

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Kipp Frohlich, Director, Habitat and Species Conservation  
**Date:** December 11, 2019  
**Subject:** Staff Report: Florida Black Bear Management Plan Update

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**Purpose:**

Present an overview of the updated Florida Black Bear Management Plan and seek Commission approval.

**Why:**

Since the initial Florida Black Bear Management Plan (Plan) was approved in 2012, the FWC has completed several key research projects and management actions that have added to our knowledge about bears and how we can best manage them. In April 2017, Commissioners requested FWC staff update the Plan to incorporate new information, add more information about population management options, and report back to them in 2019.

**Top Points:**

- 1) Commissioners asked FWC staff to update the Plan and provide it to them in 2019.
- 2) FWC staff updated all aspects of the Plan with new data, reports, management actions, and a section on population management options.
- 3) The update to the Plan has received extensive internal and external review and is ready for review by the Commissioners.

**Affected Parties:**

The 2019 Florida Black Bear Management Plan does not present new or changed regulatory structures for bears, so affected parties should be minimal. However, formal stakeholder groups as well as members of the public have strong feelings about bear conservation and have commented extensively on the use of regulated hunting to manage the bear population, so they have an interest in the Plan.

**Summary:**

Staff will present Commissioners with a brief overview of the major updates to the Plan as well as feedback received from stakeholder groups and the public. Most feedback on the updates to the Plan have been supportive, however, stakeholders and members of the public have strong feelings for and against the use of regulated hunting to manage the bear population. While the Plan does not recommend any particular population management option, it does indicate that current human and bear population growth rates in Florida will require the FWC to manage the bear population at some point.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Approve the updated 2019 Florida Black Bear Management Plan.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

David Telesco, Coordinator, Bear Management Program