

South Carolina General Assembly
126th Session, 2025-2026

Bill 3813

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~

Indicates New Matter

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Indicates New Matter

FREE CONFERENCE REPORT ADOPTED - NOT PRINTED
May 6, 2025

H. 3813

Introduced by Rep. Hixon

S. Printed 5/6/25--H.
Read the first time January 28, 2025

[SEC 5/7/2025 4:08 PM]



A BILL

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 50-11-430, RELATING TO BEAR HUNTING, SO AS TO REMOVE REFERENCES TO A REGISTERED PARTY DOG HUNT IN GAME ZONE 1.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 50-11-430 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

Section 50-11-430. (A)(1) The open season for hunting and taking bear in Game Zone 1 is as follows:

(a) for still gun hunts, October 11 through October 23 on private land and October 11 through October 16 on wildlife management areas; and

(b) for dog hunts, October 17 through October 30 on private land and on wildlife management areas. ~~for still gun party dog hunts is October 17 through October 23; for party dog still gun hunts is October 24 through October 30 November 6. A party dog hunt in Game Zone 1 may not exceed twenty-five participants per party and shall register with the department by September first. Party participants, except those not required to have licenses shall submit their hunting license number in order to register.~~

(2) In all other game zones, the General Assembly finds it in the best interest of the State to allow the taking of black bear under strictly controlled conditions and circumstances. The department may establish a bear management program that allows for hunting and selective removal of bear in order to provide for the sound management of the animals and to ensure the continued viability of the species. The department must promulgate regulations to set the conditions for taking, including methods of take, areas, times, limits, and seasons, and other conditions to properly control the harvest of bear.

(B) In game Zones, 2, 3, and 4 where the department declares an open season, the department shall determine an appropriate quota of bear to be harvested in each game zone, or county within a game zone and shall further promulgate regulations necessary to properly control the harvest of the bear. The department may close an open season at any time, provided that the department gives at least twenty-four hours' notice to the public of the closure.

(C) In Game Zones 2, 3, and 4 where the department declares an open season for hunting and taking bears on wildlife management areas, and all other areas under the ownership, control, or lease of the department, the season will be set by the department. The department may close an

open season at any time, provided that the department gives at least twenty-four hours' notice to the public of the closure.

(D) Any bear taken must be tagged with a valid bear tag and reported by midnight of the day of the harvest to the department as prescribed. The tag must be attached to the bear as prescribed by the department before being moved from the point of kill.

(E) It is unlawful to:

(1) hunt, take, or attempt to take a bear except during the open season;

(2) possess an untagged bear;

(3) take more than one bear per person during all seasons. In Game Zone 1 ~~a registered party dog hunt may take up to five bear per season per party;~~ a person who has taken a bear during the season may participate in a ~~registered party dog hunt~~ as long as the hunting license shows the bear tag endorsement, but the person may not take another bear;

(4) take or attempt to take a sow bear with cubs;

(5) possess or transport a freshly killed bear or bear part except during the open season for hunting and taking bear. This prohibition does not apply to bear lawfully taken in other jurisdictions. The department may issue a special permit for possession or transportation of a freshly killed bear or bear part outside of the season;

(6) possess a captive bear except pursuant to a permit issued by the department. A violation of the terms of the permit may result in revocation or a civil penalty of up to five thousand dollars, or both. An appeal must be made in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act;

(7) pursue bear with dogs; except during the open season for hunting and taking bear with dogs;

(8) hunt or take bear by the use or aid of bait; or attempt to hunt or take bear by use or aid of bait; hunt or take bear on or over a baited area. As used in this item:

(a) "Bait" means salt or shelled, shucked, or unshucked corn, wheat or other grain, or other foodstuffs that could constitute a lure, attraction, or enticement for bear.

(b) "Baiting" or "to bait" means placing, depositing, exposing, distributing, or scattering bait.

(c) "Baited area" means an area where bait is directly or indirectly placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, and the area remains a baited area for ten days following complete removal of all bait. Nothing in this section prohibits the hunting and taking of bear on or over lands or areas that are not otherwise baited and where:

(i) there are standing crops on the field where grown, including crops grown for wildlife management purposes; or

(ii) shelled, shucked, or unshucked corn, wheat or other grain, or seeds that have been distributed or scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural practice as prescribed by the Clemson University Extension Service or its successor;

(9) buy, sell, barter, or exchange or attempt to buy, sell, barter, or exchange a bear or bear part;

(10) take or attempt to take a bear from a watercraft or other water conveyance or molest, take, or attempt to take a bear while the bear is swimming in a lake or river;

(11) fail to report a bear harvest in the manner provided by law.

(F)(1) Each of the acts provided for in subsection (E) is a violation of this section and is a separate offense.

(2) A person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than two thousand five hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than sixty days, or both. Hunting and fishing privileges of a person convicted under the provisions of this section must be suspended for three years. In addition, each person convicted of a violation of this section shall pay restitution to the department of not less than one thousand five hundred dollars for each bear or bear part that is the subject of a violation of this section. The magistrates court retains concurrent jurisdiction for offenses contained in this section.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

/s/Sen. Campsen

/s/Sen. Ott

/s/Sen. Turner

On Part of the Senate

/s/Rep. Hiott

/s/Rep. Hixon

/s/Rep. McDaniel

On Part of the House

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This web page was last updated on May 07, 2025 at 04:08 PM

