

State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Branch

2009 Bear Take Report

The 2009 archery bear hunting season opened statewide on August 15 and extended for 23 consecutive days. The general bear hunting season opened concurrently with general deer hunting season in the A, B, C, D, X8, X9A, X9B, X10 and X12 deer hunting zones. In the remaining deer hunting X zones, bear season commenced October 10.

The bear season closed on December 16 when the Department received notification of 1,700 bears harvested statewide pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 365. The Department subsequently notified all bear tag holders, the Fish and Game Commission and media outlets of the season closure pursuant to subsection 708(e)(*Id.*).

In all, 24,805 bear hunters purchased tags, as reported by the License and Revenue Branch. This total consisted of 24,520 resident bear tags and 285 non-resident bear tags. Total bear tag sales in 2009 was 2.3% less than 2008 bear tag sales but 10.4% greater than the previous ten years' average.

This season, 1,900 black bears were reported harvested, which is 6.7% less than the reported take in 2008 (see Figure 1). Of the 1,900 bears harvested, 40% were female, 57% were male and 3% were unreported or marked unknown (Figure 2).

The first upper premolar tooth was collected from half the harvested bears and have been sent to a laboratory for age determination. The Department uses the age and gender ratios from harvested bears to estimate the pre-hunt population size. The 2009 age data and subsequent population estimate are forthcoming at the time of this report (see Figure 1).

Bears were predominantly harvested in October (Figure 3), most likely due to hound use restrictions. Similar to previous years, the number of bears harvested

in November and December were less than the month previous, reflecting decreasing bear availability due to inclement weather and denning chronology.

Northern California counties provide some of the better bear hunting in the State (Table 1). Shasta, Siskiyou, Trinity and Humboldt Counties accounted for 11%, 9%, 8% and 6% of the total statewide 2009 bear harvest, respectively. These northern counties provide some of the better bear habitat in the state – areas of mixed aged conifers interspersed with open meadows and mixed hardwood forests that provide ample amounts of calorie-dense berries and nuts.

Most bear hunters who were successful in harvesting a bear spent a week or less afield (Figure 4). Nearly half of successful hunters reported having spent a day or less in the field; 39% of successful hunters spent from 2 to 7 days in the field and the remaining 14% spent 8 or more days in the field.

California bear hunters use various methods to harvest bear. In 2009, nearly half of all bears were harvested without the assistance of hounds (Figure 5), whereas 46% of bears were reportedly taken while using hounds. Hunters who took a bear while deer hunting accounted for more than a third of the total harvest (Table 2); 10% of these hunters used archery equipment. Nearly 50% of hunters took their bear while only bear hunting and 8% of these hunters used archery equipment.

Figure 1. Bear Population Estimates and Harvest.

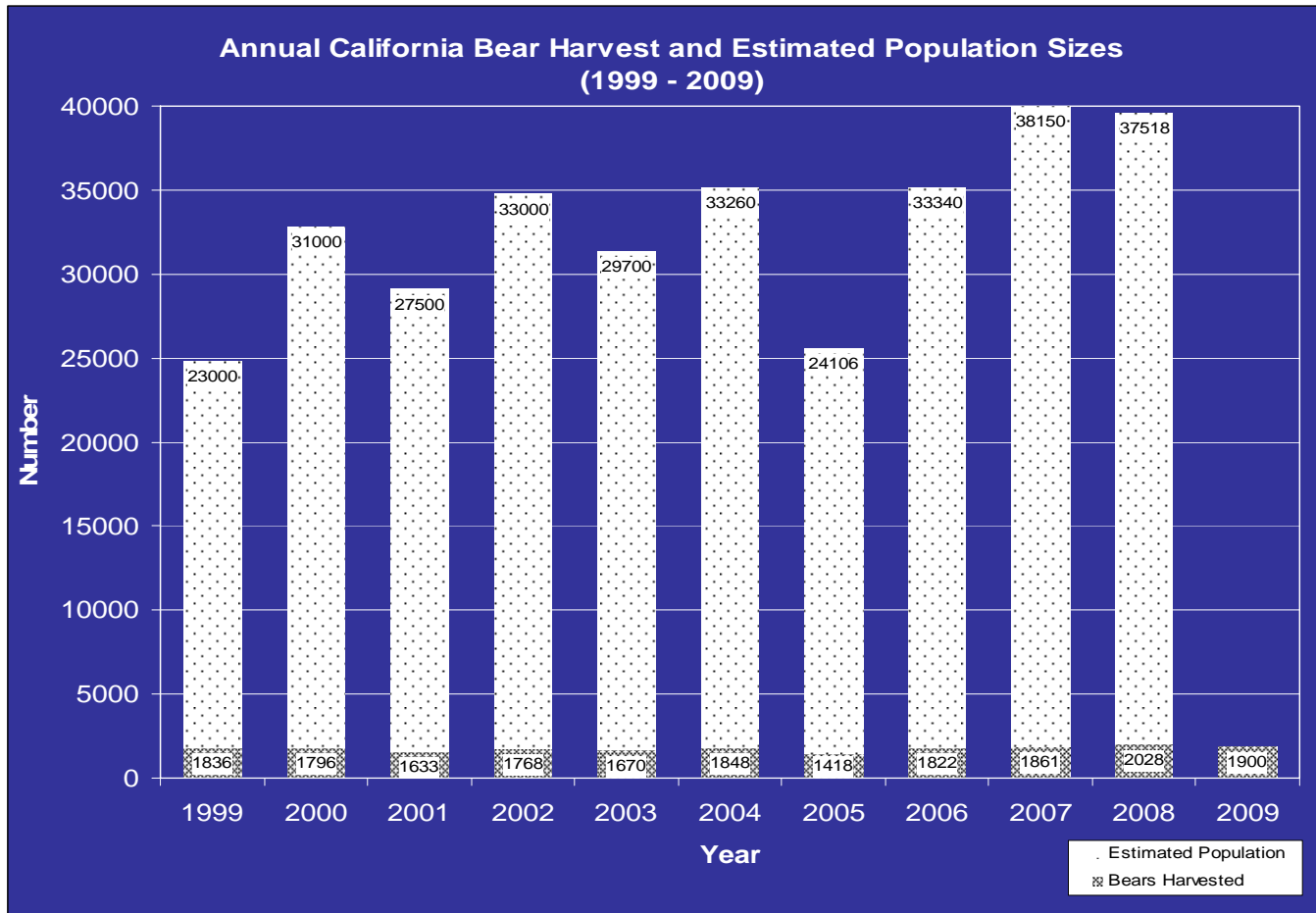


Figure 2. Harvested Bear Gender

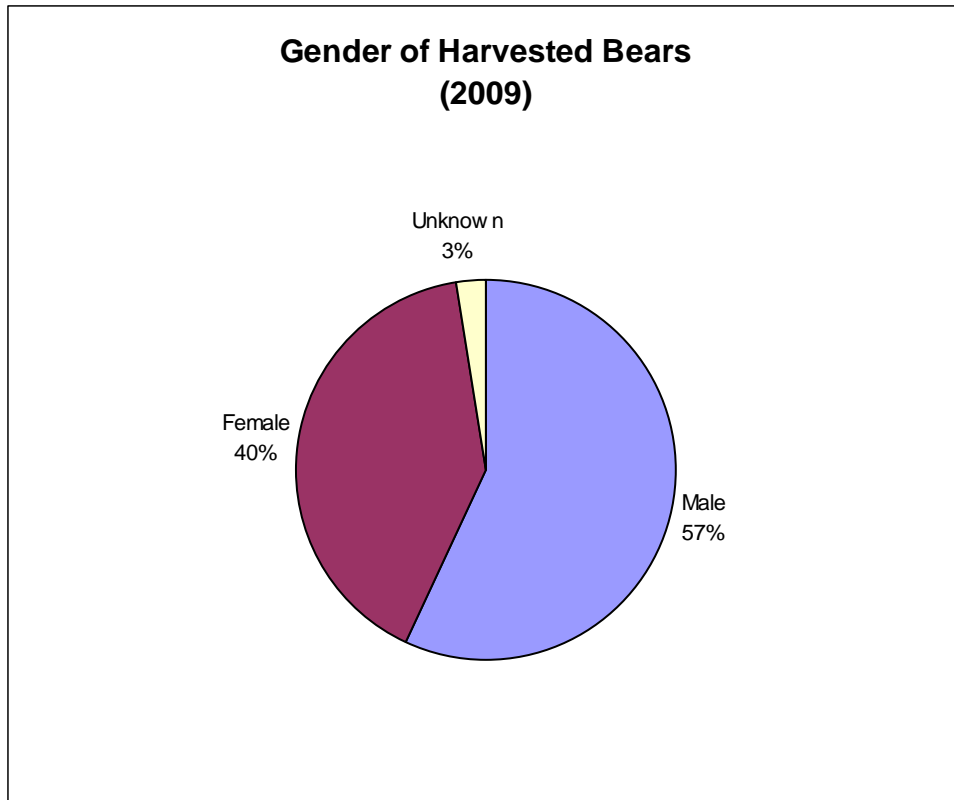


Figure 3. Monthly Bear Harvest

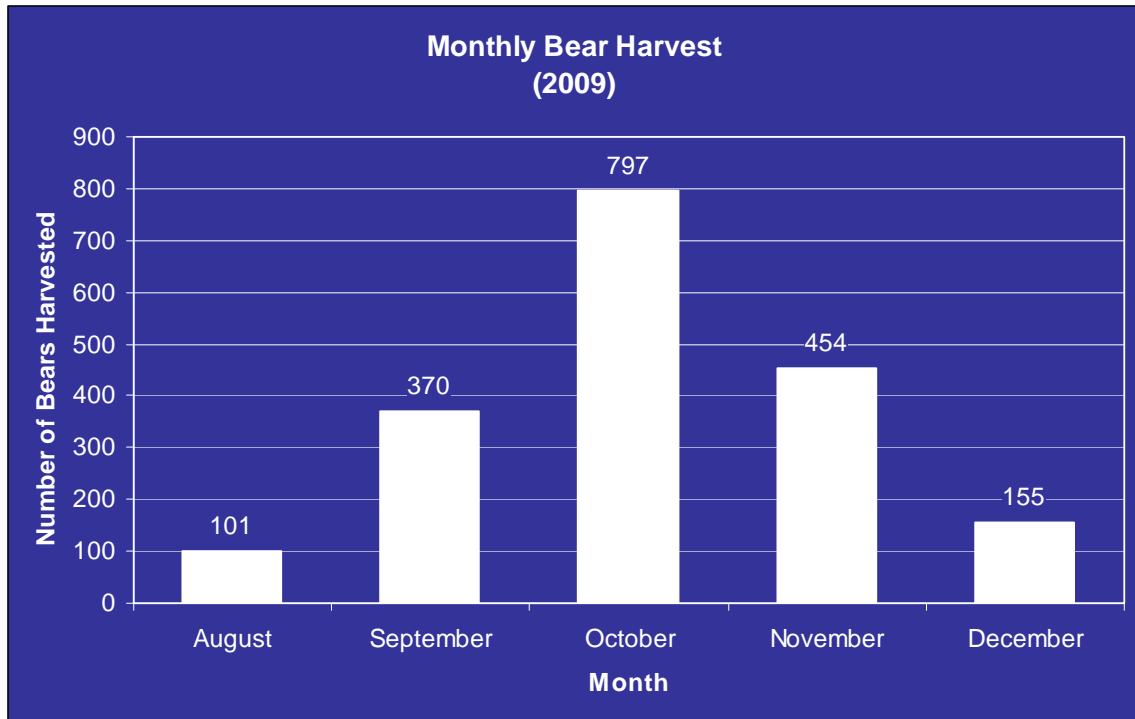


Table 1. Bear Harvest by County

County	# of Bears Harvested	Percent of Total Harvest
Alpine	9	0.5%
Amador	11	0.6%
Butte	70	3.7%
Calaveras	25	1.3%
Colusa	3	0.2%
Del Norte	16	0.8%
El Dorado	81	4.3%
Fresno	85	4.5%
Glenn	42	2.2%
Humboldt	118	6.2%
Inyo	4	0.2%
Kern	81	4.3%
Kings	1	0.1%
Lake	9	0.5%
Lassen	38	2.0%
Los Angeles	15	0.8%
Madera	34	1.8%
Mariposa	34	1.8%
Mendocino	91	4.8%
Merced	1	0.1%
Modoc	2	0.1%
Mono	12	0.6%
Napa	1	0.1%
Nevada	21	1.1%
Placer	46	2.4%
Plumas	104	5.5%
Riverside	3	0.2%
San Bernardino	20	1.1%
Santa Barbara	6	0.3%
Shasta	205	10.8%
Sierra	48	2.5%
Siskiyou	170	8.9%
Solano	1	0.1%
Stanislaus	6	0.3%
Tehama	68	3.6%
Trinity	146	7.7%
Tulare	107	5.6%
Tuolumne	81	4.3%
Ventura	29	1.5%
Yolo	1	0.1%
Yuba	37	1.9%
Unknown County	18	0.9%
Total	1900	100.0%

Figure 4. Hunter Days Afield

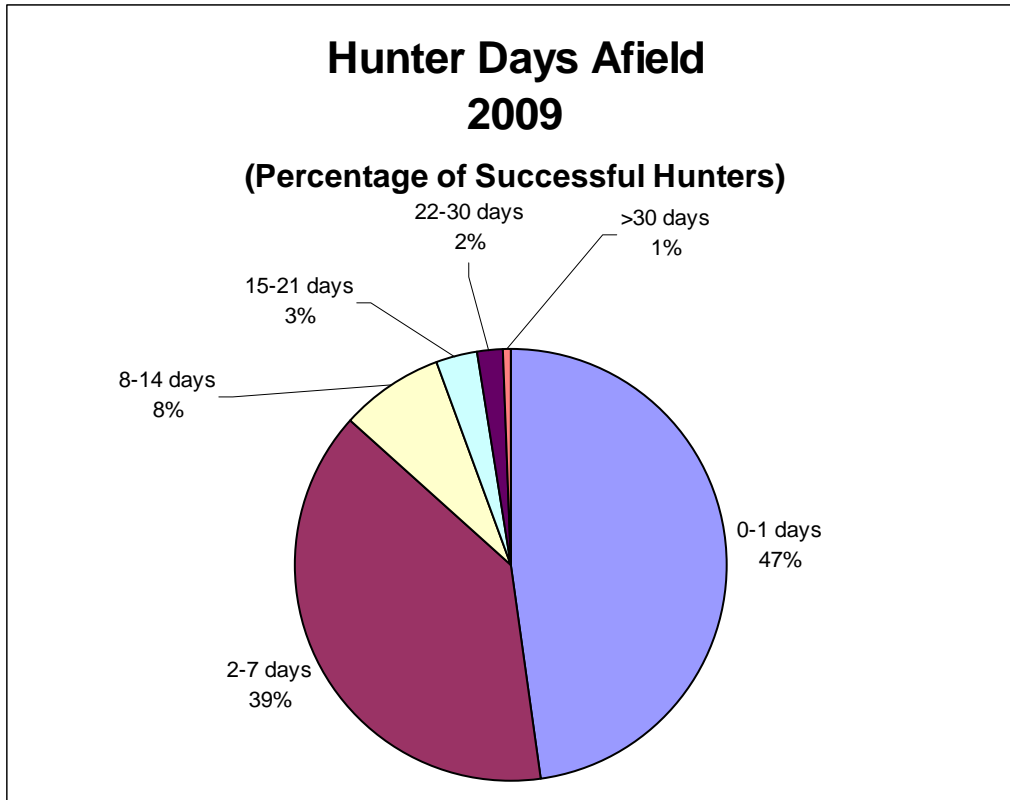


Figure 5. Use of Dogs.

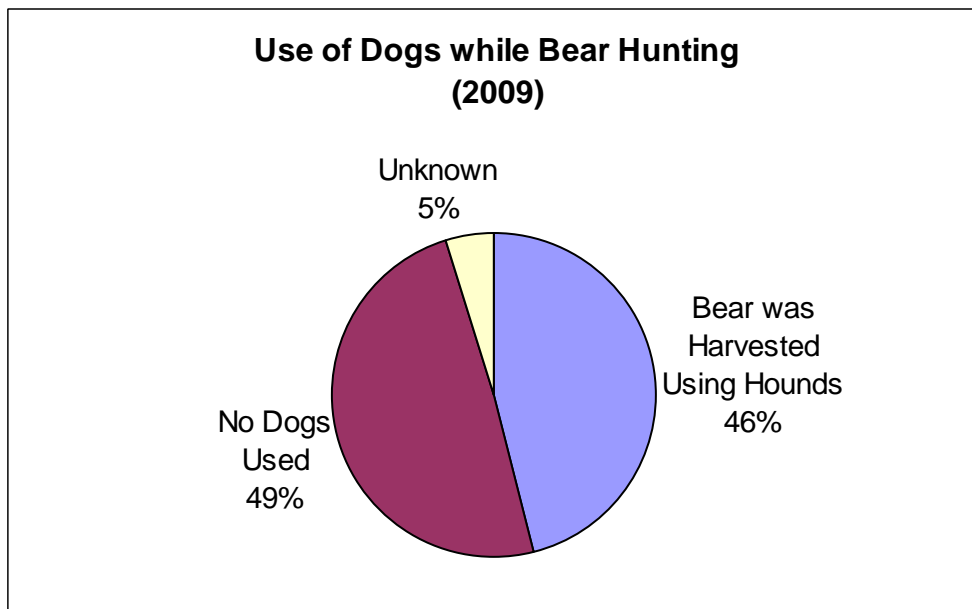


Table 2. Method of Take Summary

	Not Archery Hunting	Archery Hunting	Unknown	Grand Total
Bear Hunting	47.1%	4.4%	4.4%	55.9%
Took a Bear while Deer Hunting	27.9%	3.6%	2.8%	34.4%
Unknown	2.7%	0.3%	6.7%	9.7%
Grand Total	77.7%	8.3%	14.0%	100.0%