

Nevada bear hunt debate rages on

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Details of the contentious plan to conduct Nevada's first black bear hunt beginning next summer are set to be finalized Friday in Las Vegas, with little sign rancorous debate over the plan is near an end.

The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, which unanimously approved a hunt Dec. 4 in Reno, is scheduled to adopt harvest numbers, season dates and other specifics.

Chris Healy, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, said people continue to voice strong feelings about the hunt, with many opposed.

"Lots of people have made their thoughts known," Healy said. "The majority of input has been 'don't hunt the bears,' but we've also had input supporting the hunt."

As proposed, a hunt lasting from late August through late December would allow a maximum of 20 bears, no more than six of them females, to be killed. Once six females are killed, the hunt would be halted regardless if the full 20 have yet to be harvested, Healy said.

Dogs could be used in the hunt, as could any legal weapons, including rifles, shotguns and bows. Sows with cubs could not be hunted, and killing a cub would be illegal. Hunters would have to provide a skull and hide, with evidence of sex naturally attached, to the Department of Wildlife for inspection within 72 hours of killing a bear.

Bear hunting would be permitted across a swatch of western Nevada, including near Lake Tahoe and in parts of Douglas,

Storey, Lyon and Mineral counties.

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