



Public Hearings

Applying to 2012–2013
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping Seasons



September 2011

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

www.ncwildlife.org

State of North Carolina

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**Department of
Environment and Natural Resources**

Dee Freeman, Secretary

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

(as of August 1, 2011)

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☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1701, (919) 707-0010

Thank you for attending this public hearing. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appreciates the investment of your time here to show your concern for fish and wildlife programs in North Carolina. We welcome your opinions and suggestions about these programs.

All state regulatory agencies must follow certain procedures that govern how rules are adopted under the Administrative Procedure Act. Public notice is required and proposed regulations are published in the *North Carolina Register*. A lengthy comment period follows, which includes these public hearings. These procedures are designed to give the proposed regulations wide public exposure and to offer the public opportunities to respond with support, opposition or suggestions.

For fish and wildlife regulations, this process begins at the previous year's hearings and continues throughout the year. We consider all suggestions presented to us during the past year as starting points for these proposed regulations. As a result, the proposals presented in this document are a reflection of public, staff and committee input. The commissioners approved these proposals for publication in the *North Carolina Register* and for presentation at these public hearings.

In November 2011, after considering comments from the public and consulting with staff, the Wildlife Resources Commission will make final decisions on the proposed regulations. The rules that are adopted will then be available in the *N.C. Inland Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest* for 2012-2013. The *Regulations Digest* will be available on Aug. 1, 2012 from your licensing agent and on the NCWRC website at www.ncwildlife.org.

We appreciate your participation and look forward to hearing your comments. With your help, we will provide the best possible fish and wildlife programs for your enjoyment today and in the future.

Sincerely,

David W. Hoyle, Jr., Chairman
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

To Sportsmen Attending Regulations Public Hearings

This booklet is designed to assist those in attendance at the public hearings in the nine wildlife districts. It contains a brief description of the major changes that the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is proposing.

Hearing Procedures

For a schedule of hearings, see page 5, visit our website, www.ncwildlife.org or call the Wildlife Resources Commission.

Please review the proposals in this booklet when you arrive and complete the record form if you want to comment. During the hearing, a Commission official will ask for your comments, opinions or suggestions. Your comments are welcome, and each will be considered. In the interest of time and fairness to others who want to speak, please be concise. We ask that your comments on each proposed change be confined to the period allotted for discussions of that proposal. Adequate time to discuss each proposal will be allowed before moving to the next item.

After the proposed changes contained in this booklet are discussed, time will be allotted to discuss other matters of interest that you may want to present to the Commission for consideration. We earnestly solicit your input toward better ideas for wildlife regulations. We also ask you to remember that changing regulations in the N.C. Administrative Code can be a lengthy process. It often takes more than one year to change regulations to include your proposals. These public hearings are, however, the proper starting point for your suggestions.

What Happens Next?

A written record of all public comments will be compiled and reviewed by Commission staff and by the commissioners. Your recommendations, biological information from field surveys, harvest records, changes in habitat, fish and wildlife populations, breeding stocks, game lands use and other conditions that affect wildlife will be considered.

You are encouraged to speak at the public hearings or to write to the Commission, if you have recommendations. We will accept public input about changes to the fishing, hunting and trapping regulations until the close of the public comment period on Oct. 1. You can also comment on regulation proposals during the comment period on the Commission website, www.ncwildlife.org.

The Part that Hearings Play

The Commission has been charged with managing North Carolina's wildlife resources since 1947. Setting forth rules is one means by which we manage those resources to serve the recreational and economic interests of the state's citizens. We rely on the public's cooperation and assistance in this endeavor. Thus, we urge you to participate in these public hearings and to submit your opinions, either verbally or in writing, to the staff of the Commission.

Schedule for the 2011 Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Public Hearings

Before you make final plans to attend, check the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission website for current updates, including weather-related rescheduling, at www.ncwildlife.org.

Hearing Time: 7 p.m.

Date	District	City	Location
Tue., Sept. 6	4	Dublin	Bladen Community College
Wed., Sept. 7	5	Graham	Alamance County Courthouse
Thu., Sept. 8	6	Norwood	South Stanly High School
Tue., Sept. 13	8	Morganton	Morganton Municipal Auditorium
Wed., Sept. 14	9	Clyde	Haywood Community College
Thu., Sept. 15	7	Wilkesboro	The John A. Walker Center, Wilkes Community College
Tue., Sept. 20	1	Edenton	Swain Auditorium
Wed., Sept. 21	2	New Bern	Craven County Courthouse
Thu., Sept. 22	3	Rocky Mount	Brown Auditorium, Nash Community College
Wed., Sept. 28	Statewide	Raleigh	Centennial Campus Auditorium, NCWRC Headquarters*

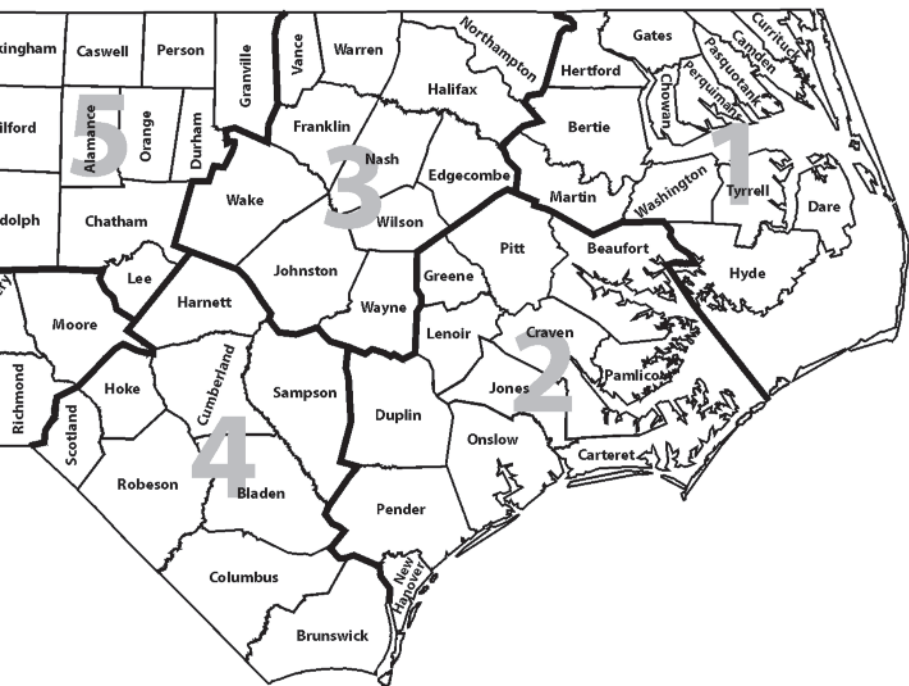
*The purpose of the Raleigh public hearing is to receive comments on proposed changes to falconry permitting rules only.

Get N.C. Wildlife Update—news including season dates, bag limits, legislative updates and more—delivered to your Inbox from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Go to www.ncwildlife.org/enews.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Districts



Report Wildlife Violations
Toll-Free Number
800-662-7137
In the Raleigh area, call: 919-707-0040



Proposed Changes in Fishing Regulations for 2012–2013

The following changes in the statewide fishing regulations are proposed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Game Fish

Trout

- F1. Cedar Cliff Lake (Jackson County)**—Classify this 146-acre lake as Hatchery-Supported Trout Waters.
- F2. Catawba River (McDowell County)**—Classify 0.6 mile of this stream as Delayed-Harvest Trout Waters.
- F3. Elk Creek (Wilkes County)**—Classify 1.5 miles of this stream as Delayed-Harvest Trout Waters.
- F4. Shawneehaw Creek (Avery County)**—Classify 0.5 mile of this stream as Wild Trout Waters.
- F5. Laurel Creek (Watauga County)**—Classify 0.3 mile of this stream as Catch-and-Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters.
Justification: Proposals F1–F5 provide additional public mountain trout fishing opportunities under the Hatchery-Supported, Delayed-Harvest, Wild, and Catch-and-Release/Artificial Lures Only designations.
- F6. Little River (Alleghany County)**—Reclassify the upper 2.5 miles of this stream from Hatchery-Supported to Delayed-Harvest Trout Waters.
Justification: Proposal F6 will increase the diversity of trout fishing opportunities in the local area and was requested by the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County.
- F7. Big Horse Creek (Ashe County)**—Reclassify the lower 2.5 miles of this stream from Hatchery-Supported to Delayed-Harvest Trout Waters.
Justification: Proposal F7 will increase the diversity of trout fishing opportunities in the local area and was requested by the Town of Lansing.
- F8. Elk Creek (Watauga County)**—Clarify the boundaries of the Hatchery-Supported Trout Waters section of this stream adding approximately 2.0 miles.
Justification: Proposal F8 will establish new boundaries for this section of Elk Creek since the current upper boundary is poorly described and the lower boundary no longer exists.

F9. North Toe River (Avery County)—Divide the Hatchery-Supported Trout Waters on this stream into an upper and lower section and remove 10.1 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F9 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation from a section of the North Toe River located on private property with limited public fishing access.

F10. Long Creek (Graham County)—Remove 4.2 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F10 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation on private property with limited public fishing access.

F11. Little Hungry River (Henderson County)—Remove 5.9 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F11 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation on private property with limited public fishing access. In addition, fingerling stockings have been unsuccessful in establishing a fishery, and trout were not collected during recent biological surveys.

F12. Little Creek (Madison County)—Remove 2.0 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F12 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation on private property with limited public fishing access.

F13. Mill Creek (Madison County)—Remove 2.4 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters and reclassify the section on game lands as Wild Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F13 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation on private lands with limited public fishing access. The portion of Mill Creek located on game lands will be managed under Wild Trout Waters classification due to the presence of a self-sustaining wild rainbow trout population.

F14. Cane Creek (Mitchell County)—Remove 2.7 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F14 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation on private lands with limited public fishing access. The portion of Cane Creek designated as Mountain Heritage Trout Waters will remain Delayed-Harvest Trout Waters.

F15. French Broad River (Transylvania County)—Remove 10.3 miles of this stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F15 will remove the Public Mountain Trout Waters designation on private lands with limited public fishing access.

Striped Bass

F16. Lakes Rhodhiss, Hickory, and Lookout Shoals—Establish an exception to the general statewide limits for striped bass and their hybrids by increasing the minimum size limit from 16 to 20 inches, removing the two-fish exception to the minimum size limit, and reducing the daily creel limit from eight to four fish in combination.

Justification: Proposal F16 increases the minimum length limit and reduces the daily creel limit in order to increase the number of large fish in the population and distribute harvest among more anglers.

F17. B. Everett Jordan Reservoir—Modify the exception to the general statewide minimum size limit for striped bass and their hybrids by increasing the minimum size limit from 20 to 24 inches. The daily creel limit will remain four in combination.

Justification: Proposal F17 will provide additional protection for striped bass 20 to 24 inches in length in order to increase the number of older fish in the population and improve the size and quality of fish available for anglers to catch.

Black Bass

F18. General Statewide Limit—Increase the general statewide minimum size limit for smallmouth and spotted bass from 12 to 14 inches, allowing two fish within the five-fish daily creel to be less than 14 inches. The daily creel limit for largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass will remain five fish in combination.

Justification: Proposal F18 will simplify regulations for anglers by making the general statewide minimum size limit consistent for black bass including largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass.

F19. Public Mountain Trout Waters and waters in and west of Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, and Polk counties—Remove the exception to the general statewide minimum size limit for black bass by increasing the minimum size limit from 12 to 14 inches, allowing two fish within the five-fish daily creel to be less than 14 inches. The daily creel limit for black bass will remain five fish in combination.

Justification: Proposal F19 will simplify regulations for anglers by making the minimum size limit for black bass in western North Carolina consistent with the general statewide limit.

F20. Lakes Cammack (Alamance County) and Holt (Granville County)—Establish an exception to the general statewide limits for black bass by removing the minimum size limit and the two-fish exception to the minimum size limit, increasing the daily creel limit from five to 10 fish, and establishing that no more than two fish greater than 14 inches may be possessed.

Justification: Proposal F20 will allow for increased harvest of largemouth bass less than 14 inches, which have become severely overcrowded in these lakes.

F21. Randleman Reservoir—Modify the exception to the general statewide limits for black bass by allowing two fish within the five-fish daily creel to be less than 14 inches and establishing that no more than one fish greater than 20 inches may be possessed. The daily creel limit for black bass will remain five fish in combination.

Justification: Proposal F21 will protect fish larger than 20 inches and allow them to remain in the reservoir while focusing the harvest on fish between 14 and 20 inches to reduce competition and allowing the limited harvest of largemouth bass smaller than 14 inches to prevent overcrowding.

American Shad

F22. Neuse River—Establish an exception to the general statewide daily creel limit for American and hickory shad by reducing the possession limit of American shad in inland fishing waters of the Neuse River and its tributaries to one fish per day within the 10-fish daily creel for American and hickory shad in combination.

Justification: Proposal F22 will reduce the harvest of American shad in the Neuse River. The abundance of American shad in the Neuse River is currently very low, and the population contains very few older fish. N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries and Wildlife Resources Commission biologists are developing an American Shad Sustainable Fishery Plan as required by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and this proposal will comply with the goals proposed for that plan.

Nongame Fish

F23. Catfish—For waters which are intensively stocked and managed for catfish and located on game lands, on other Commission-owned property, or on the property of a cooperator including waters within the Community Fishing Program, clarify that channel, white, or blue catfish may only be taken legally by hook and line and the daily creel limit is six fish in combination. The affected waters will be identified by posting instead of being listed in the N.C. Administrative Code.

Justification: Proposal F23 is an administrative change to clarify the exception to the general statewide limits for catfish in waters which are intensively stocked and managed for catfish and to provide that the affected waters will be posted.

F24. Grass Carp—Add Lake Tillery to the list of reservoirs where possession of grass carp is prohibited, except those legally taken with bow and arrow.

Justification: Proposal F24 will protect grass carp in Lake Tillery where they are stocked to control invasive aquatic vegetation (hydrilla).

Other

F25. Crossbow and arrow—Allow the take of nongame fishes with crossbow and arrow from all inland fishing waters other than impounded waters located on the Sandhills Game Land and designated Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Proposal F25 will simplify regulations by making the use of a crossbow consistent for fishing and hunting. In July 2010, crossbow became a legal hunting method that may be used by licensed hunters anytime bow-and-arrow hunting is allowed.

F26. Primary Nursery Areas—Classify the following as primary nursery areas:

- Eastham Creek, a tributary to the Pamlico River;
- Smith Creek, a tributary to the Northeast Cape Fear River;
- and 11 tributaries to the Neuse River including Core Creek, Pinetree Creek, Green's Thorofare, Grinnel Creek, Little Swift Creek, Turkey Quarter Creek, Village Creek, Taylor Creek, unnamed tributary (Kidney Creek), unnamed tributary (35° 15.464'N – 77° 13.681'W), and unnamed tributary (The Gut).

Justification: Proposal F26 will provide additional protection for these tributary creeks, which function as spawning and nursery habitat for estuarine and anadromous fishes. These waters are designated in coordination with N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

Proposed Changes in Hunting and Trapping Regulations for 2012–2013

The following changes in the statewide hunting, game land management, captive cervid, permit and falconry regulations are proposed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Deer

- H1.** Increase the either-sex deer season from conservative to moderate in Polk County.
Justification: The overall deer population has increased on private lands in Polk County and the reported deer harvest has increased over 300% in the past decade. The increase to a moderate either-sex season will give more opportunity to deer hunters, and it is a level of harvest the local population can sustain.

Bear

H2. Lengthen the bear hunting season (hunting with dogs and still hunting, unless prohibited by local law) in Greene, Halifax, Lenoir, Martin, Northampton, and Pitt counties. Currently, Greene, Lenoir and Pitt counties are open for one week in November. The Commission proposes to add two weeks in December to their season. Currently, Halifax, Martin and Northampton counties are open for one week in November and three days in December. This proposal would extend the December segment of the season from three days to two weeks. The proposed season for all six of these counties is from the second Monday in November to the following Saturday and the third Monday after Thanksgiving to the fifth Saturday after Thanksgiving. If the Commission adopts these changes, the 2012-2013 bear season dates for these counties will be Nov. 12 to 17 and Dec. 10 to 22.

Justification: Bears are well-established in these counties and expanding westward into the Piedmont. Lengthening the season in these counties would:

- increase bear hunting opportunities,
- improve management of the bear population,
- potentially slow further expansion into the Piedmont, and
- reduce hunting season complexity by consolidating some of the coastal bear seasons.

H3. Open a bear hunting season (hunting with dogs and still hunting, unless prohibited by local law) in Edgecombe, Harnett, Johnston, Nash, Stokes, Vance, Warren, Wayne and Wilson counties. In addition, change the dates of the bear season in Yadkin, Iredell, Alexander, and Catawba counties. The proposed season for all of these counties is from the second Monday in November to the following Saturday and the third Monday after Thanksgiving to the fifth Saturday after Thanksgiving. If the Commission adopts these changes, the 2012-2013 bear season dates for these counties will be Nov. 12 to 17 and Dec. 10 to 22.

Justification: Bears occur in these counties, but the population is not well-established. Due to the highly fragmented habitat and high human populations, one of the Commission's bear management goals is to keep bear populations in these Piedmont counties low. Hunting in these counties is an approach to achieving this goal.

H4. Open the portions of Cleveland, Burke and Surry counties that are currently closed to bear hunting. The proposed season (hunting with dogs and still hunting, unless prohibited by local law) for these counties would be from the Monday on or nearest Oct. 15 to the Saturday before Thanksgiving and the third Monday after Thanksgiving to Jan. 1. If the Commission adopts these changes, the 2012-2013 bear season dates for these counties in their entirety will be Oct. 15 to Nov. 17 and Dec. 10 to Jan. 1.

Justification: The expansion of the bear hunting season in these counties would:

- increase bear hunting opportunities,
- improve management of the bear population, and
- slow further expansion into the Piedmont.

Crows and Coyotes

H5. Allow electronic calls for take of crows and coyotes.

Justification: House Bill 432, passed by the 2011 session of the General Assembly, gives the Commission the authority to adopt rules to allow electronic calls for any wild animal or wild bird. The bill language that gives that authority to the Commission also eliminates the provision in statute that allows hunters to use electronic calls for crows and coyotes. This proposal will establish a permanent rule to replace the statute so that hunters will be able to continue using electronic calls for crows and coyotes. *Proposed temporary rules will allow this practice until the permanent rules are in effect.*

Feral Swine

H6. Add feral swine to the Commission's hunting rules with no closed season and no bag limit.

Justification: The proposed no closed season and no bag limit for feral swine (hogs) will allow for maximum harvest of this non-native species. As of Oct. 1, feral swine includes any free-ranging hogs in the state, including those in the six westernmost counties of the state, which used to be considered wild boar. House Bill 432, passed by the 2011 session of the General Assembly changed the definitions of wild boar and feral swine in order to allow the Commission more flexibility to manage all free-ranging hogs. Under the new definitions, hunters will have to report their harvest of wild boar until Oct. 1 when the new law takes effect. Beginning on Oct. 1, the legal status of wild boar will change to feral swine (hogs) in North Carolina, and hunters will not be required to report harvest. Also beginning on Oct. 1, anyone hunting feral swine (hogs) must wear hunter orange and have a hunting license, unless that person is otherwise license-exempt. *Proposed temporary rules will establish the open season until the permanent rules are in effect.*

Dogs

H7. Allow hunters to use dogs on Sundays on private lands in locations and during seasons where the use of dogs is currently allowed the other six days of the week in and west of the following counties or parts of counties: Rockingham; Guilford; that part of Alamance and Orange lying south of Interstate Highway 85; Chatham; that part of Wake lying south of N.C. Highway 98; Lee; Randolph; Montgomery; Stanly; Union; and that part of Anson lying west of N.C. Highway 742. The practice is already allowed east of these counties (or parts thereof), except where prohibited by local law. Also, allow falconers to use dogs on private lands and on game lands on Sundays.

Justification: According to North Carolina General Statutes §113-291.5, the Commission may not prohibit the use of dogs in hunting on private lands during open seasons east of the line described above. Since 2010, unless a local law prohibits the use of dogs for hunting, dogs have been legal to use along with archery equipment on Sundays on private lands during the open seasons. In the area under control of the Commission—in and west of Rockingham; Guilford; that part of Alamance and Orange lying south of Interstate Highway 85; Chatham; that part of Wake lying south of N.C. Highway 98; Lee; Randolph; Montgomery; Stanly; Union; and that part of Anson lying west of N.C. Highway 742—all hunting with dogs is prohibited on Sundays because it is not specifically listed as a legal manner of take in the Commission's rule. This proposal would allow for consistent use of dogs on Sunday statewide. In addition, the use of dogs for falconry was omitted when falconry on Sunday was legalized.

Weapons

H8. Allow individuals who possess a valid concealed handgun permit to carry that handgun on game lands, conservation areas, boating access areas and fishing access areas, except for these game lands (and any boating or fishing access areas located on them) exempted at the request of the landowner: Buckhorn, Harris, Sutton Lake, Mayo, Hyco, Lee, Chatham, Pee Dee River north of U.S. 74, Butner-Falls, Jordan, Vance, Kerr Scott, Dupont, Bladen Lakes and that portion of R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell that is north of U.S. 158 and east of N.C. 119. Also, allow hunters who possess a valid concealed handgun permit to carry that handgun while dog training and during the deer archery and muzzleloader seasons on both public and private lands. Anyone carrying a concealed handgun must obey the permit requirements.

Justification: Under Commission land use restrictions, firearms may not be carried on game lands when the season on game animals or game birds is closed. This proposal would add concealed handguns to the current list of exceptions to that restriction. For other Commission lands, loaded firearms are not allowed and this proposal would exempt handguns carried under a concealed handgun permit. This proposal would make Commission rules align with state law.

H9. Allow individuals to use a .22 caliber rimfire pistol to dispatch a wounded deer during the deer archery and muzzleloader seasons on both public and private lands.

Justification: Under current rules, it is unlawful to carry any type of firearm during the deer archery season and any pistol during the deer muzzleloader season. This proposal would allow hunters to carry a .22 caliber rimfire pistol to dispatch a wounded deer in accordance with state law as amended by House Bill 432, passed by the 2011 session of the General Assembly.

Importation of Animal Parts

H10. Allow the Executive Director or his designee to waive the rule banning the importation of a cervid carcass or carcass part from any state where Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) occurs for a deer or elk legally harvested within 20 miles of the North Carolina state line.

Justification: Because Virginia is a CWD-positive state, whole deer may not be brought into North Carolina from Virginia. Only meat that is cut and wrapped, quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached, meat that has been boned out, caped hides, cleaned skull plates, antlers, cleaned teeth and finished taxidermy products may cross the state line. This restriction is burdensome on landowners who have land along the state line, hunt clubs that lease in both states, and other hunters who hunt very close to the border. This proposal would allow hunters to apply to the Executive Director for a waiver from this rule and bring a whole deer into North Carolina from a CWD-positive state as long as the animal was harvested within 20 miles of the state line and the Executive Director is able to safeguard the wildlife resources in North Carolina.

Game Lands

H11. Clarify what wildlife resources and other materials may be possessed on or removed from Commission-owned game lands without any type of written permission or license and which ones would require written permission. The Commission proposes a new rule that allows, without written permission, removal of:

- Any wildlife or fisheries resources legally taken under a valid hunting, trapping, fishing or falconry license.
- Edible plants or plant parts for personal consumption. This does not include plants on a state or federal protected list.
- Insects, worms or other invertebrates collected as fish bait for personal use. This does not include invertebrates on a state or federal protected list. Any fish bait collected may not be sold.
- Miscellaneous amounts of animal parts, plant parts not removed from live plants, and other materials. These items may not be collected for commercial purposes or sale.
- Litter and road kill animals, except when specifically prohibited.

Commission land users would need to get written permission (e.g., permit, agricultural agreement, sales agreement, etc.) to remove any wildlife resources for which legal take is not allowed (or which is not taken) under a valid hunting, trapping, fishing, or falconry license; such as eggs; nests; non-edible plants; or significant quantities of pine straw, timber, water, soil, rocks and other materials. Written permission would be required from the removal of all amphibians and reptiles, which is the current policy.

Justification: Currently in the Commission's rules the removal of animals, plants and materials is regulated by two statements: 1) "*There shall be no removal of any plants or parts thereof, or other materials, without the written authorization of the landowner,*" and 2) "*No live wild animals or wild birds shall be removed from any game land.*" These two statements are insufficient to describe the variety of ways the public interacts with Commission property. Furthermore, the term "other materials" is vague, leading to uneven enforcement. The new rule aims to conserve the state's wildlife resources while providing fairness among users.

H12. Require a permit to enter Hunting Creek Swamp Waterfowl Refuge (HCSWR) in Davie County.

Justification: Commission rules currently prohibit hunting, fishing, and trapping on HCSWR but not other activities. HCSWR has been posted with "entry prohibited" signs since its purchase in the late 1980s. This change will ensure consistency between "on the ground" signage at HCSWR and Commission rules.

H13. Increase fees for the use of the J. Robert Gordon Sandhills Field Trial Grounds located on the Sandhills Game Land from the current fee of \$25 to \$75 for use of the club house only and from \$100 to \$200 for the use of the club house and field trial grounds.

Justification: Current cost estimates for operating the facility (not including staff time) in the fiscal year 2009-2010 were \$14,025. Revenues generated by user fees during the same time period were \$9,000. The cost in maintenance, utilities and garbage disposal for the club house and field trial grounds has gone up without a corresponding fee increase in over 20 years. Proposed increases will help pay for the daily operational cost of running the facilities.

H14. Allow additional archery and muzzleloader deer hunting on Sandhills Game Land by opening an archery season on the third Monday after Thanksgiving through Jan. 1, except on the J. Robert Gordon Sandhills Field Trial Grounds.

Justification: This proposal allows additional days of either-sex deer harvest on Sandhills Game Land. The 2009-10 antlerless harvest for Sandhills was 23%. More opportunity to harvest either-sex deer will help reach a targeted 50% antlerless harvest.

H15. Increase the either-sex deer season on Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land from the conservative to moderate.

Justification: Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land supports a well-established deer herd with population estimates averaging 30-44 deer per square mile. Changing the either-sex deer season from conservative to moderate will provide more opportunity for hunters to harvest antlerless deer while sustaining the population.

H16. Increase the either-sex deer season on Neuse River Game Land from moderate to maximum.

Justification: Neuse River Game Land supports a well-established deer herd. Anticipated either-sex harvest should fall within acceptable levels, and this proposal would make the deer hunting season on the game land match the county season.

H17. Open the bear season at Chowan Swamp Game Land on the first three hunting days during the November bear season and the first three days of the second week of the December bear season in order to be consistent with other game lands in District 1.

Justification: Currently the December segment of the bear season on this game land is the first three days of the first week of the December segment. Changing to the first three days of the second week of the December segment will make this season consistent with other game lands in District 1, thereby reducing confusion among hunters without negatively impacting the bear population.

H18. Open the raccoon, opossum and bobcat hunting season in the Sherwood and Harmon Den Bear sanctuaries in Haywood County.

Justification: The raccoon, opossum and bobcat hunting season was closed in the Sherwood and Harmon Den Bear sanctuaries due to a raccoon stocking program that occurred in the 1980s. Since that time raccoon, opossum and bobcat populations have grown sufficient in numbers to allow hunting.

H19. Make waterfowl hunting from designated Disabled Sportsmen blinds on Catfish Lake Waterfowl Impoundment on the Croatan Game Land by permit only.

Justification: Croatan National Forest, with the assistance of Commission game land staff, has erected two disabled accessible waterfowl blinds on Catfish Lake Waterfowl Impoundment. Making the use of these blinds by permit only will enable the Commission to regulate their use and prevent conflicts between users.

H20. Remove text from the Commission's rule that references the disabled sportsman hunts on R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell, Dupont State Forest, Sandhills, Thurmond Chatham, and Toxaway game lands. Disabled sportsmen hunts will continue to be offered through the Permit Hunting Opportunities Program and in the Permit Hunting Opportunities in North Carolina guide.

Justification: All disabled sportsman hunts are now available through the Permit Hunting Opportunities Program. Removing the reference in the Commission's rule allows Commission staff to better respond to the needs and interests of disabled sportsmen for special hunting opportunities.

H21. Prohibit hunting and taking of fox squirrels on Rockfish Creek Game Land.

Justification: The landowner, The Nature Conservancy, is concerned about a possible decline in fox squirrels on the game land and has asked the Commission to prohibit hunting or otherwise taking fox squirrels.

Captive Cervids

H22. Establish captive cervid importation criteria for captive cervid licensees with Certified herds. Importation of all cervids would be prohibited from states/provinces/other countries with active Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Importation of white-tailed deer, white-tailed deer hybrids, Sika deer, red deer, elk, elk hybrids, moose or any other species of CWD-susceptible cervids will be allowed only from states/provinces/countries which have a license type, certification program or monitoring program that requires captive cervid facility owners to, at a minimum:

- submit for CWD testing all deceased animals over the age of 12 months,
- tag, tattoo or otherwise permanently mark all animals over the age of 12 months, and
- keep records of all acquisitions and all dispositions in the facility.

These requirements apply only to white-tailed deer, white-tailed deer hybrids, Sika deer, red deer, elk, elk hybrids, moose or any other species of CWD-susceptible cervid. The herd of origin for the requested cervid must be successfully participating in the state program. Fallow, Axis and muntjac deer and other non CWD-susceptible cervids will be eligible for importation if they came from a fenced facility and have been isolated from contact with CWD-susceptible cervids for the past five years. Non CWD-susceptible cervids that have been in contact with CWD-susceptible animals are subject to the same importation criteria as CWD-susceptible animals. These importation requirements do not apply to mule deer because they are prohibited by state law.

Justification: These standards provide for disease monitoring and control while allowing a significant degree of flexibility for importation locations.

H23. Amend the waiver rule to allow licensees with Certified herds the ability to apply for an importation waiver for cervids that do not meet the proposed importation criteria, except from states/provinces/other countries with CWD in wild cervids. Under the conditions of the proposed amendments, a licensee must document the following:

- the animal requested for import has not been in a facility with a CWD-positive animal within the five years prior to the importation request;
- the animal requested for import has never been in a facility quarantined for CWD; and
- no other animals in the herd of origin, or any other herd to which the requested animal has belonged, have been in a facility with a CWD-positive animal within the five years prior to the importation request.

Justification: The proposal increases the importation options for licensees with Certified herds.

H24. Allow for the issuance of new captive cervid licenses with controls in place to prohibit using a secondary license to expand a current facility. Require newly licensed facilities to have double-fencing. Allow transportation of cervids from N.C. Certified herds (5-year status) into these new facilities for the first six months after their construction.

Justification: After creation of the Captive Cervid Herd Certification Program, the captive cervid community requested that the Commission allow for the issuance of licenses to establish new facilities in which captive cervids are held. Double-fencing decreases the risk of contact between captive cervids and wild deer.

Permits

H25. Require people who possess permits to hold endangered or threatened species to maintain cages or facilities at the same standards as other captivity licensees.

Justification: This proposal will help enforcement officers ensure that endangered and threatened species held under special permit are kept in appropriate cages or facilities.

H26. Require landowners who receive a depredation permit for Canada geese that are causing damage to agricultural operations to report the number of geese taken.

Justification: In order for state wildlife agencies to participate in a Federal Depredation Order titled “Depredation Order for Resident Canada Geese at Agricultural Facilities,” the number of Canada geese taken must be reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) each year. The Commission needs permittees to provide accurate take numbers in order to fulfill the USFWS mandate.

Falconry

H27. Remove the extended season for take of squirrels by falconry.

Justification: The regular squirrel season extends to the end of February and overlaps with the extended season for falconry. Having the extended falconry season in the Commission’s rule is redundant.

H28. Allow the practice of falconry on Sundays on Three-Day-Per-Week game lands.

Justification: Because of current definitions in the North Carolina Administrative Code, falconry is allowed on Sundays on Six-Day-Per-Week game lands, but not Three-Day-Per-Week game lands. This proposal will resolve this discrepancy.

H29. Amend 12 current rules pertaining to falconry, repeal one and adopt two additional rules in order for the Commission to fully regulate falconry in North Carolina in accordance with a directive from the USFWS. The Commission proposes to adopt key falconry requirements as set forth by the USFWS including the eligible ages for Apprentice and General Falconers, expanding the list of species Apprentices can possess and allowing increased numbers of birds that all levels of falconers may possess.

Justification: As of Jan. 1, 2014, the USFWS will no longer issue permits to falconers to practice falconry. States must license and regulate their falconers using the federal standards for guidance, or else falconry will not be allowed in that state. States can be more restrictive than the federal standards, but not less so. Commission staff believe raptors can be managed appropriately in North Carolina using the federal standards, except for a few minor deviations. Full text of all the rules and a summary sheet are available upon request.

2012–2013 Season Dates

The Commission provides this table of upcoming season dates for planning purposes ONLY. Final season dates are published in the *2012-2013 Regulations Digest*, available Aug. 1, 2012.

Species	Open Dates
Bear	<p>Western Bear Season: Oct. 15, 2012–Nov. 17, 2012 and Dec. 10, 2012–Jan. 1, 2013 [if H3 is adopted, the western bear season will not include Alexander, Catawba, Iredell and Yadkin counties]</p> <p>Beaufort, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Dare, Hyde, Jones, Pasquotank, Tyrrell, and Washington counties: Nov. 12–17, 2012 and Dec. 10–22, 2012</p> <p>Bertie, Currituck, Gates, Hertford and Perquimans counties: Nov. 10–17, 2012 and Dec. 10–22, 2012</p> <p>Northampton, Halifax and Martin counties: Nov. 12–17, 2012 and Dec. 10–22, 2012 [if the Commission adopts H2]</p> <p>Southeastern Counties: Nov. 12, 2012–Jan. 1, 2013</p> <p>Brunswick and Columbus counties: Dec. 3–22, 2012</p> <p>Greene, Lenoir and Pitt counties: Nov. 12–17, 2012 and Dec. 10–22, 2012 [if the Commission adopts H2]</p> <p>Alexander, Catawba, Edgecombe, Harnett, Iredell, Johnston, Nash, Stokes, Vance, Warren, Wayne, Wilson and Yadkin counties: Nov. 12–17 and Dec. 10–22, 2012 [if the Commission adopts H3]</p>
Wild Turkey Spring Season <i>(bearded or male turkeys only)</i>	April 14, 2012–May 12, 2012 and April 13, 2013–May 11, 2013
Wild Turkey Youth-only Season <i>(bearded or male turkeys only)</i>	April 7, 2012 and April 6, 2013
Raccoon and Opossum	Oct. 15, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013
Squirrel	<p>Gray and Red Squirrel: Oct. 15, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013</p> <p>Fox Squirrel: Oct. 15–Dec. 31, 2012 in selected counties</p>
Rabbit	Nov. 17, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013
Quail	Nov. 17, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013
Grouse	Oct. 15, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013
Bobcat	Oct. 15, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013
Fox	See “Fox Season Hunting and Trapping Laws” publication at www.ncwildlife.org .
Crow	Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of each week between June 6, 2012 and Feb. 28, 2013, plus Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and July 4th.
Pheasant	Nov. 17, 2012–Feb. 1, 2013
Trapping	Dec. 1, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013 in and east of Hertford, Bertie, Martin, Pitt, Greene, Lenoir, Duplin, Pender and New Hanover counties Nov. 1, 2012–Feb. 28, 2013 in all other counties

Deer Seasons

Locations	Type of Season and Dates
Eastern	Bow and Arrow: Sept. 8–28, 2012 Muzzleloading: Sept. 29–Oct. 12, 2012 Gun: Oct. 13, 2012–Jan. 1, 2013
Central	Bow and Arrow: Sept. 8, 2012–Oct. 26, 2012 Muzzleloading: Oct. 27, 2012–Nov. 9, 2012 Gun: Nov. 10, 2012–Jan. 1, 2013
Northwestern	Bow and Arrow: Sept. 8, 2012–Nov. 2, 2012 Muzzleloading: Nov. 3–16, 2012 Gun: Nov. 17, 2011–Jan. 1, 2012
Western	Bow and Arrow: Sept. 10, 2012–Sept. 29, 2012 and Oct. 15–Nov. 17, 2012 Muzzleloading: Oct. 1–13, 2012 Gun: Nov. 19, 2012–Dec. 8, 2012
Gun: Either-Sex Seasons	Introductory Season: Last open day of the applicable gun season. Conservative Season: Last six open days of the applicable gun season. Moderate Season: First six open days and last six open days of the applicable gun season. Maximum Season: All open days of the applicable gun season.
Urban Deer Season (open in participating cities only; see <i>Regulations Digest</i> for list and contact information)	Bow and Arrow Only: Jan. 14, 2012–Feb. 18, 2012 Jan. 12, 2013–Feb. 16, 2013
Dismal Swamp, Mackay Island, Pocosin Lakes and Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuges (and Currituck if H1 is adopted)	Gun Either-Sex: Sept. 8, 2012–Jan. 1, 2013
Sunny Point, Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point, Fort Bragg and Camp Mackall Military Installations	Gun Either-Sex: Oct. 13, 2012–Jan. 1, 2013
Belews Creek	Special Either-Sex Youth Hunt: Oct. 6, 2012 (<i>permit only</i>)
Mountain Island State Forest	Special Either-Sex Youth Hunt: Oct. 20, 2012 (<i>permit only</i>)

Helpful Phone Numbers

Big Game Harvest Reporting	800-I-GOT-ONE (800-446-8663)
Boating Access Areas	919-707-0150
Boating Safety Course Information	919-707-0031
Boater Safety Education–Replacement Certificates	888-248-6834
Conservation Education Division	919-707-0170
Enforcement Operations Office	919-707-0030
Engineering Division	919-707-0150
Hunter Safety Course Information	919-707-0031
Hunter Safety Education–Replacement Certificates	888-248-6834
Inland Fisheries Division	919-707-0220
License Information	888-248-6834
License Purchases by Credit Card	888-248-6834
Marine Fisheries	252-726-7021 800-682-2632
Migratory Bird Hunting Dates & Shooting Hours	800-675-0263
Personnel Officer	919-707-0101
Regulation Information	919-707-0030
Wildlife Calendar	866-945-3746
<i>Wildlife in North Carolina</i> Magazine/N.C. Wild Store Products	866-945-3746
Vessel Registration and Titling	800-628-3773
Violations Reporting	800-662-7137 919-707-0040 in the Raleigh area
.....	800-662-7137vTTY*

*(TTY machine available for people with hearing disabilities)

Wildlife Management Division 919-707-0050

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Division of Inland Fisheries 919-707-0220
Division of Wildlife Management 919-707-0050

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