

STATEMENT OF REASONS

CHAPTER 3

BLACK BEAR HUNTING SEASONS

W.S. § 23-1-302(a)(i) directs and empowers the Commission to fix seasons and bag limits, shorten or close seasons on any species or sex of wildlife for any type of legal weapon, except predatory animals, predacious birds, protected animals and protected birds, in any specified locality of Wyoming, and to give notice thereof.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission promulgates Chapter 3, Black Bear Hunting Seasons to establish limitations on the take of black bears during the spring and fall hunting seasons.

Section 2 is being removed because it does not provide any substantive information and is unnecessary language in this regulation. Removing section 2 also provides format consistency among other Commission regulations.

New Section 2, Definitions. The term “bait site” has been added and refers to the section of land identified by legal description on a valid bear bait registration document. The term “bait location” has also been added and refers to the GPS location of a bait placed at a registered bait site. Both terms have been added for clarity because the meaning of each term has been confused with the other in the past.

New Section 3 has been edited to provide additional clarity between bait site(s) and bait location. In subsection (b), the use of a facsimile is being removed from the options to renew a bait site. This method has not been used in recent years because this technology has been replaced with advancements to the Department’s web based bait site registration process. Subsection (c) has been edited to clarify that a person shall not change a registered bait site during the calendar year. Subsection (e) has been reformatted for clarity. Language has also been added to limit the number of bait containers to one (1) per bait site, and to require that bait containers be anchored in such a manner that the bait container cannot be moved from the GPS coordinates of a bait location provided for a registered bait site. These edits are meant to alleviate littering issues associated with multiple smaller bait containers being utilized that have not been anchored and invariably get transported away from the bait location by bears, other wildlife or environmental conditions.

New Section 4. The Use of Chemical Attractants has been added to the title line to more accurately reflect information in subsection (d).

New Section 9. Edits to this section have been made for clarity and consistency with other Commission hunting season regulations. The previous three (3) year black bear harvest information is not yet available at the time this draft regulation is being made available for public comment. As a result of harvest information analysis, the Department may propose additional changes to hunting season dates, female mortality limits or hunting season structures. Any

additional proposed black bear hunt area season date changes or annual female mortality limits will be made available to the public for comment during all public meetings held around the state. Once harvest data has been completely evaluated, an updated version of this draft regulation will also be made available for public comment on the Department's website.

New Section 10. Edits have been made to clarify that archers shall possess a general black bear license and an archery license in order to hunt black bear with archery equipment during any special archery season. This is not a new regulation, but is meant to provide further clarity to special archery season license hunting requirements.

Minor formatting edits have been incorporated but do not change the intent of the regulation.