



Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Excellence In Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

For Immediate Release

April 26, 2004

Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society Contacts:

President: Richard Hoppe: (207) 435-3451

Black Bear Committee Chair: Adam Vashon, phone (207) 622-8263

Maine Chapter of Wildlife Society Votes To Oppose Ban

BREWER, Maine -- On April 15, Members of the Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution to oppose passage of a referendum that would make it a crime to hunt bears with bait, dogs or by trapping. The vote followed a panel discussion comprised of experts on each side of the issue.

The Maine Chapter voted 34 to oppose the referendum; four in support of the referendum and one member abstained. The Wildlife Society is a non-profit scientific and educational association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education.

Among the reasons listed in the resolution for opposing the referendum was that it subverted the public process that the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife used successfully to balance scientific management and societal goals for the past 25 years, that the referendum would limit the regulated, responsible, safe, and sustainable human use of a highly valued species, and it may limit the ability of the Department to maintain the black bear population at ecologically, and socially desirable levels. The resolution also commended the department for its ongoing long-term black bear research program, its public planning process and the department's ability to actively respond to changes in bear populations by manipulating season lengths, timing, and hunting methods to achieve species goals and objectives,

The vote came on the heels of a panel discussion and a question and answer period that focused on the bear referendum. The panelists included those both for and against, as well as out-of-state wildlife professionals presently dealing with black bears in their profession. Invitees included Robert Fisk, Maine Citizens For Fair Bear Hunting; Bill Randall, Maine Hunters for Fair Bear Hunting; Aneta Coupe, The Humane Society of the United States; Jennifer Vashon, Bear Study Leader for Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; Skip Trask, Maine's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Council; John Organ, Wildlife Program Chief for USFWS Northeast Region; John McDonald, Wildlife Specialist, USFWS; Mark Ellingwood, Black Bear Biologist, NH Fish and Game Department. Robert Fisk and Aneta Coupe, while invited, did not attend.

The Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society (MeTWS), established in 1976, is a non-profit scientific and educational association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. The MeTWS represents Maine membership of The Wildlife Society, an international non-profit organization dedicated towards wildlife stewardship. The mission of The Wildlife Society is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources for the benefit of society. The Maine Chapter's membership includes approximately 120 wildlife professionals and other concerned individuals employed by government agencies, academic institutions, private firms, and non-governmental organizations, working to promote sound stewardship of wildlife resources throughout Maine.