

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 85

BY REPRESENTATIVE TRAVIS JOHNSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to study the feasibility of allowing a black bear hunting season.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana black bear was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1992; and

WHEREAS, after the Louisiana black bear was listed under the Endangered Species Act, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service developed a recovery plan for the subspecies, including at least two viable subpopulations, one each in the Tensas and Atchafalaya river basins, immigration and emigration corridors between the two subpopulations, and protection of habitat and corridors that support the two subpopulations; and

WHEREAS, to meet the recovery criteria and reduce threats to the Louisiana black bear, state and federal agencies, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and private landowners partnered in conducting numerous research and habitat restoration projects and in implementing regulations; and

WHEREAS, the LDWF, in coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Geological Survey, developed a database that is used to track bear occurrences, captures, and mortalities to better understand subpopulations; and

WHEREAS, because of these projects and regulations, the Louisiana black bear population is now considered viable over the next one hundred years with sufficient protected habitat to support breeding and exchange between subpopulations; and

WHEREAS, black bears remain protected by state laws, which currently do not allow hunting of these animals; and

WHEREAS, the LDWF continues to conduct research to monitor demographic and genetic characteristics of the individual subpopulations of the Louisiana black bear; and

WHEREAS, as the state wildlife management agency, the LDWF has the responsibility to ensure Louisiana black bear populations live on into the future; and

WHEREAS, the LDWF has released a management plan that creates a framework from which the LDWF and stakeholders can work to maintain a sustainable Louisiana black bear population within the state and ensure the subspecies remains a valued part of the state's wildlife community; and

WHEREAS, the LDWF has a responsibility to manage human and bear conflicts, and promote research and education related to these issues.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to study the feasibility of allowing a black bear hunting season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall provide a written report of its findings and conclusions to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources by February 1, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE