



Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting:

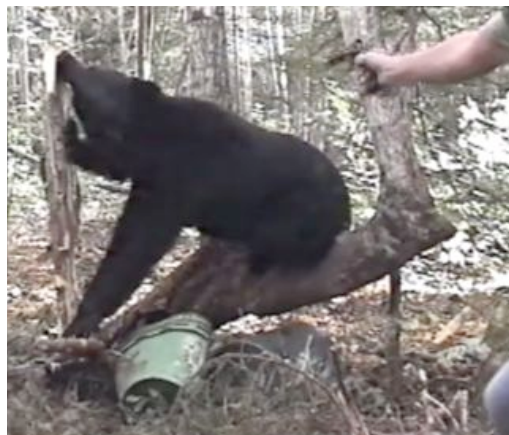
Hunting is a Maine tradition, cruelty is not

Bears are beloved creatures in Maine, the mascot of the University of Maine since 1914. More than 800,000 people view Maine's wildlife each year, spending more than \$700 million to do so. Maine is the last state to still allow the hounding, baiting, and trapping of black bears, cruel and unsporting practices that do not reflect Maine values. It's time for fair bear hunting. Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting is a broad coalition, representing hunters and nonhunters, animal protection groups, shelters and rescue groups, veterinarians, business owners, and independent biologists, seeking to enact the long-overdue protections for Maine's bear population and preserve traditional Maine hunting.



Maine is the *very last* state to still allow trapping

Bear trapping is so cruel, unsporting, and unnecessary that Maine is the *only* state left in the country that still allows it for sport. Trappers typically lure bears with bait, an unnatural diet of grease and pastries, to a particular site in the woods. There is absolutely no fair chase involved. A bear's instinct is to break free from these foot snare traps, which can lead to extensive injuries to the animals. Trappers have even reported bears chewing off their own paws to free themselves. Since these traps must be checked only once per day, the bear could be suffering for more than twenty hours in excruciating pain.



Dogs and bears suffer casualties from cruel bear hounding

Bear hounding, using packs of dogs to chase bears, cruelly pits dogs against bears. Either species could be injured or killed. Packs of dogs are fitted with radio collars or high-tech GPS transmitters that allow bear houndsmen to remotely track the dogs' movement, on high-tech computer screens. Dogs are often set after the scent of a bear from a bait site. The dogs are forced to chase a frightened bear often for miles until, in exhaustion, the bear climbs a tree to escape or turns to confront the dog pack, which can result in injuries or death for members of both species. If treed, houndsmen use their high-tech gear to locate the bears and, typically, shoot them out of the tree at close range.

Bear hounding is cruel for both bears and dogs. Too often these dogs are treated as equipment rather than beloved members of the family. Dogs forced to hound bears may become lost in the chase, and are sometimes never recovered. They may be struck by vehicles, die as a result of dehydration or confrontations with wildlife, or be abandoned at local animal shelters. Shelters see an increase in abandoned or surrendered hound dogs at the end of the hounding season.





Baiting artificially grows the bear population and creates nuisance bears

Each year, millions of pounds of human junk food are dumped into Maine's wilderness to lure bears to specific sites to be shot from a nearby tree stand, at virtually point-blank range, while the bear's head is buried in the pile of donuts, pizza, and rotting meat. Bait sites are regularly stocked for a month or more and bears become accustomed to visiting the 55-gallon drums for high-calorie food. Mother bears are particularly vulnerable to the lure of bait sites, and when they are killed they leave behind orphaned cubs that are frequently unable to survive on their own.

Time and again, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife sternly warns the public to keep food away from bears. Dumping these unnatural attractants habituates bears to human food and smells, increasing the likelihood of human-bear conflicts and artificially growing the bear population – the very thing the State claims it is attempting to prevent. Furthermore, the junk food piles unnaturally concentrate wildlife species, increasing the likelihood of spreading diseases such as rabies.

Dr. Charles Jonkel, renowned bear researcher, called the shooting of bears over bait an unfair "dirty trick" because bears have not evolved to suspect danger from above-ground level. Tom Beck, a hunter and a former bear biologist with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, says of baiting, "*I firmly believe that baiting creates 'nuisance' bears...Black bears are naturally wary, instinctively avoiding close contact with humans. But large amounts of tasty food, easily obtained defeats this wariness. By baiting, we create lazy bears who have been rewarded, not punished, for overcoming their fear of humans.*"



Bears are naturally shy creatures

No one has ever been killed or even seriously injured by a Maine bear. In the US, bear attacks are so rare that you're far more likely to be killed by lightning, jellyfish, or bees. The ballot initiative *only* affects recreational baiting, hounding, and trapping—it exempts baiting, hounding, and trapping for research purposes and also exempts these methods for the take of bears in the interest of public safety or to protect public or private property, endangered or threatened species, livestock, or pets.



Prohibiting this cruelty is economically beneficial and bear populations will remain stable

Colorado, Washington, and Oregon all prohibited baiting and hounding about 20 years ago and the number of bear hunters has risen significantly in all three states, by an average of 289%. Bear take has increased in these states as well. Reporting on the effects of prohibiting bear baiting and hounding, Maine DIFW's equivalent in Colorado said, "*[T]he passage of the 1992 initiative has had no detectable adverse effects on bear hunting or bear management in Colorado. It has shown clearly that a black bear population can be efficiently and effectively managed without recourse to bait, hounds, or spring season. Hunters have learned to effectively hunt and harvest bears without using these methods and the Colorado Division of Wildlife has seen a significant increase in revenue resulting from increased interest in bear hunting.*"