

Spring Bear Hunt Consultation Summary Report



Overview

The Department of Natural Resources and Renewables consulted with Nova Scotians to determine how a spring bear hunt might be held as a pilot in 2024 and to inform decisions about bear hunting in the future.

This report summarizes the key findings of this public consultation. In some cases, the percentages in charts do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The Department thanks everyone who responded for sharing their input. This feedback contributes to a broader understanding of how Nova Scotians feel about the idea of a spring bear hunt and helps inform decision making.

Summary of Results

From January 24 to February 24, 2024, Nova Scotians were invited to share their input via an online survey and 17,058 Nova Scotians responded, along with 159 non-residents. About 67% reported living in urban/suburban communities and nearly 33% reported living in rural communities.

The survey asked people about their level of support from the proposed hunt and whether they had any concerns. In addition to where they live, respondents were also asked to identify:

- whether they are a hunter, a farmer, and/or a landowner who owns land where people hunt
- their level of understanding of bear hunting practices in Nova Scotia

The results of the survey show that Nova Scotians are almost evenly divided on the idea of spring bear hunting. About 51%, were opposed, 47% were supportive and 2% were neutral. Rural respondents were more supportive (50%) than urban/suburban respondents (40%).

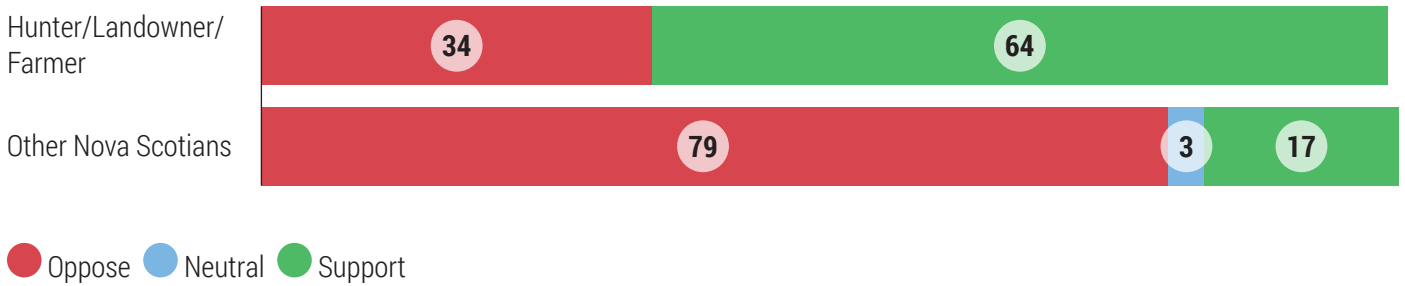
Figure 1



● Strongly oppose ● Oppose ● Neutral ● Support ● Strongly support

About 64% of hunters, farmers and landowners who responded to the survey supported the spring bear hunt. About 17% of respondents who are not engaged in these activities supported the hunt.

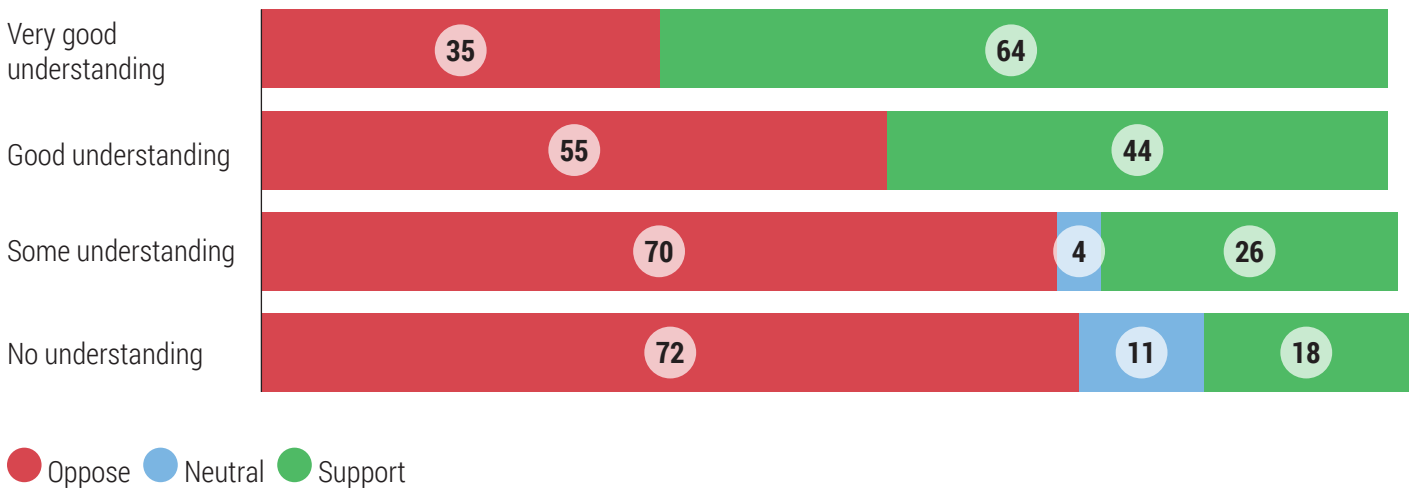
Figure 2



About 75% of respondents said that they had a good or very good understanding of bear hunting practices in Nova Scotia. Most of these respondents (64%) supported the hunt.

About 25% of respondents reported that they had some or no understanding of hunting practices. Most of these respondents (72%) did not support the hunt.

Figure 3

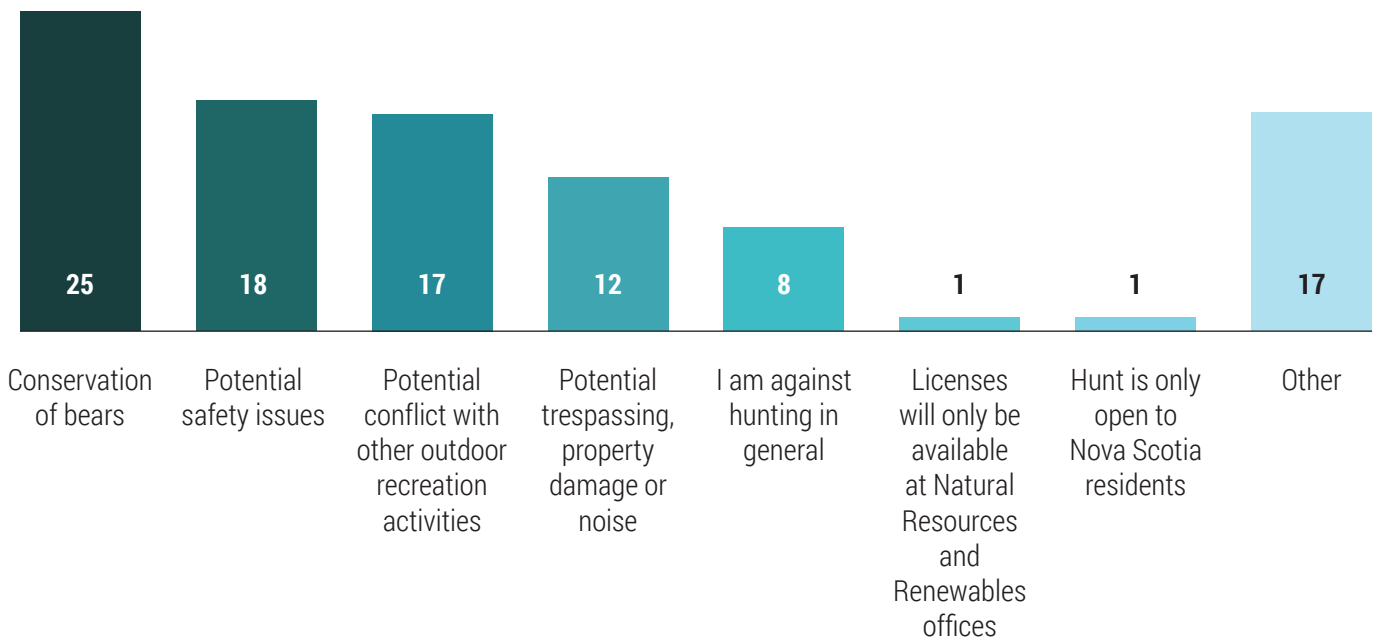


Respondents were invited to share any concerns they had with a spring bear hunt. They were provided with a list of concerns and could choose some or all of them. They were also invited to provide other comments.

From the list of options, most respondents chose concern about conservation of bears, potential safety issues, and potential for conflict with other outdoor recreation activity. Few chose concern about excluding non-resident hunters from a spring bear hunt or licenses only being available at Department offices.

Other comments submitted showed that many respondents were concerned that a spring bear hunt could have an impact on bear cubs.

Figure 4



NOTE: Early in the consultation, Department staff noticed that some people were responding to the online survey multiple times with the same responses. To clean the data and ensure fairness, 630 duplicate responses were removed from consideration. However, had the duplicates been included in the analysis outlined in this report, the total survey responses would have been 17,847 and the results would have been similar: 50% opposed, 48% in support and 2% neutral.

Some people chose to provide their feedback via email and letters. The Department received 134 pieces of correspondence from individual Nova Scotians by the February 24 deadline. Most expressed opposition to a spring bear hunt.

The Department also received letters from ten organizations. The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Big Game Society and the Safari Club were supportive of the hunt. The Ecology Action Centre, Nature Nova Scotia, Humane Society International Canada, Animal Alliance of Canada, Healthy Forest Coalition and Municipality of Pictou County were opposed. The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia did not express a view.

