

**From:** Greensboro Conservation Commission

**To:** Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board

**Re:** Public Comment on Proposed Black Bear Hunting Season Extension

Dear Members of the Fish and Wildlife Board,

The Greensboro Conservation Commission appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to Vermont's black bear hunting regulations, specifically regarding the proposal to extend the hunting season into mid-December.

We strongly oppose merging the early and late seasons into a continuous hunting period extending through mid-December. As the Department's own documentation notes, many black bears in Vermont enter their winter dens by late November. Prolonging the hunting season through mid-December creates a high risk of hunters encountering bears that are already curled up in dens. Shooting denned bears, or disturbing pregnant females and mother bears with young right as harsh winter conditions set in, runs counter to ethical wildlife management and **directly conflicts with the Board's intent to protect sows with cubs.**

We suggest that the Board allow the proposed two-tag limit in designated Wildlife Management Units to play out first. Increasing the bag limit in areas with high bear density is a more targeted method for population control, making a season extension into denning season unnecessary at this time.

**We respectfully urge the Board to reject the mid-December season extension** and continue to promote non-lethal management practices that decrease human conflict.

Thank you for considering local conservation perspectives, as you work to manage bear populations in Vermont.

Sincerely,

Greensboro Conservation Commission

Chris Steel, Chair

Emma Palumbo, Secretary

Jane Hoffman, Treasurer

JoAnn Hanowski

Peter Watkinson

Betsy Youngman