



# Public Hearings

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Applying to 2015–2016  
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping Seasons



**January 2015**

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission  
[ncwildlife.org](http://ncwildlife.org)

**State of North Carolina**

Pat McCrory, Governor

**Department of  
Environment and Natural Resources**

John E. Skvarla, III, Secretary

**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 March 2015, 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 2015–2016. The *Regulations Digest* will be available on Aug. 1, 2015 from your licensing agent and on the NCWRC website at [ncwildlife.org](http://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, appearing to read "James Cogdell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James Cogdell, Chairman  
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

# To Sportsmen Attending Regulations Public Hearings

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*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](http://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. 8, 2015. You can also comment on regulation proposals during the comment period on the Commission website, [ncwildlife.org](http://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 2015 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](http://ncwildlife.org).*

## Hearing Time: 7 p.m.

<b>Date</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Location</b>
Tue., Jan. 6	4	Dublin	Bladen Community College
Wed., Jan. 7	5	Graham	Alamance County Courthouse
Thu., Jan. 8	6	Norwood	South Stanly High School
Tue., Jan. 13	9	Murphy	Tri-County Community College
Wed., Jan. 14	8	Morganton	Municipal Auditorium
Thu., Jan. 15	7	Wilkesboro	The John A. Walker Center, Wilkes Community College
Tue., Jan. 20	1	Edenton	Swain Auditorium
Wed., Jan. 21	2	New Bern	Craven County Courthouse
Thu., Jan. 22	3	Smithfield	Johnston Community College

## Limits to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Rulemaking 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](http://ncwildlife.org/enews).

# 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

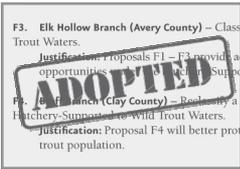
**Step 5:** The public comments on proposals through an on-line comment form at [ncwildlife.org](http://ncwildlife.org), e-mails, letters and in person at statewide public hearings.



**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*.

# North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Districts

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**Report Wildlife Violations**

Toll-Free Number  
**800-662-7137**

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



# Proposed Changes in Fishing Regulations for 2015–2016

*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.** Reformat the structure of 15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters.

**Justification:** This is an administrative change to simplify the structure of 15A NCAC 10C .0205 Public Mountain Trout Waters. Currently, the format of this section of the N.C. Administrative Code is cumbersome and difficult for the reader to navigate. This proposal will establish a consistent format that presents county-specific information in alphabetical order. This format will be simpler and more easily understood by the public. In addition it will be easier to handle administratively during the rule-making process and less prone to human error. This rule is amended annually as waters are added to or removed from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

- F2.** Designate approximately 3.6 miles of Lovills Creek in Surry County from the U.S. 52 Business bridge to the Ararat River as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters.

**Justification:** The proposed change will provide additional public mountain trout fishing opportunities under the Hatchery Supported Trout Waters classification. The City of Mt. Airy maintains an existing greenway alongside a portion of Lovills Creek and is in the process of extending the greenway along the creek to its confluence with the Ararat River. The trail network makes Lovills Creek highly visible and accessible to the angling public.

- F3.** Designate approximately 2.2 miles of the Tuckasegee River in Swain County from the U.S. 19 bridge to the Slope Street bridge as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters.

**Justification:** The proposed change will provide additional public mountain trout angling opportunities under the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters classification. This portion of the Tuckasegee River runs through Bryson City. The Town of Bryson City and Swain County have coordinated public access to this reach of the river.

- F4.** Designate approximately 0.6 mile of the Cane River in Yancey County from Blackberry Ridge Road to the downstream boundary of Cane River County Park as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters.

**Justification:** The proposed change will provide additional public mountain trout angling opportunities under the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters classification. Cane River County Park, which is owned and operated by Yancey County, borders the entire length of this reach of the river. The park makes the reach highly accessible to the angling public.

**F5.** Designate 6.0 miles of streams on Pond Mountain Game Land in Ashe County as Public Mountain Trout Waters and classify as Wild Trout Waters.

**Justification:** The proposed change will provide additional public mountain trout angling opportunities under the Wild Trout Waters classification.

**F6.** Clarify the boundaries of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on South Fork New River at Todd Island Park in Ashe County. The designated reach will be from the upstream end of Todd Island to the S.R. 1351 bridge.

**Justification:** This is an administrative proposal to clarify the reach of the South Fork New River designated as Delayed Harvest Trout Waters. The reach is currently defined as “Todd Island Park”; however, it is unclear to anglers whether the parking area and canoe launch located downstream of the S.R. 1351 bridge is part of the designated reach. The proposed change clarifies that the parking area and canoe launch is downstream of the reach, and anglers putting in or fishing at the canoe launch are not subject to the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters regulations.

**F7.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Stecoah Creek in Graham County, allowing 1.8 miles on game land to default to Wild Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the upper Nantahala Game Land boundary to Lake Fontana.

**Justification:** The proposed change will reclassify the designated reach to accurately reflect the portion of Stecoah Creek that is actually being stocked. No stocking locations will be lost as a result of this change. The proposed change will more clearly define the boundaries of this section of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters.

**F8.** Modify the upper boundary of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on Little River in Alleghany County removing approximately 1.0 mile of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1133 bridge to 275 yards downstream of the intersection of S.R. 1128 and S.R. 1129.

**Justification:** The proposed change will modify the designated reach to accurately reflect the portion of the Little River that is actually accessible to the public and being stocked. No stocking locations will be lost as a result of this change.

***The justification for proposals F9–F22 follows the description of proposal F22.***

**F9.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Big Laurel Creek in Ashe County removing approximately 7.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1315 bridge to the confluence with the North Fork New River.

**F10.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Beaver Creek in Ashe County removing approximately 2.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from N.C. 221 to the South Fork New River.

**F11.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Old Fields Creek in Ashe County removing approximately 2.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from N.C. 221 to the South Fork New River.

**F12.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Valley River in Cherokee County removing 3.1 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters and allowing 0.5 mile on Nantahala Game Land to default to Wild Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from S.R. 1359 to the U.S. 19 Business bridge in Murphy.

**F13.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Tusquitee Creek in Clay County removing 3.2 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters and allowing 0.7 mile on Nantahala Game Land to default to Wild Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from Compass Creek to the lower S.R. 1300 bridge.

**F14.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Tulula Creek in Graham County removing 3.1 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters and allowing 1.0 mile on Nantahala Game Land to default to Wild Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from S.R. 1201 to the lower bridge on S.R. 1275.

**F15.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Tuckasegee River in Jackson County removing 1.0 mile of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from John Brown Branch to the downstream N.C. 107 bridge.

**F16.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Scott Creek in Jackson County removing 3.5 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from Dark Ridge Creek to the Tuckasegee River.

**F17.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Savannah Creek in Jackson County removing 1.0 mile of Public Mountain Trout Waters and allowing 0.4 mile on Nantahala Game Land to default to Wild Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from downstream of S.R. 1300 bridge to Cagle Branch.

**F18.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Nantahala River in Macon County removing 2.4 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from Dicks Creek to Whiteoak Creek.

**F19.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Meadow Fork in Madison County removing 3.0 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters and allowing 0.2 mile on Pisgah Game Land to default to Wild Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from S.R. 1165 to Spring Creek.

**F20.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Middle Fork French Broad River in Transylvania County removing 1.0 mile of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the upstream U.S. 178 bridge to the French Broad River.

**F21.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Meat Camp Creek in Watauga County removing 1.9 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1340 bridge at S.R. 1384 intersection to N.C. 194.

**F22.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Stony Fork in Watauga County removing 2.4 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1500 bridge at S.R. 1505 intersection to the Wilkes County line.

**Justification:** Proposals F9–F22 will modify the designated reaches to accurately reflect the portion of stream that is actually accessible to the public and being stocked. No stocking locations will be lost as a result of these changes.

**F23.** Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Broad River in Henderson County removing 0.1 mile from Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the end of S.R. 1611 to the Rutherford County line.

**Justification:** The landowner at the upper Hatchery Supported Trout Waters boundary on the Broad River requested that trout no longer be stocked on his property. One stocking location will be lost as a result of the proposed change.

**F24.** Modify the boundaries of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Laurel Creek in Watauga County removing 3.5 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be from the S.R. 1123 bridge at S.R. 1157 intersection to the Watauga River.

**Justification:** The proposed change will modify the designated reach to accurately reflect the portion of Laurel Creek that is actually accessible to the public and being stocked. Two of 21 stocking locations on Laurel Creek will be eliminated as a result of the proposed change.

**F25.** Remove a 0.8 mile section of the unnamed tributary of Three Top Creek on Three Top Mountain Game Land in Ashe County from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

**Justification:** The section of Three Top Mountain Game Land on which the unnamed tributary of Three Top Creek is located has been sold and was removed from the Commission's game land program as of May 2014.

**F26.** Remove 2.5 miles of Jones Creek in Avery County from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

**Justification:** Jones Creek is currently designated as Wild Trout. Adjacent properties are posted against trespass, and the creek is not accessible to the public.

**F27.** Allow night fishing in Wild Trout Waters (including Catch and Release/Artificial Flies Only Trout Waters, Catch and Release/Artificial Lures Only Trout Waters, and Wild Trout/ Natural Bait Waters) and Public Mountain Trout Waters on game lands.

**Justification:** The proposed change will increase angling opportunities, while reducing regulatory complexity. There is not a biological justification for prohibiting night angling in Public Mountain Trout Waters. Night fishing is currently allowed in all Hatchery Supported Trout Waters, Delayed Harvest Trout Waters, and Special Regulation Trout Waters not located on game lands and a select number of Public Mountain Trout Waters located on game lands. This proposal will reduce angler confusion by establishing consistency across all regulatory classifications and locations.

**F28.** Allow the harvest of trout in undesignated waters from March 1 until 7 a.m. on the first Saturday in April.

**Justification:** The proposed change will increase angling opportunities, while reducing regulatory complexity. Currently, anglers fishing in undesignated waters are not required to have a fishing license that includes the trout fishing privilege and are allowed to fish year round (no closed season). However, anglers are unable to possess trout in undesignated waters during the closed season of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters (March 1 until 7 a.m. on the first Saturday in April).

**F29.** Reformat the structure of 15A NCAC 10C .0316(e) Trout.

**Justification:** This is an administrative proposal to reformat the structure of 15A NCAC 10C .0316(e). Currently, the format of this section does not reflect the intent of Special Regulation Trout Waters which is to provide watercourse-specific season, size, and creel limits. This proposal will establish a format that allows watercourse-specific information to be presented.

## **Crappie**

**F30.** Remove the 8-inch minimum size limit and the 20-fish daily creel limit for crappie on the South Yadkin River downstream of Cooleemee Dam, Yadkin River downstream from Idols Dam, High Rock Lake, and Tuckertown Lake.

**Justification:** High Rock Lake and Tuckertown Lake contain crappie populations that are dominated by fish less than eight inches in total length. Recent surveys in both reservoirs indicate that only 10% of the crappie is available to harvest by anglers. The removal of the minimum size and daily creel limits will allow anglers to harvest these smaller fish which should reduce competition for food resources for the remaining fish and ultimately improve average size of crappie in both reservoirs.

## **Striped Bass and Hybrid Striped Bass**

**F31.** Modify the general statewide regulation for Striped Bass and its hybrids by increasing the minimum size limit from 16 inches to 20 inches and reducing the daily creel limit from eight fish in aggregate allowing two fish to be retained less than 16 inches to four fish with no exception. Reservoirs affected include High Rock Lake, Tuckertown Lake, Badin Lake, Lake Tillery, Blewett Falls Reservoir, Hiwassee Reservoir, and W. Kerr Scott Reservoir.

**Justification:** Anglers have requested a minimum size limit of 20 inches and a daily creel limit of four fish be implemented for Striped Bass on High Rock Lake, Tuckertown Lake, Badin Lake, Lake Tillery, and Blewett Falls Reservoir. Growth and condition data for Striped Bass from these reservoirs support an increase in the minimum size limit and a decrease in the daily creel limit. With this proposed change in conjunction with proposal F32, the current general statewide regulation will be obsolete. This proposal will simplify the regulations for Striped Bass and its hybrids.

**F32.** Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for Striped Bass and its hybrids in Arrowhead Lake (Anson Co.), High Rock Pond (Caswell Co.), Moss Lake, Mountain Island Reservoir, Oak Hollow Lake, Lake Thom-A-Lex, Lake Townsend, and Salem Lake by decreasing the daily creel limit from eight fish in aggregate allowing two fish to be retained less than 16 inches to four fish with no exception. The minimum size limit will remain 16 inches.

**Justification:** Arrowhead Lake, High Rock Pond, Moss Lake, Oak Hollow Lake, Lake Thom-a-Lex, Lake Townsend, and Salem Lake are stocked with hybrid Striped Bass. Mountain Island Reservoir is stocked with Striped Bass, but hybrid Striped Bass are stocked upstream in Lake Norman. Maintaining the existing 16-inch minimum size limit is necessary due to overall lower growth potential of hybrid Striped Bass. Decreasing the daily creel limit will allow more fish to remain in the reservoirs for anglers to catch. Regulations for Striped Bass and its hybrids will also be simplified as all reservoirs will have a 4-fish daily creel limit except for John H. Kerr Reservoir.

## **American Eel**

**F33.** Clarify that American Eel less than nine inches cannot be taken or possessed, regardless of origin, while boating on or fishing in any inland fishing waters.

**Justification:** Clarification is needed to aid the enforcement of the new size and creel limits (effective August 1, 2014) and to prevent the illegal harvest of American Eel. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission recommended coastwide changes to recreational size and creel limits within *Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel*. These changes are necessary after recent stock assessment findings indicated the American Eel population in U.S. waters is depleted.

## **Equipment**

**F34.** Clarify the definitions of set-hooks, jug-hooks, and trotlines. A set-hook is a fishing device consisting of a single line having no more than three hooks that is attached at one end only to a stationary object. A jug-hook is a fishing device consisting of a single line having no more than three hooks that is attached at one end only to a float. A trotline is a fishing device consisting of a horizontal common line having multiple hooks attached. The proposed change will also clarify that set-hooks, jug-hooks, and trotlines without bait or not labeled properly may be removed from the water by wildlife enforcement officers.

**Justification:** Anglers often inquire about the definitions of set-hooks, jug-hooks, and trotlines and how they can be fished. The proposed change will clarify those definitions for better understanding and rule compliance.

**F35.** Add bow nets to the list of equipment that can be used to take nongame fish for bait or personal consumption in inland fishing waters with an inland fishing license.

**Justification:** The use of bow nets is currently authorized March 1–April 30 in 41 counties in eastern North Carolina and requires a special device license. Under this proposal the use of bow nets to take nongame fish for bait or per-

sonal consumption would remain restricted to the established seasons and waters, but only require an inland fishing license. The fish harvested under this provision cannot be sold. The use of bow nets to harvest nongame fish for the purpose of sale would require a special device license.

### ***Administrative***

**F36.** Clarify in 15A NCAC 10C .0407 that the Neuse River is not located in Granville County.

**Justification:** This is an administrative change. In 15A NCAC 10C .0407 Permitted Devices and Open Seasons, seines are listed for use from July 1 – August 31 in the Neuse River in Granville County. However, the Neuse River does not flow through Granville County.

# Proposed Changes in Wildlife Management Regulations for 2015–2016

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*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 Youth Deer Hunting Day to coincide with National Hunting and Fishing Day, the fourth Saturday in September. On this day, youth under the age of 16 would be able to use all legal weapons to hunt deer of either-sex on both private lands and game lands. Except as otherwise required, youth do not need an accompanying adult. Adults can hunt with or without a youth on this day, but are restricted to the legal weapon for the open season in that area. All hunters would be required to wear blaze orange on this day.

**Justification:** This allows for an additional Saturday of youth hunting opportunities with all legal weapons. Its purpose is to increase interest in deer hunting among youth, potentially increase the youth success, and highlight the need to engage youth in hunting.

**H2.** Extend the gun deer season in Cleveland, Polk, and Rutherford Counties until January 1.

**Justification:** The Commission has received requests to extend the Polk/Rutherford/Cleveland gun deer season past the current ending date of the fifth Saturday after Thanksgiving to January 1, the current closing date of in the North-western Deer Season.

Extending the season will allow hunting to continue at least four days and as many as 10 days past the current closing date. Thanksgiving dates range from November 22nd through November 28th, depending on the calendar. When Thanksgiving falls on November 22nd, the extension will allow 10 more hunting days at the end of the season. Conversely, when Thanksgiving falls on November 28th, the extension will allow four more hunting days in the season.

## Bear

**H3.** Clarify that bait legal for taking bears is a grain, fruit, nut, vegetable, or other material harvested from a plant crop that is not modified from its raw components. Also clarify that bears shall not be taken with the use or aid of any processed food product, extracts of processed food products, or any legal bait that has been modified by extracts or other substances.

**Justification:** In 2013, the Commission adopted a change to the bear rule to allow houndsmen and still hunters to take bears with the use or aid of some baits. This proposed change will clarify which unprocessed food products are legal bait for taking bears.

## *Waterfowl*

**H4.** Eliminate the Gaddy Goose Refuge goose zone and season in Anson County and return this area to the Southern James Bay Hunt Zone for goose hunting.

**Justification:** Reports from local sportsmen that the historically high population of geese on Gaddy Goose Pond was declining prompted the original season closure. Current biological data, however, indicate that the goose population is sufficient for inclusion in the season established for the Southern James Bay Hunt Zone.

**H5.** Allow the shooting of crippled waterfowl from a motorboat under power in those areas described, delineated, and designated as special sea duck areas.

**Justification:** A recent change in the Code of Federal Regulations added North Carolina to the list of states on the Atlantic seaboard that allow the shooting of crippled waterfowl from a motorboat under power in those areas described, delineated, and designated in their respective hunting regulations as special sea duck hunting areas. North Carolina law is now more restrictive than federal code in regards to manner of take because North Carolina prohibits the take of any wild animal or wild bird from a vessel under power. This proposed change would align North Carolina law with federal regulations and aid the ethical and legal dispatch of wounded waterfowl.

## *Trapping*

**H6.** Increase the number of days that the public has to tag bobcat, otters and foxes from up to 10 days after the close of the applicable season to up to 30 days. Establish a time frame of 23 days after the close of the season for the Commission to mail tags to sportsmen.

**Justification:** The current time frame of up to 10 days to affix a tag to bobcat, otter and fox after the close of season does not give hunters and trappers enough time to tag their furs and likely leads to inflated harvest reports due to trappers purchasing “extra” tags so as to not run out.

Changes in how furs are sold require fur to be skinned, fleshed, stretched, and dried before shipment to auction houses. Hunters and trappers now spend more time after season preparing their pelts and would benefit from the extra time to tag these furs.

Establishing a cut-off date for mailing tags will help hunters and trappers better plan their requests.

## *Feral Swine*

**H7.** Allow hunters to use electronic calls to take feral swine.

**Justification:** Electronic calls could increase the successful take of this invasive species. The public has requested expanded use of electronic calls for more species.

# Proposed Changes in Game Land Regulations for 2015–2016

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*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.*

## **Game Lands – Regulations Applying to Game Lands Generally**

**G1.** Define target shooting as “the discharge of a firearm for purposes other than hunting, trapping or self-defense”.

**Justification:** Existing rules currently prohibit target shooting on nine game lands. Proposed rule changes for 2015-16 include restrictions on another 11 related primarily to those game lands in the vicinity of newly developed target shooting facilities. There is currently no language in rule or statute which defines target shooting. Defining the term in rule will clarify existing and future rules related to target shooting and enhance public understanding of the same.

**G2.** Prohibit the use of dogs for taking deer on those portions of game lands posted as “Restricted Deer Hunting Zones”, except as may be otherwise authorized by permit.

**Justification:** During the process of addressing public safety and user conflicts related to the use of dogs for taking deer on a portion of Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land in Bladen County, staff determined that existing game land designations at that time (i.e. Safety Zone, Archery Zone, Restricted Firearms Zones, etc.) were not sufficient to address the concerns at hand without being more restrictive than necessary. This rule will replace the current temporary rule. Adding the permit exception to the permanent rule will allow for additional flexibility and facilitate opportunities to be less restrictive where appropriate.

## **Game Lands – Regulations to Specific Game Lands**

**G3.** Prohibit target shooting on the following game lands, with the exception of designated shooting ranges:

- Angola Bay Game Land (Duplin and Pender counties)
- Cape Fear River Game Land (New Hanover and Pender counties)
- R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell (Caswell County)
- Holly Shelter Game Land (Pender County)
- Nicholson Creek Game Land (Hoke County)
- Rockfish Creek Game Land (Hoke County)
- Sampson County Game Land (Sampson County)
- Sandhills Game Land (Hoke, Moore, Richmond and Scotland counties)
- Stones Creek Game Land (Onslow County)

**Justification:** These game lands are all within a 30-mile radius of developed game land shooting range facilities that are either operational or currently under construction. These restrictions will improve overall safety and reduce undesirable impacts to game land, game land users, and adjacent landowners.

**G4.** Prohibit target shooting on the following game lands:

- Buckridge Game Land (Tyrrell County)
- Buxton Woods Game Land (Dare County)

**Justification:** These game lands are state properties allocated to the N.C. Division of Coastal Management and managed as part of the Commission's game land program under cooperative agreement. Division of Coastal Management rules prohibit target shooting on Coastal Reserve sites. This proposed change will align Commission game land rules with Division of Coastal Management rules.

**G5.** Prohibit horseback riding on Harris Game Land (Chatham, Harnett and Wake counties).

**Justification:** The landowner (Duke Energy) has requested that horseback riding be prohibited.

**G6.** Modify the current rule pertaining to horseback riding on Jordan Game Land (Chatham, Durham, Orange and Wake counties) such that riders, other than youth under 16 years of age, are required to possess a Game Lands License or other license which includes the game lands privilege to ride horses on posted equestrian trails that lie entirely within the game land boundary.

**Justification:** Currently, the only trail posted for horseback riding on Jordan Game Land is the American Tobacco Trail, which is managed by the county jurisdictions under a sublease agreement and is not entirely located on game land. Commission staff is currently working with the equestrian community to develop at least one and possibly two equestrian trails with truck and trailer parking that are contained completely within game land boundaries. The receipts from the required Game Lands License will offset costs associated with the construction and maintenance of the trails and parking areas.

**G7.** Regulate the use of horses on Pee Dee River Game Land (Anson, Montgomery, Richmond, and Stanly counties) by restricting equestrian use to the months of June, July, August, and Sundays the remainder of the year except during the open turkey and deer seasons, on roads which are open and maintained for vehicular traffic.

**Justification:** This proposed change allows equestrian use in a regulated manner that reduces potential user conflicts, increases the margin of safety during hunting seasons, and ensures that environmentally sensitive areas are protected from undesirable impacts.

**G8.** Expand the opportunity for horseback riding on Pond Mountain Game Land in Ashe County, which is currently May 16 through August 31, to also include Sundays throughout the months of September and October.

**Justification:** Participants in the Pond Mountain Game Land Management Plan public input meeting in February 2014 indicated a desire for expanded opportunities to ride horses on this game land during the fall months, particularly September and October. Expanding this use to include Sundays during September and October will provide additional recreational opportunity with no anticipated negative impacts.

**G9.** Amend rules regarding the use of horses on R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land (Caswell County) and Thurmond Chatham Game Land (Alleghany and Wilkes counties) to exempt youth under 16 years of age from the requirement to obtain a Game Lands License or other license containing the game land privilege.

**Justification:** Remove a potential obstacle for youth engaging in non-traditional use of game lands and provide consistency in the exemption of youth from the Game Lands License requirement.

**G10.** Designate Lewis Millpond on Uwharrie Game Land in Montgomery County as a managed waterfowl impoundment and limit waterfowl hunting to three days per week, holidays and opening and closing days.

**Justification:** Lewis Millpond receives heavy hunting pressure for waterfowl and is generally "shot out" very early in the season. Limiting hunting pressure to three days per week will encourage extended waterfowl use and is anticipated to provide additional waterfowl hunting opportunities.

**G11.** Change the opening day of the Deer Archery Season from the Monday on or nearest September 10 to the Saturday on or nearest September 10 on Buffalo Cove Game Land (Caldwell and Wilkes counties) and South Mountains Game Land (Burke, Cleveland, McDowell and Rutherford counties).

**Justification:** In 2014, the Western Deer Archery Season was modified to open on Saturday rather than Monday, but a companion proposal to effect the same change on Buffalo Cove and South Mountains Game Land was overlooked at that time. This change will create a uniform opening day on both private land and game lands, will simplify deer seasons, and will allow for greater participation in the opening day of archery season on these two game lands.

**G12.** Clarify that only people using wildlife to train or run dogs need a hunting license.

**Justification:** This proposed change clarifies license requirements for training dogs, running dogs, and participating in field trials. This clarification, which has been requested by the regulated community, will remove ambiguity in the existing rule and increase consistency of application.

**G13.** Require only active participants in fields trials using wildlife to possess a hunting license (and game land license for field trials taking place on game lands). For commission-sanctioned field trials, the license may be from the participant's state of residence. For all other field trials, the license must be a N.C. hunting license. Define active field trial participant as a person who handles dogs or uses firearms at a field trial.

**Justification:** This proposed change clarifies license requirements for participating in field trials. This clarification, which has been requested by the regulated community, will remove ambiguity in the existing rule and increase consistency of application.

**G14.** Clarify that only judges of commission-sanctioned field trials using wildlife are exempted from the requirement to possess a hunting license. Judges of other types of field trials using wildlife must have a N.C. hunting license.

**Justification:** This proposed change clarifies that only judges in commission-sanctioned

tioned field trials are exempt from license requirements for participating in field trials. This clarification, which has been requested by the regulated community, will remove ambiguity in the existing rule and increase consistency of application.

## Helpful Phone Numbers

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Big Game Harvest Reporting .....	800-I-GOT-ONE (800-446-8663)
Boating Access Areas .....	919-707-0150
Boating Safety Course Information .....	919-707-0031
Boater Safety Education–Replacement Certificates .....	888-248-6834
Conservation Education Division .....	919-707-0170
Enforcement Operations Office .....	919-707-0030
Engineering and Lands Management Division .....	919-707-0150
Hunter Safety Course Information .....	919-707-0031
Hunter Safety Education–Replacement Certificates .....	888-248-6834
Inland Fisheries Division .....	919-707-0220
License Information .....	888-248-6834
License Purchases by Credit Card .....	888-248-6834
Marine Fisheries .....	252-726-7021 800-682-2632
Migratory Bird Hunting Dates & Shooting Hours .....	800-675-0263
Human Resources .....	919-707-0101
Regulation Information .....	919-707-0030
Wildlife Calendar .....	866-945-3746
<i>Wildlife in North Carolina Magazine</i> .....	800-786-2721
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 Management Division .....	919-707-0050

## 2015–2016 Season Dates

The Commission provides this table of upcoming season dates for planning purposes ONLY. Final season dates are published in the 2015–2016 *Regulations Digest*, available Aug. 1, 2015.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Open Dates</b>
<b>Bear</b>	<b>MOUNTAIN BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT</b> In and west of Surry, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke and Cleveland: Oct. 12–Nov. 21, 2015 and Dec. 14, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
	<b>PIEDMONT BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT</b> Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties: Nov. 14, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
	Franklin, Harnett, Johnston, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Scotland, Vance, Wake and Warren counties: Oct. 17, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
	Alexander, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Stokes, and Yadkin counties: Nov. 21, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
	<b>COASTAL BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT</b> Beaufort, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Dare, Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne, and Wilson counties: Nov. 9–14, 2015 and Dec. 14–26, 2015
	Bertie, Currituck, Gates, Hertford and Perquimans counties: Nov. 7–14, 2015 and Dec. 14–26, 2015
	Bladen, Carteret, Cumberland, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender and Sampson counties: Nov. 9, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
Brunswick, Columbus and Robeson counties: Dec. 7–26, 2015	
<b>Wild Turkey Spring Season</b> <i>(bearded or male turkeys only)</i>	Apr. 11–May 9, 2015 Apr. 9–May. 7, 2016
<b>Wild Turkey Youth-only Season</b> <i>(bearded or male turkeys only)</i>	Apr. 4–10, 2015 Apr. 2–8, 2016
<b>Raccoon and Opossum</b>	Oct. 12, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016
<b>Squirrel</b>	<b>Gray and Red Squirrel:</b> Oct. 12, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016 <b>Fox Squirrel:</b> Oct. 12, 2015–Dec. 31, 2015 in selected counties
<b>Rabbit</b>	Nov. 21, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016

<b>Quail</b>	Nov. 21, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016
<b>Grouse</b>	Oct. 12, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016
<b>Bobcat</b>	Oct. 12, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016
<b>Fox</b>	See “Fox Season Hunting and Trapping Seasons” publication at ncwildlife.org.
<b>Crow</b>	Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of each week between June 3, 2015 and Feb. 29, 2016 plus Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and July 4th.
<b>Pheasant</b>	Nov. 14, 2015–Feb. 1, 2016
<b>Trapping</b>	Dec. 1, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016 in and east of Hertford, Bertie, Martin, Pitt, Greene, Lenior, Duplin, Pender and New Hanover counties Nov. 1, 2015–Feb. 29, 2016 in all other counties

## Deer Seasons

<b>Locations</b>	<b>Type of Season and Dates</b>
<b>Eastern</b>	<b>Bow and Arrow:</b> Sept. 12–Oct. 2, 2015 <b>Blackpowder:</b> Oct. 3–Oct. 16, 2015 <b>Gun:</b> Oct. 17, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
<b>Central</b>	<b>Bow and Arrow:</b> Sept. 12–Oct. 30, 2015 <b>Blackpowder:</b> Oct. 31–Nov. 13, 2015 <b>Gun:</b> Nov. 14, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
<b>Northwestern</b>	<b>Bow and Arrow:</b> Sept. 12–Nov. 6, 2015 <b>Blackpowder:</b> Nov. 7–Nov. 20, 2015 <b>Gun:</b> Nov. 21, 2015–Jan. 1, 2016
<b>Western</b>	<b>Bow and Arrow:</b> Sept. 12–Sept. 27 and Oct. 11–Nov. 22, 2015 <b>Blackpowder:</b> Sept. 28–Oct. 10, 2015 <b>Gun:</b> Nov. 23–Dec. 12, 2015
<b>Gun: Either-Sex Seasons</b>	<b>Introductory Season:</b> Last open day of the applicable gun season. <b>Conservative Season:</b> Last six open days of the applicable gun season. <b>Moderate Season:</b> First six open days and last six open days of the applicable gun season. <b>Maximum Season:</b> All open days of the applicable gun season.
<b>Urban Deer Season</b> (open in participating cities only; see <i>Regulations Digest</i> for list and contact information)	<b>Bow and Arrow Only:</b> Jan. 9–Feb. 13, 2016



### **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

Division of Inland Fisheries 919-707-0220

Division of Wildlife Management 919-707-0050

Division of Engineering and Lands Management 919-707-0150

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Visit the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission online at [ncwildlife.org](http://ncwildlife.org).

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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/eneews](http://ncwildlife.org/eneews).

**Additional Comments:**