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Special black bear hunt scheduled for Capitol State Forest

Black bears are chomping -- and killing -- a lot of Douglas fir trees in the Capitol State Forest, so hunters will whittle down the bear population during special hunts this spring.

Fifty hunters will get special permits to go after bears in the Game Management Unit 663 part of Capitol Forest.

All told, hunters can apply for 295 permits to hunt black bears in five different parts of western Washington.

Bears fresh out of hibernation peel off the tree bark to get to a layer of sugar. Bears like Douglas firs that are 15 to 20 years old. The hunt starts on April 15 and runs through June 15. Hunters must apply for a special permit to hunt the bears.

The state Department of Natural Resources -- which manages Capitol State Forest -- asked for the special hunt because bears are ravaging Douglas fir trees in parts of the forest, said spokeswoman Jane Chavey.

I'll have more about this hunt in Saturday's newspaper and online.

Hunters must buy a special permit application and a 2008 hunting license that includes bear hunting by midnight on March 13. Applications for the special hunts can be submitted online at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/> or by telephone at 1-877-945-3492. Applications must have a correct hunt choice number.