



Proposed Changes to Inland Fisheries Regulations for 2024-2025

Trout

- F1.** Remove the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters section on the Little River in Alleghany County and reclassify the lower 1.2-mile section from Delayed Harvest Trout Waters to Hatchery Supported Trout Waters. The new Hatchery Supported Trout Waters reach will be from 400 yards upstream of the S.R. 1128 bridge (marked by a sign on each bank) to the McCann Dam. This proposal will remove approximately 1.3 miles of water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The upper 1.3-mile section of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on the Little River is on private property, and angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing. The property owner has formally asked that the section be removed from Public Mountain Trout Waters. The remaining 1.2 miles of the section remain open to public access, so the upper boundary of the existing Hatchery Supported Trout Waters (located directly downstream) is being moved upstream to incorporate the remaining section.

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS

- F2.** Modify the lower boundary of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on Helton Creek in Ashe County. The new reach will be 900 yards upstream of S.R. 1372 bridge (marked by a sign on each bank) to a point adjacent to the intersection of N.C. 16 and S.R. 1536. This proposal will remove approximately 0.7 miles of water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: This section of Helton Creek is on private property, and most of the angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS

- F3.** Clarify that tributaries to the Hatchery Supported Trout Waters section of the West Fork Pigeon River in Haywood County on the Pisgah Game Land are classified as Wild Trout Waters. This proposal will not remove any water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The tributaries to this section of the West Fork Pigeon River have never been stocked and have been misidentified as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters in the North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC). This proposal clarifies that the tributaries are managed as Wild Trout Waters.

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS

- F4.** Remove the Wild Trout Waters section from the Avery County line to S.R. 1580 bridge on the Watauga River in Watauga County from Public Mountain Trout Waters. This proposal will remove approximately 4.0 miles of water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: This section of the Watauga River is on private property, and most angler access locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS

- F5.** Modify the lower boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on East Prong Roaring River in Wilkes County. The new reach will be from the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary to the Low Meadows Lane bridge. This proposal will remove approximately 0.7 miles of water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: This section of the East Prong Roaring River is on private property, and most angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS

- F6.** Reclassify the following waters from Wild Trout Waters/Natural Bait to Wild Trout Waters and remove the Wild Trout Waters/Natural Bait classification from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

- The game land portion of Bald Creek and its tributaries in Cherokee County
- The game land portion of Dockery Creek and its tributaries in Cherokee County
- The game land portion of Long Creek and its tributaries in Graham County
- The game land portion of the Chattooga River and its tributaries in Jackson and Macon counties
- The game land portion of Kimsey Creek and its tributaries in Macon County
- The game land portion of Park Creek and its tributaries in Macon County
- The game land portion of the North Fork French Broad River and its tributaries in Transylvania County
- The game land portion of the Thompson River and its tributaries in Transylvania County

This proposal will not remove any water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The Wild Trout/Natural Bait classification was intended to diversify angler opportunity and experience; however, bait anglers rarely use Wild Trout/Natural Bait streams. The classification never expanded regionally beyond District 9, is not requested by anglers, and unnecessarily adds complexity to Public Mountain Trout Waters regulations.

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS

15A NCAC 10C .0316 MOUNTAIN TROUT

Striped Bass and Hybrid Striped Bass (Bodie Bass)

- F7.** Modify the size limit for Striped Bass and its hybrids at Kerr Reservoir by prohibiting the possession of fish larger than 26 inches from October 1 through May 31. The minimum size limit will remain 20 inches and daily creel limit will remain two fish per day from October 1 through May 31. The daily creel limit of four fish per day and no size limit will remain from June 1 through September 30.

Justification: Per agreement, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VADWR) is the lead for fisheries management at Kerr Reservoir, and VADWR implemented the proposed change for the Virginia portion of Kerr Reservoir effective January 1, 2023. This proposal would implement the regulation in the North Carolina portion of the reservoir. The proposed change will provide additional protection for larger Striped Bass.

15A NCAC 10C .0314 STRIPED BASS

- F8.** Establish a 16-inch minimum size limit for Striped Bass and its hybrids at Farmer Lake. The daily creel limit will remain four fish.

Justification: The Commission has recently initiated annual stockings of hybrid Striped Bass at Farmer Lake to create a fishery. This proposed change would make regulations for hybrid Striped Bass at Farmer Lake consistent with other reservoirs across North Carolina that are stocked with hybrid Striped Bass.

15A NCAC 10C .0314 STRIPED BASS

- F9.** Remove the 16-inch minimum size limit for Striped Bass and its hybrids at Mountain Island Reservoir and Lake Thom-A-Lex. The general statewide regulation of a 20-inch minimum size limit and four fish daily creel will apply.

Justification: Striped Bass are no longer stocked in Mountain Island Reservoir due to poor growth and survival. Hybrid Striped Bass may be present in Mountain Island Reservoir through emigration from Lake Norman, but do not require more protection than what is already provided by the statewide regulation. Hybrid Striped Bass have not been stocked at Lake Thom-A-Lex since 2018 due to their high rate of emigration from the reservoir. Striped Bass are not present in Lake Thom-A-Lex. Removing these reservoir-specific regulations will alleviate angler confusion about species availability and simplify rules for anglers.

15A NCAC 10C .0314 STRIPED BASS

- F10.** Clarify in the NCAC that the season for taking and possessing Striped Bass and its hybrids is closed year-round in the Inland Fishing Waters of the Central/Southern Management Area. Waters covered include the Inland Fishing Waters of the Tar, Pungo, and Neuse rivers, and their tributaries.

Justification: This closure was initially implemented in March 2019 by proclamation. Maintaining the closure was recommended in Amendment 2 to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. The closure needs to be codified in the NCAC.

15A NCAC 10C .0314 STRIPED BASS

Largemouth Bass

- F11.** Establish no minimum size limit except that only two may be less than 14 inches for Largemouth Bass at Shearon Harris Reservoir. The daily creel limit will remain five fish.

Justification: Biological data collected over the past 15 years indicates that the current prohibited size range of 16 - 20 inches for Largemouth Bass has not worked as intended. Harvest of Largemouth Bass is low at Shearon Harris Reservoir and few, if any, Largemouth Bass less than 16-inches are being harvested. Low harvest has resulted in reduced overall average condition of Largemouth Bass. Increasing harvest of Largemouth Bass may help increase overall average condition and growth of fish greater than 16 inches.

15A NCAC 10C .0305 LARGEMOUTH BASS

American Shad

- F12.** Prohibit harvest of American Shad in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River basin upstream of Blewett Falls Dam and clarify existing language that prohibits harvest in Roanoke River Reservoirs upstream of Roanoke Rapids Dam. The proposal will not prohibit catch-and-release opportunities.

Justification: Duke Energy-Progress is required by its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license to provide upstream passage for American Shad at Blewett Falls Dam to help restore American Shad in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River basin. Initial testing of fishway operations is scheduled to begin spring 2024, and full-time operation is anticipated in spring 2025. Harvest restrictions are necessary to protect spawning American Shad passed upstream of the dam. In addition, the existing rule prohibiting harvest of American Shad in Roanoke Rapids Reservoir, Lake Gaston, and John H. Kerr Reservoir is intended to protect American Shad moved upstream of Roanoke Rapids Dam required by Dominion Energy's FERC license. Proposed changes to the current rule will clarify that American Shad shall not be harvested from all public fishing waters upstream of Roanoke Rapids Dam, which was the intent of the original rule. These changes will not prohibit catch-and-release opportunities.

15A NCAC 10C .0313 AMERICAN SHAD AND HICKORY SHAD

Crappie

- F13.** Remove the daily creel limit of 20 fish and the minimum size limit of 8-inches for Crappie in Ramseur Lake.

Justification: A 2019 assessment of Crappie in Lake Ramseur indicated slow growth and a stunted population evidenced by the abundance of smaller-sized yet older Crappie. Removing the creel and size limit will promote harvest and help to improve growth and body condition.

15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE

Muskellunge

- F14.** Prohibit fishing from March 1 through May 31 in the Pleasant Grove floodplain slough connected to the French Broad River, 0.25 miles upstream of S.R. 1205 (Etowah School Road) in Henderson County.

Justification: Closure of the Pleasant Grove slough to fishing during the spring would prevent targeted angling and the potential harvest of Muskellunge during their spawning period. Construction of the Pleasant Grove backwater slough was conducted specifically to restore

spawning and nursery areas for adult and juvenile Muskellunge to promote natural reproduction and recruitment of juvenile fish to the population. The French Broad River Muskellunge population currently has extremely limited to no natural reproduction or measurable recruitment. The population has been supported by hatchery produced Muskellunge since 1970.

15A NCAC 10C .0208 SPAWNING AREAS

Flounder

- F15.** Reduce the daily creel limit for Flounder from four fish to one fish. The 15-inch minimum size limit and the season for taking and possessing Flounder from September 1 through September 14 will remain.

Justification: According to North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries data, Flounder are overfished, and overfishing is occurring. The reduction in the daily creel limit from four fish to one fish will reduce harvest and potentially end overfishing of the population. The proposed change is consistent with the daily creel limit established in Coastal Fishing Waters.

15A NCAC 10C .0307 FLOUNDER

Fishes in Joint Fishing Waters

- F16.** Reaffirm the Wildlife Resources Commission's authority over certain species designated as inland game fish in all public fishing waters and clarify the size and creel limits which apply. Additionally, clarify that these species can only be taken with hook and line, that species taken incidental to commercial fishing operations shall be immediately returned to the water unharmed, and that the appearance of species with size and creel limits cannot be altered.

Justification: There has been confusion in the public and government agencies as to the Commission's authority over species designated as inland game fish when found in Joint Fishing Waters. Certain inland game fish are under the authority of the Wildlife Resources Commission in all public fishing waters. The proposed changes clarify the regulations for those species that apply to both recreational and commercial fishing in Joint Fishing Waters.

15A NCAC 10C .0801 INLAND GAME FISHES DESIGNATED IN JOINT FISHING WATERS

- F17.** Reaffirm the Wildlife Resources Commission's authority over all fishes taken by hook and line in Joint Fishing Waters and clarify the size and creel limits, seasons, and restrictions on species that may be sold. Also, clarify that the appearance of species with size and creel limits cannot be altered.

Justification: There has been confusion in the public and government agencies as to the Commission's authority over fishes taken by hook and line in Joint Fishing Waters. Per 15A 03Q .0106 and 15A NCAC 10C .0106, the Commission has authority for fish taken by hook and line in Joint Fishing Waters. The proposed rule clarifies that authority including size and creel limits, seasons, and if the species may be sold.

15A NCAC 10C .0802 TAKING AND POSSESSION OF OTHER FISHES BY HOOK AND LINE IN JOINT FISHING WATERS



Proposed Changes to Land and Water Access Regulations for 2024-2025

Use of Game Lands

- G1.** Update the rule language from “under the influence of alcohol or any narcotic drug” to “under the influence of an impairing substance” as defined by North Carolina General Statute 20-4.01(48b) to allow Law Enforcement to enforce the rule more effectively.

Justification: Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers routinely encounter individuals hunting on game lands that are under the influence of impairing substances other than those categorized as alcohol or narcotic drugs. Officers have encountered numerous subjects impaired due to marijuana use. Under G.S. 90-87, marijuana is not defined as a narcotic drug; therefore, officers are currently unable to charge these individuals for hunting while under the influence. Additionally, many other drugs exist that are not defined per General Statute as narcotic drugs. Changing the language to "under the influence of an impairing substance" will allow officers to enforce this rule more effectively. G.S. 20-4.01(14a) defines an impairing substance as, "Alcohol, controlled substance under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, any other drug or psychoactive substance capable of impairing a person's physical or mental faculties, or any combination of these substances."

15A NCAC 10D .0103 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING HUNTING ON GAME LANDS

- G2.** Prohibit target shooting on Dover Bay Game Land.

Justification: Opportunities currently exist for target shooting at alternative sites appropriately constructed and monitored to provide a safe environment for participants. Dover Bay Game Land is within 52 miles of the Holly Shelter Shooting Range. This change is consistent with other game lands where target shooting is prohibited within an acceptable radius of shooting ranges. Additionally, target shooting at this game land routinely occurs at or near the parking area, which increases potential conflict between hunters and target shooters.

15A NCAC 10D .0225 DOVER BAY GAME LAND IN CRAVEN COUNTY

- G3.** Restrict recreational and mountain biking on the Chatham, Harris, and Lee game lands. Hunters engaged in the act of hunting will be permitted to use bicycles on these properties.

Justification: Duke Energy, the landowner, requested the prohibition of recreational cycling on these properties. They have experienced a substantial increase in mountain biking and the associated unauthorized trail making, bridge building, creek crossing, and cycling obstacle infrastructure creation in recent years on these properties. Mountain biking has led to ecological damage and potential liabilities on the Harris Game Land.

15A NCAC 10D .0216 CHATHAM GAME LAND IN CHATHAM COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0233 HARRIS GAME LAND IN CHATHAM, HARNETT, AND WAKE COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0245 LEE GAME LAND IN LEE COUNTY

- G4.** Establish a “Scouting-only Zone” on North River Game Land for waterfowl impoundments to limit the disturbance to migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds.

Justification: A “Scouting-only Zone” is a tool used to manage non-hunting and trapping activities on waterfowl impoundments to decrease disturbances during the migration and wintering periods. The North River Game Land posted waterfowl impoundments have significant human disturbances including people walking the dikes of the impoundments and interfering with permitted hunts during the migration and wintering periods. Human presence is a disturbance that most waterfowl species do not tolerate, and they will flee the area. To mitigate this issue, an observation tower adjacent to the parking area near the impoundments will be installed, to provide opportunities to view the posted waterfowl impoundments, while limiting the disturbance. The Scouting-only Zone will be limited to the observation tower from November 1 through March 15. Outside of these dates, the area will be open to public use. This Scouting-only Zone will reduce the amount of disturbance to waterfowl, provide a higher quality hunt for permitted waterfowl hunters, and better align management of the posted waterfowl impoundments with the guidelines of the Federal grant used to create the site.

15A NCAC 10D .0256 NORTH RIVER GAME LAND IN CAMDEN AND CURRITUCK COUNTIES

- G5.** Restrict camping at designated camping areas on Thurmond-Chatham Game Land to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May 14.

Justification: The use of camping areas by non-licensed individuals has increased substantially over the years, both during and outside the hunting seasons. Law Enforcement routinely encounter violations including illegal drugs, littering, indecent exposure, and extended camping. Trash, tents, drug paraphernalia, and human waste pose a safety issue for staff and other users. Restricting camping to dates within the hunting seasons will limit use and undesirable activity, decrease the required maintenance at these areas, and make camping on this game land consistent with other game lands.

15A NCAC 10D .0283 THURMOND CHATHAM GAME LAND IN ALLEGHANY AND WILKES COUNTIES

Hunting Season Changes

- G6.** Change the Gun Antlered or Antlerless Season in the Montgomery County portions of the Yadkin River Game Land from moderate to maximum.

Justification: This change aligns the Montgomery County portion of the Yadkin River Game Land with the rest of the game land and aligns Antlered or Antlerless Season dates with surrounding private land seasons.

15A NCAC 10D .0293 YADKIN RIVER GAME LAND IN DAVIDSON, DAVIE, MONTGOMERY, ROWAN, AND STANLY COUNTIES

Establishment of Game Lands

- G7.** Define the 4,830-acre portion of the R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land, as the Caswell Small Game Focal Area (CSGFA). The CSGFA will be a draw permit only for all quail and woodcock hunting and point-of-sale permit only for rabbit and squirrel hunting outside the normal three days per week framework. Hunting for big game and small game will still be allowed during the regular hunt days (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays) without a permit, except for quail and woodcock hunting.

Justification: It is imperative that the boundaries of the new CSGFA be conspicuously posted on the ground and the geographic area be defined in rule. This designation will inform constituents of hunting opportunities and allow Law Enforcement to enforce the rules.

15A NCAC 10D .0215 R. WAYNE BAILEY-CASWELL GAME LAND IN CASWELL COUNTY

- G8.** Add the North Bend Game Land to the Northern Mountain Region Game Land Program as a hunting by permit only game land.

Justification: The Commission acquired 1,225 acres from Duke Energy below Lake James in Burke County. The North Bend Game Land has proximity to multiple residences, portions of the Overmountain National Historic and Fonta Flora Trails, and is a hunting by permit only acquisition. North Bend will provide unique, quality opportunities, and serve user groups from surrounding municipalities such as Marion and Morganton.

15A NCAC 10D .0294 NORTH BEND GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY



Proposed Changes to Wildlife Management Regulations for 2024-2025

Deer

- H1.** Shift the western blackpowder and gun seasons so that blackpowder season begins two Saturdays before Thanksgiving and runs two weeks until gun season, which will begin the Saturday after Thanksgiving and run through January 1, and shift the timing of the 1-week and 1-day blackpowder antlerless seasons to begin the second Saturday of the season.

Justification: Most antlered buck harvest in the western deer seasons occurs before peak breeding which negatively affects breeding synchrony and thus fawn recruitment and hunter satisfaction. Shifting blackpowder and gun seasons later in the year will reduce vulnerability of yearling bucks during dispersal, reduce harvest of bucks prior to breeding, and provide more hunting opportunities during the rut. Shifting the 1-week and 1-day blackpowder antlerless deer seasons to Thanksgiving week will provide more antlerless hunting opportunities during the holiday.

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

- H2.** Introduce 1-day antlerless gun season on private lands and increase antlerless blackpowder season from 1-day to 1-week on all lands in Cherokee, Clay, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties.

Increase antlerless gun season from 1-day to 1-week on private lands and increase antlerless blackpowder season from 1-week to 2-weeks on all lands in Buncombe and Henderson counties. This change does not apply to the portions of Buncombe and Henderson counties where the harvest of antlerless deer is currently allowed during the entire gun season.

Justification: The harvest objective of at least one antlered buck per square mile is being met on private lands in these counties and continued herd growth is expected. Additional antlerless harvest is sustainable and will provide hunters with additional opportunities as well as help balance the buck to doe ratio.

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

- H3.** Remove specific youth deer hunts on Belews Creek Steam Station, Mountain Island State Forest, and W. Kerr Scott Reservoir.

Justification: The agency is able to allow special organized hunts to promote Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) efforts via 15A NCAC 10B .0126. The provision in the deer rule is unnecessarily restrictive, as these hunts are only for youth. Participation in these three hunts has declined over the years, but because they are specifically for youth, the agency is unable to

offer unused permits to anyone other than individuals under 18. Removing this language will clarify regulations, give the agency, and hunt organizers flexibility to use these opportunities for youth, individuals with disabilities, novice hunters, or lapsed hunters.

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

Bear

H4. Amend the bear rule to incorporate the following changes:

- Update rule text to be consistent with the use of “designated bear management areas” terminology that is used in 15A NCAC 10D .0106.
- Shift the start date of the bear hunting season in the Mountain Bear Management Unit to add nine days and create Saturday openers for each of the two segments.
- Remove the prohibition on hunting bears with the aid of unprocessed bait during the second segment of the Mountain bear season.
- Correct rule text to clarify that dogs can be used to hunt bears in Franklin County.

Justification: Additional hunting opportunity in early October is necessary to meet population management objectives for the Mountain Bear Management Unit. The Mountain bear population is increasing annually, and current levels of harvest are not meeting the objective established in the Black Bear Management Plan, which is to stabilize the population. Opening the Mountain bear season nine days earlier will serve to change the composition of the Mountain bear harvest, slow down bear population growth, and help meet the population objective, while providing additional bear hunting opportunities.

Removing the prohibition on the use of unprocessed bait during the second segment will reduce regulation complexity without any biological impacts.

Per G.S. 113-291.5 and since the Piedmont bear seasons were created in 2014, the intention has been to allow hunters to use dogs to hunt bears in Franklin County. However, this county was unintentionally included in the rule prohibiting the use of dogs to take bear. The amendments will correct this error in the rule.

15A NCAC 10B .0202 BEAR

Pheasant

H5. Bring the ring-necked pheasant season into alignment with overall conservation goals.

Justification: Conservation goals for ring-necked pheasants differ greatly between self-sustaining populations that occur on the outer banks and domestically raised pheasants that are released in other parts of the State. This proposed change will clarify regulations, continue to safeguard wild pheasants on the outer banks, and provide additional opportunities for hunting pheasants concurrent with other traditional small game hunting seasons.

15A NCAC 10B .0211 RING-NECKED PHEASANT

Feral Swine

- H6.** Clarify when dogs may be used to take feral swine on game lands and establish additional opportunities for dogs to be used outside of an open deer or bear hunting season by individual game land rule.

Justification: Feral swine hunting with dogs is a tradition in the far western counties of the State and feral swine populations have been established in the National Forest for more than 100 years. Feral swine are a non-desirable species that are legal to hunt during this time period. The proposed change expands opportunities to hunt feral swine with dogs.

15A NCAC 10B .0223 FERAL SWINE

15A NCAC 10D .0103 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING HUNTING ON GAME LANDS

15A NCAC 10D .0251 NANTAHALA GAME LAND IN CHEROKEE, CLAY, GRAHAM, JACKSON, MACON, SWAIN, AND TRANSYLVANIA COUNTIES

Regulated Activities

- H7.** Move rules pertaining to dog training and field trials from Subchapter 10B Hunting and Trapping to Subchapter 10H Regulated Activities and incorporate the following changes:

- Remove the requirement to band domestically raised game birds on controlled hunting preserves, for sanctioned field trials, and for dog training out of hunting seasons.
- Allow individuals that are training bird dogs outside of hunting seasons and outside of controlled hunting preserves to release up to six domestically raised game birds each day.
- Clarify that the only requirement for training dogs outside of the hunting season is a hunting license.

Justification: Moving these rules to Subchapter 10H is necessary for regulatory clarity. Requiring pheasants and quail to be banded when released on controlled hunting preserves provides no overall conservation benefit. Limiting dog training to releasing no more than six domestically raised waterfowl or game birds outside of controlled hunting preserves each day ensures that training is not inappropriately used to avoid the regulatory safeguards that are in place for controlled hunting preserves.

15A NCAC 10B .0114 DOG TRAINING AND FIELD TRIALS

15A NCAC 10H .1701 FIELD TRIALS

15A NCAC 10H .1702 DOG TRAINING

- H8.** Amend the controlled hunting preserves for domestically raised game bird rules to incorporate the following changes:

- Incorporate use of the terms “domestically raised waterfowl and game birds” and “controlled hunting preserve” for consistency and clarity.
- Remove the requirement to band bobwhite quail and pheasants that are released on controlled hunting preserves.
- Clarify that domestically raised waterfowl (i.e., mallard ducks) can only be hunted on controlled hunting preserves from October 1 through March 31, except on Sundays.
- Specify that domestically raised mallards must be marked in accordance with 50 CFR 21.45.
- Update application requirements for a controlled hunting preserve operator license.
- Reduce the minimum size of a controlled shooting preserve from 100 acres to 50 acres.

- Remove the detailed requirements for signs used to post boundaries of controlled hunting preserves and require only basic signage.

Justification: Many of the rules that apply to controlled hunting preserves are outdated and are no longer needed to safeguard wildlife resources. The proposed changes will simplify and clarify regulations, bringing them into alignment with how controlled hunting preserves are currently used by the public.

15A NCAC 10H .0100 CONTROLLED HUNTING PRESERVES FOR DOMESTICALLY RAISED GAME BIRDS
15A NCAC 10H .0101 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
15A NCAC 10H .0102 ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION
15A NCAC 10H .0105 RECORDS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
15A NCAC 10H .0109 QUAIL CALL-PEN TRAPS

H9. Amend the game bird propagation rules to incorporate the following changes:

- Incorporate use of the terms “domestically raised waterfowl and game birds” and “controlled hunting preserve” for consistency and clarity.
- Remove the requirement for a game bird propagation license to purchase, possess, transport, transfer, or release domestically raised waterfowl or game birds to allow hunters to release birds for dog training without a propagation license.
- Clarify that the propagation license is only required for individuals propagating or selling domestically raised waterfowl and game birds.

Justification: Many of the rules that apply to game bird propagation are outdated and are no longer needed to safeguard wildlife resources. The proposed changes will simplify and clarify regulations, bringing them into alignment with how game bird propagation is currently conducted.

15A NCAC 10H .0901 GAME BIRD PROPAGATION LICENSE
15A NCAC 10H .0904 DISPOSITION OF GAME BIRDS OR GAME BIRD EGGS
15A NCAC 10H .0905 TRANSPORTATION
15A NCAC 10H .0906 RECORDS

H10. Prohibit a Wildlife Control Agent (WCA) with a suspended or revoked WCA license from obtaining a Wildlife Control Technician (WCT) certification.

Justification: This amendment closes a loophole that currently allows a WCA with offenses and citations who has temporarily or permanently lost their WCA license to continue their wildlife control or removal activities as a WCT.

15A NCAC 10H .1505 WILDLIFE CONTROL AGENT LICENSE RENEWAL AND REVOCATION
15A NCAC 10H .1510 WILDLIFE CONTROL TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS



Proposed Changes to Administrative Regulations for 2024-2025

Wildlife Poacher Reward Fund

- A1.** Include Class 1 and 2 misdemeanors in G.S. 113-262 - Taking fish or wildlife by poisons, drugs, explosives or electricity prohibited, and violations of the following Inland Fisheries rules to the list of offenses for which rewards can be paid to informants for providing information resulting in the arrest and conviction of persons committing these crimes:
- 10C .0302 - Manner of Taking Inland Game Fishes
 - 10C .0304 - Taking and Possession of Inland Game Fishes
 - 10C .0401 - Manner of Taking Nongame Fishes
 - 10C .0402 - Taking Nongame Fishes by Special Device for Bait or Personal Consumption
 - 10C .0409 - Taking and Possession of Nongame Fishes

Justification: Currently, no inland fisheries related crimes are eligible for the Wildlife Poacher Reward Program despite the large percentage of criminal activity reported by the public. These violations represent a significant loss of inland fishery resources as well as substantial replacement cost to the Commission. This change will allow informants for violations of the most serious fisheries rules and regulations to be eligible for rewards. Additional edits for clarity and consistency of these rules have been made as part of the periodic review.

15A NCAC 10A .1301 FUNDING SOURCES

15A NCAC 10A .1302 OFFENSES AND REWARD AMOUNTS

15A NCAC 10A .1303 ELIGIBILITY