

Bagging a Grizzly



It's fall hunting season in British Columbia. Hunters have permits to kill wild animals such as deer and moose. But one hunt is very controversial – the hunt for grizzly bears. Should people be allowed to shoot these big bears? Many don't think so.

Trophy hunting

Some people hunt for food. They fill their freezers with meat for the winter. Others hunt for sport. They pay thousands of dollars to guides who help them shoot the animals. The goal is to bag a really big one.

They'll snap a photo of the kill. Maybe they'll take the head home to stuff and mount on a wall. They might keep the paws, too. The rest of the body is usually thrown away.

First Nations ban

Many B.C. First Nations are against trophy hunting.

"In my culture, if you're going to shoot something, you use all of it," says Doug Neasloss, Chief of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation.

In 2012, ten First Nations living along the central and northern B.C. coast banned bear hunting in their territory. The B.C. government doesn't support the ban. However, the First Nations say they will do whatever it takes to stop the hunters.

Others against the hunt

Many conservation groups have also spoken out against the grizzly hunt. They don't think that the bear population is healthy enough to allow hunting.

Besides, they say, it's just not right to kill animals for the thrill of it. The hunt doesn't even make sense economically. People come from around the world to view and photograph the bears. They are worth more alive than dead.

The government's viewpoint

According to the B.C. government, the province is home to about 15,000 grizzly bears. That's one-fourth of all the grizzlies in North America.

Grizzly hunting is allowed in 65 percent of the province. About 300 bears are killed each year. That's about two percent of the bear population. The government says these numbers show the hunt is **sustainable**.

It also brings benefits to B.C. Most hunters come from outside the province or the country. They are big spenders. That money makes it possible for hunting guides to earn a living.

Outrage

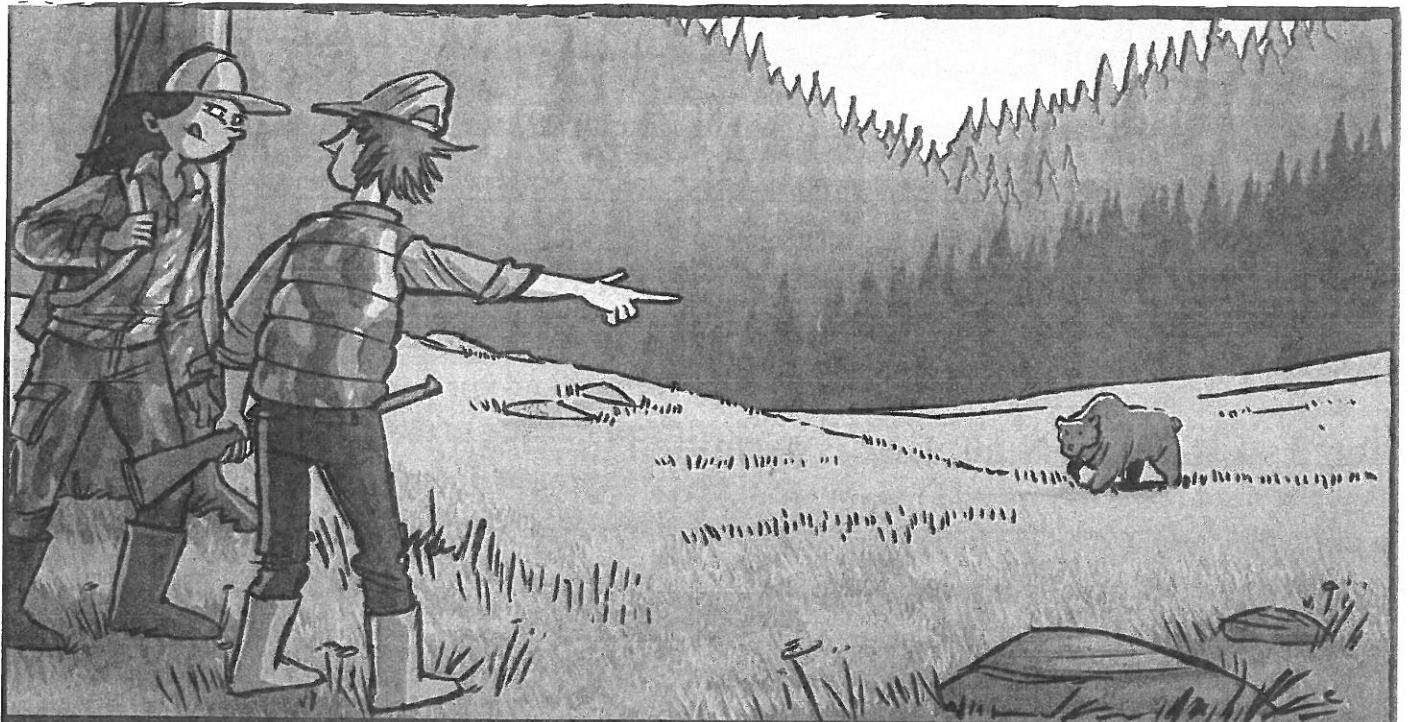
Still, calls to stop the hunt are increasing. Environmentalist David Suzuki says trophy hunting is **barbaric** and wasteful. He also thinks the government should respect the coastal First Nations ban.

Sustainable means not harmful to the population as a whole.
Barbaric means extremely violent and cruel.



"It's time to... end the grizzly hunt," he says.

For what reasons are you in favour of the grizzly hunt? For what reasons are you against it?



Grizzly hunting is banned in Alberta. In the United States, only the state of Alaska allows it.