BEAR HUNTING WITH HOUNDS: TECHNIQUES AND EFFECTS ON BEARS AND THE PUBLIC

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Abstract  Bear hunting with hounds is a tradition that is undergoing hard scrutiny by the public. Perceptions of the effects of hounds on bears often are based on little or no knowledge of hound or bear behavior. The techniques of bear hunting with hounds are presented along with discussion of bear behavior during chases. Major factors affecting success rates of houndsmen are hunter experience, quality of hounds, bear behavior, terrain, weather, and use of telemetry equipment. Average packs of hounds may tree 30 percent of the bears they actually run and exceptional packs may tree up to 80 percent. Trespass and perceptions of inhumaneness are major issues with public acceptance of bear hunting with hounds.

East. Workshop Black Bear Res. and Manage. 10:101-109

INTRODUCTION

Hunting bear with the use of hounds is a tradition in North American dating back to colonial times. It had its origins in Europe where hounds were used to chase most game species. Recently, hunting bear with hounds has come under considerable public attack, or at least, hard scrutiny. Hound hunting is highly visible to the public and is perceived to be inhumane and un sporting. Changes in the last 15-20 years in bear status, from vermin to a valued animal, and a shift of urban people to rural areas have intensified feelings against hound hunting in general.

The purpose of this paper is to present the techniques and effects of hunting bear with hounds on bears and the public. It should be noted that these are my own observations and opinions based on intensive use of hounds on bears since 1980, resulting in over 200 captures of bear in New England and Utah with hounds belonging to cooperators, friends, guides, and myself.

Most intensively monitored radio-collared bears (n>75) in a Massachusetts study (Elowe 1984, 1987) were run by hounds several times each between 1980-1986 after their initial capture for collar changing or by mistake while attempting capture of other bears in the same area. Observations of bear behavior while being pursued are based largely on chases involving these collared bears. I thank E. V. Howard, E. S. Howard, K. Ertel, C. Sprague, and E. Sutherland for help and cooperation with their hounds during bear capture attempts.

TECHNIQUES

While specific techniques of hound hunting for bear vary somewhat between hunters and regions, there are commonalities. In general, the idea is to (1) find a bear or track fresh enough for the hounds to follow, (2) get the hounds to find the bear and give chase, and (3) have the bear climb a tree, back into a hole, or otherwise stop running and allow the hunter to catch up with the chase.

Hounds used for bear are generally the long-
legged breeds used for fox, bobcat, and raccoon, namely Redbones, Walkers, Blueticks, Black and Tans, Plott's, and variations and mixes of these. Aficionados will extol the virtues of their favorite breed, and each breed has its strong points (e.g., exceptional voice, nose, running stamina), but good bear hounds can be of any breed. In fact, assuming a hound has good scenting, running, and voice abilities, the attribute that identifies an exceptional hound is a grit or desire that somewhat overcomes its smarts. Bear chasing often results in hound injury because hounds must really harass the bears to make them tree consistently. Dogs that are too aggressive may be killed by a bear, but a smart dog will soon realize that a bear is dangerous and will not push the animal too hard.

Fresh bear tracks can be found by either the hunter or hounds. In general, the hunter takes his hounds to areas thought to be used or traveled by bears. This may involve walking into an area where bears have been feeding or it may involve "roading."

Roading is the searching along roads for signs of bear crossing, usually from a vehicle. Large areas can be covered this way, depending on the road system. Roading is particularly effective if the hunters know where the regular bear crossing areas are. Roads must, of course, traverse good bear habitat, be small enough not to hinder bear movements, and yet be passable to a vehicle.

In areas with suitable soils, tracks can be found by the hunter. Hunters in the midwest and west often drag roads and crossings with brush to provide a fresh surface to view tracks the following morning. In the northeast, where hard gravel and rocky soils prevail, a strike dog is relied upon to find the fresh tracks. Strike dogs are highly trained and experienced dogs that can be counted on to bark and trail only bear. A walking hunter may have the strike dog on a lead or let him range close by. A roading hunter ties the strike dog on the hood or in the bed of a pickup truck while slowly driving along likely roads; excited baying by the strike dog usually means a bear track has been found.

Usually, the most experienced dog is allowed to work out the track first to make sure that it is fresh enough to follow and to determine the direction the bear went. The excited confusion, if other dogs are let loose at this stage, can distract the more experienced dog and lead to delays getting all hounds on the right track. Once the experienced hound is working the track in a steady manner and direction, other hounds are put on the track to follow and catch up.

Three or four good hounds chasing a bear at one time are enough to tree most bears that will tree. We have had good success with as few as two good hounds and as many as six. Some hunters, particularly in the southeastern states, prefer to use more hounds, sometimes as many as 20–25 at one time. Certainly the sound of hounds baying on the trail is a large part of the sport of hunting with hounds. There are problems with using too many hounds at one time, however. Dogs fighting a bear need to work together and too many aggressive dogs may get in each other's way and be injured by the bear. Also, handling many hounds at one time is difficult, and most chases that do not end with a treed bear often result in dogs scattered over a generous piece of real estate.

Bear hunting with hounds is often a social sport; while some hunters may like to go alone, groups of two to five hunters with a pack of hounds are common. In some areas, social hunts are the norm, with ten or more hunters and twice that many hounds involved. During the chase, hunters station themselves at known bear crossing areas, hoping to see and/or get a shot at the bear. If a bear crosses a road at some point in the chase, rested extra dogs are sometimes relayed in to spell the tired dogs.

Experienced houndsmen can interpret the chase by the sound of the hounds; hounds usually have different barks when trailing, in close pursuit of the bear, baying at a standing or fighting bear, and treeing. Bear chases can be as short as ten minutes, or last a day or more, depending on the hounds and bear. The average chase lasts two to four hours and covers two to twenty km. Traditionally, hunters followed hounds on foot or horseback. Attempting to stay within hearing of a running pack of hounds for several kilometers is very strenuous; modern hunters, in areas with some roads, usually try to drive to vantage points to listen for baying hounds.
Eventually, the chase ends with a bear treed, bayed, or escaped. Bears can elude hounds by out-running them; confusing the trail by backtracking, circling, entering water, killing or injuring hounds; or simply outlasting them and never treeing. Bears that tree usually pick the largest softwood tree in the immediate area. Aggressive bears are usually just above the hound's reach, while more timid bears may be quite high, sitting on a limb against the trunk.

Some modern innovations have come into widespread use by houndsmen after bear. Road systems, 4-wheel drive trucks, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) have made hunters more mobile, aiding both searching bear habitat for fresh tracks and staying within hearing of the chase. Citizen Band (CB) two-way radios mounted in trucks allow hunters to communicate the progress of the hunt and coordinate efforts. Another relatively new innovation is the use of radio-telemetry collars on hounds; transmitters on hounds allow them to be picked up the same day as the hunt, instead of after a search of several days. The primary advantage is the safety of valuable hounds; however, radio collars also allow the savvy hunter to stay within electronic “earshot” of the chase with much less effort and much more certainty.

In general, little has changed the actual sport of hound hunting. It is still a very strenuous method of bear hunting that requires hundreds of hours invested into training effective hounds. The sport lies in the failures and successes of the chase, as in any hunting.

BEAR BEHAVIOR

Bears behave according to their individual traits when pursued by hounds. Some are much more timid or aggressive by nature than others and these behaviors are apparent during chases. Timid bears will outrun hounds or tree relatively easily while aggressive bears may walk along or stop and fight the hounds. Some bears will never tree, even with many aggressive hounds, and others tree easily every time they are chased.

Very large, heavy males are likely to be the walking/fighting variety. Very long, fast running chases are likely to be caused by two-to three-year-old bears around 40–50 kg. Any bear >15 kg can be dangerous to hounds, but bears under 50 kg usually prefer to run. Allen (1984) and Massopust and Anderson (1984) describe movements of instrumented bears being chased by hounds and conclude, as we found, that bears generally stay within their home range while being pursued by hounds. On the few occasions when bears leave their normal home range during a chase, they usually return the same day. Bears use a variety of methods to confuse trailing hounds, including running through very thick cover (e.g., thickets, swamps, logged areas with slash), backtracking and circling extensively, running or swimming through water, and running through very rugged terrain such as broken ledges. Although the general direction of the chase may be known, the actual routes are usually very convoluted. Medium-sized bears seem to try to confuse hounds more than the smaller, straight-running bears or the large walking bears. Generalizations are difficult, of course, since there are many exceptions.

Females with young cubs (up to seven months old) react predictably when pursued by hounds; invariably they put cubs up a good climbing tree (usually a softwood) and then lead the hounds away on a chase. This trait helped us to find several families of cubs and was confirmed by telemetry data on chases of known families. If a bear was chased, treed, immobilized, and found to be a nursing female, cubs could sometimes be found by returning to the specific area where the hounds first caught up to the bear (as evidenced by a marked increase in excitement level of baying) and carefully searching the largest softwood trees. Occasionally, one dog stayed behind and bayed at the tree that cubs were in while the rest of the pack chased the mother. Cubs usually hid near the crown of the tree, making them very difficult to spot.

When a chase ended, the mother immediately started back to the tree that cubs were left in and called them down. Cubs never showed any desire to leave the tree until the mother called them down, even for periods up to eight hours. Thus, we never observed a chase that hurt young cubs or separated the family for much longer than the duration of the chase.
Families pursued after August are more likely to stay together during the chase. Cubs keep up remarkably well, although chases may be shorter in duration than for single bears. If the family trees, they usually all climb the same tree, but may be in several trees within the immediate area.

Bears chased from good feeding areas, during any season, may return after the chase. For example, bears chased away from beehives, cornfields, or good oak stands usually returned within a day to the same area. One bear was chased from the same cornfield, along the same 12-15 km route, on three consecutive mornings.

Bear behavior during and after runs by hounds illustrates that they are usually in control of the chase. Some bears use a multitude of tactics to throw hounds off the trail; others will not run, but instead fight aggressively and often kill hounds; still others tree very easily. In general, hounds can only follow and the bear runs where it wants to.

HUNTER SUCCESS

To many people, hunting with hounds implies that a bear is run until it climbs a tree, and the hunter then shoots the bear; the success of the hunt is certain. However, there are many factors affecting the success of the hunt. As with any hunting, success in hunting bear with hounds hinges directly on the hunter. The hunter must possess enough knowledge of bear to find fresh bear sign. Most importantly, he must know what his hounds are doing at all times in order to train them and to know how each chase is progressing. Hounds instinctively run almost any animal, and the hunter must know what is being chased and how to train the hounds to chase only bear; this is paramount to maintaining an effective pack of bear hounds and requires constant attention.

DOGS

The experience and aggressiveness of hounds affect the ability of the pack to successfully tree or bay bears. Hounds must be aggressive enough to effectively harass the bear to make it tree, but not so aggressive that they get injured repeatedly or killed. Hounds also must be tenacious enough to stay with a difficult bear without giving up; those that simply follow will tree bears occasionally, but not consistently.

The ability to correctly follow a scent trail is, of course, essential for a hound. Different hunters have different preferences for scenting ability, depending on their style of hunting and bear densities in their area. Some hunters prefer hounds with the ability to follow very old (up to 12-15 hours old) tracks (cold-nosed hounds) and be able to catch up to the bear. They enjoy hearing the hounds work out an old scent trail, and they also can take advantage of more trailing opportunities than with hounds lacking this ability. Other hunters, especially in areas where bears are very common, may prefer a hound that will trail only fairly fresh tracks (hot-nosed hound) so that time is not “wasted” trying to follow a track from a bear that may be a long way off.

The number of hounds used during the chase may affect success somewhat. Usually, more than four or five good hounds offers no advantage as they may get in each other’s way or become too bold and get injured.

BEAR BEHAVIOR

As mentioned before, bears react in a variety of ways while being pursued by hounds, and directly affect the outcome of the hunt. There is no way to know how any bear will react until it is actually chased. Bears that do not tree easily usually have a pattern—either in behavior or the route they use—that becomes recognizable. Sometimes houndsmen will try to avoid running a particular bear by avoiding an area or trying to recognize its tracks. In the northeast, however, most strike dogs are trusted to run the fresh scent of bear without the hunter actually seeing tracks, making identification of the bear difficult.

TERRAIN

The terrain being hunted affects both the bear/hound chase and how well the hunter can keep
up. Areas that are relatively flat do not offer good vantage points for listening for the hounds unless there is a good road network. It is very difficult to hear hounds more than 1 km away in flat forested areas. Dogs running in valleys between mountains or large hills are usually easily heard at distances up to 1.6 km. The most difficult terrain to hear hounds in is a combination of low, steep-sided hills and steep valleys that offer a multitude of possible routes for the chase and mask the sound of the hounds.

Any terrain that is steep, rocky, or covered with streams, bogs, logging slash, blowdowns, or thick vegetation offers the bear an advantage. Hounds have a more difficult time keeping up with the bear and hunters have a difficult task catching up even if a bear is treed. More roads in an area improve the hunter's chance for success by allowing him to keep closer to the chase. Most houndsmen seem to avoid chasing bears in any areas where there are 8–16 km or more between roads if there are other areas open to hunting with more roads. Without road or trail access, the chase usually gets out of hearing so quickly that the hunter's chance for success is small and it may be very difficult to recover the hounds.

WEATHER

The weather can affect conditions for scenting bear and, therefore, affect hunter success. Cool, moist conditions are best for scenting, while very hot, dry weather causes scent to dissipate quickly. The primary effect of scent conditions on success is the ability of the hounds to find and/or follow a trail. Whereas a particular hound may be able to follow a ten-hour-old track in cool, moist weather, a two-hour-old track may be impossible to follow on a hot, dry, breezy day. Steady rain also obliterates scent trails very quickly. Therefore, the probability of the hunter and his hounds finding a bear to chase is greatly diminished in poor scenting conditions because they must be closer to where the bear actually is, rather than someplace where it was in the last 6–12 hours.

Very hot weather causes hounds to tire quickly. Temperatures in the 35–55°F (2–14°C) range are generally best for the comfort and stamina of the hounds. In addition to affecting scent conditions somewhat, wind directly affects the distance hounds can be heard; on calm mornings, they can be heard for two km or more, depending on terrain. Winds can quickly reduce hearing and the hunter will not be able to effectively follow the chase.

SEASON

The season of the year can affect success indirectly by its influence on weather and bear behavior. Cool spring weather is ideal for running hounds, and bears, soon after emergence from hibernating, are usually easier to tree than later in the year. Limited movements of bears early in spring require that hunters walk into likely feeding areas to consistently find fresh tracks.

Increasing bear activity in June and throughout the summer make finding fresh tracks to run easier; however, bears are in better condition and the weather is generally hot, making summer the most difficult time of year to consistently catch bears with hounds. Bears again become easier (do not read “easy”) to catch in the fall, probably as a result of increasing weight and improved weather conditions for hounds.

NUMBER OF HUNTERS

Hunter success may not increase as the number of hunters in a party increases, because there is still only one pack of hounds. However, the chances that a bear will be killed by the party may increase, depending on the progress of the chase and how the hunters react. If a bear trees quickly, there is no advantage to more than one or two hunters in the party. However, if the chase is long, hunters can separate and station themselves at known crossing or listening vantage points. Thus, chances are better that someone in the party will be in a position to shoot the bear as it crosses a road or to get to a tree more quickly. At the very least, more ears will be listening at different points, and the chances of losing the chase or hounds are reduced. Often, CB radios are used by hunters to report chase progress to others in the
party. Efforts can by coordinated to place hunters in better positions and increase chances for killing the bear.

TELEMETRY

The use of electronic “gadgetry” in hunting has recently come under much scrutiny from the public. Radio telemetry collars for hounds are seen by some to represent an unfair advantage and by others as an essential part of running hounds. The use of telemetry equipment on hounds will not ensure success for the hunter; the hounds must still do the work of trailing and treeing a bear. Once hounds are released on a bear track, they will react the same with telemetry collars as without. However, telemetry equipment can make the hunter more successful. In a sport where it is essential to stay within hearing of the hounds to know where and how a potentially long chase is progressing in order to kill a bear, telemetry equipment effectively increases the hearing distance to the hounds. In the past, if hounds went out of hearing range or the wind masked their sound, hunters could only guess the direction of the chase. Now, well-equipped hunters take bearings on the hounds’ transmitter collars with telemetry receivers and antennas. In some areas with high road densities, hunters may never have to leave their trucks until the telemetry signals stop moving, indicating a “tree.”

As part of an intensive bear capture effort with hounds in Massachusetts, detailed notes were kept on the progress of bear chases in 1981 and 1982 and the influence telemetry had on the ability to find the bear if it treed. Telemetry influence was put into three categories: not helpful, helpful to get the bear more quickly, and essential to finding the treed bear. Of 86 chases ending in 60 treed bears, telemetry equipment was of no help in 38 percent, helpful in 23 percent, and essential in 38 percent. Thus, in 61 percent of successful runs, telemetry collars on hounds functioned as electronic aids either in finding the treed bears more quickly (23%) or finding the treed bear at all (38%). Again, these bears would have treed anyway, but without collars on the dogs, we would not have known that these particular hounds treed 70 percent of the bears they ran.

There is no doubt that telemetry allows a hunter to pick up valuable hounds at the end of the day. The dangers from busy roads and theft are important concerns of houndsmen; in many areas, picking up hounds quickly is a social benefit, as people may not like dogs running at large. Recovering hounds every day also allows a hunter more opportunities to hunt instead of spending time searching for lost or injured dogs. In the past, several days may have been required to find hounds; some, especially those hurt during the chase, may never have been recovered.

There is some indication that not as many hunters would own hounds for running bear if telemetry equipment were not available or legal; they would not have the time available to search for lost hounds after a chase. In the past, hounds were allowed or taught to backtrack after a chase ended to the place where they were released. Often, a hunter would find his hound there at the end of the day or the next day if he left a coat or box. Hounds wearing telemetry collars are usually picked up as soon as they cross a road after the chase ends; this may be many kilometers from the release point and the hounds gradually learn to come to roads instead of backtracking.

Many wilderness areas with fewer roads would not get hunted if telemetry collars were not available. Hunters are reluctant to release hounds in an area where they will move out of hearing range quickly.

There are advantages and disadvantages to use of telemetry equipment on hounds. Telemetry can make a houndsman much more efficient at taking bear, but also can stir up social issues that must be resolved by each state or province.

SUCCESS RATES

Given all of the preceding factors that govern success, it is not difficult to understand why success rates are rarely high. An average to good pack of hounds with knowledgeable handlers may tree 30 percent of the bears they actually run; this does not include the days spent finding no suitable tracks to run or trailing old tracks where the hounds never start (catch up to) the bear.
An exceptional pack of hounds with good hunters may tree as many as 80 percent of the bears they actually run; however, this rarely translates to a bear treed almost every time out. Depending on bear densities, movements, ability of the handlers to find fresh sign, and scent conditions, one to two bears treed per week may be very good even if hunters hunt every day.

EFFECTS OF HOUNDS ON BEAR HARVESTS

The effects of hunting with hounds on the total harvest will vary depending on the timing of the bear season, skill of hunters and their hounds, other hunting methods that are legal, and whether guiding by houndsmen is allowed.

Bear seasons that occur very late in the fall or during the firearms deer season generally show very low harvests by houndsmen. Bears may be denned and unavailable for harvest very late in the fall. Also, many states prohibit the use of hounds during deer season and, even if it were legal, many houndsmen will not run hounds when deer hunters are in the woods for fear of the dogs being shot.

Early bear seasons (e.g., September) can show elevated kills by houndsmen during some years if bears congregate around corn or oat fields, apple orchards, or other feed areas. Hunters easily find fresh tracks to run in heavily used feeding areas.

The percentage of bears taken with hounds in the total harvest will vary depending on other hunting methods in use. For example, hounds may take 50 percent of the harvest in a state that does not allow baiting or hunting during the deer season; a state that allows baiting may show houndsmen taking 20 percent or less of the harvest. If a hunting method is available that the general public can use, the percentage of bears taken with hounds usually is low. It requires many hundreds of hours of training and considerable expense to make up and maintain an effective pack of bear hounds, and there is a limit to the numbers of hunters willing to invest the required time and money.

Houndsmen claim that they can be more selective than any other group of hunters, and that they take mostly large males. Potentially, this can be true. Bears are sometimes shot running ahead of hounds, but usually they are shot from a tree. The hunter has time to decide if the bear is large enough or if cubs are present. However, male-female ratios of harvested bears taken by houndsmen usually are close to 50:50. From 1982 to 1989, the male component of the harvest taken by houndsmen in Maine ranged from 48 to 58 percent. It is very difficult, even for very experienced observers to judge the size of a bear in a tree.

Generally, the difference between a large bear and a small bear is discernable, but finer resolution is tenuous. An exceedingly large bear probably can be assumed to be a male, but it is impossible to tell whether a mid-sized solitary bear is male or female, regardless of hunters' claims. Selectivity also depends on the hunter's skill at catching bears, since it is unlikely that the only bear treed all year would be passed up.

Predictions of selectivity and restraint are impossible if guiding is legal by houndsmen. The economic incentives offered by a treed bear are usually too great for hunters not to take the bear. All except very small bears and, sometimes, mothers with cubs are fair game; therefore, more bears and most sex and age classes may be taken by houndsmen who guide paying clients.

TRAINING SEASONS

Seasons for training, or pursuit-only, are allowed in many areas at the request of houndsmen in order to keep hounds in shape and fully trained for the start of the hunting season. Also, for many houndsmen, the chase and hearing the hounds are all that is important.

There are some biological/enforcement issues associated with the training season, but it largely is a social issue. Biological issues involve the levels of disturbance that can be tolerated by bear, separation of family groups, and illegal taking of bear.

The level of disturbance to individual bears is dependent on bear densities and the numbers of houndsmen involved in pursuit. In areas with high interest by houndsmen and relatively low bear
densities, the disturbance to an individual bear may be significant. The effect may be local if houndsmen concentrate their activities; in most of the northeast, this is probably not a problem. Separation of family groups may be a problem if training activity is extreme, but we never had a collared family group separate after being run with hounds in Massachusetts. When cubs are small, family movements are limited and houndsmen are more likely to run tracks of single females or males. Cubs climb well enough to prevent injury from hounds when families are run, and mothers return to pick up the cubs immediately following the chase.

Illegal taking of bear is a law enforcement issue. There will be some bear mortality during training seasons. Some hunters claim they need to protect their hounds from fighting bears. Others believe that hounds pulled repeatedly away from treed bears will be ruined; they require a bear shot out of the tree occasionally. At times, cubs may be shaken out of trees to hounds. If only a training season is open, but hunting seasons in neighboring states are open, bears may be shot and taken over the border to be tagged.

Most biological/enforcement problems with training seasons are small and isolated, however, and social acceptance becomes the overriding factor in determining whether a training season can be instituted.

EFFECTS OF HOUND HUNTING ON THE PUBLIC

Public perceptions of bear hunting with hounds are intensified because it is a highly visible sport. Hunting parties with several people, trucks, and baying dogs make a low profile impossible. Most people think that any bear chased is a dead bear and to watch three trucks full of hunters or hear hounds running aggravates them further. For the same reasons, some farmers or others suffering depredations enjoy hearing hounds run, thinking that a dead bear will result.

In settled areas, trespass is a major issue. Hunters may find and start a bear run on public land, a farmer’s field, or unposted areas, but the bear determines where the chase will go. At times it seems as though bears have an uncanny habit of running 10–15 km and treeing on the one small piece of posted property with an irate owner. The way houndsmen behave can have a direct effect on relations with other area landowners; some hunters insist that the bear is theirs to shoot, but others apologize and take their hounds to find another bear.

To some people, letting dogs harass wildlife is inhumane and not to be tolerated; others think that bear hounds run all wildlife, especially deer. The use of telemetry collars on hounds and other gadgetry can exacerbate a bad public image by perception of further hunter advantage over bears. Most problems with public perception of bear hunting with hounds stem from lack of knowledge of how the hunt is conducted and the bear’s advantage in the chase. The claim that there is no sport in shooting a bear from a tree is true; the sport is the extremely strenuous, often unsuccessful, excitement of the chase that results from all the effort of working with hounds to refine them into an effective pack.

Hunters using other methods, especially baiting, may resent hounds chasing bear in their area. Often, bait hunters place baits <100 m from roads that houndsmen drive to find tracks. It is inevitable that hounds will eventually chase a bear that is visiting baits near the road. This leads to accusations from bait hunters that houndsmen are using their baits to run from, which is not the case, but leads to ill feelings between the groups.

DISCUSSION

The hunting of bear with hounds has benefited somewhat from new technology, allowing hunters to be more mobile and more efficient in taking bear; however, the methodology has changed very little since hounds were first used for catching bears in colonial times.

Issues surrounding bear hunting with hounds, from a management standpoint, are partly biological but mostly social. Harvest pressure by
houndsmen depends on local tradition, commercial guiding, and the availability of other hunting methods. These factors must all be considered when judging the impact houndsmen have on bear harvests. The separate, but fully as important, social issues of land ownership, landowner attitudes, and public acceptance of hunting with hounds must be considered also when regulating the use of hounds on bear.

Hunting bear with hounds probably is the most physically demanding way to hunt bear and is definitely not a “sure bet.” Perhaps public education dealing with techniques and real success rates could help clear misconceptions. Landowner relations are more acute than with other hunting methods and good relations should be recognized by houndsmen as their primary responsibility.

LITERATURE CITED


