting in an overlap with deer season during the December segment of bear season **and** adding two weeks in October to the beginning of the bear season. Based on available biological data for the MBMU, adding two weeks to the beginning of the bear season should not have a negative impact on the bear population.

Proposed Regulation Changes for Bear Season:

- Modify the bear hunting season in the CBMU to align hunting seasons with five bear hunting zones.
- Modify bear hunting season in the MBMU to add two weeks to the beginning of the current season.