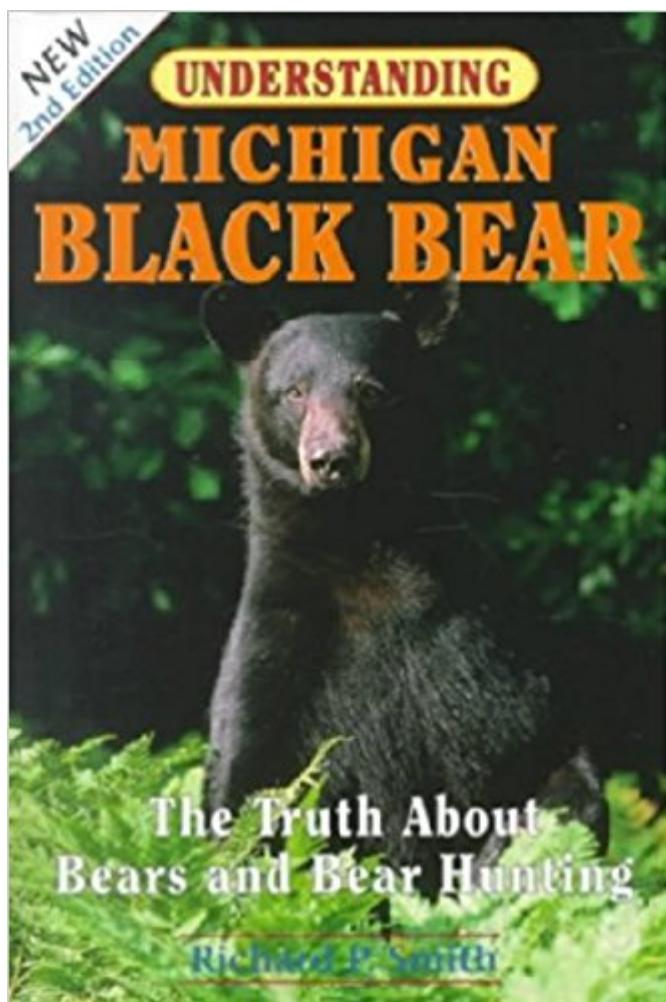


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# Understanding Michigan Black Bear: The Truth About Bears And Bear Hunting



## **Synopsis**

All you wanted to know about Michigan bears and more. The bulk of the book is devoted to what has been learned about black bears through research in the state, including one researcher who learned about bears by walking with them. There's also valuable historical information about how hunting for this species of big game has evolved, an unsuccessful attempt to ban certain bear hunting methods and a history of bear attacks. There's also valuable information about how to avoid problems from black bears whether you are a rural resident, camper, hiker, biker, angler or hunter. One section of the book covers current bear management. This is the 2nd edition of the book, which contains about 100 more pages and far more information than the 1st edition. Although the book has Michigan in the title, much of the information about black bears on its pages applies to the animals almost anywhere they are found. One of the chapters is about a Michigan cub that was orphaned and became part of an important bear research project in Minnesota.Â

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Everything you ever wanted to know about black bears is contained between the covers of this book... You will come away with a far greater understanding of black bears." Betty Sodders, Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine "I know of no one better qualified to write about the black bear in Michigan than Richard P. Smith. He has put together the best report on the subject that I have ever seen. In layman's terms he discusses bear habits, bear hunting, bear research, bear attacks and just about everything else you might want to know about these fascinating animals." Ken Lowe, former editor Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine.

I've been fascinated by black bears for a long time, and the more I learn about them, the more I respect them. They are truly intelligent and adaptable animals. I had been thinking about writing a book to educate the public about bears and bear hunting for years when a Michigan ballot referendum that would have banned a pair of popular bear hunting methods prompted me to do so. The 1st edition of this book was published in 1995. The referendum was on the state ballot in 1996 and it failed. I like to think that book had something to do with the outcome of that vote. When that edition sold out, I wrote an expanded 2nd edition with much more information, which remains popular today. One of the chapters in this book is about a pair of orphaned cubs my wife and I helped raise and return to the wild.

Written in 1995, this book argues for the continuation of bear hunting in Michigan and the continued use of baiting and hounds. The author also critiques the opposition's arguments against those practices. The use of baiting was put to a subsequent state wide vote and the practice was retained. This book is an interesting case study of the issue with a pro-hunting emphasis, but it will interest opposition types seeking to understand the pro-hunting case. The book is endorsed by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs organization. It has some interesting accounts of bears and advice for handling encounters based on actual experience but lacks a bibliography and lacks references to studies referred to in the text. Written in a magazine-type style with short chapters, this 187 page book can complement the serious reader's shelf of bear books. This reader bought the book in 1999.

This author has also written "Hunting Trophy Black Bear (Hunter's Information Series)," and both of his books should be of interest to both hunters and non-hunters like myself. Most of what I thought I knew about black bear was wrong, according to this book, e.g. den locations, number of cubs, and lifespan. Our Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has divided our state into ten Bear Management Units (BMUs), and I live in the Gladwin BMU. When this book was printed in 1995, the Lower Peninsula (LP) only had one BMU, which ended a bit south of our house. However, black bear territory has been expanding south and now the LP has two BMUs. In fact, quite a bit of the information about Bear Hunting Licenses, regulations, baiting, and harvesting is out-of-date in this book, and hunters should check the DNR website for the most recent data. However, the author's knowledge about and interest in black bear will never be out-of-date. He has helped raise black bear cubs, has photographed them extensively in the field (his photographs are included in this book),

and has hunted them. His two favorite methods of hunting bruins are (1) setting bait stations (which he describes in detail) and (2) hunting with trained hounds. He also spends quite a bit of print justifying these two methods to those of us who might think them unfair. He argues that nuisance bears (bears that raid garbage cans, bird feeders, and outbuildings) are created by campers, not bait stations. One of the most interesting chapters in this book is "Dealing with Nuisance Bears." Another chapter hunters and non-hunters might want to read is "Michigan Bear Attacks." According to the author, "a can of bear repellent called Counter Assault is the best means of stopping a bear attack." This book includes a photograph of a guy spraying a charging bear. Dog Shield, a product used by mail carriers, also seems to work. Another photograph shows a hiker beating off a bear with a walking stick. There are also stories of hunters who have been pulled out of trees by angry black bear. One area that the author and I are in violent agreement: bear hunting should not be allowed after black bear have gone into dens for the winter. When the Upper Peninsula bear hunting season extended into November, "47 percent of the bears deer hunters shot were in dens." (1955). All Upper Peninsula (UP) BMUs now have bear hunting seasons that run from September to October, and the LP BMUs have shorter seasons that begin and end in September. Something the author fought hard for was the elimination of the November bear hunting season, and his efforts succeeded in 1990--not because it was unethical to shoot denning bear, but because the UP bear population went into a rapid decline. In spite of the dated hunting information, this book should be of interest to all Michiganders who might find themselves interacting with '*Ursus americanus*'.

A very interesting book that covered a lot of places that I have backpacked. I found the bears in the Porcupine Mountains to be very docile when encountering them. I was amazed to find out that people had been attacked in the same area and years that I had travelled through there. There are always two sides to every story and this book tells it's side very well.

Very informational, a must for people trying to ban hunting. Shows the consequences of banning hunting. Also uncovers anti-hunting lies.

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