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Evaluating Hunter Support for Black Bear Restoration in East Texas

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Abstract

Hunters are an influential interest group in wildlife management. Little is known, however, about variation in attitudes toward species restoration among hunters in regard to either specific hunting interests or restoration of black bear. We surveyed 1,006 East Texas residents to assess hunter support for restoration of black bear populations in East Texas and hunter interest in hunting black bears. Because we defined hunters broadly, our study included hunters who were demographically dissimilar to those in other studies. Sixty-one percent of hunters supported black bear restoration. Among hunters, restoration support was twice as great among those interested versus not interested in hunting black bears. Our results highlight the importance of measurement differences in determining the boundaries of particular stakeholder groups and reinforce the importance of hunting specialization in influencing management attitudes.

Keywords: attitudes; black bear; hunting; restoration; Texas

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