

## 2018 Bear Hunt

Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order directing the Department of Environmental Protection **(DEP) to close all public lands under the Department's jurisdiction to bear hunting for the 2018** season. This includes all State forests, State parks, State recreation areas, State historic sites, State Wildlife Management Areas and State natural areas.

Farmers may continue to apply for Depredation Permits on their private land through the Division of Fish & Wildlife. There is no limit to the number of depredating black bears that may be taken.

Farmers may also apply for a Special Farmer Black Bear Permit for the two segments of the 2018 Black Bear Season. Only the owner or lessee of a farm, who resides on the farm, or members of his/her immediate family, 10 years of age or older, who also resides on the farm may apply for this permit. There is a bag limit of one bear. There is no fee. The application deadline is September 1, 2018. Farmers who applied for this permit previously, do not need to reapply provided that their information and farm situation has not changed.

Farmers may want to consider seeking private individuals to hunt on their land since State lands are off limits for this season. The Landowner Liability Act provides a level of protection to landowners who allow access to their property, as long as there is no charge for that access.