

Sally O. Smyth
Camden, ME

Despite consistent public opinion against perpetrating, much less expanding the desperately un-sporting and cruel practices of hounding, trapping and baiting bears, Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) has refused to adapt to a changing world.

Specifically, with this re-introduction of last year's LD 1118 in today's LD 142, Maine's DIFW again includes in its mission cruelty to animals in general and wildlife in particular. For many years, cruelty to animals has been identified as a clear sign of sociopathy in humans. Encouraging behaviors which reinforce in-humane practices should not be part of the mission of Maine's DIFW.

I understand the desire of the DIFW to increase its funding from the federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition, which is allocated to states according to the number of hunting permits they issue, as per the now seriously outdated 1932-1937 Pittman-Robertson Federal Air in Wildlife Restoration Act.

Given the wide margins by which non-hunting recreational use of Maine lands now out-distances the ever-declining hunting use, the DIFW would be better advised to focus on protecting the state's wildlife so that it can continue to attract a non-sociopathic public amenable to finding ways of co-existing with wildlife.

Please reject the ugliest of these current DIFW bear management practices—hounding, trapping and baiting as allowed and encouraged in LD 142.

In future, please review all DIFW practices with the goal of expanding citizen respect for and accommodation to the other sentient members of the traditional Maine community: bears as well as birds and their role in our shared ecology.

Sincerely,

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