



Fiscal Note for 2026-2027 Annual Cycle Rule Proposals Wildlife Resources Commission – Wildlife Management

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10B .0502 CWD MANAGEMENT AREAS
15A NCAC 10B .0503 SURVEILLANCE AREA
15A NCAC 10B .0504 DISPOSAL OF CERVID CARCASSES
15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER
15A NCAC 10B .0206 SQUIRRELS

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Fiscal Impact: State Government: Yes
Local Government: Yes
Private Impact: Yes
Substantial Economic Impact: No

Authority: G.S. 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-276.1; 113-291.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-306

BACKGROUND

The wildlife resources of the State belong to the people of the State as a whole, including the enjoyment of these resources (G.S. 113-131(a)). The Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) is tasked with the conservation of wildlife resources of the State (G.S. 143-239). This responsibility includes managing as equitably as possible the various competing interests regarding these resources, including the use and take of such resources (G.S. 113-131.1(a)). The statutes governing wildlife resources are found in Chapter 113, Subchapter IV of the General Statutes, and WRC has been granted rulemaking authority to implement the provisions of these statutes (G.S. 113-134).

As part of its mission, the WRC conducts an annual review of its inland fish, wildlife, and game land regulations to determine whether the rules need to be adjusted in order to accomplish the objectives of managing wildlife resources or Commission property through a biologically sustainable harvest consistent with sound conservation objectives; managing WRC-owned land for the conservation of wildlife resources, and the enjoyment of the public; and implementing legislative directives.

A summary of the proposed rules and rule amendments is shown below, with the full rule text included in Appendix A. The proposed changes will shift or align hunting season dates for white-tailed deer and gray squirrels and update Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) management rules. These proposed changes are intended to help ensure future hunting opportunities and wildlife conservation while minimizing costs to the regulated community.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY RULE

15A NCAC 10B .0502 CWD MANAGEMENT AREAS

15A NCAC 10B .0503 SURVEILLANCE AREA

15A NCAC 10B .0504 DISPOSAL OF CERVID CARCASSES

Chronic wasting disease is managed through both rule and proclamation. When a cervid tests positive for CWD, the WRC is authorized to issue proclamations in accordance with G.S. 113-291.2(a2), to establish and modify Primary Surveillance Area(s) and Secondary Surveillance Area(s) and mandatory sampling requirements for cervids taken in those areas. These actions are augmented with CWD rules which are designed to reduce movement and transmission of the disease.

Proposed rules .0502 through .0504 build on the existing CWD regulations in 15A NCAC 10B .0500 and requirements established by the Wildlife Resources Commission's proclamation authority. The current requirements primarily emphasize surveillance and sampling, whereas the proposed requirements shift the focus to ongoing management in affected areas and introduce additional measures designed to limit the movement of CWD within the state.

Rule 10B .0502: The proposed rule establishes the following counties as CWD Management Areas: Cumberland, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, and Yadkin. It also establishes a special, two-day antlered buck-only season on public and private lands within the CWD Management Area counties. The deer seasons and two-day antlered buck only season will shift harvest timing earlier in the hunting season, thus increasing opportunities for deer hunters and encouraging additional harvest of antlered bucks, which are the segment of the deer population most likely to have and spread CWD.

Rule 10B .0503: The cervid carcass transport requirements are proposed to be removed from this rule, revised, and incorporated into new Rule 10B .0504.

Rule 10B .0504: The proposed rule simplifies cervid carcass transport requirements and shifts the focus to disposal, requiring non-edible portions to be disposed of in a lined landfill, buried under specific conditions, or left on the ground within the county of origin.

Under current rule 10B .0503, cervid carcasses or carcass parts originating from inside a CWD surveillance area cannot be transported outside of the county of origin, except for specific cleaned or processed parts and for movement between the primary and secondary surveillance areas. This new proposed rule will allow unrestricted transportation of cervids harvested within the State as long as the carcass is disposed of in one of the three ways outlined in the rule. These proposed changes give hunters in Surveillance Area counties more transportation and disposal

options, whereas for hunters in the rest of the State, it will either have no impact or impose additional disposal requirements, depending on if they cross county lines with a cervid carcass.

Current cervid carcass transportation rules are complex and are not being followed by many hunters. The proposed amendments and accompanying new rule simplify requirements and are anticipated to result in better compliance by hunters and better overall CWD management. The implementation of the proposed rule will be statewide.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed rules and rule amendments have no anticipated state government impact and will not require additional staff time or resources for implementation or enforcement. If the CWD interventions are effective, they could help prevent declines in local business visitation and sales. As a result, state governments would also be more likely to maintain sales tax revenue generated by the economic activity associated with deer hunting.

Licensed hunters provide a significant portion of funding for WRC, not only through the license fees themselves, but also the matching federal funding dollars from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based on license sales. Maintaining the NC deer herd will help avoid potential losses to this source of conservation funding.

Local Impact

The proposed rules and rule amendments continue to allow cervid carcass disposal in lined landfills, some of which may be owned by municipal or county governments. Some hunters and deer processors already dispose of deer carcasses in landfills. Additional carcasses resulting from this rule proposal are not anticipated to significantly impact landfill operations.

Private Impact

The proposed rules and rule amendments will benefit hunters by providing additional deer hunting opportunities. The streamlined carcass transport restrictions are likely to reduce confusion among hunters and additional disposal options should make compliance easier. Hunters who currently transport cervid carcasses outside the county of harvest may be negatively impacted because they will now be required to dispose of the carcass in a landfill or via burial, both of which will require additional time and/or labor compared to leaving a carcass on the ground in the county of origin.

Businesses that process deer into venison products could benefit from hunters potentially harvesting more deer due to the additional deer harvest opportunities. These businesses are not

expected to be impacted by the changes to the disposal requirements as they already typically dispose of carcasses in landfills already.

North Carolina’s “Call Before You Dig” service (“NC811”) may experience a slight increase in calls from hunters who choose to bury carcasses and want to locate underground utilities before they dig a three-foot hole.

It is the agency’s hope that these streamlined transport and disposal requirements and defined management areas will improve compliance by hunters and build upon ongoing efforts to contain the distribution of CWD within the NC deer herd. By restricting the movement of potentially infectious carcass materials and mandating proper disposal methods, the agency aims to reduce the risk of human-assisted transmission of the disease, which is a key factor in its spread. These efforts are part of a broader, adaptive management strategy designed to protect the long-term health and viability of North Carolina’s deer population.

According to annual hunter harvest surveys, deer remain the most hunted species in North Carolina. Eighty-one percent of licensed hunters (241,619) hunt deer. Eighty percent of NC resident hunters (238,478) hunt deer. These individuals contribute over \$731M to the economy annually¹. Though the NCWRC does not have data on how many hunting trips are made to these six counties specifically, Northwestern NC is known to be popular with deer hunters.

Reducing the spread of CWD will have significant long-term benefits to hunters, local businesses, wildlife conservation, and the North Carolina economy. If successful, the bulk of these benefits will be realized over the course of many years. Although the long-term benefits are highly uncertain and could not be quantified, the benefits are highly likely to exceed the marginal costs associated with the proposed increased carcass disposal requirements. If no action is taken, this could potentially contribute to significant losses to the cervid population and harm to local and state economies which benefit from significant revenues generated by NC hunting.

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

The proposed amendments remove the CWD Management Areas counties from the deer rule and increase the antlerless white-tailed deer season on private lands in three Northwestern Season counties and six Western Season counties. The proposed amendments increase the antlerless white-tailed deer season 11 days in Polk, Cleveland, and Rutherford counties, 25 days in Madison County, and 18 days in Avery, Caldwell, Burke, Mitchell, and Yancy counties.

¹

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. 2023. North Carolina Outdoor Experiences Survey

The CWD Management Area county seasons are in the CWD Management Area Rule (10B .0502). The harvest objective of at least one antlered buck per square mile is being met on private lands in the counties specified in the Northwest and Western seasons. Additionally, long-term trends in harvest data and deer hunter observation surveys continue to show these herds growing. Additional antlerless harvest is sustainable, will provide hunters with additional hunting opportunity, and help to improve balance in the adult buck to doe ratio.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Expanding opportunities for deer hunting may increase participation and possibly recruit new or lapsed hunters. The Commission has no way to predict how many people might purchase hunting licenses or continue hunting because of the additional opportunities.

Local Impact

The proposed amendments to the deer seasons are expected to increase hunter participation, which may result in increased visitation to the western counties. More deer hunters may result in increased visitation to local businesses which is likely to result in increased revenues for those businesses. However, this anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

The proposed amendment will benefit hunters by providing additional deer hunting opportunities. Additional deer harvest may benefit businesses that process deer into venison products. The WRC does not have a mechanism to quantify the specific impacts of the proposed change on private entities.

15A NCAC 10B .0206 SQUIRRELS

The proposed amendment adjusts the opening of the spring gray squirrel season to ensure no overlap with turkey season and expand the spring gray squirrel season to game lands.

Currently, the spring squirrel season and turkey season do not overlap. Previous adjustments to the turkey season dates require adjustment to the spring squirrel dates to avoid overlap. The proposed amendment accomplishes this by tying the opening of spring squirrel season to the closing date of turkey season. Avoiding overlap may improve hunter safety and satisfaction, ensuring hunters targeting each species do not disturb one another by being on the landscape at the same time.

Additionally, the proposed amendment will extend hunting opportunities over Memorial Day weekend and to game lands. Numerous requests have been received to include game lands in the

spring squirrel season. The proposed change will increase hunting opportunities and is not expected to have a biologically significant impact on gray squirrel populations.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Expanding opportunities for squirrel hunting may increase participation and possibly recruit new or lapsed hunters. The Commission has no way to predict how many people might purchase hunting licenses or continue hunting because of the additional opportunities.

Local Impact

The proposed amendments to the squirrel season and game lands are expected to increase hunter participation. More squirrel hunters may result in increased visitation to local businesses which is likely to result in increased revenues for those businesses. However, this anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

The proposed amendment will provide additional hunting opportunities on game lands and improve hunter safety and satisfaction by ensuring no overlap between turkey and spring gray squirrel season. The WRC does not have a mechanism to quantify the specific impacts of the proposed change on private entities.

APPENDIX A

15A NCAC 10B .0502 CWD SURVEILLANCE AREAS DEFINED MANAGEMENT AREAS

(a) The following counties are CWD Management Areas:

- (1) Cumberland;
- (2) Forsyth;
- (3) Stokes;
- (4) Surry;
- (5) Wilkes; and
- (6) Yadkin.

(b) Prohibitions specified in Rule .0503 apply to the counties identified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule.

(c) Open seasons for hunting deer are as follows:

- (1) Special Early Season. Deer with antlers or spikes protruding through the skin, as distinguished from knobs or buttons covered by skin, may be taken on the fourth Saturday in August and the Sunday immediately following with a lawful weapon, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
- (2) All Lawful Weapons.
 - (A) Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken in Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, and Yadkin counties two Saturdays before Thanksgiving Day through January 1, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
 - (B) Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken in Cumberland County the Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
- (3) Archery Seasons. Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment as authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 on the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the day immediately preceding the first open day of the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in Subparagraph (c)(4) of this Rule.
- (4) Blackpowder Firearms Seasons. Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment as authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116, and blackpowder firearms as defined in 15A NCAC 10B .0203(c)(3), from two Saturdays preceding the first day of the All Lawful Weapons Season described in Subparagraph (c)(2) of this Rule through the second Friday thereafter, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.

(d) Seasons, bag limits, and programs specified in paragraphs (d) through (g) of Rule 10B .0203 of this Subchapter shall apply in the counties identified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule.

History Note: *Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-306;*
 Temporary Adoption Eff. July 1, 2022;
 Temporary Adoption Eff. July 1, 2023;

37
38
39

Temporary Adoption Expired Eff. April 12, 2024

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0503 SURVEILLANCE AREA**

2 (a) Inside a surveillance area, placement of minerals or salt licks to purposefully congregate wildlife shall be
3 prohibited. Placement of bait, food, or food product to purposefully congregate wildlife shall be prohibited from
4 January 2 through August 31 inside a Surveillance Area, except that:

- 5 (1) bird feeders specifically designed for nongame birds shall be allowed;
6 (2) placement of bait, food, or food products to hunt during the urban archery season shall be allowed
7 within the established season in participating municipalities; and
8 (3) the placement of food specifically permitted by the Commission for scientific research, population
9 management, and wildlife control may be allowed.

10 (b) White-tailed deer fawn rehabilitation is prohibited in a Surveillance Area.

11 (c) White-tailed deer fawns originating from within a Surveillance Area shall not be transported alive outside the
12 Surveillance Area.

13 ~~(d) No cervid carcass or carcass parts originating from inside a Primary Surveillance Area (PSA) or Secondary~~
14 ~~Surveillance Area (SSA) shall be transported outside of the county of origin, except:~~

- 15 ~~(1) meat that has been boned out so that no pieces or fragments of bone remain;~~
16 ~~(2) caped hides with no part of the skull or spinal column attached;~~
17 ~~(3) antlers, antlers attached to cleaned skull plates, or skulls free from meat or brain tissue;~~
18 ~~(4) cleaned lower jawbones with teeth or cleaned teeth;~~
19 ~~(5) finished taxidermy products and tanned hides;~~
20 ~~(6) carcass or carcass parts permitted by the Commission for disposal outside of the Surveillance Area;~~
21 ~~(7) carcass or carcass parts originating inside a PSA county may be transported into contiguous PSA~~
22 ~~counties; and~~
23 ~~(8) carcass or carcass parts originating inside a SSA county may be transported into contiguous SSA or~~
24 ~~PSA counties.~~

25 ~~(e)(d)~~ No person shall possess or use a substance or material that contains or is labeled as containing any excretion
26 collected from a cervid, including feces, urine, blood, gland oil, or other bodily fluid for the purposes of taking or
27 attempting to take, attracting, or scouting wildlife inside a surveillance area. This prohibition shall not apply to the
28 following substances:

- 29 (1) products labeled as containing synthetic analogs of cervid excretions;
30 (2) natural substances labeled as being collected from facilities within North Carolina that have a valid
31 Farmed Cervid License from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Services;
32 (3) natural deer urine products labeled as containing excretions from facilities within North Carolina
33 that have a valid Farmed Cervid License from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and
34 Consumer Services; and
35 (4) natural deer urine products labeled as containing excretions from facilities that meet all the
36 following requirements:

- 1 (A) determined to be free of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) based on testing by an
2 independent laboratory using a method that may help detect the presence of CWD prions;
3 (B) complies with a federally approved CWD herd certification program and any federal CWD
4 protocols; and
5 (C) participates in additional herd management requirements as specified by the Wildlife
6 Resources Commission.
7

8 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-306;*
9 *Temporary Adoption Eff. July 1, 2022;*
10 *Emergency Adoption Eff. September 1, 2022;*
11 *Temporary Adoption Eff. November 29, 2022;*
12 *Temporary Adoption Eff. July 1, 2023;*
13 *Eff. January 1, 2024.*
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1 **15A NCAC 10B .0504 ~~PRIMARY SURVEILLANCE AREA~~ DISPOSAL OF CERVID CARCASSES**

2 (a) The final disposition of non-edible portions of cervid carcasses and carcass parts originating from North Carolina
3 shall be:

4 (1) in a lined landfill;

5 (2) buried 3 feet below ground and 300 feet from a waterbody; or

6 (3) lawfully left on the ground within the county of origin.

7 (b) No cervid carcass or carcass part shall be placed on the ground outside of the county of origin.

8 (c) This section shall not apply to cervid carcass parts that are lawful to possess pursuant to Rule .0124 of this
9 Subchapter.

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11 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-306;*

12 *Temporary Adoption Eff. July 2, 2022;*

13 *Temporary Adoption Eff. July 1, 2023;*

14 *Temporary Adoption Expired Eff. April 12, 2024.*
15

NOTE: THIS RULE IS CURRENTLY NOTICED FOR CHANGES TO DEFINITION OF YOUTH AND YOUTH DEER DAYS. CHANGES ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN AS IF CURRENTLY EFFECTIVE.

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

(a) Open All Lawful Weapons Seasons for hunting deer:

(1) Deer With Visible Antlers. Deer with antlers or spikes protruding through the skin, as distinguished from knobs or buttons covered by ~~skin or velvet~~, skin, may be taken during the following seasons, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.

(A) Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1 in Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, ~~Cumberland~~, Craven, Dare, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, and Washington counties. It is unlawful to hunt or kill deer in Lake Waccamaw or within 50 yards of its shoreline in Columbus County.

(B) Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1 in Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Johnston, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne, and Wilson counties.

(C) Saturday before Thanksgiving Day through January 1 in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Catawba, Cleveland, Davie, ~~Forsyth~~, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Polk, Rutherford, ~~Stokes~~, ~~Surry~~, ~~Watauga~~, ~~Wilkes~~, and ~~Yadkin~~ and Watauga counties.

(D) Saturday after Thanksgiving Day through January 1 in Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey counties.

(E) Two Saturdays before Thanksgiving Day through January 1 in Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties.

(F) Saturday on or nearest September 10 through January 1 in the parts of Camden, Gates, and Pasquotank counties known as the Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties known as the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge; in the part of Hyde county known as Lake Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Dare and Hyde counties known as Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Anson and Richmond counties known as the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge; and in the part of Currituck County known as the Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge.

- (2) Antlered or Antlerless Deer. Except on Game Lands, antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during the open seasons and in the counties and portions of counties listed in Parts (A) through ~~(G)~~ (E) of this Subparagraph.
- (A) The open antlered or antlerless deer hunting dates established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through January 1 in the parts of Camden, Gates, and Pasquotank counties known as the Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties known as the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Anson and Richmond counties known as the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge; and in the parts of Currituck County known as the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge and the Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge.
- (B) The open antlered or antlerless deer hunting dates established by the military commands at the military installations listed in this Paragraph, from Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1 in the part of Brunswick County known as the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal, in the part of Craven County known and marked as Cherry Point Marine Base, in the part of Onslow County known and marked as the Camp Lejeune Marine Base, on Fort ~~Liberty~~ Bragg Military Reservation, and on Camp Mackall Military Reservation.
- (C) The first open Saturday of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule in Cherokee, Clay, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, and Transylvania counties.
- (D) The first open day of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the first Saturday thereafter in Buncombe, Henderson, ~~Madison~~, and McDowell counties, except in the areas described in Subparts ~~(a)(2)(G)(i)~~ (a)(2)(E)(i) and (ii) of this Rule.
- ~~(E) The first open day of the season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the second Saturday thereafter in Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.~~
- ~~(F) The first open day of the season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the fourth Saturday thereafter in Cleveland, Polk, and Rutherford counties.~~
- ~~(G)~~(E) Open days of the season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule in and east of ~~Ashe, Watauga, Wilkes, Alexander, Catawba, Lincoln, and Gaston~~ Avery, Burke, Rutherford, and Polk counties and in Madison, Mitchell, and Yancey counties, and the following parts of counties:
- (i) The part of Buncombe County east of N.C. 191, south of the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers, west of U.S. 25, and north of N.C. 280; and
- (ii) The part of Henderson County east of N.C. 191 and north and west of N.C. 280.
- (b) Open Archery Seasons for hunting deer:

- (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (2) of this Paragraph and the bag limits set out in Paragraph (f) of this Rule, deer may be taken with archery equipment from Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the day immediately preceding the first open day of the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in Subparagraph (c)(1) of this Rule, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
- (2) Restrictions
- (A) In the areas of the State where the Commission regulates the use of dogs as provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs may not be used for hunting deer during the Archery Season, except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a dead or wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).
- (B) Only archery equipment of the types authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 for taking deer may be used during the Archery Season.
- (C) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during Archery Season specified by Part ~~(b)(1)(A)~~ (b)(1) of this Rule.
- (c) Open Blackpowder Firearms Seasons for hunting deer:
- (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (2) of this Paragraph, deer may be taken only with blackpowder firearms and archery equipment from two Saturdays preceding the first day of the open season for Deer with Visible Antlers described in Parts (a)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), (E), and (F) of this Rule through the second Friday thereafter including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
- (2) Restrictions
- (A) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during Blackpowder Firearms Season in a county or county part set forth in Part (a)(2)(D), ~~(E), (F), or (G)~~ (E) of this Rule that has one or more open days within the All Lawful Weapons Season to legally harvest antlerless deer.
- (B) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during the second open Saturday of the Blackpowder Firearms Season thru the first Friday thereafter in any county or county part set forth in Part (a)(2)(C) of this Rule.
- (C) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken on the second open Saturday of the Blackpowder Firearms Season in any county or county part not set forth in Subparagraph (a)(2) of this Rule.
- (D) In the areas of the State where the Commission regulates the use of dogs as provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs shall not be used for hunting deer during the Blackpowder Firearms Season, except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a dead or wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).
- (3) As used in this Rule, "blackpowder firearms" means any firearm, including any firearm with a matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type of ignition system, manufactured before 1899, that cannot use fixed ammunition; any replica of this type of firearm if the replica is not designed

1 or redesigned for using rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition; and any muzzle-
2 loading rifle, muzzle-loading shotgun, or muzzle-loading or cylinder-loading handgun that is
3 designed to use blackpowder, blackpowder substitute, or any other propellant loaded through the
4 muzzle, cylinder, or breech and that cannot use fixed ammunition.

5 (d) Open Urban Season for hunting deer:

6 (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (3) of this Paragraph and the bag
7 limits set out in Paragraph ~~(e)~~ (f) of this Rule, antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery
8 equipment in participating cities in the State, as defined in G.S. 160A-1(2), from the second Saturday
9 following January 1 through the sixth Sunday thereafter. Deer shall not be taken on game lands
10 within a city boundary.

11 (2) Participation. Cities that intend to participate in the Urban Season shall send a letter to that effect
12 no later than April 1 of the year prior to the start of the Urban Season to the Executive Director or
13 his designee at 1722 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1700. Cities shall also submit a map
14 of the city's boundaries within which the Urban Season shall apply.

15 (3) Restrictions:

16 (A) In the areas of the State where the Commission regulates the use of dogs as provided in
17 G.S. 113-291.5, dogs shall not be used for hunting deer during the Urban Season except a
18 single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a dead or wounded deer in accordance with
19 G.S. 113-291.1(k).

20 (B) Only archery equipment of the types authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 for taking deer
21 shall be used during the Urban Season.

22 (e) Open Youth Days for hunting deer. Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with all lawful weapons by individuals
23 under 16 years of age during the following days:

24 (1) The fourth Saturday in September and the Sunday immediately thereafter in all counties; and

25 (2) Thanksgiving Day and the Friday immediately thereafter in the counties listed in Part (a)(1)(D) of
26 this Rule.

27 (f) Bag limits. The possession and season limit is six deer, two that may be deer with visible antlers and four that may
28 be antlerless deer. Antlerless deer include males with knobs or buttons covered by skin ~~or velvet~~ as distinguished from
29 antlers or spikes protruding through the skin. A hunter may obtain multiple Bonus Antlerless Deer Harvest Report
30 Cards from the Wildlife Resources Commission or any Wildlife Service Agent to allow the harvest of two additional
31 antlerless deer per card for deer harvested during the season described in Paragraph (d) of this Rule within the
32 boundaries of participating municipalities, except on State-owned game lands. Antlerless deer harvested and reported
33 on the bonus antlerless harvest report card shall not count as part of the possession and season limit.

34 (g) Deer Management Assistance Program. The bag limits described in Paragraph ~~(e)~~ (f) of this Rule do not apply to
35 deer harvested in areas covered in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) as described in G.S. 113-
36 291.2(e) for those individuals using Commission-issued DMAP tags and reporting harvest as described on the DMAP
37 license. Season bag limits shall be set by the number of DMAP tags issued and in the hunters' possession. All deer

1 harvested under this program, regardless of the date of harvest, shall be tagged with DMAP tags and reported as
2 instructed on the DMAP license. The hunter does not have to validate the Big Game Harvest Report Card provided
3 with the hunting license for deer tagged with the DMAP tags. Any deer harvested on lands enrolled in the DMAP and
4 not tagged with DMAP tags may only be harvested during the regularly established deer seasons subject to the
5 restrictions of those seasons, including bag limits, and reported using the big game harvest report card or the bonus
6 antlerless harvest report card.

7 (h) Seasons for counties identified as Chronic Wasting Disease Management Areas shall be as specified in Rule .0502
8 of this Subchapter.

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11 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-276.1; 113-291.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.5;*
12 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*
13 *Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996, July 1, 1995; December 1, 1994; July 1,*
14 *1994; July 1, 1993;*
15 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;*
16 *Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;*
17 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002; July 1, 2001;*
18 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (Approved by RRC on 06/21/01 and 04/18/02);*
19 *Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;*
20 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this amendment replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17,*
21 *2003);*
22 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2021; August 1, 2020; August 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016;*
23 *August 1, 2015; August 1, 2014; August 1, 2013; August 1, 2012; August 1, 2011; July 10, 2010;*
24 *June 1, 2008; May 1, 2007; May 1, 2006; June 1, 2005;*
25 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2022;*
26 *Amended Eff. May 1, 2025; August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023.*
27
28

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0206 SQUIRRELS**

2 (a) The open season for gray and red squirrels is the Monday on or closest to October 15 through the last day of
3 February. Gray squirrels may also be taken by hunting on the Monday following the closing of the open season for
4 wild turkey in 15A NCAC 10B .0209(a) through the second Monday thereafter.

5 (b) The daily bag limit for gray and red squirrels is eight in aggregate and there are no season or possession limits.

6 (c) The open season for fox squirrels is the Monday on or nearest October 15 through January 31.

7 ~~(e) Except on game lands, gray squirrels may also be taken by hunting on the second Monday in May through the~~
8 ~~fourth Monday in May.~~

9 ~~(d) The daily bag limit for gray and red squirrels is eight in aggregate and there are no season or possession limits.~~

10 ~~(e)~~(d) The daily bag limit for fox squirrels is one; the possession limit is two; and the season limit is 10.

11
12 *History Note Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-291.2;*

13 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*

14 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2022; August 1, 2013; August 1, 2010; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2008; May 1,*
15 *2006; July 1, 1995; July 1, 1987; July 1, 1986; July 1, 1985;*

16 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;*

17 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2022.*