



Bears are a beloved icon in Maine, the mascot of the University of Maine since 1914. Nonetheless, Maine is the last state to still allow the hounding, baiting, and trapping of black bears. These cruel, unsporting, and unnecessary practices do not reflect Maine values. Hunting is a time-honored tradition in Maine, but cruelty is not. It's time for fair bear hunting. Mainers for Fair Bear Hunting is a broad coalition of hunters, nonprofits, shelters and rescue groups, veterinarians, business owners, and independent biologists, seeking to preserve traditional Maine hunting by restoring fair chase to Maine's bear hunt.



#### **It's time for *effective* bear management**

Bear management using hounding, baiting, and trapping is not working. Since 1975, the population has grown in Maine by 253% when bear baiting became popular. In bear baiting, roughly 6 million pounds of junk food, generally consisting of donuts, grease, and rotting meat, are regularly dumped at bait sites to lure bears in for an easy trophy kill. The supplemental high-calorie food at bait sites is artificially growing the bear population. This is not sound wildlife management.

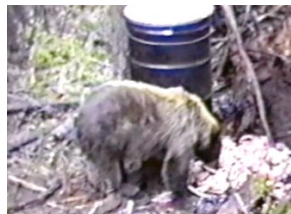
Twenty years ago, Washington, Colorado, and Oregon prohibited hounding and baiting, their bear populations have stabilized and they have effective bear management. The three unsporting practices of bear hounding, baiting, and trapping are unnecessary to bear management.

#### **Bring Maine bear hunting in line with traditional Maine values**

This initiative will bring Maine in line with traditional Maine values by restoring fair chase and prohibiting the unsporting practices of bear hounding, baiting, and trapping. Traditional hunters in other states have embraced fair chase hunting after prohibiting hounding and baiting, as evidenced by more hunters are participating in Colorado's bear hunt than ever before.



**Bear hounding** uses high-tech, unsporting equipment that violates traditional hunting. There is nothing "natural" or "traditional" about packs of dogs outfitted with GPS devices running down bears. There is no sport involved in following a GPS signal with a handheld computer to find frightened and exhausted bears and shooting them off tree limbs at point blank range. Montana, the second largest hunting participation state, has prohibited bear hounding since 1921, and boasts that it "offers world renowned, fair-chase black bear hunting."



**Bear baiting** only became popular in the mid 1970's and there is nothing traditional about dumping six million pounds donuts, pizza, and rotting meat each year into Maine's otherwise pristine wilderness for the purpose of luring a bear in for an easy, close range, trophy kill. There is no tradition in bear baiting and there is certainly no fair chase. In Maine, no other big game species, including moose and deer, can be baited. There is no fair chase in bear baiting, instead bears are lured in for an easy trophy kill.



**Bear trapping** is so unsporting that it is not allowed in any other state in the country. Trappers typically lure bears with bait to a particular site in the woods. Once trapped, a bear's instinct is to break free, 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. There is absolutely no fair chase involved.



## 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 filled with high-calorie food. Mother bears are particularly vulnerable to the lure of bait sites, and when they are killed they leave behind orphaned cubs, dependent on their mothers for two years, that are frequently unable to survive on their own.

Time and again, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife sternly warn 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.



## Traditional, fair chase bear hunting in Maine

Fair chase bear hunters in Maine use traditional scouting techniques, monitoring areas of natural food availability and stalk or stand hunting. Tom Beck, retired bear biologist with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department states:

*“What aggravates me most is that wildlife professionals accept the hunters' claim that bears can't be hunted without bait. Every [bear baiting] state says its woods are 'too thick.' I don't believe anyone who says you can't hunt bears in the fall when they're on berries or nuts. You can predict where they're going to be, and if you're a woodsman, all you have to do is scout those places. After we prohibited baiting, it took only two years for our hunters to get to the point where they were killing more bears than they were before. They learned how to do it. There was this large pool of hunters convinced—mostly by the outfitters—that you had to hunt with bait or hounds. These guys didn't want to spend the money on hounds, and they were opposed to using bait. When they learned the truth, the number of bear hunters skyrocketed.”*

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.



## Passing this initiative 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.”