



Public Hearings

Applying to 2017–2018
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping Seasons



January 2017

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
ncwildlife.org

State of North Carolina

Roy Cooper, Governor

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
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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 February 2017, 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 2017–2018. The *Regulations Digest* will be available on August 1, 2017 from your licensing agent and on the NCWRC website at 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John L. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

John Litton Clark, Chairman
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

RULE-MAKING PROCESS



Step 1: The public, Commission staff, Commission committees, conservation partners and other stakeholders propose new or amended hunting, fishing, trapping, land management or other regulations.



Step 2: Commission staff consider proposals from conservation, enforcement and management perspectives.



Step 3: Proposals and staff analysis are presented to the Executive Director for his consideration.



Step 4: Proposals are reviewed by Commission committees. Full Commission votes on which proposals to be presented at public hearings.

| Hearing Time: 7 p.m. | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Date | District |
| Mon., Jan. 4 | 4 |
| Wed., Jan. 6 | 5 |
| Thu., Jan. 7 | 6 |

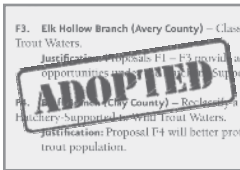
Step 5: The public comments on proposals through an online comment form at ncwildlife.org, e-mails, letters and in person at statewide public hearings.



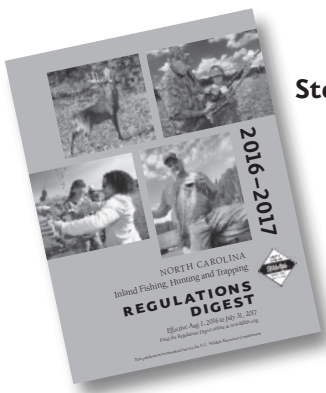
Step 6: The Commission considers comments submitted during the comment period and votes to reject proposals, adopt as presented or adopt in a modified form.



Step 7: Adopted rules are filed with the Rules Review Commission for approval.



Step 8: The Rules Review Commission approves or disapproves rules. Rules that receive 10 or more letters requesting legislative review are delayed pending legislative review.



Step 9: Approved rules are entered into the Administrative Code and written into the *Regulations Digest*.

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, 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 Feb. 1, 2017. You can also comment on regulation proposals during the comment period on the Commission website, 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 2017 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 ncwildlife.org.

Hearing Time: 7 p.m.

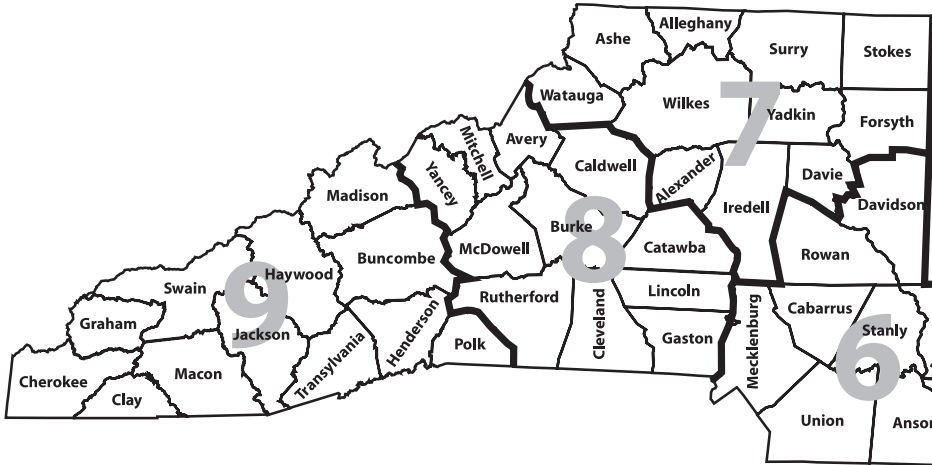
| Date | District | City | Location |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Tue., Jan. 10 | 4 | Dublin | Bladen Community College |
| Wed., Jan. 11 | 5 | Graham | Southern Alamance High School |
| Thu., Jan. 12 | 6 | Albemarle | Stanly Agri-Civic Center |
| Tue., Jan. 17 | 9 | Clyde | Haywood Community College |
| Wed., Jan. 18 | 8 | Morganton | Western Piedmont Community College |
| Thu., Jan. 19 | 7 | Elkin | Elkin High School |
| Tue., Jan. 24 | 1 | Edenton | Chowan County Public Safety Center |
| Wed., Jan. 25 | 2 | New Bern | Craven Community College |
| Thu., Jan. 26 | 3 | Rocky Mount | Nash Community College |

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

The General Assembly declares, through state statutes, which matters of fish, wildlife and land management the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission can regulate through its rules. Some aspects of wildlife and fish management, hunting, fishing and human/wildlife interaction are legislated directly. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appreciates the interest of North Carolina’s sportsmen in the state’s wildlife resources and respectfully considers all suggestions within its authority to change regulations.

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 ncwildlife.org/enews.

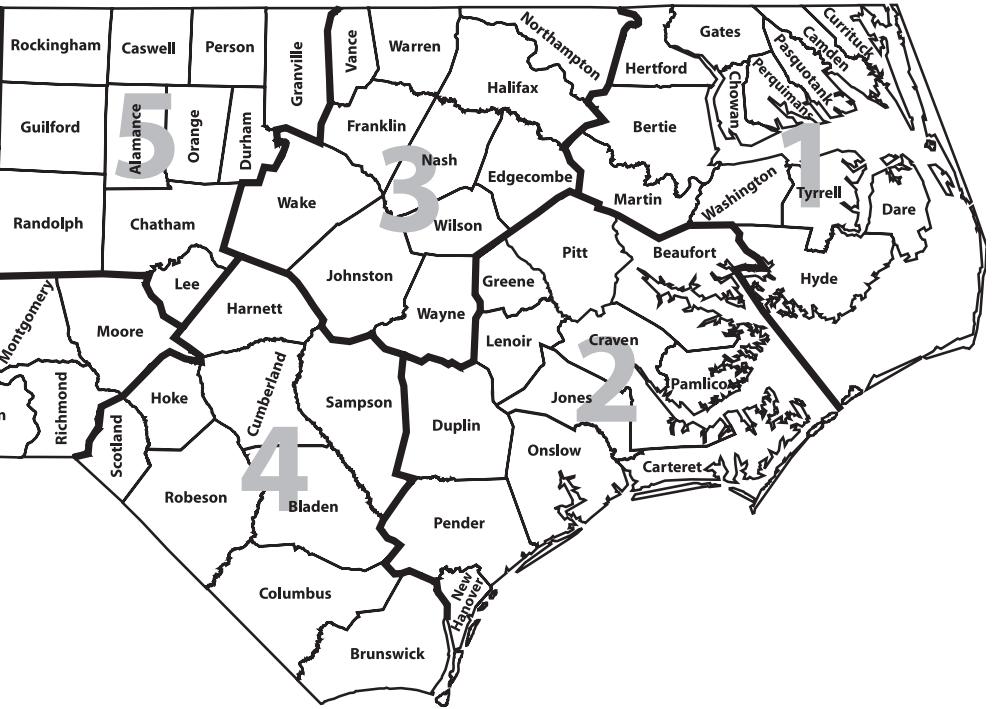
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Districts



Report Wildlife Violations

Toll-Free Number
800-662-7137

In the Raleigh area, call: 919-707-0040



Proposed Changes in Inland Fisheries Regulations for 2017–2018

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

Trout

F1. Designate all undesignated waters on Stone Mountain State Park in Alleghany and Wilkes counties as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Wild Trout Waters. Reclassify Harris Creek from Catch and Release Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters to Wild Trout Waters. The portions of Stone Mountain Creek and East Prong Roaring River currently classified as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters will remain unchanged. The proposed change will add approximately 30 miles of stream to Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The proposed change originated with NC State Parks personnel and will increase angling opportunities within Stone Mountain State Park and reduce possible angler confusion. This proposal includes designating Bullhead and Rich Mountain creeks as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classifying them as Wild Trout Waters. NC State Parks is eliminating current fees and use restrictions associated with these waters. The proposal also reclassifies Harris Creek from Catch and Release Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters to Wild Trout Waters because access to Harris Creek is extremely limited. Harris Creek offers little angling opportunity and does not warrant a separate classification. This proposal will not impact portions of Stone Mountain Creek and East Prong Roaring River that are currently Delayed Harvest Trout Waters.

F2. Designate all waters on Rendezvous Mountain State Forest Game Land in Wilkes County as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Wild Trout Waters. The proposed change will add approximately 10 miles of stream to Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: Wild trout fishing opportunities occur on the new Rendezvous Mountain State Forest Game Land. The default Wild Trout Waters classification will offer protection to all trout populations within the new game land.

F3. Designate approximately 1.0 mile of Basin Creek in Wilkes County from S.R. 1730 bridge to the confluence with Lovelace Creek as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters.

Justification: The section of Basin Creek just above its confluence with Lovelace Creek is currently being stocked despite being undesignated waters. The reclassification of Basin Creek will reflect the section accessible to the public and being stocked.

F4. Modify the lower boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Cove Creek in Watauga County adding approximately 1.8 miles of stream to Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1233 bridge at Zionville to the S.R. 1214 bridge at Sherwood.

Justification: The landowner immediately downstream of the existing Hatchery Supported Trout Waters reach of Cove Creek requested that the designated reach

be extended to include the section adjacent to his property. The proposed change will provide additional angling opportunities on Cove Creek under Hatchery Supported Trout Waters classification.

- F5.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Middle Fork New River in Watauga County removing approximately 1.0 mile of stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1539 and U.S. 321 to the South Fork New River.

Justification: The proposed change will clarify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Middle Fork New River, while more accurately reflecting the portion of the stream that is actually stocked and accessible to the public. The proposal will also eliminate possible angler confusion regarding the adjacent section of Middle Fork New River located on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

- F6.** Modify the upper boundary of Catch and Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters on Laurel Creek in Watauga County and exclude all tributaries removing approximately 9.5 miles of stream from Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the confluence of North and South Fork Laurel creeks to Elk Creek, excluding tributaries.

Justification: The landowners surrounding the upper reach of Laurel Creek no longer wish to allow public fishing access and have requested that the section be removed from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

- F7.** Remove 7.4 miles of Dugger Creek in Watauga and Wilkes counties from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification: The landowners surrounding Dugger Creek no longer wish to allow public fishing access and have requested that the stream be removed from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

- F8.** Amend the definition of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters to more clearly indicate that only lures having one single hook may be used.

Justification: The proposed change will address confusion over the type of hook that can be used in Delayed Harvest Trout Waters and make the definition consistent with the wording used in all other Public Mountain Trout Waters classifications where only single hook lures can be used.

- F9.** Define youth as a person under 18 years of age.

Justification: New federal rules enable states to define youth as persons under 18 years of age for the purpose of allowing youth to hunt on Youth Waterfowl Days. The Commission has chosen to adopt this change which will now allow 16 and 17 year olds to hunt on Youth Waterfowl Days, in addition to youth 15 years of age and under. In order to be consistent and expand youth opportunities, the Commission is proposing to raise the age of youth allowed to fish during the Youth-only Delayed Harvest Trout Water Season to under 18. Currently youth must be under 16 to fish during this season. Under this proposal, licensing requirements do not change.

Black Bass

F10. Modify the exception to the general statewide regulation for black bass in Lake Mattamuskeet and associated canals in Hyde County by increasing the minimum size limit of 14 inches to 16 inches and allowing only one fish greater than 20 inches to be possessed. The daily creel limit will remain 5 fish.

Justification: Annual assessments by NCWRC biologists of Largemouth Bass population characteristics in the lake and its associated canals indicate that few Largemouth Bass greater than age 4 are present. Age and growth analysis confirms that Largemouth Bass at Lake Mattamuskeet reach 16 inches by age 4. A creel survey conducted at Lake Mattamuskeet in 2014 indicated a relatively high harvest rate of 34% for Largemouth Bass, most of which were 16-20 inches. Because spawning success and recruitment of Largemouth Bass is highly variable at Lake Mattamuskeet, Largemouth Bass could be overexploited at the current minimum size limit. The proposed change is intended to increase the number of larger and older Largemouth Bass in Lake Mattamuskeet. Allowing only one fish over 20 inches to be possessed will protect larger bass while also allowing for occasional trophy harvest.

Striped Bass and Bodie Bass (Hybrid Striped Bass)

F11. Modify the exception to the general statewide regulation for Striped Bass in inland fishing waters of the Neuse, Pungo and Tar-Pamlico rivers by increasing the minimum size limit of 18 inches to 26 inches. The daily creel limit (2 per day) and harvest season (October 1–April 30) will not change.

Justification: Annual assessments by NCWRC biologists of Striped Bass population characteristics in the Neuse and Tar rivers continue to document high mortality, truncated size and age structures, and minimal natural recruitment. The proposed change is intended to promote the abundance of larger, older female Striped Bass, which is expected to result in increased egg production.

Crappie

F12. Modify the exception to the general statewide regulation for crappie in Lake Mattamuskeet and associated canals in Hyde County by increasing the minimum size limit of 8 inches to 10 inches. The daily creel limit will remain 20 fish.

Justification: Annual assessments of Black Crappie population characteristics in Lake Mattamuskeet continue to indicate that fast-growing, age-1 fish are reaching the current minimum size limit of 8 inches and are available to harvest. Increasing the minimum size limit to 10 inches will allow these fast-growing fish an additional year of spawning. This is especially important considering few Black Crappie older than age 4 have been observed. Results from the 2014 angler creel survey confirm the popularity of the Black Crappie fishery as indicated by catch and harvest rates (nearly 75%).

White Bass

F13. Modify the general statewide regulations for White Bass by establishing a minimum size limit of 14 inches and reducing the daily creel limit from 25 fish to 10 fish.

Justification: Populations of White Bass across the state, including Lake Tillery, B. Everett Jordan Reservoir, and Falls of the Neuse Reservoir, have declined over the past decade. Recent data from these reservoirs have indicated that White Bass populations are mostly comprised of younger fish and that the potential for overharvest of these younger fish exists. Male White Bass typically are able to reproduce at age 1, while female White Bass are able to reproduce by age 2. The proposed change will allow White Bass the opportunity to spawn at least once before becoming vulnerable to harvest by anglers.

Equipment

F14. Clarify that the taking of nongame fish for bait or personal consumption in inland waters using specific equipment only requires a license that authorizes basic fishing privileges.

Justification: The intent of NCAC 15A 10C .0402 is to allow the use of specific special fishing devices and other equipment which have traditionally been fished recreationally to take nongame fish for bait or personal consumption under any license that authorizes basic fishing privileges. However, the license requirement was inadvertently omitted from the original rule text.

F15. Prohibit the use of Archery Equipment for taking nongame fishes on Lake James from Black Bear Boating Access Area to the NC-221 Business bridge crossing on the Catawba River and the S.R. 1553 (Cannon Rd.) bridge crossing on the North Fork Catawba River in McDowell County from March 1 through May 31.

Justification: The Lake James Muskellunge fishery is very popular, yet the population is sensitive due to low densities and a lack of quality habitat. NCWRC Law Enforcement Officers and local anglers have observed a substantial number of dead Muskellunge with apparent arrow wounds in Lake James near the mouths of Catawba and North Fork Catawba rivers in McDowell County. Muskellunge have a very limited distribution in the reservoir and occupy areas easily exploited by anglers using archery equipment. Bow fishermen target these areas for Common Carp, Grass Carp, and other nongame species. While illegal to target game fish with archery equipment, the size and shape of Muskellunge make them difficult to distinguish while bow fishing and can result in inadvertent shootings. Although Muskellunge reside in the upper Catawba River portion of Lake James year-round, the proposed change protects Muskellunge during the spawning season when they are most vulnerable to archery equipment while maintaining the opportunity to bow fish the remainder of the year.

Reciprocal Fishing License Agreement

F16. Allow bank angling on Lake Calderwood in Graham County under the reciprocal fishing license agreement between North Carolina and Tennessee.

Justification: The proposed change was requested by Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). Lake Calderwood is bisected by the North Carolina/Tennessee State Line and is jointly managed by the NCWRC and TWRA for put-and-take trout fishing. The lake is designated as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classified as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters. Both NCWRC and TWRA stock trout into the reservoir. An existing reciprocal fishing license agreement between the two states allows licensed anglers of either state to fish the entire reservoir from a boat. Angler access to the lake is limited to a boat ramp and a half-mile of shoreline, all of which are located in North Carolina. A Tennessee-licensed angler cannot fish from shore in North Carolina under the existing agreement, even though the same angler could legally fish the same spot in a boat they launched in North Carolina.

Proposed Changes in Wildlife Management Regulations for 2017–2018

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

Deer

H1. Create a third archery season segment in the Western deer season to open the Sunday immediately following the last day of gun season and close January 1 for antlered bucks only.

Justification: This proposal would add about three weeks of additional archery hunting opportunity in the Western deer season and was requested by local hunters. A biological evaluation shows negligible impacts of this proposed change to the deer population in the Western deer season.

Deer and Turkey

H2. Define youth as a person under 18 years of age.

Justification: New federal rules enable states to define youth as persons under 18 years of age for the purpose of allowing youth to hunt on Youth Waterfowl Days. The Commission has chosen to adopt this change which will now allow 16 and 17 year olds to hunt on Youth Waterfowl Days, in addition to youth 15 years of age and under. In order to be consistent and expand youth opportunities, the Commission is proposing to raise the age of youth allowed to hunt on Youth either-sex deer hunts, Youth Deer Hunting Day, and Spring Youth Only Wild Turkey Season to under 18. Currently youth must be under 16 to hunt during those seasons. Under this proposal, licensing requirements do not change.

Bear

H3. Extend the bear hunting season in Brunswick and Columbus counties. Under this proposal, Brunswick and Columbus counties would be moved into the bear hunting season that begins on the second Monday in November and extends to January 1.

Justification: The proposal is at the request of local bear hunters and increases opportunities for bear hunting in Brunswick and Columbus counties and potentially increases bear harvest to achieve the objective of stabilizing the coastal bear population as outlined in the North Carolina Black Bear Management Plan. The proposal would make permanent the temporary rule adopted by the Commission in April 2016 and instituted for the fall 2016 bear season.

H4. Allow the use of unprocessed foods as bait to take bears during the entirety of the bear seasons in the Coastal Plain Bear Management Unit for all hunters. Allow the use of unprocessed food as bait to take bears during the first split (the Monday on or nearest October 15 to the Saturday before Thanksgiving) of the bear season in the Mountain Bear Management Unit. The use of unprocessed foods as bait is allowed on private lands only.

Justification: These proposals would increase the amount of time still hunters have to take bears with the aid of unprocessed foods as bait on private lands and accomplishes two goals:

- Further reduce the inequity between still hunters, who currently have only six days (except in the Piedmont) to use unprocessed foods to take bears, and hunters using dogs, who may strike bears using dogs from sites with unprocessed foods anytime during the open bear season; and
- Potentially increase bear harvest to achieve the objectives of stabilizing the coastal and mountain bear populations as outlined in the North Carolina Black Bear Management Plan.

These proposals would make permanent the temporary rule adopted by the Commission in April 2016 and instituted for the fall 2016 bear season.

Snapping Turtles

H5. Limit the size of turtles that may be collected or possessed to those that are 11 inches or larger.

Justification: This proposal is at the request of a non-profit herpetological conservation group concerned about the continued viability of North Carolina's snapping turtle population. Maryland DNR-sponsored research showed that a minimum size limit of 11 inches for snapping turtles will protect more than 60% of female turtles and improve our conservation efforts for this species.

Crows

H6. Clarify that crows cannot be hunted on Sundays.

Justification: As currently written, the law allows hunting of crows on Christmas and New Year's Day even though this is in conflict with G.S. 103-2(a)(2) which states that "Hunting of migratory birds on Sunday is prohibited." Because both Christmas and New Year's Day shift with the calendar, they may occur on Sundays approximately once every seven years. This proposal clarifies that crows may not be hunted on Christmas and New Year's Day when those holidays occur on Sundays.

Big Game Harvest Reporting

H7. Eliminate the use of paper Big Game Harvest Record sheets. Hunters would report big game harvests via electronic means, either phone or Internet. Clarify that any hunter validating a deer harvest with a Commission-issued DMAP tag shall record and maintain the issued authorization number to serve as proof of registration.

Justification: Discontinuing the use of paper Big Game Harvest Record Sheets for registering deer and bear harvests will further improve efficiency, accuracy, timeliness and effectiveness of the big game harvest reporting system. This proposal will complete the conversion of big game harvest reporting that began with turkey harvests in 2003 to an electronic registration system resulting in the following benefits to customers and the agency:

- Complete and real-time harvest registration verifications for customers;
- Improve customer Big Game Harvest Report Card (BGHRC) replacement and reprint services;
- Improve data accuracy;
- Increase adaptability to customer and informational needs; and
- Reduce agency costs.

Trapping

H8. Allow trappers to use unused tags purchased in one season during the next season.

Justification: The sale of fur tags in North Carolina is not used to determine annual harvests. This proposal would reduce the regulatory burden on trappers.

Proposed Changes in Game Land Regulations for 2017–2018

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

Bear

- G1.** Add Columbus County to the rule defining Green Swamp Bear Sanctuary.
Justification: Existing rule currently identifies the location of Green Swamp Bear Sanctuary as Brunswick County. This modification is necessary to clarify that a small portion of Green Swamp Bear Sanctuary also exists in Columbus County.

Game Lands – Regulations Applying to Game Lands Generally

- G2.** Define youth as a person under 18 years of age.
Justification: New federal rules enable states to define youth as persons under 18 years of age for the purpose of allowing youth to hunt on Youth Waterfowl Days. The Commission has chosen to adopt this change which will now allow 16 and 17 year olds to hunt on Youth Waterfowl Days, in addition to youth 15 years of age and under. In order to be consistent and expand youth opportunities, the Commission is proposing to raise the age of youth allowed to participate in Youth hunts on game lands to under 18. Currently youth must be under 16 to participate. Under this proposal, licensing requirements do not change.
- G3.** On game lands owned by the State of NC, where NCWRC is the primary custodian, limit consecutive nights stay on designated camping areas to a maximum of 14 days within any 30-day period from May 1–August 31.
Justification: Homesteading has become a problem that intermittently arises at designated camping areas. This creates problems regarding trash accumulation, human waste disposal, disturbance of other game lands users and adjacent landowners, and limits opportunities for other users who want to camp in these areas. This proposal will provide a basis for addressing this situation and help facilitate a better user experience on designated camping areas.

Game Lands – Regulations Applying to Specific Game Lands

- G4.** Modify the deer either-sex season on Bullard and Branch Hunting Preserve in Robeson County from Moderate to Maximum.
Justification: This proposal will align the gun either-sex deer season on this game land with the either-sex season that applies elsewhere in Robeson County. There is no biological justification for managing this game land under an either-sex structure that differs from that applicable to surrounding lands.

G5. Except for hunters engaged in the act of hunting, restrict the use of bicycles to Sundays only from September 1–May 14 on Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land.

Justification: Per the terms of a long-standing agreement, signs posted on designated mountain bike trails at Butner-Falls of Neuse Game Land indicate that riding is limited to Sundays only from September 1–May 14. However, riding is frequently occurring on other days within this timeframe. Codifying this restriction will provide a basis for enforcing the existing agreement and reduce conflicts with other user groups.

G6. Remove NCAC text which establishes Cherokee Game Land in Ashe County.

Justification: Cherokee Game Land is currently separated from Pond Mountain Game Land by a single property which has been offered to NCWRC as a donation. After the donation transaction is completed, there will be no need to manage these contiguous tracts as separate game lands. The current Cherokee Game Land and the donated parcel will be combined and managed as part of Pond Mountain Game Land.

G7. Establish Hill Farm Game Land in Stokes County as a Permit Only Area.

Justification: The Wildlife Resources Commission is working in partnership with the Piedmont Land Conservancy to acquire 156 acres of property bordering the Dan River in northwestern Stokes County. Adding this property to the game land program as a permit only area will ensure quality user experiences and will minimize the potential for conflicts among various user groups and adjacent property owners.

G8. Remove the permit requirement for hunting deer and bear on Pond Mountain Game Land in Ashe County.

Justification: At the time of acquisition, Pond Mountain Game Land contained a large Christmas tree farm totaling approximately 500 acres. A lease agreement was established with the former owners, to include permit restrictions for deer and bear, to address safety and security concerns associated with harvesting the remaining trees. All harvesting operations are now complete and there is no longer any justification to continue permit requirements for taking deer or bear on this game land.

G9. Establish Rendezvous Mountain State Forest Game Land in Wilkes County as a three-day-per-week area with a conservative either-sex deer season and prohibit bear hunting.

Justification: The NC Forest Service wishes to enroll approximately 2,400 acres of the 3,170-acre Rendezvous Mountain State Forest in the Game Lands Program as a three-day-per-week game land and has requested that bear hunting be prohibited due to relatively small tract sizes, limited points of access, and potential for conflicts with adjacent landowners.

G10. Modify the deer either-sex season on Robeson County Game Land in Robeson County from Moderate to Maximum.

Justification: This proposal will align the gun either-sex deer season on this game land with the either-sex season that applies elsewhere in Robeson County. There is no biological justification for managing this game land under an either-sex structure that differs from that applicable to surrounding lands.

G11. Restrict the use of vessels on managed waterfowl impoundments on Suggs Mill Pond Game Land to permitted waterfowl hunters only from November 1 – March 15, and except for Sundays, apply the same restriction to Suggs Mill Pond Lake and Little Singletary Lake from November 1–January 31.

Justification: This proposed change will continue to allow multiple uses of game land resources, while also reducing the potential for user conflicts, minimizing disturbance to waterfowl, and increasing the margin of safety during waterfowl hunting seasons.

G12. Prohibit target shooting on Uwharrie Game Land, except on the Flintlock Valley Shooting Range.

Justification: This proposed change will improve overall safety and reduce undesirable impacts to game land, game land users, and adjacent landowners by restricting recreational shooting to a safe location that is specifically designed and constructed for that purpose.

G13. Establish Voice of America Game Land in Beaufort County as a Permit Only Area.

Justification: Adding this new 2,818-acre acquisition to the game land program as a permit only game land will provide for quality user experiences.

G14. Establish the William H. Silver Game Land in Haywood County as a six-day-per-week game land with an introductory either-sex deer season.

Justification: The Conservation Fund (TCF) conveyed the 561-acre Sheepback Mountain property in the Maggie Valley area of Haywood County to the State of North Carolina as a bargain sale in March 2016. Another 409-acre tract was donated in August 2016. TCF has also committed to convey three additional tracts in the near future in a combination of donations and bargain sale transactions. These properties will be managed as a new game land complex totaling 1,925 acres.

Proposed Rules in Law Enforcement Regulations for 2017–2018

The following additions to law enforcement regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

D1. Establish Commission rules required to implement the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (WVC). Rule components include:

- Administrative and procedural guidelines necessary to carry out the WVC, specifically referencing the Compact Operations Manual and North Carolina General Statute 113-300.6;
- Standards and conditions for processing and resolving citations issued to non-residents who commit misdemeanor hunting, fishing, or trapping violations in North Carolina and fail to comply with terms of their citation(s);
- Standards and conditions for administrative suspensions of a resident's hunting, fishing, or trapping licenses due to failure to comply with the terms of a citation in another WVC member state, and specific requirements for resolving citations and reinstating North Carolina license privileges;
- Standards for reviewing resident hunting, fishing, or trapping license suspensions received in other WVC member states that are the result of a conviction or accumulation of convictions of wildlife violations;
- Standards for reporting resident and non-resident license suspension information to other WVC member states; and
- Procedure for appealing the suspension of a North Carolina hunting, fishing, or trapping license under the WVC through the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Justification: The North Carolina Legislature adopted the WVC in 2008, which requires the Wildlife Resources Commission and Marine Fisheries Commission to adopt rules necessary to carry out its purpose. The WVC creates a way for member states to: (1) Promote compliance of hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations in their respective states; and (2) Provide for the fair and impartial treatment of persons committing wildlife violations in member states.

2017–2018 Season Dates

The Commission provides this table of upcoming season dates for planning purposes ONLY. Final season dates are published in the *2017–2018 Regulations Digest*, available Aug. 1, 2017.

| Species | Open Dates |
|---|---|
| Bear | MOUNTAIN BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT In and west of Surry, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke and Cleveland: Oct. 16–Nov. 18, 2017 and Dec. 11, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| | PIEDMONT BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties: Nov. 11, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| | Franklin, Harnett, Johnston, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Scotland, Vance, Wake and Warren counties: Oct. 14, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| | Alexander, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Stokes, and Yadkin counties: Nov. 18, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| | COASTAL BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT Beaufort, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Dare, Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne, and Wilson counties: Nov. 13–18, 2017 and Dec. 11–23, 2017 |
| | Bertie, Currituck, Gates, Hertford and Perquimans counties: Nov. 11–18, 2017 and Dec. 11–23, 2017 |
| | Bladen, Brunswick*, Carteret, Columbus*, Cumberland, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender and Sampson counties: Nov. 13, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| Robeson county: Dec. 4–23, 2017 | |
| Wild Turkey Spring Season <i>(bearded or male turkeys only)</i> | Apr. 8–May 6, 2017 Apr. 14–May 12, 2018 |
| Wild Turkey Youth-only Season <i>(bearded or male turkeys only)</i> | Apr. 1–7, 2017 Apr. 7–13, 2018 |
| Raccoon and Opossum | Oct. 16, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 |
| Squirrel | Gray and Red Squirrel: Oct. 16, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 Fox Squirrel: Oct. 16, 2017–Dec. 31, 2017 in selected counties |
| Rabbit | Nov. 18, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Quail | Nov. 18, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 |
| Grouse | Oct. 16, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 |
| Bobcat | Oct. 16, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 |
| Fox | See “Fox Season Hunting and Trapping Seasons” publication at ncwildlife.org. |
| Crow | Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of each week between June 7, 2017 and Feb. 28, 2018 plus Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and July 4th. Except crows may not be hunted on Sundays. |
| Pheasant | Nov. 11, 2017–Feb. 1, 2018 |
| Trapping | Dec. 1, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 in and east of Hertford, Bertie, Martin, Pitt, Greene, Lenior, Duplin, Pender and New Hanover counties Nov. 1, 2017–Feb. 28, 2018 in all other counties |

Deer Seasons

| Locations | Type of Season and Dates |
|---|---|
| Eastern | Bow and Arrow: Sept. 9–Sept. 29, 2017 Blackpowder: Sept. 30–Oct. 13, 2017 Gun: Oct. 14, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| Central | Bow and Arrow: Sept. 9–Oct. 27, 2017 Blackpowder: Oct. 28–Nov. 10, 2017 Gun: Nov. 11, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| Northwestern | Bow and Arrow: Sept. 9–Nov. 3, 2017 Blackpowder: Nov. 4–Nov. 17, 2017 Gun: Nov. 18, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 |
| Western | Bow and Arrow: Sept. 9–Oct. 1; Oct. 15–Nov. 19, 2017; Dec. 10, 2017–Jan. 1, 2018 (anteder deer only)* Blackpowder: Oct. 2–Oct. 14, 2017 Gun: Nov. 20–Dec. 9, 2017 |
| 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. 13–Feb. 17, 2018 |

*Changes since last year

Notes

Helpful Phone Numbers

| | |
|--|---|
| Big Game Harvest Reporting | 800-I-GOT-ONE (800-446-8663) |
| Boating Access Areas | 919-707-0150 |
| Boating Safety Course Information | 919-707-0030 |
| Boater Safety Education–Replacement Certificates | 888-248-6834 |
| Enforcement Operations Office | 919-707-0030 |
| Engineering Section | 919-707-0150 |
| Human Resources | 919-707-0101 |
| Hunter Safety Course Information | 919-707-0170 |
| Hunter Safety Education–Replacement Certificates | 888-248-6834 |
| Inland Fisheries Division | 919-707-0220 |
| Land and Water Access Section | 919-707-0150 |
| 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 |
| Regulation Information | 919-707-0030 |
| Vessel Registration and Titling | 800-628-3773 |
| Violations Reporting | 800-662-7137 919-707-0040 in the Raleigh area 800-662-7137vTTY* |
| | <i>*(TTY machine available for people with hearing disabilities)</i> |
| Wildlife Calendar | 866-945-3746 |
| Wildlife Education Division | 919-707-0170 |
| <i>Wildlife in North Carolina Magazine</i> | 800-786-2721 |
| Wildlife Management Division | 919-707-0050 |



Purchasing Licenses or Magazine Subscriptions Using MasterCard or Visa

Call 888-248-6834 to use your MasterCard or Visa to purchase most hunting and fishing licenses. Call 800-786-2721 for a subscription to *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine. Have your credit card, a pen and paper handy before calling.

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 Section 919-707-0150

The 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, NC 27606. Telephone 919-707-0101.

Visit the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission online at ncwildlife.org.

COVER PHOTO BY THOMAS HARVEY/NCWRC

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 ncwildlife.org/enews.

Additional Comments:



PUBLIC HEARING RECORD FORM

_____ / _____
WRC CUSTOMER NUMBER **DISTRICT**

_____ / _____ / _____ / _____
LAST NAME **FIRST NAME** **MIDDLE INITIAL** **SUFFIX**

_____ / _____
BIRTH DATE **PHONE NUMBER**

ADDRESS

_____ / _____ / _____
CITY **ZIP CODE** **COUNTY**

E-MAIL ADDRESS

Please check “agree” or “disagree” for the proposals below.
 If you have no opinion do not check a box.

Additional comments can be written on the back of this form. Please tear off your record form and give it to a Commission staff person at the end of the hearing.

| AGREE | DISAGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| F1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G3 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G4 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G5 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G6 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G7 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F8 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | H8 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G8 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F9 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | G9 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | AGREE | DISAGREE | | G10 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F11 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | D1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G11 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F12 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | G12 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F13 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | G13 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F14 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | G14 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F15 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |
| F16 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |