

## Chronological history of events regarding Florida black bear management

Year	Event
1913	Florida creates a short-lived Department of Game & Fish (DGF).
1915	DGF estimated bear's have a "value" of \$25 each; DGF is abolished (Jones 1915).
1915–1925	Local laws were enacted for protection of game and freshwater fish.
1925	Law passed creating Department of Game and Fresh Water Fish; leaving in effect 130 local laws which conflicted with general law.
1927	Law from 1925 rewritten to change Department into a Commission of Game and Fresh Water Fish (GFC); all local laws are repealed.
1931	Chapter 15721 of the Commission of GFC Laws – Local Law of Volusia County makes it unlawful to kill or take bears.
1936	The bear is defined as a “fur-bearing animal” permissible for harvest between December 1 <sup>st</sup> – March 1 <sup>st</sup> with no bag limit.
1945	Apalachicola WMA opens 2 consecutive 3-day bear hunts held Nov. 18–23; only one bear killed.
1947–1948	Apalachicola WMA bear hunt extended to 6 3-day hunts with 3 bears taken during 1947 and none in 1948. One and 2 bears, respectively, are taken on the Ocala WMA.
1948	Wildlife Code of the State of Florida for GFC redefined bears as “Unprotected Fur-bearing Animals” (open season November 20 <sup>th</sup> – February 15 <sup>th</sup> of succeeding year).
1950	GFC defines bears as “Protected Fur-bearing Animals” in NFs, WMAs and Eglin Field Military Reservation and “Unprotected Fur-bearing Animals” elsewhere. In 1950, the bear is designated as a game animal with no bag limit and harvest dates coinciding with deer season statewide. Special GFC managed hunts continue on Ocala WMA (1 bear bag limit) and Apalachicola and Osceola WMAs (2 bear bag limit)
1951	Definitions changed in Wildlife Code of the State of Florida for GFC; bears defined as a Game Animal.
1958–1961	Bear hunting was closed on Eglin WMA in 1958, Big Cypress WMA in 1960, and Ocala NF in 1961
1969	Special managed bear hunts on Tomoka WMA began during 1969–1970 hunting season
1971–1972	GFC closes hunting season statewide except in Baker Co. and Columbia Co. and during GFC managed hunts on Apalachicola NF, Osceola NF (or by special permit; Rule 16E-10.08 allowed Commission Director to issue special permits to run or chase bears during closed seasons); Tomoka WMA hunt discontinued in 1972

Year	Event
1974	GFC created definition and list of Threatened Species under Chapter 16E-3 of the Florida Wildlife Code and includes bears as a Threatened Species
1977	FAC Rule 16E-10.01, general methods of taking game changed to include the prohibited taking of bear cubs and female bears with cubs
1978	Threatened designation removed from bears in Baker and Columbia counties and Apalachicola NF.
1979	Listed Species Rules 39-27.01 to 39-27.05 established, including general prohibitions on harming or killing a listed species (GFC 1979).
1990	USFWS petitioned to list the Florida black bear as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act (Bentzien 1990)
1991	USFWS determined threatened status is “warranted but precluded by other higher priority listing actions” (Bentzien 1991).
1993	GFC recommended closing bear hunting statewide; creates management strategy for bears (GFC 1993); 1993–1994 season on Osceola NF closed.
1994	GFC closed remaining bear hunting seasons statewide
1995	GFC (1995) published habitat management guidelines for Apalachicola
1997	Conserve Wildlife Tag featuring a bear was created by GFC and the Wildlife Foundation of Florida; portion of funds go to bear conservation.
1998	Florida Constitution Revision 5 passed to combine staff from the Marine Fisheries Commission, elements of the Divisions of Marine Resources and Law Enforcement of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and GFC to become the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC); USFWS finds “listing of the Florida black bear is not warranted at this time” (Bentzien 1998). Conservation organizations sue USFWS; Bentzien (1998) estimates 1,280 bears in Florida.
2001	Maehr et al. (2001) published <i>Black Bear Habitat Management Guidelines for Florida</i>
2002	FWC passed wildlife feeding restriction (F.A.C. 68A-4.001(3)) that makes it illegal to intentionally or unintentionally feed bears where they can cause a public nuisance.
2003	FWC published <i>Conservation Strategy for the Black Bear in Florida</i> (Eason 2003)
2004	Court ordered USFWS to re-examine the inadequacy of 1998 regulatory mechanisms. Service determined “existing regulatory mechanisms are not inadequate so as to warrant listing the Florida black bear under the Endangered Species Act” (Kasbohm 2004).
2005	FWC released report assessing the impacts of roads on bears, including population estimates for bears in six subpopulations (Simek et. al. 2005).
2007	FWC creates Bear Action Team to draft statewide bear management plan with assistance of a team representing stakeholder groups
2010	Draft 5.1 of bear management plan opens for public review and comment; Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species rule FAC 68A-27 approved; Draft 5.1 revised to comply with FAC 68A-27

Year	Event
2011–2012	Biological status review indicates the bear does not meet any criteria for high risk of extinction; Commission agrees with staff recommendation to remove bears from State Threatened Species list in June 2011; Draft 6.1 of bear management plan and rule open for public review and comment Nov. 10, 2011 to Jan. 10, 2012; Draft plan presented to Commission Feb. 9, 2012; Plan revised and Draft 7.0 was opened for public comment April 13 to June 1, 2012; Plan revised and Draft 7.1 was posted on the FWC website June 11, 2012; Plan returned to Commission for final review June 27, 2012.

