



FWC concludes bear management webinars

News Release

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Biologists answer hundreds of questions during three webinars

Last night, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) completed the last of three webinars held to answer the public's questions and gather input on the agency's comprehensive bear management program. Biologists answered hundreds of questions about Florida's growing bear population and addressed topics including new bear population estimates, 2016 bear range updates, Bear Wise communities, results of the 2015 limited bear hunt, and input concerning a possible hunt in 2016.

"We should all be glad that Florida's black bear populations are strong and growing, however, this conservation success comes with the challenge of responsibly balancing the needs of people and bears," said FWC Executive Director Nick Wiley. "We are listening carefully to all interests and stakeholders because meeting bear management challenges with comprehensive solutions involves all Floridians who want to see thriving bear populations existing in harmony with the people who live here or visit our great state."

Each webinar lasted three hours and provided participants opportunities to offer input as the agency formulates recommendations on how to manage Florida's large and growing bear population. The webinars add to channels already in place for gathering public feedback including email, social media, phone, Ask FWC, bear stakeholder group meetings and commission meetings.

Florida's black bear population has grown from a low of 300 to 500 in the 1970s to approximately 4,350 today.

The FWC's bear management webinar presentation and responses to the most frequently asked questions are available at MyFWC.com/bear. Input about bear management can be emailed to [BearComments@MyFWC.com](mailto: BearComments@MyFWC.com).