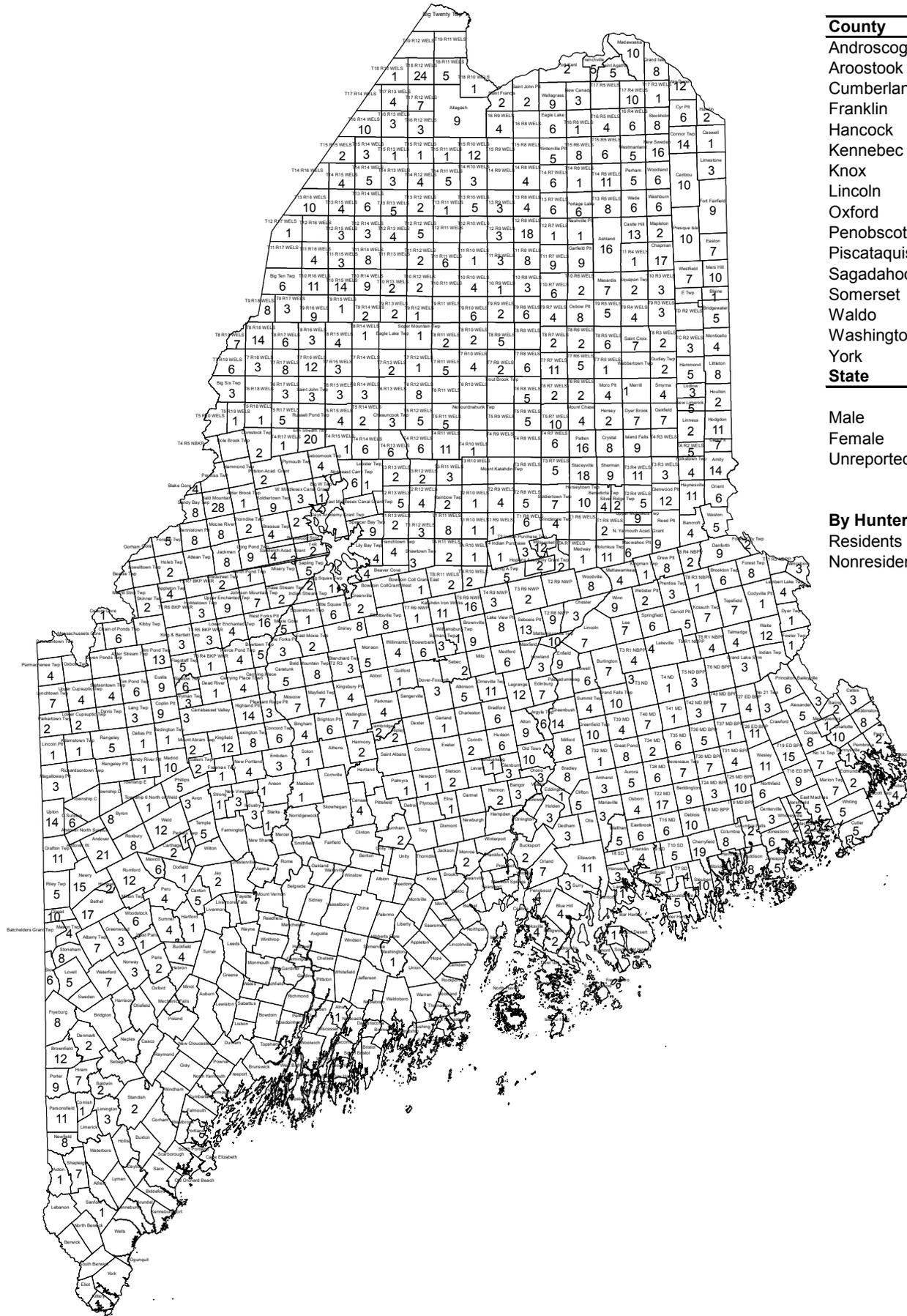


# 2010 Bear Harvest by Town



County	# of Bears
Androscoggin	0
Aroostook	875
Cumberland	4
Franklin	132
Hancock	157
Kennebec	0
Knox	1
Lincoln	1
Oxford	268
Penobscot	425
Piscataquis	357
Sagadahoc	0
Somerset	441
Waldo	4
Washington	365
York	32
<b>State</b>	<b>3,062</b>

Male	1,699
Female	1,329
Unreported	34

By Hunter Residence	
Residents	1,199
Nonresidents	1,863

## **Maine's 2010 Black Bear Season**

The general hunting season for black bear in 2010 opened August 30 and closed November 27. Hunters were allowed to hunt bears near natural food sources or by still-hunting throughout this 3-month period. Hunting over bait was permitted from August 30 through September 25. The hound season overlapped the bait season, opening September 13 and closing October 29. The bear trapping season opened September 1 and closed October 31.

In 2010, 2,479 bears were taken over bait (81%), 352 bears were taken by hound hunters (12%), 87 bears were taken in traps (3%), 77 were taken by unreported methods (3%), and 67 bears (2%) were harvested by deer hunters. Most bears were taken early in the season with 2,797 bears (91%) harvested before the end of September. Although the 2010 harvest of 3,062 bears is lower than last year's harvest of 3,486 bears, it exceeded the previous 4 year harvest (2,659-2,879).

In Maine, the abundance of fall foods for bears is high in even numbered years and low in odd number years which influence the numbers of bears harvested by hunters especially late in the season. This year, the exceptionally early spring caused summer and fall fruit and nut crops to ripen early, as a result bears entering their dens earlier than expected and few bears were killed by deer hunters.

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

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 28 at 24 bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup> followed closely by WMDs 3, 6, 11, and 12 with 18 to 20 bears harvested/100 mi<sup>2</sup>. In all other WMDs, hunters harvested less than 17 bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup> (statewide average of 10 bears/100 mi<sup>2</sup>). Bears were harvested in 13 of the state's 16 counties. Most (875) were harvested in Aroostook county accounting for 29% of the harvest. No bears were taken in Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Sagadahoc counties and <5 bears were taken in Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln and Waldo counties.

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

Maine's reputation for producing high-quality bear hunting was again reflected in the harvest distribution by hunter residency. Visitors to Maine killed 1,863 bears (61%) of the 3,062 bears tagged during 2010. Non-resident hunters shot most of the bears (65%) taken over bait and with the use of hounds (61%), although bait hunting remained popular amongst resident hunters with 73% 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 (88% and 85%, respectively) of the bears taken during those seasons.

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

In 2010, guides helped take 79% of bears harvested over hounds, 67% of the bears taken over bait, 23% of trapped bears, 20% of the bears for which method of take was unreported, and none of the bears taken by deer hunters. Guides assisted 254 residents (23%) and 1,632 nonresidents (91%) with their successful hunts in 2010.

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

Males made up 56% (1,699 bears) of the 2010 harvest. Adult bears accounted for 91% (2,797 bears) of the harvest and sex and age were not reported for an additional 34 bears (1%).

### ***Prospects for the 2011 season***

The Department has adopted a generic bear season framework to maintain consistent hunting periods, unless management concerns require changes to the lengths of hunting or trapping periods. In 2011, the season will remain similar to those in recent years. The season will span 13 weeks and will begin on the last Monday in August and close on the last Saturday in November (August 29-November 26, 2011).

A population model of Maine black bears indicates the population can sustain a harvest of 15%. Thus a harvest of 3,500 bears was needed to stabilize Maine's bear population conservatively estimated at 23,000 bears in 2004. However, in recent years we have not met our harvest objective. This low harvest rate coupled with high cub survival rates has allowed Maine's bear population to grow. In the next year, we will be considering modifying hunting opportunities to stabilize Maine's bear population based on a pending updated population estimate.