



Fiscal Note for Proposed Bear and Deer Rule Amendments for the Wildlife Resources Commission

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10H .0202 Bear
15A NCAC 10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

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Impact Summary: State Government: Yes
Local Government: Yes
Private Impact: Yes
Substantial Impact: No

Authority: G.S. 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-276.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.7; 113-305

Background

The wildlife resources of the State belong to the people of the State, including the enjoyment of these resources (G.S. 113-131(a)). The Wildlife Resources Commission (hereinafter WRC or Commission) 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). In accordance with the supply of wildlife and other factors it determines to be of public importance, the Wildlife Resources Commission may fix seasons and bag limits upon the wild animals and wild birds authorized to be taken that it deems necessary or desirable in the interests of the conservation of wildlife resources (G.S. 113.291.2(a)).

I. Introduction and Purpose of Rule Change

To optimize the relationship between hunting seasons and biological conditions of the bear and deer populations, the WRC is proposing to modify the hunting zones in the Coastal Black Bear Management Unit (CBMU), deer hunting season zones, and associated hunting seasons for both species throughout the State.

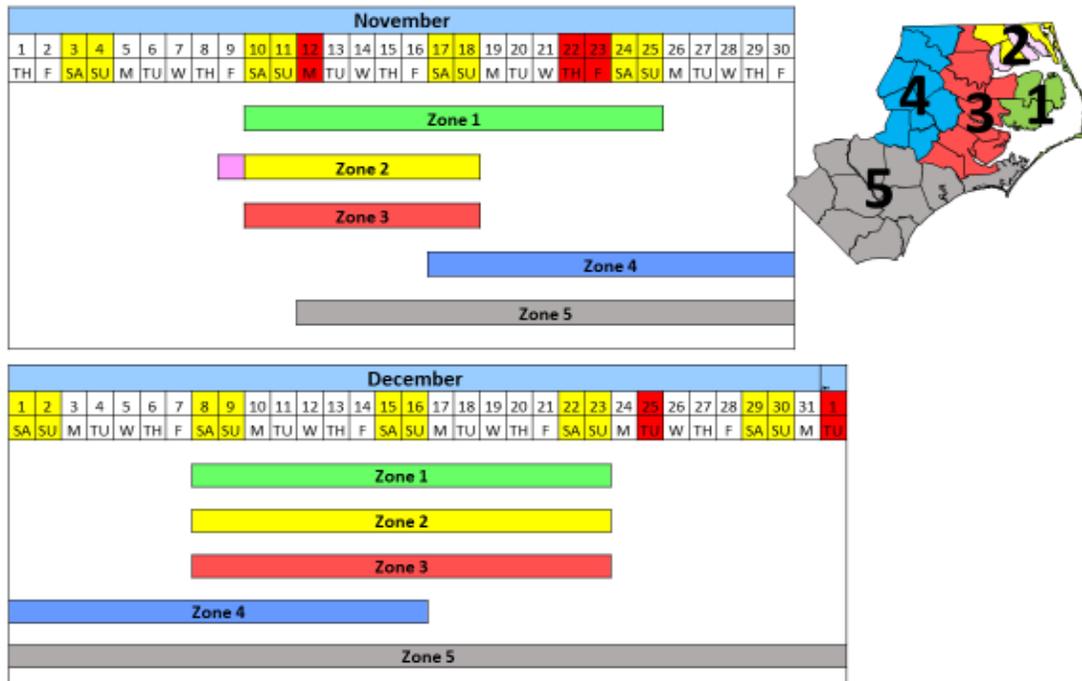
Bear

Proposed changes to the bear management units and bear hunting seasons are as follow:

- 1) Change bear hunting seasons in the CBMU to align hunting seasons with biological zones.

Goals and objectives in the 2012 – 2022 North Carolina Black Bear Management Plan¹ call for stabilizing bear population growth in the CBMU at 2012 levels while sustaining a bear population to provide hunting and other benefits to the citizens of North Carolina. After evaluating significant public input, biological data from across the coastal region, and options for balancing biological and social goals, the changes to the current rules are proposed to meet goals in the Black Bear Management Plan, public desires for bear management, and social carrying capacity.

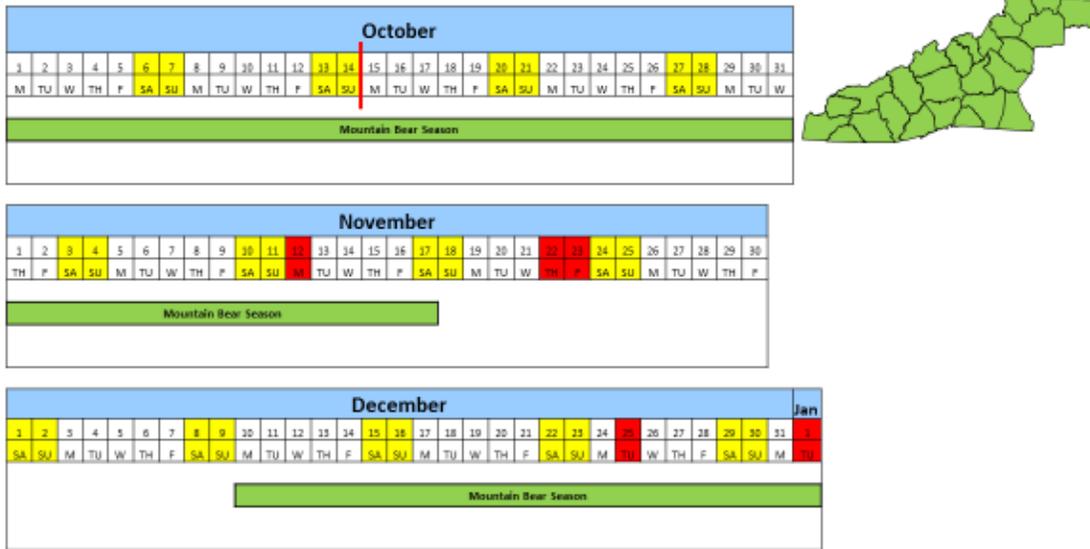
Proposed 2018-19 CBMU Seasons - 5 Zones



¹ http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Species/Bear/Black%20Bear%20Management%20Plan_2012-2022.pdf

- 2) Change bear hunting season in the Mountain Bear Management Unit (MBMU) to begin on the first Monday in October.

Proposed 2018-19 MBMU Season



Proposed statewide changes to deer hunting seasons will result in overlap of the current bear and deer hunting seasons in the MBMU, where historically, these seasons have not overlapped (deer and bear seasons currently overlap in all other portions of the State with no significant user conflicts). In collaboration with mountain bear hunters, the proposal to add two weeks at the beginning of the season in October was developed. Based on available biological data, adding two weeks to the beginning of the bear season should have no negative impacts on the bear population.

Deer

To improve the biological condition of the deer herd and hunter satisfaction, WRC staff began evaluating deer populations and hunting season frameworks in 2010. Biological objectives were set for management in the best interest of the resource and data were collected to determine if those objectives were being met. Results of biological evaluations of the statewide deer herd were publicized and initial feedback was gathered in public forums in 2015.² A scientific 2016 Survey of Deer Hunters was developed to better determine the desires, expectations, and potential support from deer hunters to meet biological objectives across the state.³

² <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Regs/Documents/Evaluation-of-Deer-Hunting-Seasons-and-Mgt-Units.pdf>
³ <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Documents/Deer/2016-Deer-Hunting-and-Management-Survey-Report.pdf>

Biologically, the deer herd is in good condition, but could be improved by reducing young buck harvest, shifting the timing of harvest later in the year, and adjusting doe harvest rates. From the deer hunter survey, the WRC found that hunter satisfaction has declined since the last survey in 2006, and that 68% think there are too few mature bucks in the herd. Additionally, 48% of respondents wanted deer numbers to increase.⁴ Eighty-one percent of respondents were willing to see changes in deer hunting seasons to improve herd condition, but their preferences on these changes were mixed.

Changes to improve the condition of the herd require some trade-offs to hunting opportunity and/or traditions. Potential trade-offs that hunters would make to season lengths, timing, and bag limits were assessed from the survey. Based on both the survey results and biological evaluation, WRC staff developed five deer zones and a management option for each zone that balanced hunter preferences with the biologically optimum management of the deer herd.

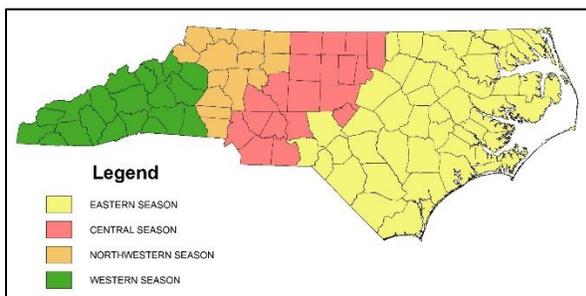
Public forums were held in 2017 to present results of WRC evaluations, and potential changes in hunting seasons that could improve the condition of the deer herd and positively impact deer hunting. In addition to the anticipated support for these options from the deer hunters surveyed in 2016, 80% of the 401 forum attendees indicated that they either supported the options presented or would accept them if the results improved management of the deer herd.

The proposed changes to the deer seasons were developed from this multi-year evaluation and should significantly improve the biological condition of the herd and hunter satisfaction over time, by improving buck age structure, timing of the harvest, and establishing a sustainable doe harvest.

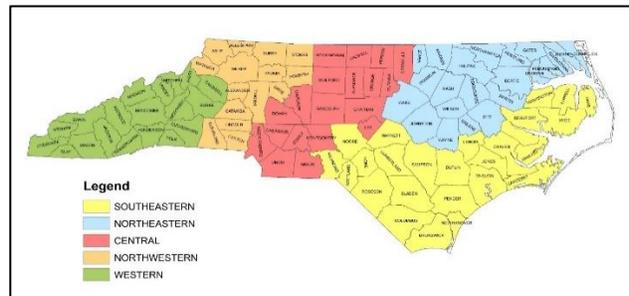
The proposed changes to season frameworks are as follows:

- 1) Establish five deer season zones by splitting the Eastern Zone into two zones, Northeastern and Southeastern. Move Cleveland County to the Northwestern Zone.

Current Deer Season Zones



Proposed Deer Season Zones



⁴ Data based on responses from 33,750 participants.

- 2) Implement the following changes in season lengths and timing, and both antlered and antlerless bag limits within each of the five season zones.

Proposed Season Change: Western
Peak Breeding: December 2

| 2018/2019 Season | Current Season | Proposed Change | Proposed Season |
|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Blackpowder | Oct. 1-13 Monday opening | 7 weeks later; 1 week shorter | Nov. 17 – 23 Saturday opening |
| Gun | Nov. 19 - Dec. 8 Monday opening | 5 days later; 3 weeks longer | Nov. 24 - Jan. 6 Saturday opening |
| Antlered bag | 2 | No change | 2 |
| Antlerless bag | 6 | Reduced | 4 |

Proposed Season Changes: Northwestern
Peak Breeding: November 25

| 2018/2019 Season | Current Season | Proposed Change | Proposed Season |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Blackpowder | *Nov. 3 - Nov. 16 | 1 week later; 1 week shorter | Nov. 10 - Nov. 16 |
| Gun | *Nov. 17 - Jan. 1 | Same time; 5-7 days longer | Nov. 17 - Jan. 6 |
| Antlered bag | 2 | No change | 2 |
| Antlerless bag | **Unlimited | Reduced | 4 |

*Cleveland blackpowder currently opens Oct. 1 and gun Nov. 19
**Unlimited with purchase of bonus antlerless report card in max. either-sex seasons

Proposed Season Changes: Central
Peak Breeding: November 15

| 2018/2019 Season | Current Season | Proposed Change | Proposed Season |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Blackpowder | Oct. 27 - Nov. 9 | 1 week later; 1 week shorter | Nov. 3 - Nov. 9 |
| Gun | Nov. 10 - Jan. 1 | Same time; 5 days longer | Nov. 10 - Jan. 6 |
| Antlered bag | 2 | No change | 2 |
| Antlerless bag | *Unlimited | Reduced | 4 |

*Unlimited with purchase of bonus antlerless report cards

Proposed Season Changes: Northeastern
Peak Breeding: November 7

| 2018/2019 Season | Current Season | Proposed Change | Proposed Season |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Blackpowder | Sept. 29 - Oct. 12 | 3 weeks later; 1 week shorter | Oct. 20 - Oct. 26 |
| Gun | Oct. 13 - Jan. 1 | 2 weeks later; 9 days shorter | Oct. 27 - Jan. 6 |
| Antlered bag | 4 | Reduced | 2 |
| Antlerless bag | *Unlimited | Reduced | 4 |

*Unlimited with purchase of bonus antlerless report cards

Proposed Season Zone: Southeastern
Peak Breeding: Oct. 27

| 2018/2019 Season | Current Season | Proposed Change | Proposed Season |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Blackpowder | Sept. 29 - Oct. 12 | 2 weeks later; 1 week shorter | Oct. 13 - Oct. 19 |
| Gun | Oct. 13 - Jan. 1 | 1 week later; 2 days shorter | Oct. 20 - Jan. 6 |
| Antlered bag | 4 | Reduced | 2 |
| Antlerless bag | *Unlimited | Reduced | 4 |

*Unlimited with purchase of bonus antlerless report cards

- 3) Shift either-sex days to the front of Introductory, Conservative, and Moderate antlerless deer seasons.

| Either-Sex Season | Area Impacted | Current | Proposed |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Blackpowder – Introductory | In and west of Henderson, Buncombe, Yancey, Mitchell, Avery | Last day | First day |
| Gun – Introductory | Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, Transylvania | Last day | First day |
| Gun - Conservative | Avery, Burke, Caldwell, McDowell, Mitchell, Yancey | Last 6 days | First 7** days |
| Gun - Moderate | Cleveland, Polk, Rutherford | First 6* and last 7 days | First 14** days |

*Monday opening and Saturday closing

**Saturday opening and Friday closing (includes an additional Sunday)

- 4) Restrict use of bonus antlerless deer licenses to the urban archery season and shift the closing day of the urban archery season from Saturday to Sunday (adds 1 day).

Expected effectiveness

Hunters indicated a desire for a slight increase in the deer population in areas that they hunt and biologist likewise concur, that current population trend data, especially across the coastal plain indicate a declining deer population in these areas. The reasons for these declines are likely related to multiple factors including changing land use (habitat change) and new mortality factors (predators), but hunter harvest of antlerless deer remains the most significant mortality factor on that segment of the deer herd. Since the only regulatory approach to addressing this declining trend is to reduce the harvest of female deer by humans during open hunting seasons, this proposal reduces the legal limit for antlerless deer statewide. Based on harvest data and harvest trends, this change may result in a minimum of 4% reduction in doe harvest.⁵ Biologists will continue to monitor the trends and make recommendations for antlerless harvest appropriately to address future changes in the population trends.

One of the WRC established biological management objectives for the deer herd is that the sex composition of the harvest that occurs prior to peak breeding is comprised of at least 50% does. This biological variable is not currently met for any of the Deer Management Units. This means that either doe harvest prior to the peak breeding period needs to increase or antlered buck harvest prior to that time period needs to decrease. Achieving this objective will ensure that does are not overrepresented in the population at peak breeding periods. This in turn ensures adequate breeding of females during the first estrous period, that fawn births occur during an optimal and relatively short span of time, and that food resources are available later in the season. In areas

⁵ Calculated from reported harvest data.

with undesirably low deer density the objective is to decrease antlered buck harvest prior to the peak breeding period, as additional doe harvest is not warranted.

Another biological management objective with regards to deer management is that no more than 20% of the total antlered buck harvest (i.e., excluding button bucks) occurs before the time of peak breeding. Achieving this objective will ensure that adult bucks are not under-represented in the population at peak breeding periods, and that successful yearling buck dispersal is adequate. Meeting this objective also ensures adequate breeding of females during the first estrous period and that fawn births occur during an optimal and relatively short span of time. Minimizing the span of fawning dates across time may also reduce predation of fawns by predators.

As for the shift in buck age structure the agency estimates that at a minimum, during the 2016/17 deer season, 7,362 antlered bucks would not have been lawfully harvested with a 2-buck limit.⁶ Natural mortality in most populations in typical years is <20%, indicating that at a minimum, roughly 6,000 antlered bucks would survive to the next hunting season, and would be 1 year older, which would contribute to a shift in the buck age structure. Reducing buck harvest increases annual survival rates, which results in a shift in the age-structure toward older individuals. This is because the reduction in buck harvest occurs annually and there is a cumulative effect resulting in increases in all age classes over time.

Specifically, in the 2016/17 season, 16% of antlered bucks reported to be harvested in the 4-buck area (Eastern Season Zone) were taken with the 3rd or 4th buck “tag” by hunters harvesting all their bucks solely in the Eastern Deer Season Zone (5,769 antlered bucks).⁶ This is a conservative estimate of reduction in harvest that could occur from changing to a 2-buck limit. But, the reduction in harvest from this change would likely be even higher because this estimate does not account for hunters hunting both sides of the current buck limit line or potential changes in harvest selectivity, and of course does not account for the fact that many hunters may become more selective (i.e., holding their tags in case they see a bigger buck).

Currently, the agency is not meeting the buck age-structure objective (<30% 1.5yr. bucks in the antlered harvest) in any season zone, but is relatively close in the Eastern Zone (33%). The antler characteristics of a 2.5 yr. old in the Eastern Season Zone are similar to those of a yearling (1.5 yr.) in the rest of the state, which contributes to a lower percent yearling (1.5yr.) bucks in the harvest. A statewide 2-buck limit that prevents individuals from traveling across zones to harvest more than two bucks, will likely result in moving toward this objective across the state, and meeting the objective in the Eastern Zone.

II. Impacts - Costs

State Impact

The proposed amendments to the bear and deer rules are anticipated to create the following costs to the State.

⁶ Calculated from 2016/17 reported harvest data.

10B .0202 Bear

No specific state-level costs are anticipated due to proposed changes in bear season.

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

In the 2016-17 deer season, deer hunters purchased 2,447 bonus antlerless deer licenses at a cost of \$10.00 each (2,447 X \$10.00 = \$24,470.00). Currently bonus antlerless deer licenses are valid during all open seasons in counties with the “maximum” either-sex season. The proposed amendments to 10B .0203 would make bonus antlerless deer licenses valid only during the urban archery season (in the second half of January). Based on data from the WRC big game harvest reporting system, 99.5% (1864 out of 1873 in 2016-17) of the antlerless deer harvests reported on bonus licenses occurred before the Urban Archery Season. Based on this information, the WRC anticipates a significant decline in the number of bonus antlerless licenses sold. However, because the intent of the license purchase is unknown (when the hunter intended to use the bonus license), as is the actual usage of the license (hunters may have reported antlerless deer on this license before reporting on their hunting license), the WRC is unable to accurately estimate the decline in sales, and thus anticipates a maximum potential loss of approximately \$24,470 per year in revenue.

The WRC is authorized by G.S. 113-270.1 to charge a fee of \$2.00 per transaction for the sale of licenses or permits issued by the Commission. In 2016, 288 bonus antlerless licenses were sold by governmental license sales methods (sales counter, help desk, internet sales) as independent transactions (individual purchased just the bonus antlerless license), totaling \$568 (288 x \$2 = \$568.00). Because the WRC anticipates that the number of bonus antlerless deer licenses sales will decline due to the proposed amendments to the rule, it also anticipates a reduction in this specific revenue. Unfortunately, due to lack of data the agency is unable to accurately estimate what the decline will be, and thus anticipates a maximum potential loss of approximately \$568 per year.

Local Impact

The proposed amendments to the Bear and Deer Rules are anticipated to create no local economic costs.

Private Impact

The proposed amendments to the Bear and Deer Rules are expected to create the following private costs.

10B .0202 Bear

No specific private costs are anticipated due to proposed changes in bear season.

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

WRC license agents are authorized by G.S. 113-270.1 to charge a fee of \$2.00 per transaction for the sale of licenses and permits issued by the Commission. In 2016, 470 bonus antlerless licenses were sold by WRC license agents as independent transactions (individual purchased just

the bonus antlerless license), totaling \$940 (470 x \$2 = \$940) statewide. Because the WRC anticipates that the number of bonus antlerless deer licenses sales will decline due to the proposed amendments to the rule, it also anticipates a reduction in this specific revenue for license agents. Unfortunately, due to lack of data, there is no way to accurately estimate the reduction in sales, and thus the maximum potential loss of approximately \$940 per year for license agents across the state is anticipated.

While each licensed hunter will still be able to harvest six deer statewide each season, the removal of the bonus antlerless license (except for Urban Archery Season) may impact an individual's opportunity to harvest additional antlerless deer and potentially their ability to obtain meat. Based on survey data from the 2017 deer forums, many of the hunters in attendance indicated that the primary reason they hunt is for the venison. Because it is illegal for individual hunters to sell venison, it is assumed that the meat is being used by individuals to feed themselves, their families, or friends. It is possible that some hunters will obtain less meat because of the proposed rule changes, and therefore need to spend additional money on commercially available protein. However, only 124 hunters reported taking more than 6 deer during the 2016-2017 deer season.⁷ Additionally, the WRC does not know what successful hunters do with their venison, therefore it is not possible to accurately estimate this potential impact.

Reducing the antlerless bag limits could result in a slight increase in deer numbers in some areas. Depending on specific location, it is possible that in these areas a proportional increase in depredation could occur. While WRC does not expect a significant increase in depredation as a result of these rule changes, no changes are being proposed that alter the opportunity of a landholder to obtain a depredation permit and address these situations. Additionally, the WRC is making no changes to the Deer Management Assistance Program which, through biological prescription, allows individuals to harvest more antlerless deer than is allowed on their normal season bag limit.

In all proposed deer season zones, the length of the blackpowder season is proposed to be reduced by one week. Additionally, in the Northeastern and Southeastern Zones, the length of the proposed gun season is shortened. While this could be considered a lost opportunity for hunters, there are a variety of factors that play into an individual's decision to hunt on any given day, including time of the season, weather, and deer behavior (i.e. peak breeding "the rut", deer becoming more nocturnal due to increased hunting pressure, etc.). Hunters are well aware of these changes, and thus, not all days within a season can be considered equal. Because of the length of deer seasons in NC, the agency does not anticipate the change to be a major lost opportunity, but instead, as an adjustment that could lead to considerable benefits in the quality of an individual's experience in the future. On the flip side, the increased number of available hunting days in the firearms (blackpowder and gun) seasons in the western zone could have the effect of leading hunters to experience a sense of security or additional opportunity that leads to procrastination, which could ultimately lead to fewer days hunted. However, because the agency is unable to predict hunter behavior, there is no way to accurately anticipate the magnitude of either of these costs.

⁷ Data from WRC hunter survey with 781 respondents.

III. Impacts - Benefits

State Impact

It is unknown if increasing the season length will result in increased hunter effort (trips to the field throughout the season). However, more time in the woods each season could lead to increased contacts with enforcement personnel and increases in the number of citations issued, some of which result in court costs, replacement costs, etc. Replacement cost of a black bear is \$2,232 and a deer is \$602; court costs can vary annually but are consistent across the state.

Approximately 233,000 hunting licenses are sold each year, 24,000 of those being lifetime licenses. In addition, approximately 28,000 bear e-stamps are sold each year. While it is possible that increases in season length for bear and deer could result in additional sales of licenses and/or bear e-stamps, the likelihood of this occurring is unknown. Additionally, the WRC sells a variety of different licenses that make estimating the potential increase in license sales impractical. However, any increase in sales is not anticipated to be significant, as it does not appear that hunters are currently limited by time (Table 1, Table 2).

10B .0202 Bear

In some bear hunting zones, increasing the length of the season could result in additional days that non-local hunters spend in these areas. These hunters may spend additional money purchasing lodging, fuel, food, and bait which would contribute to the economy in the form of increased state tax revenue. However, the WRC has no way to estimate or quantify this benefit.

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

Reducing the season bag limit on antlerless deer from six to four has the potential to result in some hunters purchasing bonus antlerless licenses and increasing efforts in the urban archery season. While it is known that only 0.5% (9 of 1873) of the antlerless deer harvests reported on bonus licenses occurred during the Urban Archery Season⁸, there is no way for the agency to estimate how much the harvest with bonus antlerless licenses will increase in the Urban Archery Season because of the proposed rule change.

Local Impact

The proposed amendments to the Bear and Deer Rules are expected to have minimal local benefits.

10B .0202 Bear

In some zones, increasing the bear season could result in additional time spent in these areas by non-local hunters. These hunters may spend additional money purchasing lodging, fuel, food, and bait which would contribute to the local economy in the form of increased county and city tax revenues. Unfortunately, the WRC has no way to estimate or quantify this benefit.

Additionally, baiting of bears (with certain restrictions in statute and rule) is legal in most seasons across the state. Because the bear season will be extended by two weeks in the MBMU, additional opportunities will be available for individuals to bait bears in these areas. While the

⁸ 2016-2017 data from the WRC big game harvest reporting system.

WRC does not track information on bear baiting, it is reasonable to assume that in areas where seasons increase, the sale of unprocessed bait for bears may also increase, thus minimally increasing local tax revenue. However, the WRC has no mechanism for estimating this impact.

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

No specific local benefits are anticipated due to proposed changes in deer seasons.

Private Impact

The proposed amendments to the Bear and Deer Rules are expected to have appreciable private benefits.

Hunting, in most cases, is a voluntary activity. Increasing or decreasing the length of a hunting season does not mandate that individual hunters adjust their participation; hunters choose whether to hunt on available season days. Regardless of season length, many hunters will hunt the same number of days, and changes in season length do not necessarily result in changes to hunting participation. A variety of factors play a role in a hunter's decision about when they will hunt during the season beyond convenience, including weather, animal behavior and number of animals available for harvest (more deer earlier in the season vs. later). However, opportunity cost effects may occur in the Mountain Deer Season zone, where increasing the season length by 2 weeks offers individuals additional days to either increase their participation (number of hunting trips) or modify their participation in a way that allows them to more optimally allocate their time between various activities. Increasing the length of the season may provide additional advantageous opportunities for hunters, decreasing the opportunity costs of participating in this activity. This opportunity may be considered a benefit by those individuals able to take advantage of the additional days. Hunters may also value and benefit from an extended season - even if they do not increase their hunting trips - due to the added convenience of the extended opportunities to participate in the activity. A longer season may allow hunters to optimally allocate their time between hunting and other activities (lower opportunity costs).

In NC, seasons for bear and deer currently provide extended opportunities for participation in comparison with season lengths in some other states. WRC data (Table 1 and Table 2) indicate that most hunters are not hunting on all currently available hunting days. Current firearm (gun and blackpowder) seasons for deer range from 30 to 90 days. The mean number of days hunted for deer is approximately 15 days. Current bear hunting seasons range from 24 to 58 days and the mean number of days hunted for bear is approximately 7. These data illustrate that most North Carolina hunters are using less than half of the currently available hunting days for either species. Except for the proposed increases to the Zone 1 bear hunting season, the MBMU season and the Mountain Deer Season, the WRC does not anticipate that increasing the number of open days will necessarily increase hunting participation, but acknowledges that expanding these seasons could provide additional opportunities.

Table 1. Number of days respondents to the 2016 survey of deer hunters hunted during open deer season.⁹

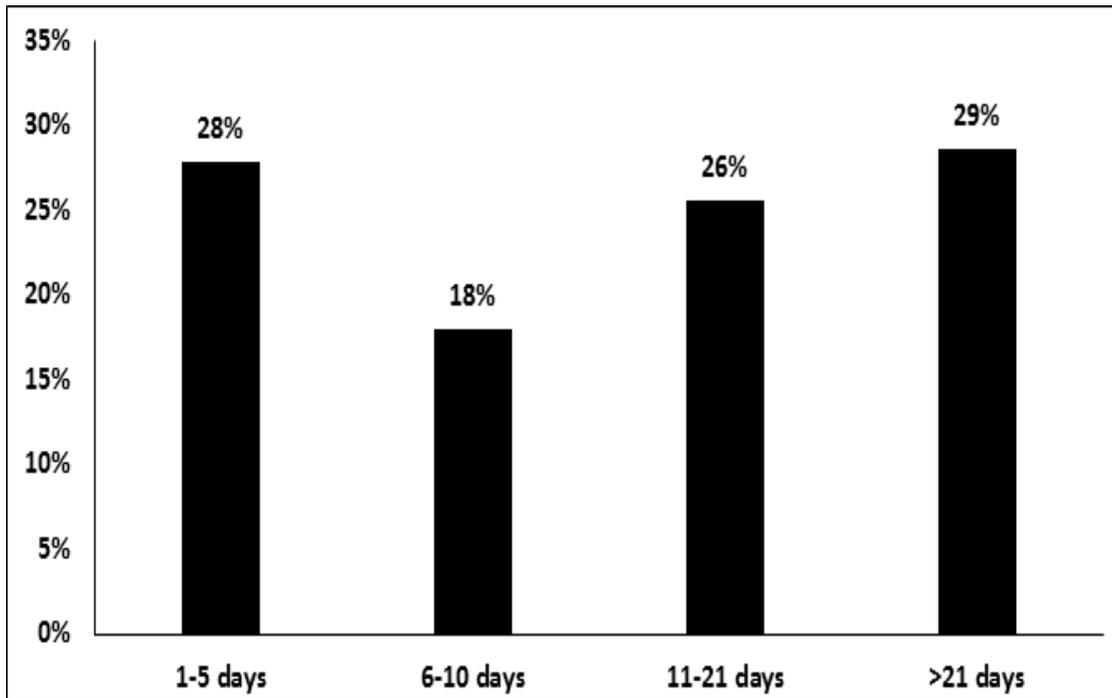
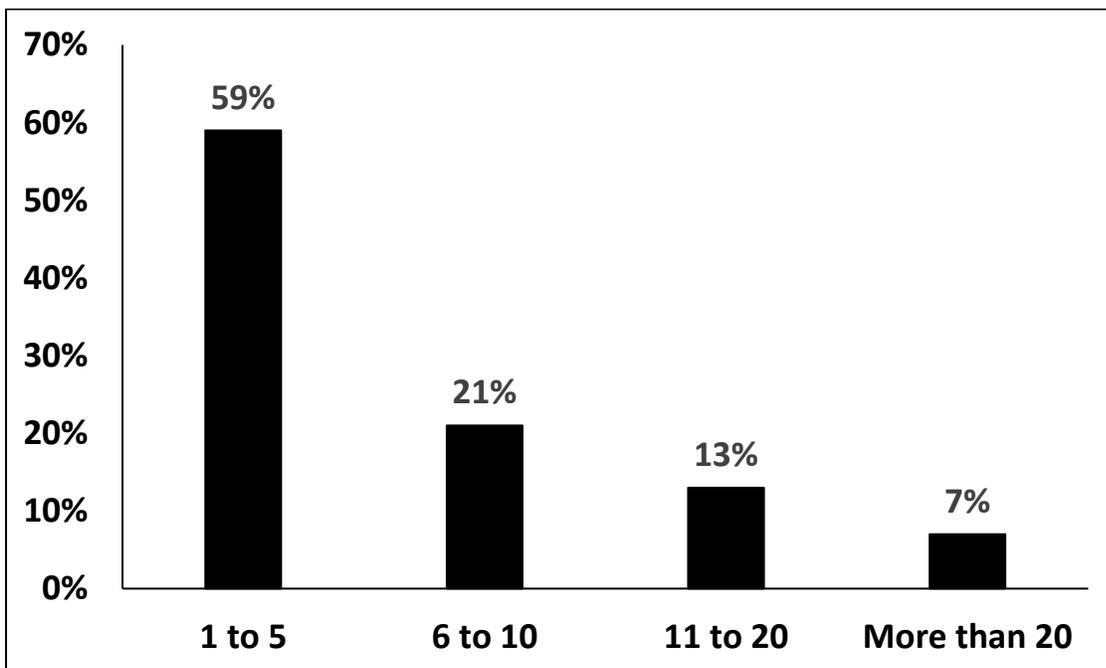


Table 2. Number of days bear e-stamp survey respondents hunted during open bear season.¹⁰



⁹ Data obtained from 2016 WRC deer hunter survey (n = 33,750).

¹⁰ Data obtained from 2015 bear e-stamp survey (n = 20,747).

10B .0202 Bear

Landowners/Farmers can legally shoot bears that are in the act of damaging their property with or without a depredation permit. In some bear management units, increasing the bear season may result in increased harvest, which could have an accompanying reduction in crop depredation issues from black bear. While the WRC does not know how many bears are shot without a depredation permit, there are data on the number of depredation permits issued. There were 27 depredation permits issued by the WRC for black bear in 2016. Most permits (22) were issued in the CBMU (15 in District 1 and seven in District 2). There is no way to predict if harvest will increase enough to result in associated decreases in crop depredation, or to know if the bears taken during the season would be the same ones that might cause damage.

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

Because proposed amendments to the rules will make bonus antlerless deer licenses valid only during the urban archery season, the agency expects the purchase of these bonus licenses to significantly decrease. Based on 2016-17 deer season license sales, 2,447 bonus antlerless licenses were purchased at a cost of \$10.00 each. While the agency does anticipate that participation in the urban archery season may minimally increase, it is expected, on net, that fewer hunters will purchase bonus licenses. Thus, the agency anticipates the maximum change of approximately \$24,470 ($\$10/\text{license} \times 2,447 \text{ licenses} = \$24,470$) in avoided costs for hunters.

Additionally, sustainable doe harvest along with improvements in timing of harvest, buck age-structure, and sex-ratio of the deer herd should improve long-term hunter satisfaction. Available days to hunt with a firearm (blackpowder and gun) would be increased in the Western Deer Season Zone.

IV. Uncertainties

During the deer and bear forums, hunters had a chance to express their concerns about changes to the bear and deer seasons. While the WRC recognizes these concerns, there is no available mechanism to validate or quantify them. These issues are presented below.

10B .0202 Bear

A hunting lease is an arrangement between a property owner and hunter(s), that allows them to hunt land for a specified time period. This is a widely recognized way for landowners to manage their property while receiving income, and for hunters to have access to land that would otherwise be off-limits to them. The WRC does not regulate this practice. However, it is known that much of the property in the CBMU is leased to bear hunters and guides.

Individual hunters have expressed the following concerns about hunting leases in regards to extended bear seasons:

- Guide fees in some coastal bear areas are so substantial that increasing the season length in these areas will result in a lost opportunity because they can't afford to lease the property (guides will outbid them for the land).

The WRC believes that this may occur regardless of season length.

- Increasing the length of bear seasons could increase the fees that landowners charge hunters for hunting access (lease fees).

These fees are typically paid for a specific hunting year regardless of the season length and the WRC is unaware of information that would support this concept.

- If seasons are lengthened, bear guides/outfitters will have more time to serve more clients, and this will ultimately result in driving lease rates higher.

The WRC does not have access to income received by hunting guides, nor does it have knowledge of lease rates or income of landowners/landholders. The WRC has no way to predict fee increases for hunting leases or guide services, but does not anticipate an increase in the number of guides due to the proposed season changes, as the land area is not changing. Additionally, the WRC recognizes that it is possible that increasing the bear season length could result in increases in land lease rates, resulting in additional income for landowners/landholders and it is also possible that increases in bear harvest will occur in some zones, thus leading to additional business for meat processors who charge fees for processing carcasses. Due to lack of data, estimates of these speculated impacts are unquantifiable and unknown.

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

Some hunters that pay annual lease fees to access hunting land believe that decreasing season length would result in fewer access days per unit cost. While this may be the case, the WRC has no way of determining the actual cost to lessees for reduced access days. However, it should be noted, that with only one exception, the proposed changes in season length either maintain or increase the number of weekend days as the current seasons.

V. Economic Impact Summary

In estimating the economic impact of the proposed amendments to the Bear and Deer rules, most costs identified were unquantifiable. However, the following quantifiable impacts were identified:

State

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

- Estimated \$24,470 annual reduction in sales of the bonus antlerless deer license
- Estimated \$568 annual reduction in the \$2.00 transaction fee.

Private

10B .0203 Deer (White-Tailed)

- Estimated \$940 annual reduction in collection of \$2.00 transaction fee collected by WRC service agents.
- Estimated \$24,470 annual avoided cost for hunters not purchasing bonus antlerless deer licenses.

Based on these estimates, the WRC expects an annual recurring loss of approximately \$25,038. A private total loss of approximately \$940 is expected for license agents located throughout the state, with varying impacts to individual license agents, and individual hunters are expected to experience a maximum of approximately \$24,470 in avoided costs for purchase of bonus antlerless deer licenses.

While several cost and benefits associated with the proposed amendments have been identified, many are speculative and cannot be quantified due to lack of data.

Unquantifiable costs and benefits include the following:

State

- Additional sales of bear e-stamps
- Increased (or decreased) sales tax revenue from hunter purchases
- Increase in citations issued during bear or deer seasons, some of which result in court costs, replacement costs, etc.
- Improved quality and condition of the deer herd

Local

- Increased (or decreased) sales tax revenue from hunter purchases

Private

- Increased hunter satisfaction because of improved quality and condition of deer herd
- Decrease in bag limit for both sexes
- Reduced crop depredation from black bears with increased harvest
- Increased hunter access fees (land lease costs)
- Increased income for guides/outfitters
- Increased sales of bait, gasoline, food, lodging, etc.
- Loss or increase in meat obtained from harvested game
- Increased/decreased opportunities to hunt based on length of seasons

In summary, only the loss of WRC revenue from the sale of bonus antlerless deer licenses and the loss of associated transaction fees collected by the State and private license agents are known, quantifiable costs. All other impacts anticipated from these proposed rule changes are speculative and/or are not quantifiable due to the nature of the rules themselves. However, the WRC believes that the biological and social benefits of the proposed changes to the bear and deer rules, though likely not immediate, will far outweigh the costs.

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1 **15A NCAC 10B .0202 BEAR**

2 (a) Open Seasons for hunting bear shall be from the:

3 (1) First Monday in or nearest October 15 to through the Saturday before Thanksgiving and the third
4 Monday after Thanksgiving to through January 1 in and west of Surry, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke,
5 and Cleveland ~~counties~~counties;

6 (2) Second Monday in November to through January 1 in Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus,
7 Cumberland, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, ~~Pamlico~~, Pender, Robeson, and Sampson
8 ~~counties~~counties;

9 ~~(3) First Monday in December to the third Saturday thereafter in Robeson County~~

10 ~~(4)(3) Second Monday-Saturday in November to through~~ the following Saturday-Sunday and the third
11 Monday-Saturday after Thanksgiving ~~to through~~ the fifth Saturday-Sunday after Thanksgiving in
12 Beaufort, Bertie, ~~Camden~~, Chowan, Craven, Dare, Edgecombe, ~~Greene~~, Halifax, ~~Hyde~~, Hertford,
13 Jones, ~~Lenoir~~, Martin, ~~Nash~~, ~~Northampton~~, ~~Pasquotank~~, ~~Pitt~~, ~~Tyrrell~~, Pamlico, and
14 Washington~~Washington~~, Wayne, and Wilson ~~counties~~counties;

15 ~~(4) Second Saturday in November through the first Sunday after Thanksgiving and the third Saturday~~
16 ~~after Thanksgiving through the fifth Sunday after Thanksgiving in Dare, Hyde, and Tyrrell counties;~~

17 ~~(5) Second Saturday preceding the second Monday in November to through~~ the following Sunday
18 Saturday and the third Saturday ~~Monday~~ after Thanksgiving ~~to through~~ the fifth Saturday after
19 Thanksgiving in Bertie, Currituck, Gates, ~~Hertford~~, and Perquimans ~~counties~~counties;

20 ~~(6) Second Monday in November through the following Sunday and the third Saturday after~~
21 ~~Thanksgiving through the fifth Sunday after Thanksgiving in Camden, Chowan, and Pasquotank~~
22 ~~counties;~~

23 ~~(7) Third Saturday in November though the fifth Sunday thereafter in Edgecombe, Greene, Halifax,~~
24 ~~Lenoir, Nash, Northampton, Pitt, Wayne, and Wilson counties; and~~

25 ~~(6)(8)~~ Concurrent with the open season for all lawful weapons for hunting deer as specified in 15A NCAC
26 10B .0203(a)(1) in Alamance, Alexander, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Davie,
27 Davidson, Durham, Franklin, Forsyth, Gaston, Granville, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Iredell, Johnston,
28 Lee, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Orange, Person, Randolph, Richmond,
29 Rockingham, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly, Stokes, Union, Vance, Wake, Warren, and Yadkin counties.

30 (b) Restrictions

31 (1) For purposes of this Paragraph, "bait" means any natural, unprocessed food product that is a grain,
32 fruit, nut, vegetable, or other material harvested from a plant crop that is not modified from its raw
33 components.

34 (2) Bears shall not be taken with the use or aid of:

35 (A) any processed food product as defined in G.S. 113-294(r), any animal, animal part or
36 product, salt, salt lick, honey, sugar, sugar-based material, syrups, candy, pastry, gum,
37 candy block, oils, spices, peanut butter, or grease;

38 (B) any extracts of substances identified in Part (A) of this Subparagraph;

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- 1 (C) any substances modified by substances identified in Part (A) of this Subparagraph,
2 including any extracts of those substances; or
- 3 (D) any bear bait attractant, including sprays, aerosols, scent balls, and scent powders.
- 4 (3) Bears may be taken with the aid of bait from the Monday on or nearest October 15 to the Saturday
5 before Thanksgiving in the counties in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule.
- 6 (4) Bears may be taken with the aid of bait during the entire open season in the counties identified in
7 Subparagraphs (a)(2) through (a)(6) of this Rule.
- 8 (5) Bears shall not be taken while in the act of consuming bait.
- 9 (6) Hunters shall not take bears using dogs in the following counties: Alamance south of Interstate 85,
10 Anson west of N.C. Hwy 742, Cabarrus, Chatham, Davie, Davidson, Franklin, Forsyth, Gaston,
11 Guilford, Lee, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange south of Interstate 85, Randolph,
12 Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, Union, and Wake south of N.C. Hwy 98. In all other counties and
13 parts of counties, hunters may take bears using dogs and may release dogs in the vicinity of bait.
- 14 (c) No Open Season. There is no open season in those parts of counties included in the following posted bear
15 sanctuaries:
- 16 Avery, Burke, and Caldwell counties--Daniel Boone bear sanctuary except by permit only
17 Beaufort, Bertie, and Washington counties--Bachelor Bay bear sanctuary
18 Bladen County--Suggs Mill Pond bear sanctuary
19 Brunswick County--Green Swamp bear sanctuary
20 Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Transylvania counties--Pisgah bear sanctuary
21 Carteret, Craven, and Jones counties--Croatan bear sanctuary
22 Clay County--Fires Creek bear sanctuary
23 Columbus County--Columbus County bear sanctuary
24 Currituck County--North River bear sanctuary
25 Dare County--Bombing Range bear sanctuary except by permit only
26 Haywood County--Harmon Den bear sanctuary
27 Haywood County--Sherwood bear sanctuary
28 Hyde County--Gull Rock bear sanctuary
29 Hyde County--Pungo River bear sanctuary
30 Jackson County--Panthertown-Bonas Defeat bear sanctuary
31 Macon County--Standing Indian bear sanctuary
32 Macon County--Wayah bear sanctuary
33 Madison County--Rich Mountain bear sanctuary
34 McDowell and Yancey counties--Mt. Mitchell bear sanctuary except by permit only
35 Mitchell and Yancey counties--Flat Top bear sanctuary
36 Wilkes County--Thurmond Chatham bear sanctuary
- 37 (d) The daily bag limit is one, the possession limit is one, and the season limit is one.
- 38 (e) Kill Reports. The carcass of each bear shall be reported as provided by 15A NCAC 10B .0113.

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1 **15A NCAC 10B .0203 DEER (WHITE-TAILED)**

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

3 (1) Deer With Visible Antlers. Except on Buffalo Cove, Nicholson Creek, Rockfish Creek, Sandhills,
4 and South Mountains Game Lands, Deer-deer with antlers or spikes protruding through the skin, as
5 distinguished from knobs or buttons covered by skin or velvet, may be taken during the following
6 seasons (Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103 for Deer With Visible Antlers seasons on these Game
7 Lands):

8 (A) Saturday on or nearest October ~~15-22~~ through the first Sunday in January in all of
9 Beaufort, ~~Bertie~~, Bladen, Brunswick, ~~Camden~~, Carteret, ~~Chowan~~, Columbus*,
10 Cumberland, Craven, ~~Currituck~~, Dare, Duplin, ~~Edgecombe~~, Franklin, ~~Gates~~, ~~Greene~~,
11 ~~Halifax~~, Harnett, ~~Hertford~~, Hoke, Hyde, ~~Johnston~~, Jones, Lenoir, ~~Martin~~, Moore, ~~Nash~~,
12 New Hanover, ~~Northampton~~, Onslow, Pamlico, ~~Pasquotank~~, Pender, ~~Perquimans~~, ~~Pitt~~,
13 Richmond**, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland**, Tyrrell, and Vance, Wake, Warren,
14 Washington, Wayne, and Wilson counties.

15 *Unlawful to hunt or kill deer in Lake Waccamaw or within 50 yards of its shoreline.

16 **~~Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103(h) for seasons on Nicholson Creek, Rockfish Creek,~~
17 ~~and Sandhills Game Lands.~~

18 (B) Saturday on or nearest October 29 through the first Sunday in January in all of Bertie,
19 Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford,
20 Johnston, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Vance, Wake,
21 Warren, Wayne, and Wilson counties.

22 (C) Saturday before Thanksgiving Day through the first Sunday in January in all of
23 Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Catawba, Cleveland, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell,
24 Lincoln, Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes*, and Yadkin counties.

25 *~~Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103(h) for seasons on Buffalo Cove Game Land.~~

26 ~~(C)(D)~~ Monday-Saturday after of Thanksgiving week-Day through the ~~third Saturday after~~
27 ~~Thanksgiving Day~~ first Sunday in January in all of Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell,
28 Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell,
29 Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey counties.

30 ~~(D)(E)~~ Two Saturdays before Thanksgiving Day through the first Sunday in January in all of
31 Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford,
32 Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan,
33 Stanly, and Union counties.

34 ~~(E)(F)~~ Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the first Sunday in January in those parts
35 of Camden, Gates, and Pasquotank counties known as the Dismal Swamp National
36 Wildlife Refuge; in those parts of Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties known as the
37 Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge; in that part of Hyde county known as Lake
38 Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge; in those parts of Dare and Hyde counties known

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1 as Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge; in those parts of Anson and Richmond
2 counties known as the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge; and in that part of Currituck
3 County known as the Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge.

4 ~~(F) Monday of Thanksgiving week through January 1 in all of Cleveland, Polk, and~~
5 ~~Rutherford counties, except for South Mountain Game Land.~~

6 (2) Deer of Either Sex. Except on Game Lands, deer of either sex may be taken during the open seasons
7 and in the counties and portions of counties listed in Parts (A), (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), and (G) of this
8 ~~Subparagraph: Subparagraph~~ (Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103 for either-sex deer seasons on Game
9 Lands). Deer of either sex may be taken during the open season identified in Part (H) of this
10 Subparagraph.

11 (A) The open either-sex deer hunting dates established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
12 during the period from the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the first Sunday
13 in January~~4~~ in those parts of Camden, Gates, and Pasquotank counties known as the
14 Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; in those parts of Hyde, Tyrrell, and
15 Washington counties known as the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge; in those
16 parts of Anson and Richmond counties known as the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge;
17 and in those parts of Currituck County known as the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge
18 and the Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge.

19 (B) The open either-sex deer hunting dates established by the appropriate military commands
20 at each of the military installations listed in this Paragraph, during the period from
21 Saturday on or nearest October ~~15-22~~ through the first Sunday in January~~4~~ in that part of
22 Brunswick County known as the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal, in that part of
23 Craven County known and marked as Cherry Point Marine Base, in that part of Onslow
24 County known and marked as the Camp Lejeune Marine Base, on Fort Bragg Military
25 Reservation, and on Camp Mackall Military Reservation.

26 (C) Youth either-sex deer hunts. First Saturday in October for youth either-sex deer hunting
27 by permit only on a portion of Belews Creek Steam Station in Stokes County designated
28 by agents of the Commission; the third Saturday in October for youth either-sex deer
29 hunting by permit only on Mountain Island State Forest in Lincoln and Gaston counties;
30 and the second Saturday in November for youth either-sex deer hunting by permit only
31 on apportion of Warrior Creek located on W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, Wilkes County
32 designated by agents of the Commission. A youth is defined as a person under 18 years
33 of age.

34 (D) The ~~last first~~ open day of the Deer with Visible Antlers season described in Subparagraph
35 (a)(1) of this Rule in all of Buncombe*, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and
36 Transylvania counties.

37 *Except for that part east of NC 191, south of the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers,
38 west of US 25, and north of NC 280

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- 1 ~~**Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103 for either sex deer seasons on game lands that differ~~
2 ~~from the days identified in this Subparagraph~~
- 3 (E) The ~~last six~~ first open days of the Deer With Visible Antlers season described in
4 Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the first Friday thereafter in all of Avery, Burke,
5 Caldwell, McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.
- 6 (F) The first ~~six~~ open days ~~and the last seven open days~~ of the Deer with Visible Antlers
7 season described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the second Friday thereafter
8 in all of Cleveland, Polk, and Rutherford counties.
- 9 (G) All the open days of the Deer With Visible Antlers season described in Subparagraph
10 (a)(1) of this Rule in and east of Ashe, Watauga, Wilkes, Alexander, Catawba, Lincoln,
11 and Gaston counties and in the following parts of counties: Buncombe: That part east of
12 NC 191, south of the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers, west of US 25, and north of
13 NC 280; and Henderson; That part east of NC 191 and north and west of NC 280.
- 14 (H) The fourth Saturday in September, subject to the following restriction: only persons
15 under the age of 18 years may hunt.
- 16 (b) Open Seasons (~~Bow and Arrow Archery~~) for hunting deer:
- 17 (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (2) of this Paragraph and the bag
18 limits set out in Paragraph (e) of this Rule, deer may be taken with bow and arrow archery equipment
19 ~~during the following seasons: from the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the day~~
20 immediately preceding the first open day of the Blackpowder Firearms and Archery Seasons
21 described in Subparagraph (c)(1) of this Rule except on Buffalo Cove, Nicholson Creek, Rockfish
22 Creek, Sandhills, and South Mountains Game Lands (Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103 for Archery
23 seasons on these Game Lands).
- 24 (A) ~~Saturday on or nearest September 10 to the third Friday thereafter in the counties and~~
25 ~~parts of counties having the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers specified by Part~~
26 ~~(A) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule, except on Nicholson Creek, Rockfish Creek, and~~
27 ~~Sandhills Game Lands.~~
- 28 (B) ~~Saturday on or nearest September 10 to the third Friday before Thanksgiving in the~~
29 ~~counties and parts of counties having the open seasons for Deer with Visible Antlers~~
30 ~~specified by Part (B) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule except for that portion of~~
31 ~~Buffalo Cove Game Land in Wilkes County.~~
- 32 (C) ~~Saturday on or nearest September 10 to the Sunday prior to the opening of the~~
33 ~~blackpowder firearms and bow and arrow season identified in Part (c)(1)(C) of this Rule;~~
34 ~~and the Sunday immediately following the closing of blackpowder firearms and bow and~~
35 ~~arrow season identified in Part (c)(1)(C) of this Rule to the Sunday before Thanksgiving~~
36 ~~in the counties and parts of counties having the open seasons for Deer With Visible~~
37 ~~Antlers specified by Part (C) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule and in Cleveland, Polk,~~
38 ~~and Rutherford counties.~~

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- 1 ~~(D) — Saturday on or nearest September 10 to the fourth Friday before Thanksgiving in the~~
2 ~~counties and parts of counties having the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers~~
3 ~~specified by Part (D) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule, and on Nicholson Creek,~~
4 ~~Rockfish Creek, and Sandhills Game Lands.~~
- 5 ~~(E) — Sunday immediately following the closing of the open season for Deer With Visible~~
6 ~~Antlers specified by Part (a)(1)(C) of this Rule through January 1 in the counties and~~
7 ~~parts of counties having the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers specified by Part~~
8 ~~(a)(1)(C) of this Rule.~~
- 9 (2) Restrictions
- 10 (A) In the areas of the state where the WRC is authorized to regulate the use of dogs as
11 ~~provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs~~ Dogs may not be used for hunting deer during the ~~bow~~
12 ~~and arrow~~ archery season, except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a
13 wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).
- 14 (B) Only archery equipment of the types authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 for taking deer
15 may be used during the ~~bow and arrow~~ archery deer hunting season.
- 16 (C) Deer of either sex may be taken during ~~bow and arrow~~ archery seasons specified by ~~Parts~~
17 ~~Subparagraph (b)(1)(A), (B), (C), and (D)~~ Subparagraph (b)(1)(A), (B), (C), and (D) of this Rule.
- 18 ~~(D) — Only deer with antlers or spikes protruding through the skin, as distinguished from knobs~~
19 ~~or buttons covered by skin or velvet, shall be taken during the bow and arrow season~~
20 ~~specified by Part (b)(1)(E) of this Rule.~~
- 21 (c) Open Seasons (Blackpowder Firearms and ~~Bow and Arrow~~ Archery) for hunting deer:
- 22 (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (2) of this Paragraph, deer may be
23 taken only with blackpowder firearms and ~~bow and arrow~~ archery equipment on the Saturday
24 ~~preceding the Deer with Visible Antlers seasons described in Parts (a)(1) (A), (B), (C), (D), (E), and~~
25 ~~(F) of this Rule through the first Friday thereafter except on Buffalo Cove, Nicholson Creek,~~
26 ~~Rockfish Creek, Sandhills, and South Mountains Game Lands (Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103 for~~
27 ~~Blackpowder Firearms and Archery seasons on these Game Lands):~~ during the following seasons:
- 28 (A) — ~~The Saturday on or nearest October 1 to the Friday of the second week thereafter in the~~
29 ~~counties and parts of counties having the open seasons for Deer With Visible Antlers~~
30 ~~specified by Part (A) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule, except on Nicholson Creek,~~
31 ~~Rockfish Creek, and Sandhills Game Lands.~~
- 32 (B) — ~~The third Saturday preceding Thanksgiving until the Friday of the second week thereafter~~
33 ~~in the counties* and parts of counties having the open seasons for Deer With Visible~~
34 ~~Antlers specified by Part (B) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule.~~
- 35 *Refer to 15A NCAC 10D .0103(h) for seasons on Buffalo Cove game land.
- 36 (C) — ~~Monday on or nearest October 1 to the Saturday of the second week thereafter in~~
37 ~~Cleveland, Polk, and Rutherford counties and in the counties and parts of counties having~~

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1 ~~the open seasons for Deer With Visible Antlers specified by Part (F) of Subparagraph~~
2 ~~(a)(1) of this Rule.~~

3 ~~(D) — The fourth Saturday preceding Thanksgiving until the Friday of the second week~~
4 ~~thereafter in the counties and parts of counties having the open season for Deer With~~
5 ~~Visible Antlers specified by Part (D) of Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule, and on~~
6 ~~Nicholson Creek, Rockfish Creek, and Sandhills Game Lands.~~

7 (2) Restrictions

8 (A) Deer of either sex may be taken during blackpowder firearms and ~~bow and arrow~~ archery
9 season in and east of the following counties: Polk, Rutherford, McDowell, Burke,
10 Caldwell, Watauga, and Ashe. Deer of either sex may be taken on the ~~last~~ first day of this
11 season only in all other counties.

12 (B) In the areas of the state where the WRC is authorized to regulate the use of dogs as
13 provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs ~~Dogs~~ shall not be used for hunting deer during the
14 blackpowder firearms and ~~bow and arrow~~ archery seasons, except a single dog on a leash
15 may be used to retrieve a wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).

16 (3) As used in this ~~Paragraph~~ Rule, blackpowder firearms means "Any firearm - including any firearm
17 with a matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type of ignition system - manufactured in or
18 before 1898, that cannot use fixed ammunition; any replica of this type of firearm if such replica is
19 not designed or redesigned for using rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition; and any
20 muzzle-loading rifle, muzzle-loading shotgun, or muzzle-loading or cylinder-loading handgun that
21 is designed to use blackpowder, blackpowder substitute, or any other propellant loaded through the
22 muzzle or cylinder and that cannot use fixed ammunition."

23 (d) Open Season (Urban Season) for hunting deer:

24 (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (3) of this Paragraph and the bag
25 limits set out in Paragraph (e) of this Rule, deer of either sex may be taken with bow and arrow in
26 participating cities in the State, as defined in G.S. 160A-1(2), from the second Saturday following
27 January 1 ~~to through the fifth-sixth Saturday-Sunday~~ thereafter. Deer shall not be taken on any game
28 land or part thereof that occurs within a city boundary.

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

33 (3) Restrictions:

34 (A) In the areas of the state where the WRC is authorized to regulate the use of dogs as
35 provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs ~~Dogs~~ shall not be used for hunting deer during the
36 urban season, except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a wounded deer in
37 accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).

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1 (B) Only archery equipment of the types authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 for taking deer
2 shall be used during the urban season.

3 (e) Bag limits. ~~In and east of Vance, Franklin, Wake, Harnett, Moore, and Richmond counties, the possession limit is~~
4 ~~six deer, up to four of which may be deer with visible antlers. In all other counties of the state the~~ The possession and
5 season limit is six deer, up to two of which may be deer with visible antlers, antlers and up to four of which may
6 antlerless deer. Antlerless deer include males with knobs or buttons covered by skin or velvet as distinguished from
7 spikes protruding through the skin. The season limit in all counties of the State, is six deer. In addition to the bag limits
8 described above, a hunter may obtain multiple bonus antlerless deer harvest report cards from the Wildlife Resources
9 Commission or any Wildlife Service Agent to allow the harvest of two additional antlerless deer per card ~~on lands~~
10 ~~others than lands enrolled in the Commission's game land program during any open deer season in all counties and~~
11 ~~parts of counties of the State identified in Part (G) of Subparagraph (a)(2) of this Rule. Antlerless deer harvested and~~
12 ~~reported on the bonus antlerless harvest report card shall not count as part of the possession and season limit. Hunters~~
13 ~~may also use the bonus antlerless harvest report cards for deer harvested during the season described in Paragraph (d)~~
14 ~~of this Rule within the boundaries of participating municipalities, except on State-owned game lands. Antlerless deer~~
15 harvested and reported on the bonus antlerless harvest report card shall not count as part of the possession and season
16 limit. Antlerless deer include males with knobs or buttons covered by skin or velvet as distinguished from spikes
17 ~~protruding through the skin.~~ The bag limits described above do not apply to deer harvested in areas covered in the
18 Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) as described in G.S. 113-291.2(e) for those individuals using
19 Commission-issued DMAP tags and reporting harvest as described on the DMAP license. Season bag limits shall be
20 set by the number of DMAP tags issued and in the hunters' possession. All deer harvested under this program,
21 regardless of the date of harvest, shall be tagged with these DMAP tags and reported as instructed on the DMAP
22 license. The hunter does not have to validate the Big Game Harvest Report Card provided with the hunting license for
23 deer tagged with the DMAP tags. Any deer harvested on lands enrolled in the DMAP and not tagged with DMAP tags
24 may only be harvested during the regularly established deer seasons subject to all the restrictions of those seasons,
25 including bag limits, and reported using the big game harvest report card or the bonus antlerless harvest report card.