



Public Hearings

Applying to 2021–2022

Inland Fishing, Hunting, Trapping
and Game Land Regulations



January 2021

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

ncwildlife.org

State of North Carolina

Roy Cooper, Governor

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

David W. Hoyle, Jr., Chairman	Dallas
Monty R. Crump, Vice Chairman	Rockingham
Thomas A. Berry	Greensboro
James Ruffin	Winston-Salem
V. Ray Clifton, Jr.	Clarkton
James Cogdell	Norwood
John T. Coley IV	Holly Springs
Mark R. Craig	Greensboro
Kelly N. Davis	Swan Quarter
Richard Edwards	Wilmington
Thomas L. Fonville	Raleigh
Nat T. Harris	Whitsett
Mike Johnson	Hickory
Hayden Rogers	Brasstown
Wes Seegars	Goldsboro
Bradford G. Stanback	Canton
John A. Stone	Jackson Springs
Steve Windham	Winnabow
Landon G. Zimmer	Wilmington
Cameron Ingram, Executive Director	Raleigh





☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1701

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appreciates the investment of your time and thanks you for attending this public hearing to show your concern for fish and wildlife programs in North Carolina. We welcome your opinions and suggestions about these conservation 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 60-day comment period follows, which includes 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, wildlife, and game land regulations, this process begins at the previous year's hearings and continues throughout the year. We consider all suggestions presented during the past year as starting points for these proposed regulations. The proposals in this document reflect public, staff, and Commissioner input. The Commissioners approved these proposals for publication in the *North Carolina Register* and for presentation at these public hearings.

In February 2021, after considering comments from the public and consulting with staff, the Commission will make final decisions on these proposed regulations. The rules that are adopted will then be available in the *N.C. Inland Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest* for 2021–2022. The digest will be available on August 1, 2021 from your licensing agent and on eregulations.com/northcarolina.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "David W. Hoyle, Jr.".

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

THE RULE-MAKING PROCESS

Step 1: PROPOSALS

The public, Commission staff, Commissioners, conservation partners, and other stakeholders propose new or amended fishing, hunting, trapping, land management, and other regulations.

Step 2: PROPOSALS VETTED

Staff analyze and present proposals to the Executive Director for consideration.

Step 3: COMMISSION VOTES ON PROPOSALS

Proposals are presented to and reviewed by the Commission who then votes on the proposals to be noticed for public comment and presented at public hearings.

Step 4: PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS

The public submits comments on proposals online (ncwildlife.org), by e-mail (regulations@ncwildlife.org), letter, or in-person at public hearings.

Step 5: COMMISSIONERS REVIEW THE COMMENTS AND VOTE ON THE PROPOSALS.


All comments submitted during the comment period are reviewed and the Commissioners vote to adopt proposals as presented, adopt in a modified form, or reject the proposal.

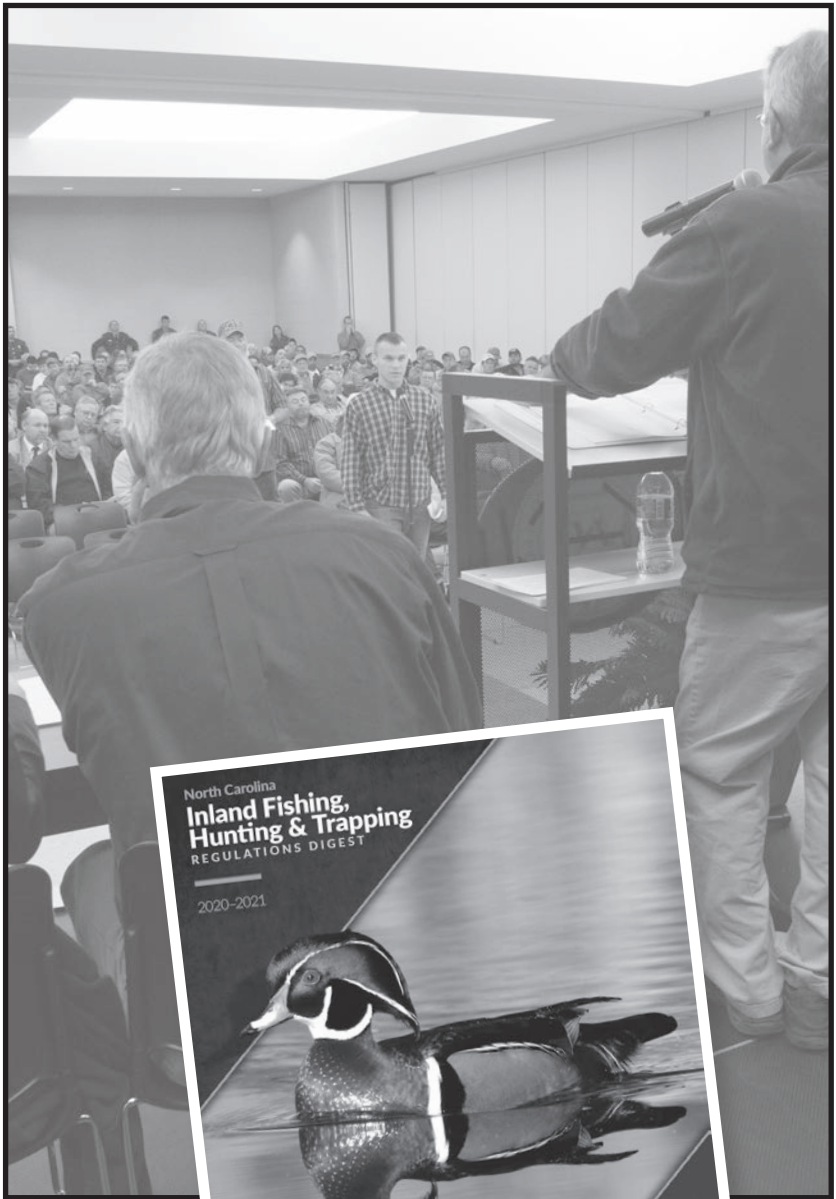
Step 6: RULES ARE FILED

Adopted rules are filed with the Office of Administrative Hearings for approval. The Rules Review Commission approves or disapproves the rules as written.

Step 7: APPROVED RULES PUBLISHED

Approved rules are entered in the N.C. *Administrative Code* and added to the regulations digest.





Public Hearings

The Commission has been charged with managing North Carolina's wildlife resources since 1947. The General Assembly, through statute, declares which matters of fish, wildlife, and land management the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission can regulate through rule. Rules are one means of managing 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 by commenting at a public hearing or submitting your comments in writing.

Hearing Procedures

Please review the proposals in this booklet when you arrive and complete the record form on the back if you wish 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 when commenting.

After the proposed changes in this booklet are presented, time will be allotted to comment on other matters of interest that you may want to present to the Commission for consideration. We earnestly solicit your input and ideas to improve regulations. We also ask you to remember that changing regulations in the *N.C. Administrative Code* can be a lengthy process that often takes more than one year to accomplish. These public hearings are, however, the proper starting point for your suggestions.

What Happens Next?

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 proposed changes to the regulations until the close of the public comment period on Feb. 1, 2021.

A written record of all public comments will be compiled and reviewed by staff and 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 all be considered.

Schedule for the 2021 Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping Public Hearings

Before you make final plans to attend, check the Commission's website (ncwildlife.org) for updates, including weather-related rescheduling.

Hearing Time: 7 p.m.

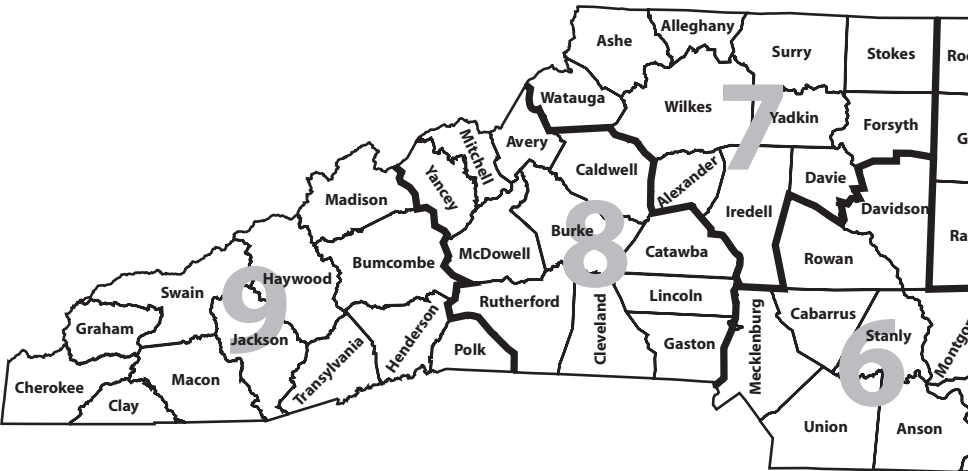
Date	Region	City	Location
Thu., Jan. 21	All		Virtual - Register online at ncwildlife.org/proposed-regulations

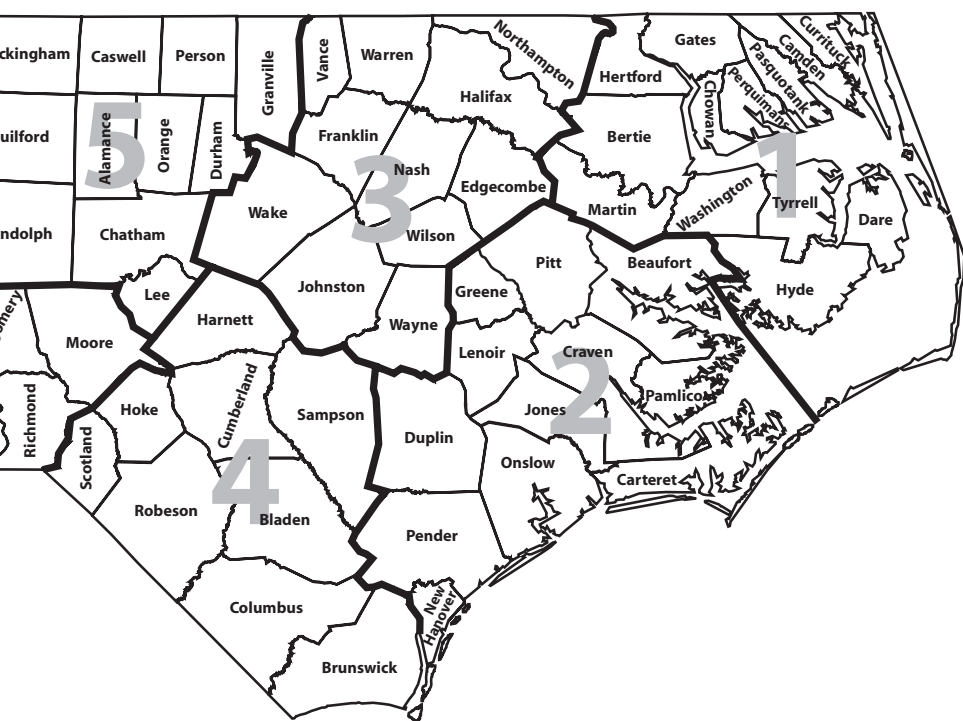
Limits to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Rule-making Process

Some aspects of wildlife and fish management, hunting, fishing, trapping, and human/wildlife interaction are legislated directly. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appreciates the interest of North Carolina's sportsmen and sportswomen in the state's wildlife resources and respectfully considers all suggestions.

Subscribe for N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission email updates on proposed rules and regulations at **ncwildlife.org/subscribe**.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Districts





Proposed Changes to Inland Fishing Regulations for 2021–2022

The following changes to the statewide inland fishing regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions, or suggestions.

Trout

F1. Combine the two-existing Public Mountain Trout Waters (PMTW) catch-and-release classifications (Catch and Release/Artificial Flies Only Trout Waters and Catch and Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters) into a single classification (Catch and Release/Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters).

Justification: Regulatory complexity has been identified routinely by trout anglers as an impediment to their experiences, and the Commission identified the need to reduce rule complexity within its Trout Management Plan. The two-existing catch-and-release classifications function as social regulations and do not address any biological issues. This proposal will reduce angler confusion by combining the two current classifications into one.

F2. Remove Franks Creek in Graham County from Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters. This proposal will remove 4.1 miles from Public Mountain Trout Waters and 0.4 miles of Franks Creek on game lands will be reclassified to Wild Trout Waters.

Justification: Franks Creek was historically managed as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters with stockings of fingerling trout. When fingerling trout stockings were phased out, Franks Creek was reclassified as Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters to maintain the stream as Public Mountain Trout Waters. Much of the stream is located on private property and public access is limited. The proposed change will simplify rules by allowing the portion of Franks Creek on private property to default as undesignated.

F3. Remove Hemphill Creek in Haywood County from Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters. This proposal will remove 3.7 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Hemphill Creek was historically managed as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters with stockings of fingerling trout. When fingerling trout stockings were phased out, Hemphill Creek was reclassified as Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters to maintain the stream as Public Mountain Trout Waters. The stream is located on private property and public access is limited. The proposed change will simplify rules by allowing Hemphill Creek to default as undesignated.

F4. Remove Buff Creek in Jackson County from Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters. This proposal will remove 2.8 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters and 1.0 mile of Buff Creek on game lands will be reclassified to Wild Trout Waters.

Justification: Buff Creek was historically managed as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters with stockings of fingerling trout. When fingerling trout stockings were phased out, Buff Creek was reclassified as Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters to maintain the stream as Public Mountain Trout Waters. Much of the stream is located on private property and public access is limited. The proposed change will

simplify rules by allowing the portion of Buff Creek on private property to default as undesignated.

F5. Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Big Pine Creek in Alleghany County removing approximately 4.5 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1464 bridge to the confluence with Brush Creek.

Justification: Most of the Hatchery Supported Trout Waters reach on Big Pine Creek is located on Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) property. National Park Service staff has requested this portion of the creek no longer be stocked in compliance with the BRP management policy prohibiting the stocking of fish into streams on BRP property.

F6. Remove Meadow Fork in Alleghany County from Hatchery Supported Trout Waters. This proposal will remove 5.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The Hatchery Supported Trout Waters reach on Meadow Fork is located on Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) property. National Park Service staff has requested this portion of the creek no longer be stocked in compliance with the BRP management policy prohibiting the stocking of fish into streams on BRP property.

F7. Remove Mill Creek in McDowell County from Hatchery Supported Trout Waters. This proposal will remove 6.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The Hatchery Supported Trout Waters reach of Mill Creek is primarily adjacent to private properties, many of which have been posted against trespassing in recent years. The few areas that are stocked are short in reach, disjunct, and often separated by lengthy inaccessible reaches, making it difficult for anglers to access the fishery.

F8. Clarify that there is no closed season for harvest in undesignated trout waters.

Justification: This is an administrative change. The removal of the closed season for harvest in undesignated trout waters was adopted during the 2015-2016 rule-making cycle but was not removed from the NCAC.

F9. Clarify the boundaries for the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters reaches of the Watauga River in Watauga County. The designated reaches are S.R. 1114 bridge to Valle Crucis Community Park lower boundary (upper reach) and S.R. 1103 bridge to confluence with Laurel Creek (lower reach). This proposal will not add or remove any Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: This is an administrative change. The boundary changes for the reaches of the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters of the Watauga River were adopted during the 2015-2016 rule-making cycle but were not fully incorporated in the NCAC.

F10. Clarify that Boundary Line Pond in Wilkes County is designated as Public Mountain Trout Waters and further classified as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters.

Justification: This is an administrative change. The addition of Boundary Line Pond to Public Mountain Trout Waters was adopted during the 2015-2016 rule-making cycle but was not incorporated into the NCAC.

F11. Clarify that the lower Hatchery Supported Trout Waters boundary on the Middle Prong Roaring River in Wilkes County is the second bridge on S.R. 1736.

Justification: This is an administrative change. The boundary change for the Hatchery Supported Trout Waters reach of the Middle Prong Roaring River was adopted during the 2015-2016 rule-making cycle but was not incorporated into the NCAC.

Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Spotted Bass

F12. Clarify that the daily creel limit for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Spotted Bass in the Alleghany County portion of the New River downstream of Fields Dam (Grayson County, Virginia) is five fish in combination.

Justification: This is an administrative change. The previous rule for black bass species was reformatted into species-specific rules during the 2020–2021 rule-making cycle, and this combined daily creel limit was inadvertently omitted from the NCAC. The size and creel limits for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Spotted Bass in this reach of the New River are consistent with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' regulations downstream.

F13. Prohibit harvest of Largemouth Bass from three ponds associated with Martin-Marietta Park, City of New Bern, Craven County.

Justification: The City of New Bern is allowing public angling opportunities to three ponds within the newly established Martin-Marietta Park. The proposed rule will address concerns regarding potential overharvest of Largemouth Bass once the ponds are opened to fishing.

Striped Bass

F14. Prohibit harvest of Striped Bass from three ponds associated with Martin-Marietta Park, City of New Bern, Craven County.

Justification: The City of New Bern is allowing public angling opportunities to three ponds within the newly established Martin-Marietta Park. Periodic flooding from the Neuse River has introduced Striped Bass into these ponds. The proposed rule will provide consistent regulations in the area and address concerns regarding potential overharvest of Striped Bass once the ponds are opened to fishing.

Blue Catfish

F15. Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for Blue Catfish in the North Carolina portion of the Dan River (Caswell Co.), downstream of Danville, Va. by allowing only one fish greater than 32 inches to be possessed in the daily creel.

Justification: From the Union Street Dam in Danville, VA, the Dan River flows downstream through Caswell County for approximately 10 miles before flowing back into Virginia and then into John H. Kerr Reservoir. The proposed change is consistent with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' regulations for Blue Catfish and will provide continuity when enforcing regulations on the river.

American Eel

F16. Allow American Eel greater than the 9-inch minimum length limit to be used for cut bait provided the body depth of the eel is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

Justification: During the 2018-2019 rule-making cycle, a rule was adopted prohibiting the removal the head or tail or otherwise changing the appearance of any nongame fish with a specific size and/or creel limit. American Eel is subject to this rule, and before it became effective, eels were a popular cut bait among anglers, especially those targeting trophy catfish. Anglers have requested the ability to use eels once again as cut bait. The proposal would allow the use of eels greater than the 9-inch minimum length limit as cut bait provided the body depth of the cut bait is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, which is consistent with the $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch x $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mesh restriction for eel pots. While American Eel are considered depleted across their range by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, using legally harvest eels as cut bait is not expected to impact the overall population.

Prohibited Species

F17. Add the African Longfin Eel, Creole Painted Crayfish, Bigclaw Crayfish, Marbled Crayfish or Marmorkrebs, Applesnail, Olive Mysterysnail, European Eel, Oriental Weatherfish, Brown Hoplo, Yellow Bass, Shortfin Eel, Crucian Carp, Prussian Carp, European Perch, European Minnow, and Amur Sleeper to the list of species for which it is unlawful to transport, purchase, possess, sell or stock in the public or private waters of North Carolina. The proposed change also includes taxonomic clarifications and corrections.

Justification: Non-native species introduced into public waters can have unintended, negative consequences, which can alter the existing aquatic community permanently. Unfortunately, once established, introduced species are nearly impossible to eradicate. Strategies to evaluate and manage the unintended impacts of introduced species are difficult to implement, often ineffective and costly. The species proposed for adding are listed in the North Carolina Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan, U.S. Geological Survey's Aquatic Nuisance Species website, or in the Lacey Act as species that can become invasive and nuisance species in North Carolina.

Proposed Changes to Game Land Regulations for 2021–2022

The following changes to game land regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions, or suggestions.

Property

G1. Codify the Commission's authority to manage public access and use of Commission property and/or waive any non-statutorily required rules in Chapter 10 to protect public health, public safety, wildlife resources, and Commission property.

Justification: The Commission is authorized to regulate, prohibit or restrict public use of property by rule; however, a single rule does not currently exist that restricts public use and can be applied to the variety of Commission managed properties (buildings, boating access area, public fishing areas, game lands). This rule will provide flexibility to temporarily restrict access to Commission property as needed during emergency situations to protect public health, public safety, wildlife resources, and Commission property. This proposal also gives the Commission authority to temporarily waive any non-statutorily required rules in Chapter 10 upon the declaration of a national emergency, disaster, or state of emergency, by a federal, state, or local governmental authority impacting North Carolina.

Game Lands and Wildlife Conservation Areas

G2. This proposal will redefine the description of a Temporary Restricted Zone.

Justification: Redefining the Temporary Restricted Zone description is needed to align this definition with the proposed Emergency Closure and Waiver rule. The new definition provides flexibility to the Commission to post an area of game land as a Temporary Restricted Zone solely when there is a danger to the health or welfare of the public, regardless of the cause for the danger.

G3. Remove the Laurinburg Fox Trial facility from the NCAC.

Justification: The State no longer owns this property and this proposed rule removes references of it in the NCAC.

G4. Clarify that coyotes, armadillos, and groundhogs are authorized to be taken on game lands by trapping during the regulated trapping season (November 1 through end of February). This rule also clarifies that foxes can be trapped on game lands during the regulated trapping season in counties with a session law that authorizes fox trapping in that county. This proposal also establishes a closed trapping season on game lands from April 1 through October 31.

Justification: There has been confusion about the legality of trapping foxes, coyotes, armadillo, and groundhogs on game lands. This proposal will clarify the rules for this activity. This proposal will also establish a closed trapping season to avoid conflicts and confusion among game land users.

- G5.** Clarify that licensed trappers can use bait on game lands while trapping.

Justification: NCAC text about using bait on game lands for trapping is unclear and various interpretations about this rule have been made by Commission staff and the public. This rule will provide a specific definition of bait and include requirement that trappers must follow. Specifically: at each trap, trappers may use a single bait site of grain, fruit, or other foods when trapping if the food is not a processed food product as defined in GS113-294(r), is less than 3 cubic inches, and is completely covered to prevent it from being seen from above. Feathers (including those with attached skin or entire bird wings), hair (with or without skin or hide), and bones that include no attached meat, organs, or viscera do not need to be covered.

- G6.** Clarify NCAC rule text that identifies where game lands designated in the disabled access program are listed.

Justification: This proposal clarifies that game lands designated in the disabled access program are listed in the regulations digest and not in the NCAC.

- G7.** Amend NCAC rule text by removing Brunswick County Game Land.

Justification: The private landowner removed Brunswick County Game Land from the Game Land Program in 2017. This change will update the NC Administrative Code.

- G8.** Clarify NCAC rule text that establishes the December segment of the bear season for Alligator River, Buckridge, Chowan Swamp, Gull Rock, and Van Swamp game lands.

Justification: An administrative change to clarify language in the NCAC.

- G9.** Clarify that horseback riding is allowed seven days per week from May 16–August 31, and on Sundays only September 1–May 15 on R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell, Chatham, Jordan, and Pee Dee River game lands. This proposal will also allow equestrian riding on gated roads and trails posted for equestrian use at Pee Dee River Game Land. This proposal will also clarify that a Game Land License is not needed to ride horses on the American Tobacco Trail at Jordan Game Land.

Justification: The existing rule language is confusing regarding Sundays during hunting seasons and has been interpreted differently from the way it was intended. This will make the permitted riding times easier to understand. This change will also allow for more horseback riding opportunities at Pee Dee River Game Land and clarify needs for a Game Land License at Jordan Game Land.

- G10.** Prohibit the pursuing or chasing of deer and bear with dogs for the purposes of training or hunting on the Beaufort County portion of Goose Creek Game Land north of NC 33.

Justification: Landowners adjacent to this portion of the game land have complained and reported about trespass, unleashed dogs on their property, and harassing and intimidating behaviors from dog hunters.

G11. Implement permanent rule text to replace a temporary rule that corrected a clerical error in the NCAC regarding the primitive weapons seasons for deer on Nicholson Creek Game Land.

Justification: An administrative change to clarify language in the NCAC.

G12. Change Perkins Game Land from an Introductory Either-Sex Gun Season to a Conservative Either-Sex Gun Season.

Justification: This proposal would increase hunter opportunities by adding five days for when antlerless deer could be harvested on Perkins Game Land during the either-sex gun season. Perkins Game Land is approximately 1,100 acres in size and located in Davie County. Deer densities near this game land in Davie County suggest that these additional five days of opportunity would not adversely affect the local deer population. This change would closer align the Perkins Game Land regulations with nearby properties enrolled in the Game Land Program that are in the Maximum Either Sex-Gun Season. Lastly, the property owner is supportive of this change.

G13. Clarify the times and places where horseback riding will be permitted and not allowed on the Sandhills Game Land.

Justification: The existing rule language does not address horseback riding outside of the J. Robert Gordon Field Trial Area of the Sandhills Game Land. This rule will make it clear that horseback riding is allowed on the remainder of the Sandhills Game Land seven days per week. For safety reasons and the protection of sensitive habitats, this rule will also establish that horseback riding can only occur on roads open to vehicular traffic and on those gated roads or trails posted for equestrian use.

G14. Amend NCAC rule text to remove references to impoundments on Stones Creek Game Land.

Justification: Posted waterfowl impoundment do not exist on this game land.

G15. Prohibit horseback riding at William H. Silver Game Land.

Justification: A great deal of the habitat management on the game land is focused on habitat improvements for elk. These habitat improvements converted old logging trails and roads to linear wildlife openings. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has made significant financial contributions to assist in the creation of these linear wildlife openings. Recently, groups of horseback riders have been riding on linear wildlife openings on the game land. As a result, the vegetation planted for wildlife in the linear openings is getting damaged and/or destroyed. The damaged/destroyed vegetation also creates the threat for erosion problems.

G16. Clarify NCAC rule text regarding restrictions on Wildlife Conservation Areas.

Justification: An administrative change to clarify language in the NCAC.

G17. Add the definition of a “Seven Days per Week Game Land” and indicate that hunting is allowed Monday through Sunday during open seasons. Also add the definition for a “Four Days per Week Game Land” and indicate that hunting is allowed Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Further, as per G.S. 103-2, this rule will indicate that on Sundays, hunting between 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM is prohibited, the use of a firearm to take deer that are run or chased by dogs is prohibited, and hunting within 500 yards of a place of religious worship, as defined by G.S. 14-54.1(b), or any accessory structure thereof, is prohibited.

Justification: G.S. 103-2 gives the Commission the authority to authorize hunting on Sundays on Game Lands. This proposal will amend the definitions of game lands and identify Sunday as an open day for “Seven Days per Week Areas” and “Four Days per Week Areas”. This rule also outlines the restrictions to Sunday hunting as outlined in G.S. 103-2.

G18. Change the following six game lands to “Four Days per Week Game Lands”:

- Bullard and Branch Hunting Preserve
- Columbus County
- Mitchell River
- Perkins
- Robeson
- Sampson

Justification: G.S. 103-2 gives the Commission the authority to authorize hunting on Sunday on Game Lands. Based on seven in-person public meetings, two virtual public meetings, three focus group meetings with stakeholders, an Agency staff retreat, discussions with landowning partners, biological staff, and commissioners, and a follow up meeting with stakeholders, the following criteria were used to help evaluate the feasibility of Sunday hunting on game lands: rural game lands that are not heavily used by non-hunters, proximity to other game lands and public lands where hunting is prohibited, value to unique properties that are important to user groups, avoid game lands where past conflict has been a pattern. Given the results of the public input process, staff recommend that Sunday hunting be allowed at the above game lands and that these areas be changed from “Three Days per Week Areas” to “Four Days per Week Areas”.

G19. Change the following 45 game lands to “Seven Days per Week Game Lands”:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| - Alcoa | - Embro | - Pee Dee River |
| - Alligator River | - Goose Creek | - Pisgah |
| - Angola Bay | - Gull Rock | - Pond Mountain |
| - Bachelor Bay | - Harris | - Sandy Creek |
| - Brinkleyville | - Hyco | - Shocco Creek |
| - Buffalo Cove | - Juniper Creek | - South Mountains |
| - Cape Fear River | - Lee | - Sutton Lake |
| - Wetlands | - Light Ground Pocosin | - Three Top Mountain |
| - Carteret County | - Linwood | - Thurmond Chatham |
| - Chatham | - Lower Fishing Creek | - Tillery |
| - Chowan | - Mayo | - Toxaway |
| - Cold Mountain | - Nantahala | - Uwharrie |
| - Croatan | - Needmore | - Van Swamp |
| - Currituck Banks | - New Lake | - William H. Silver |
| - Dare | - North River | |
| - Elk Knob | - Northwest River Marsh | |

Justification: G.S. 103-2 gives the Commission the authority to authorize hunting on Sunday on Game Lands. Based on seven in-person public meetings, two virtual public meetings, three focus group meetings with stakeholders, an Agency staff retreat, discussions with landowning partners, biological staff, and commissioners, and a follow up meeting with stakeholders, the following criteria were used to help evaluate the feasibility of Sunday hunting on game lands: rural game lands that are not heavily used by non-hunters, proximity to other game lands and public lands where hunting is prohibited, value to unique properties that are important to user groups, avoid game lands where past conflict has been a pattern. Given the results of the public input process, staff recommend that Sunday hunting be allowed at the above game lands and that these areas be changed from “Six Days per Week Areas” to “Seven Days per Week Areas”.

G20. Prohibit the harvest of bear on Sunday on the following game lands in the Coastal Bear Management Unit:

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Alligator River | - Chowan | - New Lake |
| - Angola Bay | - Croatan | - North River |
| - Bullard and Branch | - Currituck Banks | - Northwest River Marsh |
| - Hunting Preserve | - Goose Creek | - Robeson |
| - Cape Fear River | - Gull Rock | - Sampson |
| - Wetlands | - Juniper Creek | - Sutton Lake |
| - Carteret County | - Light Ground Pocosin | - Van Swamp |

Justification: There is concern about allowing additional harvest of bear in the Coastal Bear Management Unit (CBMU) since the population objective of a 0% population growth rate is currently being met. Additional opportunities for harvest in the CBMU could result in negative population growth rate or a reduction in the population size. Further, increased weekend hunting on game lands in the CBMU that have significant bear hunting traditions could impact hunt quality. Therefore, recommendation at this time is to prohibit bear hunting on Sundays on the game lands in CBMU to meet the guiding principal identified by the focus groups, that the resources come first. If management objectives change or changes in the bear population are observed in the CBMU, staff will reevaluate the conditions and adjust the rule to allow for additional opportunities in the CBMU if warranted.

Proposed Changes to Wildlife Management Regulations for 2021–2022

The following changes to the statewide wildlife management regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions, or suggestions.

Deer

H1. This proposal modifies the definition of a muzzleloading firearm to allow for the use of pre-loaded powder capsules in muzzleloaders during blackpowder season.

Justification: Products are currently commercially available that make the loading and reloading aspect of using a muzzleloader much easier and safer for hunters. Though the bullet is loaded through the muzzle of the rifle, the powder capsule is loaded through the breech. So, while this system does not use fixed ammunition, the powder is not loaded in the same manner as with a traditional sidelock or inline muzzleloader. Thus, this blackpowder firearm does not meet the current definition in rule. This proposed amendment will allow for the use of new technology that is less intimidating to hunters and may increase opportunities for hunters to use muzzleloaders in a safe way.

Archery Equipment

H2. This proposal modifies the permitted archery equipment to allow for the use of sling bow for taking white-tailed deer.

Justification: Sling bows continue to increase in popularity and were made legal in North Carolina for wild turkey, small game animals, nongame animals, and nongame fish in 2019. Request have been made to consider allowing the use of sling bows for deer. These weapons are legal and successfully used in other states and some hunters have generated an interest in allowing them to hunt deer in North Carolina.

Quail

H3. This proposal will create a NCWRC private land program called “Wild Quail Management Areas” and will allow dedicated property managers enrolled in the Program to implement specific additional management actions.

Justification: Certain intensive management actions have been demonstrated, through peer-reviewed research, to have positive impacts on quail populations when combined with appropriate landscape size and overall habitat creation and management. Properties eligible for this program must meet specific requirements outlined in this rule including a minimum of 1500 acres of contiguous habitat, be managed for wild quail populations with no release of pen-reared birds, and to collect and maintain specific records which must be submitted to NCWRC annually. Specific management actions to be permitted on Wild Quail Management Areas by this rule include, trapping programs to reduce the abundance of the most important quail nest predators (opossum, raccoon, and striped skunk during the early nesting season and providing supplemental feed without impacting the ability to hunt quail on the property.

Trapping

H4. This proposed rule amendment will allow the use of remote trap checking systems in lieu of a physical trap check under specified conditions.

Justification: Wildlife damage control agents (WDCAs) and the wildlife control industry have expressed interest in having remote trap checking systems as an alternative to physical trap check. WDCAs feel the devices would improve their ability to more quickly respond to an activated trap, which will not only improve animal welfare, but improve their efficiency, reduce costs, and make them look more professional, all of which may increase customer satisfaction. Electronic trap check systems conforming to the standards recommended in this proposed rule ensures that trap status is reliably determined. The recommended standards are supported by the wildlife control industry and assures that remote trap monitoring devices used in North Carolina are reliable in detecting captured animals and notifying the user. These standards also assure that the users using these devices will meet or exceed maximum time requirements (e.g., daily trap check except 72 hours for completely submerged conibear-type traps) for trap attendance.

Bear

H5. This proposed rule amendment corrects the open season for the take of bear in Camden, Chowan, and Pasquotank counties.

Justification: Due to the convention for how seasons of take are established in rule, this year when November 1 falls on a Sunday, the first segment of the bear season in Camden, Chowan, and Pasquotank counties begins a week and one day earlier than intended. Allowing this would be counter to bear management objectives and detrimental to the bear population. Additionally, this amendment is currently being implemented as a temporary rule.

2021–2022 Proposed Season Dates

The Commission provides this table of upcoming season dates for planning purposes ONLY.

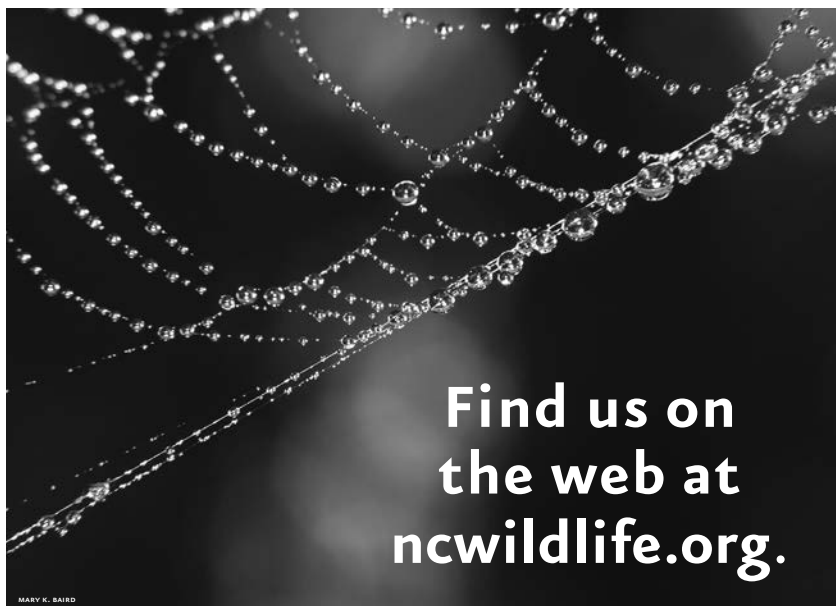
Final season dates will be published in the 2021–2022 regulations digest, available Aug. 1, 2021.

Species	Open Dates
Bear	<p>MOUNTAIN BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT In and west of Surry, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke and Cleveland: Oct. 18 – Nov. 20, 2021 and Dec 13, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022</p> <p>PIEDMONT BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union: Nov. 13, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022</p> <p>Franklin, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Moore, Richmond, Scotland, Vance, Wake, and Warren: Oct. 16, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022</p> <p>Alexander, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Stokes, and Yadkin: Nov. 20, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022</p> <p>COASTAL BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT Zone 1: Dare, Hyde, and Tyrrell: Nov. 13 – Nov. 28 and Dec. 11 – Dec. 26, 2021</p> <p>Zone 2: Camden, Chowan, and Pasquotank: Nov. 12 – Nov. 21 and Dec. 11 – Dec. 26, 2021 Gates, Currituck, and Perquimans: Nov. 13 – Nov. 21 and Dec. 11 – Dec. 26, 2021</p> <p>Zone 3: Beaufort, Bertie, Craven, Hertford, Jones, Martin, and Washington: Nov. 13 – Nov. 21 and Dec. 11 – Dec. 26, 2021</p> <p>Zone 4: Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax, Lenoir, Nash, Northampton, Pitt, Wayne, and Wilson: Nov. 20 – Dec. 19, 2021</p> <p>Zone 5: Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Cumberland, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico (use of dogs for hunting bears prohibited in this county), Pender, Robeson, and Sampson: Nov. 8, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022</p>
Wild Turkey Spring Season (bearded or male turkeys only)	Apr. 10 – May 8, 2021 Apr. 9 – May 7, 2022
Wild Turkey Youth-only Season (bearded or male turkeys only)	Apr. 3 – 9, 2021 Apr. 2 – 8, 2022
Raccoon and Opossum	Oct. 18, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022
Squirrel	Gray and Red Squirrels: Oct. 18, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022 Fox Squirrels: Oct. 18, 2021 – Jan. 31, 2022
Rabbit	Oct. 18, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022
Quail	Nov. 20, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022

Grouse	Oct. 18, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022
Bobcat	Oct. 18, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022
Fox	See “Fox Season Hunting and Trapping Seasons” publication at ncwildlife.org/foxseasons .
Crow	Aug. 4, 2021 – Feb. 26, 2022, June 1, 2022 – July 30, 2022 Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of each week Crows may also be hunted on Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Independence Day; except when these days fall on a Sunday.
Pheasant	Nov. 20, 2021 – Feb. 1, 2022
Trapping	Nov. 1, 2021 – Feb. 28, 2022 in all counties

Deer Seasons

Locations	Type of Season and Dates
Northeastern	Archery: Sept. 11 – Oct. 1, 2021 Blackpowder: Oct. 2 – Oct. 15, 2021 Gun: Oct. 16, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022
Southeastern	Archery: Sept. 11 – Oct. 1, 2021 Blackpowder: Oct. 2 – Oct. 15, 2021 Gun: Oct. 16, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022
Central	Archery: Sept. 11 – Oct. 29, 2021 Blackpowder: Oct. 30 – Nov. 12, 2021 Gun: Nov. 13, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022
Northwestern	Archery: Sept. 11 – Nov. 5, 2021 Blackpowder: Nov. 6 – Nov. 19, 2021 Gun: Nov. 20, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022
Western	Archery: Sept. 11 – Oct. 3, 2021 Blackpowder: Oct. 4 – Oct. 16, 2021 Archery: Oct. 17 – Nov. 21, 2021 Gun: Nov. 22 – Dec. 11, 2021 Archery (Antlered Only): Dec. 12, 2021 – Jan. 1, 2022
Gun: Either-Sex Seasons	Introductory Season: First open Saturday of the applicable gun season. Conservative Season: First 6 open days of the applicable gun season. Moderate Season: First 14 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 regulations digest for list and contact information)	Archery Only: Jan. 15 – Feb. 20, 2022



Purchasing Licenses or Magazine Subscriptions

Call 888-248-6834 to use your MasterCard or Visa to purchase most hunting and fishing licenses. Call 800-786-2721 or go to ncwildlife.org for a subscription to *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine.

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. Subscribe at ncwildlife.org/enews.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1701

Inland Fisheries Division 919-707-0220

Wildlife Management Division 919-707-0050

Land and Water Access Division 919-707-0150

N.C. Wildlife Helpline 866-318-2401

Report Wildlife Violations 800-662-7137

Turn In Poachers (NCWILDTIP) 855-945-3847

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and all wildlife programs are administered for the benefit of all North Carolina citizens without prejudice toward age, sex, race, religion, or national origin. Violations of this pledge may be reported to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Equal Employment Officer, Human Resources, 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, N.C. 27606. Telephone: 919-707-0101.