

Penalty for Hunting Black Bear

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Issue

What is the penalty for hunting black bears in Connecticut? Has the penalty changed in the past 10 years?

Summary

It is illegal to hunt black bears in Connecticut ([Conn. Agencies Regs. § 26-66-3\(f\)](#)), and people who do so face fines, imprisonment, and hunting license suspension or revocation.

The extent of the penalty depends upon whether the crime is a first, second, or subsequent offense. Possible fines range from up to \$500 to up to \$1,000 and prison terms range from up to 30 days to up to six months. A person convicted of bear hunting may receive both a fine and a prison sentence. In addition, a first- or second-time offender has his or her hunting license temporarily suspended, for at least one or two years respectively, and a subsequent offender has his or her hunting license revoked.

[PA 08-144](#) established the specific penalty for hunting black bear. Before the act passed, hunters were subject to the law's generic hunting penalty. The legislature generally reduced the possible amount of fines and length of imprisonment in [PA 12-80](#), which are the existing penalties.

Penalty for Bear Hunting

A first-time offender is subject to a fine of up to \$500, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. A second-time offender is subject to a fine of up to \$750, imprisonment for up to three months, or both. A third-time or subsequent offender faces a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to six months, or both.

The law also requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection commissioner, upon a conviction for illegal bear hunting, to suspend (1) a first-time offender’s hunting license for at least one year and (2) a second-time offender’s hunting license for at least two years. The commissioner must revoke the hunting license of a third-time or subsequent offender ([CGS § 26-80a](#)).

Changes to Penalties

The legislature created penalties specific to bear hunting in [PA 08-144](#). Previously, the state’s general hunting penalties applied, which subjected offenders to fines of up to \$200, imprisonment for up to 60 days, or both. The law also allowed the commissioner to suspend a person’s hunting license.

As shown in the table below, the 2008 legislation increased the possible fines and extended the possible prison term. It also established graduated penalties and specified minimum license suspension requirements. [PA 12-80](#) reduced the possible fines by capping them at the minimum amounts set in 2008. It also generally decreased the potential prison terms. By law, someone convicted of illegal bear hunting may receive both a fine and a prison sentence.

Table: Legislation on the Penalties for Hunting Black Bear

Penalty Type	PA 08-144		PA 12-80 (Existing Penalties, as codified at CGS § 26-80a)	
	Offense	Penalty	Offense	Penalty
Fine	1 st	At least \$500	1 st	Up to \$500
	2 nd	At least \$750	2 nd	Up to \$750
	3 rd or more	At least \$1,000	3 rd or more	Up to \$1,000
Imprisonment	1 st	Up to 90 days	1 st	Up to 30 days
	2 nd	Up to 120 days	2 nd	Up to three months
	3 rd or more	Up to 180 days	3 rd or more	Up to six months
License Suspension/Revocation	1 st	At least one year suspension	1 st	At least one year suspension
	2 nd	At least two years’ suspension	2 nd	At least two years’ suspension
	3 rd or more	Permanent revocation	3 rd or more	Permanent revocation

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