

Grin & Bear It: Black Bear Teeth are highly valued by Biologists

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Q: Why is Fish & Wildlife interested in black bear teeth, and how can you help?

A:

Teeth can tell wildlife managers a wealth of information about black bears, including their age, sex, condition and the year(s) they had young. These data help managers determine if populations are increasing, decreasing or stable, and sustainable mortality rates for black bear populations.

ESRD has initiated a voluntary black bear tooth collection program to help maintain healthy bear populations while providing hunters recreational opportunities and reducing the potential for human-bear conflict.

Trappers, hunters and landowners who harvest black bears in the following Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) are asked to voluntarily submit a premolar tooth to a local Fish & Wildlife office: 318-332, 500-504, 506, 509-512, 514-519 and 529-531. The premolar tooth is the small tooth behind the canines.

You can extract a tooth either

- In the field yourself (instructions on how best to do this are in the Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations and on the <http://mywildalberta.com> web-site),
- By taking the skull to a local taxidermist or
- By taking the skull to one of the following Fish and Wildlife Provincial Offices where an ESRD government biologist or Solicitor General Officer will assist you:

Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, Athabasca, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Rocky Mountain House, Sundre and Drayton Valley.

Once the teeth have been analyzed, results will be posted on on the <http://mywildalberta.com> web-site. Information on each bear will be listed according to a hunter's Wildlife Identification Number (WIN).

Thank you for your help!