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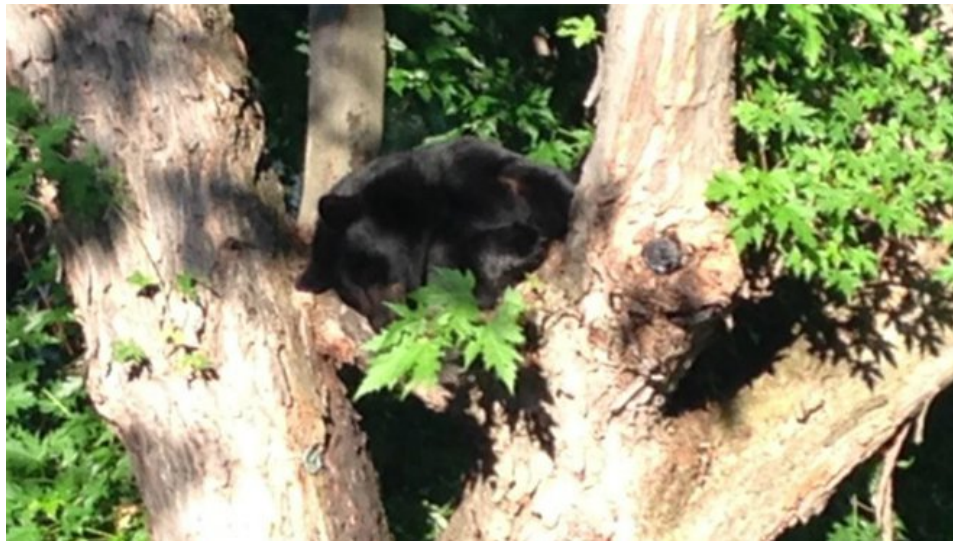
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Report: Permanent spring bear hunt an economic opportunity for Ont.

By: Darren MacDonald - Sudbury Northern Life | Aug 21, 2015 - 5:00 PM | 24



A New Sudbury resident found this bear sleeping in her backyard earlier this week. A new report released by Northern Policy Institute recommends the province reintroduce the spring bear hunt and allow U.S. hunters to participate on a trial basis. However, the report doesn't say whether a new hunt would reduce human-bear encounters. Supplied photo.

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Province's bear population large enough to sustain more hunting, researcher concludes

A new report released by Northern Policy Institute recommends the provincial government reintroduce the spring bear hunt and allow U.S. hunters to participate on a trial basis.

The report, "Does the Spring Bear Hunt Make 'Cents?'" was researched and written by Dr. Mike Commito, a policy analyst with the Northern Policy Institute.

The report recommends reintroducing the spring bear hunt because it would be a boon to many Northern Ontario communities with strong outfitting industries.

Commito concluded the current black bear population can sustain additional harvesting, and provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador all offer spring bear hunting opportunities.

Commito writes that reintroducing the spring bear hunt could generate millions of dollars annually for the province. In 1997, a provincial mail survey found that non-resident hunters spent \$25.2-million on spring and fall black bear hunting.

"History has demonstrated that non-resident bear hunting, primarily individuals from the United States, has been big business for outfitters and guides in Northern Ontario, particularly during the spring season (1937-1998)," Commito writes in the report.

"In the wake of the moratorium in 1999, resident and non-resident hunters have

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participated in extended fall seasons. The most recent data from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has placed the number of resident and non-resident hunters in 2012 at 16,378 and 4,843 respectively.

"Based on the cost of licenses for the 2012 season, this amounts to an estimated \$1,825,693 in license sales alone."

Commito says Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry estimates put the current black bear population in Ontario between 85,000 and 105,000 – large enough to sustain additional hunting in the spring. The ministry estimates the current black bear population can withstand a 10 per cent harvest threshold.

"While the 10 per cent harvest rate is generally applicable across the province, it could be too high in certain parts of Ontario's Boreal Forest region, so it is important to keep stock of these local variances in terms of acceptable harvest rates," Commito writes.

"Going back through the last 14 seasons, from 1999 to 2012, the estimated combined legal harvest for trappers and hunters is 75,754 black bears. This gives an expected annual average of 5,411 and therefore places Ontario in an acceptable harvest range of five to six per cent of the total population."

While the report is being released amid a flurry of stories about human-bear conflicts in Sudbury and other Ontario communities, Commito said in an interview his study was focused on the future of the hunt as an economic opportunity.

"This study doesn't address human-bear conflicts," he said Friday. "Obviously, the release of the paper is coinciding with a lot of bears making headlines in the news (but) this is not meant to be viewed as a solution to those issues."

Instead, his report is timed to coincide with the end of the province's pilot program bringing the hunt back for two years. The hunt was cancelled in 1999 before being revived in some communities – including Sudbury – in 2013 on a trial basis.

"The two-year pilot ended in June, so for us, it was an opportunity to then put forward a policy recommendation," Commito said.

"Currently, there's nothing on the books for next year as to what the government's going to do with the spring bear hunt. They haven't said whether they are going to bring it back completely or they're not going to do anything. That's why I wanted to write about this."

He hasn't gotten any feedback yet from the province on his report's findings, but hopes it will play a role in the decision-making process.

"I don't know whether it's made it into their hands, or if they have any thoughts on it. We'll have to wait and see what happens in the coming weeks and months."

A copy of "Does the Spring Bear Hunt Make 'Cents?'" can be found on the institute's website at www.northernpolicy.ca.

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**Brian MARsh**

I am all for the re-instatement of the spring bear hunt PERMANENTLY. I am all for the City getting off its ass and enforcing the garbage bylaws.

Start charging all of those people who set their garbage out too soon. Charge the bleeding hearts who feed the birds during the summer months.

The City needs to create some consistency for garbage pickup times on collection days.

Quite frankly I am comfortable with meeting a bear on occasion in town. But we can all blame ourselves for training bears to become aggressive due to our sloppy habits.

Bear aside from being a nuisance in towns are also major predators of moose calves. There has been a 40% reduction in moose populations in recent years and not all of it has to do with unregulated and unmanaged FN "harvests"

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**Mike Archibald**

Have any evidence of ANY of that? While its true Sudburians leave garbage around, they've done that FOREVER. In fact far worse than currently. They've also spilt their heart's blood by feeding the birds. ALWAYS. Yet bears were never a problem.

As for 'consistency' in garbage collection thats hardly an issue. Your garbage collection comes on the same day every week right? Its not like they say "we'll come whenever". They also usually come at the same time, I was told not to even put garbage out early in the morning because they don't arrive until after lunchtime. You don't g... See More

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**Brian MARsh**

Mike Archibald Garbage collection on my street can either be shortly after 7AM or in the afternoon. I am suggesting some consistency to collection times.

Bear do prey on new born moose calves. You comments about lack of evidence is asinine . The same goes for your comments about bird feeders.

Like · Reply · 1 · 2 hrs

**Mike Archibald**

I hate to turn this political, but after researching this I'm wondering if Sudbury was one of the city's who got a visit from the OFAH. I'm suddenly seeing the Mayor's comments in a new light when he made the silly comment that bylaws can't be created because 'no bylaw officers work after 5 PM'.

"As a positive example: in Elliot Lake, Ontario, bear-resistant garbage containers (in conjunction with public education) were introduced and lowered the 500 bears reports (with three shot) to the just 87 reports (with none shot), and falling. Timmins is considering a similar program."

So ... See More

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**Mike Archibald**

"The very week when the collective World was mourning the tragic trophy killing of Cecil the lion, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters was making presentations to Ontario municipalities, pitching how much money could be made by bringing back the Spring bear hunt. Now, a few days before the Fall bear hunt is set to open in Ontario, city council for North Bay unanimously passed a motion to petition the Province to return the Spring bear hunt (which was cancelled 16 years ago for being inhumane). Several other Northern Ontario municipalities who have been visited by the OFAH have recent... See More

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**Mike Archibald**

Anybody else make the connection that there are MORE nuisance bears around since they STARTED a spring bear hunt? And yet we still see numbers of people complaining that there is no spring bear hunt. It seems ignorance is the newest weapon in questionable public policy.

"Then, just before the 2014 provincial election, the Ontario Government questionably introduced a two-year pilot program of the Spring hunt in a limited number of areas. While

the Province is still yet to reveal their findings, the CBC reported that the major cities in Northern Ontario who voted to take part in the pilot program have reported more calls to their police forces about urban bears than before the Spring hunt."

Like · Reply · Aug 21, 2015 8:01pm



Mike Archibald

I'd just like to recommend the Imax screening at Science North called "Journey to the South Pacific". There isn't nearly enough underwater footage in the film, but its a good film for the reason that it shows an area around the Phillipines (I'm pretty sure it was), which shows how the local economies prospered by abandoning the 'new old ways' of 'killing everything for sale' and turning into an ecological preserve which then prospered from tourism.

When I first heard about numerous bear sightings my first thought was what a boon this would be for local tourism. How many people from la... See More

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Eliades Pastor · Miami Skool of Sheep herding

Im fine with it as long as you call it what it is:
Men with small pp's with big guns in trees shooting down on baited bears!

Like · Reply · 1 · Aug 21, 2015 7:33pm



Ken Cosens · Iroquois Falls Secondary School

Its should not be about the money. We JUSTHave way too many BLACK BEARS wandering around in populated areas. I spend lots of time in the bush, until about 15 years ago, I hardly seen a bear , now u see about 10 every time and never the same bear twice. REINSTATE THE SPRING BEAR HUNT.

Like · Reply · 2 · Aug 21, 2015 7:31pm



Mike Archibald

First, there have been ten postings for your one from people who USED to see bears but no longer do so.

Second, and most importantly:

"In 2003, the Province commissioned a review committee which did not find any connection between the cancellation of the Spring hunt and reported increases in "nuisance" bear activity (the report is now removed from the MNR website). In a 2010 paper, the MNR again confirmed that conclusion and added that the more bears who are killed from hunting does not reduce human-bear conflict."

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Neil Coyne

There were hundreds of bear outfitters that went out of business when they cancelled the spring bear hunt. There were many lodges that also went out of business because of this cancellation

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Everyone knows that the hunt was cancelled because the owner of Husky molding threatened to finance opposition members in swing ridings and Mike Harris folded like a weakling. The bear populations were fine even though outfitters had traditionally harvested hundreds of bears each year just in the Sudbury area alone. Even the MNR biologists at the time said the bear populations were steady.

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Lodge owners ... See More

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Mike Archibald

Its called KILLING, not 'harvesting', and it was cancelled because its insane and barbaric. In the spring bears are at their weakest and most vulnerable, and cubs have virtually zero chance of survival without their mothers. If you want to believe MNR, the people who barely even set foot in the woods anymore, on bear populations thats your business, but there's a reason that out of all the US states there are only FOUR which have a spring bear hunt.

The hunt was cancelled not for the reasons you mention, but according to bear history expert and the author of this study:

"Ethical con... See More

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Mike Archibald

Its also worth notino that the sprindg bear hunt was first initiated in order to deal with

he also mentioned that the spring bear hunt has been instituted in order to deal with NUISANCE bears. Mr. Commino might be an expert bear historian, but he is not a wildlife expert. In several of his writings he references it as a 'useful management tool', but offers ZERO evidence of how it is 'useful'. Because we have no idea of wild bear populations there is no way of gauging how useful it is or not.

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Neil Coyne

Mike Archibald The only error I made was saying 70 % favor the reinstatement of the spring bear hunt....IT IS ACTUALLY 82% THAT FAVOR IT.

Like · Reply ·  1 · Aug 22, 2015 8:00pm

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Dubb Shweezy · Garson, Ontario

this is so typical...always about how much money our government can make off it? should have just left well enough alone, do they not realize every time they mess, with what is already working well, we as citizens are the ones effected!

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Greg Skov · Mohawk College

leave the bears alone it not about money you fools

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Randy Newton · Kap high

You must be in the south where you don't have to deal with the fucking bears a good bear is a dead one

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