

HUNTERS ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A FIRST PREMOLAR TOOTH FROM EACH BLACK BEAR THAT THEY KILL.

A person who kills a bear shall submit a first premolar tooth to the Division of Natural Resources by January 31 of the year following the kill. The tooth should be secured to a card along with a label with the name and address of the hunter, date of kill, weapon used, whether dogs were used to kill the bear, county of kill and the game tag number, and either mailed or delivered to a DNR District Office or the DNR Elkins Operation Center.

Locating the tooth

The first premolar teeth are located immediately behind the canine teeth (largest, sharpest teeth). There are four first premolar teeth (two on top, two on bottom) and any of those four teeth will meet the mandatory tooth submission requirement.

The tip of the black knife blade in the photographs is pointing to two of the first premolar teeth. The photo on the left shows the first upper premolar (one on each side of the jaw). The photo on the right shows the first lower premolar (one on each side of the jaw). The tooth is very small and can be easily broken when trying to remove it from the jaw.



First upper premolar



First lower premolar

In order for the tooth to be used for aging purposes, it must be unbroken. If you break a tooth trying to remove it from the jaw, there are three others that can be submitted. Hunters are encouraged to remove two or more teeth from their bear in the event that a tooth is lost in the mail. The skull of your bear will not be used in any mount (half mount, full mount, rug) that you have made and removing these teeth will not damage the skull itself.

First premolar tooth after extraction showing a complete unbroken tooth with root intact.



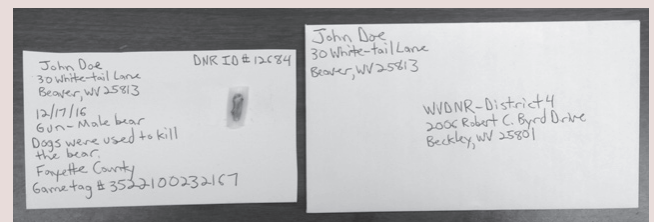
Removing the tooth

The first premolar teeth are most easily extracted when the bear is freshly killed (not frozen). Hunters are encouraged to remove the tooth (or teeth) as soon as the bear is killed and before the skull and hide are frozen. In addition, hunters are reminded that the tooth from their bear must be received by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources by January 31 of the year following the kill.

The easiest way to remove a first premolar tooth is to use a knife with a wide blade. Cut the skin around the tooth (gum). Then, place the back of the knife blade (the unsharpened side) against the large canine tooth and the sharpened edge against the first premolar tooth. Use the back of the knife blade (the unsharpened side) and the canine tooth for leverage to roll the first premolar tooth out of the bear's jaw. Go to WVDnr.gov to watch a video about how to remove a bear's first premolar tooth.

Submitting the tooth

Hunters may mail or deliver the tooth from their bear to any DNR District Office or the DNR Elkins Operations Center (mailing information can be found on the inside of the front cover of the Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary). If mailing a tooth, hunters can get a pre-addressed envelope provided by the DNR at all District offices and the Elkins Operations Center.



Example of properly labeled bear tooth

If hunters do not have an envelope provided by DNR, the tooth should be secured to a card along with a label with the name and address of the hunter, date of kill, weapon used, whether dogs were used to kill the bear, county of kill, DNR ID number and game tag number. The card with the tooth attached should then be placed in an envelope and either mailed or delivered to a DNR District Office or the DNR Elkins Operation Center by January 31 of the year following the kill.