

# Baits may be bolstering bear populations

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Black bear in the Canadian Rockies. Image: Wikipedia.

New research reveals that baits used by hunters have become a substantial portion of black bears' diets. In northern Wisconsin, over 40% of the diet of harvested animals consisted of bait subsidies.

The widespread availability and consumption of these calorically rich baits—often high-sugar foods, such as cookies, donuts, and candies—may be bolstering the bear population density in the region.

Thirty states permit hunting [black bears](#), 12 of which allow baiting prior to the opening of the [hunting season](#). However, the findings indicate that the goals and consequences of baiting policies should be re-evaluated.

"It's not surprising that bears are eating bear bait, but what is notable is the extent. Not only are these bears consuming bait just before they are harvested, but also throughout their lifetimes, which makes them one of

the most highly subsidized populations of bears," said Dr. Rebecca Kirby, lead author of the *Journal of Wildlife Management* study.

**More information:** *Journal of Wildlife Management* (2017). [DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.21304](https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.21304)

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