

End of bear hunting season does not make controversy go away

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

The new year ended Nevada's first black bear hunt with 14 bears killed and no sign that controversy over the hunt is near an end.

Nine male and five female bears were killed since the hunt's Aug. 20 start, six bears shy of the maximum that could have been taken by Dec. 31.

The hunt was approved by the Nevada Wildlife Commission after a series of crowded public hearings and protests and vigils conducted by organized critics. A lawsuit was filed to block the hunt but was rejected by a district court judge in Carson City shortly before the hunt began.

"I think it was very successful," Carl Lackey, a biologist and bear expert with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, said of the state's inaugural bear hunting season.

Lackey said a few more bears were killed than he expected and that he was somewhat surprised only two of them were taken in the Carson Range. None was killed in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Of the 14 bears killed, half were taken in the Pine Nut Mountains east of Minden. Two were taken in the Stillwater Mountains near Wellington and three in the Pine Grove Hills in Lyon County.

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