



## End Hound Hunting of Maine Bears



A pack of hounds pursue a treed bear.

miles away where each of his dogs are, how quickly they're running, and in what direction. Hound hunters may use packs of up to 6 dogs who are released to chase frightened bears often for miles, across all types of habitat, including private property. Bears are poor distance runners and dogs pursue their target until in exhaustion the bear climbs a tree to escape or turns to confront the dog pack. If the bear fails to take refuge in a tree, a fight often ensues where the bear may be ripped apart by the pack of dogs and/or the dogs seriously injured or killed.

### HOUNDING VIOLATES TRADITIONAL HUNTING ETHICS

The practice of hounding is not necessary. Hunters often profess adherence to rules of fair chase, which require that animals have a reasonable chance to escape. There is nothing fair about a pack of trained hounds wearing high-tech collars running down a wild animal or shooting an exhausted bear off tree limbs. 84% of Mainers don't hunt, so hunting traditions depend on how non-hunters view the legitimacy of hunting practices.

### WHAT IS HOUNDING?

Each year, 12 percent, or about 300 of the bears taken legally in Maine are killed via "hounding." Hounding involves fitting dogs with high-tech radio or GPS collars that allow houndsmen to monitor the dogs' movement remotely. Some GPS devices are so sophisticated that they can tell a hunter from



Many houndsmen use high-tech, unsporting trackers that allow them to see the exact GPS coordinates of each dog in the pack

## HOUNDING IS COMPLETELY UNECESSARY

In Maine, only about 300 of the approximately 2,800 bears taken annually are killed with the aid of hounds. Fourteen of the states that allow bear hunting, including Montana, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, New York and Pennsylvania, conduct successful hunting seasons without resorting to the unfair and inhumane practice of hunting bears with hounds. Montana has the second largest hunting participation rate in the US. Its 2011 bear report states: "Montana offers world renowned, fair-chase black bear hunting, and black bears are a highly treasured big game animal in Montana... *Use of dogs to hunt black bears or grizzly bears was prohibited in Montana in 1921...The harvesting of cubs or females with cubs, was prohibited in 1947, followed by a prohibition of the use of baits in 1948. With these regulations in place, black bear hunting became more of a fair chase sport in Montana.*"



High-tech, unsporting tracking device used for hounding

## HOUNDS DISTURB AND DISTRESS WILDLIFE AND OFTEN TRESPASS ON PRIVATE AND PROTECTED PROPERTY

Since the pursuit of bears by hounds depends on releasing them to run across large tracts of land, hounds also pursue non-target species, including deer and ground-nesting birds, and animals who are endangered or protected. Off-leash and off-trail hounds are unpredictable and cause stress and flushing behavior in many wildlife species including deer, birds, and small mammals. The nature of hounding also causes significant conflicts between hound hunters and landowners, other types of hunters, and other outdoor recreationists.

## THERE ARE SERIOUS DOG WELFARE CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH HOUNDING

Dogs used for hounding are often regarded treated as hunting equipment rather than companions. Adult dogs are regularly bought and sold, often via the Internet. They are typically kept primarily outdoors, chained or kenneled with often little more than a barrel for shelter. Hounding also poses major risks for the hounds. Dogs can be injured or killed during the chase and confrontations with the bear. Dogs may be struck by vehicles, die as a result of dehydration, or be abandoned at local animal shelters. Some houndsmen may keep their dogs hungry to encourage their prey drive which is why hunting dogs are often underweight. Because houndsmen often have so many dogs, they may cut corners and perform their own veterinary care. In online forums dedicated to the sport, one can find horrifying accounts of at-home veterinary procedures performed by unlicensed hound hunters.