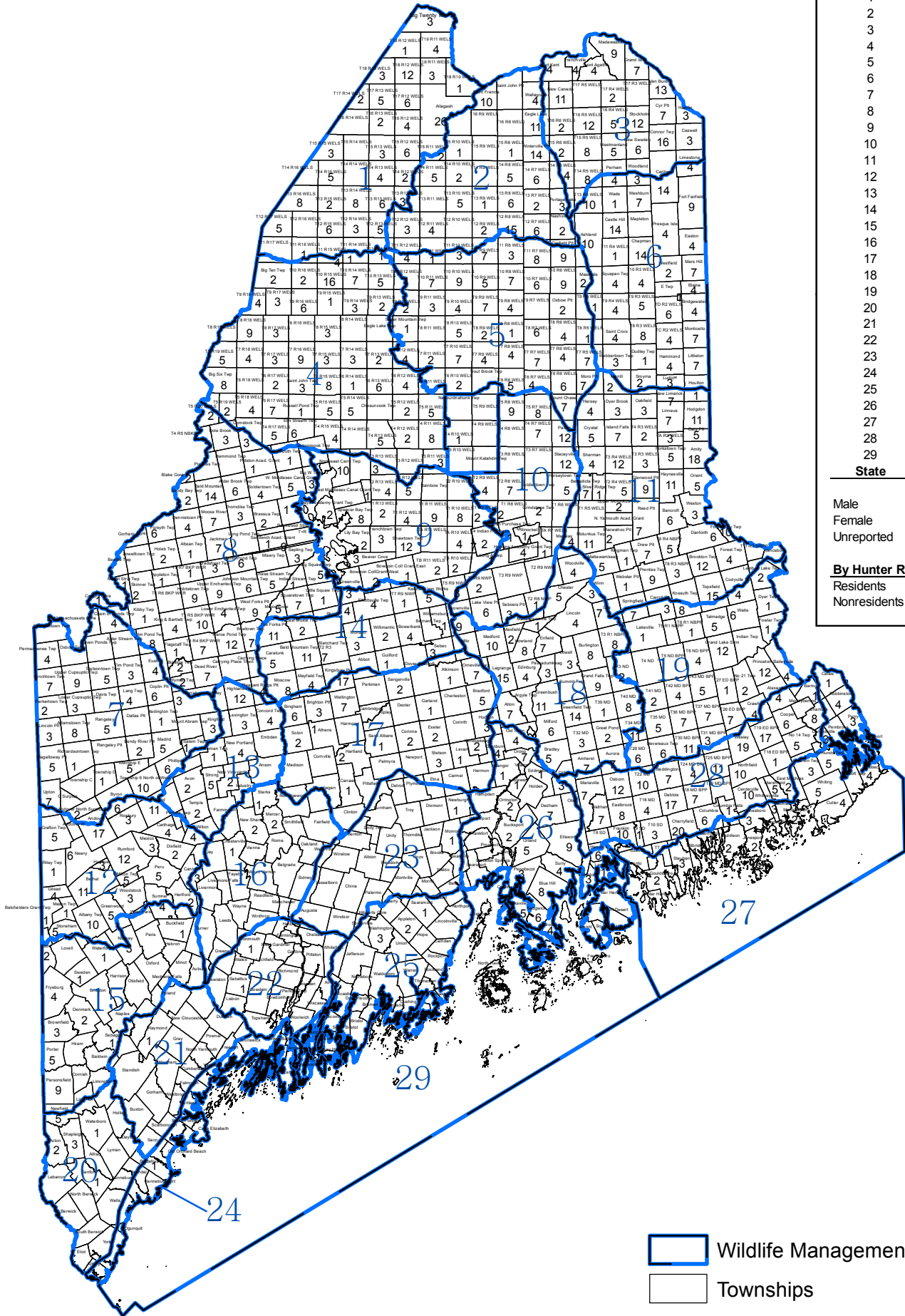


# 2013 Bear Harvest by Town



WMD	# of Bears
1	150
2	100
3	177
4	188
5	178
6	174
7	111
8	245
9	101
10	79
11	267
12	130
13	50
14	77
15	35
16	8
17	71
18	190
19	152
20	9
21	4
22	2
23	2
24	1
25	4
26	75
27	55
28	208
29	2
<b>State</b>	<b>2,845</b>
<b>By Hunter Residence</b>	
Male	1,600
Female	1,215
Unreported	30
<b>By Hunter Residence</b>	
Residents	1,059
Nonresidents	1,786

Wildlife Management Districts  
 Townships

## **Maine's 2013 Black Bear Season**

The general hunting season for black bears opened August 26 and closed November 30. Hunters were allowed to hunt bears near natural food sources or by still-hunting throughout the entire 3-month season. Hunting over bait was permitted from August 26 through September 21. The hound season overlapped the bait season, opening September 9 and closing November 1. The bear trapping season opened September 1 and closed October 31.

During the falls of 2000 – 2004, hunters harvested around 4,000 bears each year. In recent years, harvest has declined to approximately 3,000 bears annually. Again this fall, Maine's bear harvest was just under 3,000 with 2,845 bears taken during the 14 week fall season. Most bears (93%) were taken with the use of bait, hounds, or traps: 2,048 bears were harvested over bait, 479 bears were taken by hound hunters, and 105 bears were taken in traps. Only 8% were taken by other methods: 81 bears were harvested by deer hunters and 131 bears were taken by unreported methods. Most bears (87%) were harvested earlier in the season with 2,486 bears harvested before the end of September. However due to the abundance of natural food, bears entered their dens later providing hunters with opportunity late into the season (12% taken in October and November) and fewer bears were taken by bait hunters (72%). By comparison, 2012 was a very poor year for natural foods for Maine's black bears. As a result more bears were taken by bait hunters (81%) and fewer bears (6%) were harvested in October and November since bears entered dens earlier. The abundance of natural foods varies from year to year and is generally high one year and low the next.

### ***Geographic Distribution of the Harvest***

For the first time, bears were harvested in all 29 Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs). The density of harvest expressed as the number of bears killed per 100 square miles of habitat (forested land) was greatest in WMD 3 and WMD 28 at 22 bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup> and lowest in WMD's 22-24 and 29 with only 1 or 2 bears harvested (<1 bear/100mi<sup>2</sup>). In all other WMDs, hunters harvested between 1 and 14 bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup> (statewide average of 9 bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup>). Bears were harvested in 14 of the state's 16 counties. No bears were taken in Lincoln, and Sagadahoc counties and ≤3 bears were taken in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec, Knox, and Waldo counties.

### ***Residence of Successful Hunters***

Maine's reputation for producing high-quality bear hunting was again reflected in the distribution of the harvest by hunter residency. Visitors to Maine killed 1,786 bears of the 2,845 bears (63%) tagged during 2013. Non-resident hunters shot most of the bears (69%) taken over bait and with the use of hounds (62%), although bait hunting remained popular among resident hunters with 59% of successful resident hunters taking their bear over bait. Although few bears were taken during the deer season or in traps, Maine residents accounted for the majority (89% and 87%, respectively) of the bears taken during those seasons.

### ***Assistance by Registered Maine Guides***

In 2013, guides assisted 233 residents (13%) and 1,522 non-residents (87%) with their successful hunts: accounting for 77% of bears harvested over hounds, 71% of the bears taken over bait, and 21% of trapped bears.

### ***Sex and Age Distribution of the Harvest***

Males made up 56% (1,600 bears) of the 2013 harvest. Adult bears accounted for 92% (2,612 bears) of the harvest and sex and age were not reported for an additional 30 bears (1%).

### ***Prospects for the 2014 season***

The 2014 season will remain similar to recent years, opening the last Monday in August and closing the last Saturday in November (August 25<sup>th</sup> -November 29<sup>th</sup>). Since 1997, the Department has adopted a generic bear season framework to maintain consistent hunting periods. However, bear hunting regulations can be modified in response to changes in Maine's bear population or other management concerns. Despite a long fall hunting season for bears in Maine, the bear harvest (~3,000) has been below objectives since 2005. Bait, hounds, and traps are the most effective for harvesting bears in Maine's dense forest and accounts for 93% of the harvest. About 1 in 4 hunters using bait, hounds, and traps are successful. Still-hunters harvest less than 300 bears (7%), since it is difficult to spot and stalk bears in Maine's thick vegetation. To stabilize the bear population estimated at more than 30,000 in 2010, a harvest of 4,500 bears is needed. Without bait, hounds, or traps, Maine's bear harvest will be well below objectives.