

**Eight Studies Show that Hunting Bears Does Not Alleviate Human-Bear Conflicts
Regarding House Bill 1099, February 9, 2015
State, Veterans and Military Affairs**

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Obbard, ME, EJ Howe, LL Wall et al. 2014. Relationships among food availability, harvest, and human-bear conflict at landscape scales in Ontario Canada. *Urus* 25(2): 98-110.

Authors tested relationships between food availability, human-bear conflicts (HBC), and harvest on a landscape scale in Ontario (p. 99).

“Harvest is a cost-effective management tool in most jurisdictions, and intuitively it seems that with fewer bears, there should be fewer conflicts. Therefore, managers may attempt to achieve both objectives by manipulating the harvest . . . Human-bear conflict was not correlated with prior harvests, providing no evidence that larger harvests reduced subsequent HBC” (p. 98).

Human-bear conflicts were negatively correlated with food availability. In other words, where there’s abundant natural foods (no food failures because of weather/climate), there are less human-bear conflicts. Attacks on humans coincide with food-poor years (p 105).

“We found no significant correlations between harvest and subsequent HBC [human-bear conflicts]. Although it may be intuitive to assume that harvesting more bears should reduce HBC, empirical support for this assumption is lacking despite considerable research (Garshelis 1989, Treves and Karanth 2003, Huygens et al. 2004, Tavss 2005, Treves 2009, Howe et al. 2010, Treves et al. 2010)” (p. 106).

Treves, A., K.J. Kapp and D. M. MacFarland. "American Black Bear Nuisance Complaints and Hunter Take." *Ursus* 21, no. 1 (2010): 30-42.

While some wildlife managers believe that hunting bears increases human safety and reduces property conflicts with them, the evidence is “equivocal” (Treves et al. 2010, also citing Treves 2009). That is because hunters, trappers, and wildlife-control agents may be removing the non-problem bears from the population; that is, the individuals not involved in nuisance behaviors (Treves et al. 2010).

Researchers, over a 10-year-data-collection period, found that in years with complaints there appeared to be no relationship with the previous year’s harvest (Treves et al 2010). Instead both hunter take of bears *and* nuisance complaints rose when the bear population increased (Treves et al. 2010). In short, hunting fails to select for “nuisance” bears because hunting was not designed for this purpose, and wildlife managers’ assumptions do not hold true when tested empirically over time (Treves et al. 2010).