

Wildlife Management Rule Proposals for 2027-2028

W1. Wildlife Collectors – Possession Limit

15A NCAC 10B .0119 WILDLIFE COLLECTORS

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Specify that a person may not possess more than 4 individuals of any combination of native reptile species (which would limit them to 4 TOTAL native reptiles in their possession), without a license.

JUSTIFICATION

The proposed change improves clarity and reduces uncertainty regarding the number of reptiles allowed to be possessed without a Wildlife Collection License. Previously the Rule could either be interpreted as four reptiles in aggregate or four reptiles of any one species with an undefined number of reptiles in total. The change clarifies that only a total of four reptiles, regardless of species, may be possessed without a license.

W2. White-Tailed Deer – Urban Season

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Modify the Urban Season for deer so municipalities do not have to annually opt into the season. Municipalities only need to enroll once and they will remain in the program until they contact the agency to opt out. Additionally, municipalities would not be required to submit a map.

JUSTIFICATION

Each year, municipalities must re-enroll to be included in the Urban Season. This process puts an administrative burden on participating municipalities and agency staff.

W3. Raccoon – Bag Limit

15A NCAC 10B .0205 RACCOON AND OPOSSUM

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Remove the daily bag limit for raccoon by means of hunting.

JUSTIFICATION

There is no biological reason for a daily bag limit on raccoons.

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W4. Squirrels – Season

15A NCAC 10B .0206 SQUIRRELS

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Open the fall gray and red squirrel season on the Saturday on or nearest October 1st.

JUSTIFICATION

The proposed change adds approximately two weeks to the fall gray and red squirrel season fulfilling constituent requests for an earlier opening of fall Squirrel season. This change more closely aligns the NC season with surrounding states.

W5. Red and Gray Foxes – Season and Bag Limit

15A NCAC 10B .0212 FOXES (GRAY AND RED)

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Clarify that there are daily and season bag limits to the firearm fox season established by G.S. 113-291.4A.

Match fox seasons established in state law (i.e., former G.S. 113-111 as specified by G.S. 113-133.1).

Remove language from rule that creates an archery season on foxes east of I-77.

JUSTIFICATION

When the rule was readopted in 2022, the language was amended in a way that made the bag limit unclear. The origin of the archery season east of I-77 is unknown, but the Commission does not have the authority to establish such a season. The proposed changes align the rule to the applicable statutes.

W6. Coyote & Feral Swine – Artificial Light

15A NCAC 10B .0219 COYOTE

15A NCAC 10B .0223 FERAL SWINE

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Prohibit shining of artificial light from a motorized conveyance from a public road or public road right of way in search of coyotes or feral swine while in possession of a weapon.

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JUSTIFICATION

This proposed change removes a loophole for night deer hunters claiming to hunt coyote or feral swine while shining a light from a vehicle on the highway into a field or woods while in possession of a weapon capable of killing a deer.

W7. Chronic Wasting Disease Management Areas – Sampson County

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

15A NCAC 10B .0502 CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE MANAGEMENT AREAS

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Add Sampson County to the CWD Management Area Rule and remove it from the White-Tailed Deer Rule.

JUSTIFICATION

Sampson County was a CWD surveillance area but now has confirmed positive cases of the disease. Moving the county into the CWD Management Area Rule advances the agency's efforts to slow the spread of the disease.

W8. Designated Bear Management Areas – Running Dogs

15A NCAC 10D .0106 DESIGNATED BEAR MANAGEMENT AREAS

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Change the dates of the restriction on dogs running unleashed on Designated Bear Management Areas. This change will ensure permitted bear hunters can legally hunt with dogs on these areas beginning on the season start date for the Mountain Bear Management Unit (i.e., Saturday on or immediately prior to October 9th; applies to game lands and private land).

JUSTIFICATION

This proposed change corrects an error in the rule that prohibits the running of dogs off leash on Designated Bear Management Areas at the start of the hunting season in the Mountain Bear Management Unit. Current restrictions were applicable to the previous opening day but did not get adjusted when opening day was moved earlier.

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W9. Taking Raptors – Species and Dates

15A NCAC 10D .0106 DESIGNATED BEAR MANAGEMENT AREAS

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CHANGE

Change the dates that nestling raptors may be taken from the wild from May 1 - June 30 to January 1 - July 31 and allow American Kestrels and Great Horned Owls nestlings to be taken.

JUSTIFICATION

Different species of raptors used in falconry have varied nesting times and desired development stages prior to their removal from the wild. Because of this, the current rule, which allows take of raptors from the wild from May 1 – June 30 excludes take of some species. Modifying the dates will expand species available for falconry to include Great Horned Owls and American Kestrels.