



AGENDA
N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION
June 6, 2024 9:00 a.m.
1751 Varsity Drive
NCWRC Conference Room, 5th Floor
Raleigh, North Carolina

CALL TO ORDER – *Chairman Monty Crump*

This electronic meeting is being streamed live for the public to attend and recorded as a public record. The recording of the meeting will be available at www.ncwildlife.org.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – *Commissioner Joe Budd*

INVOCATION – *Commissioner Tommy Fonville*

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT – *Margo Minkler, Commission Liaison*

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY – North Carolina General Statute §138A-15 mandates that the Commission Chair shall remind all Commissioners of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict under this Chapter, and that the chair also inquires as to whether there is any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the Commission at this time. It is the duty of each Commissioner who is aware of such personal conflict of interest or of an appearance of a conflict to notify the Chair of the same. *Chairman Crump*

RECEIVE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION REVIEW OF 2024 STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEREST FOR PROSPECTIVE COMMISSIONER REID M. SMITH - Pursuant to NCGS §138A-15(c), any actual or potential conflict of interest by a public servant sitting on a board and cited by the Ethics Commission under NCGS 138A-24(e) is required to be read into the minutes of the applicable board. Read into the Minutes relevant portions of the evaluations by the N.C. Ethics Commission of the 2024 Statement of Economic Interest for Reid M. Smith, House Speaker Tim Moore Appointee – *Margo Minkler*

ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE TO NEW COMMISSIONER – Administer the Oath of Office to House Speaker Appointee Reid M. Smith – *Representative John R. Bell, IV, North Carolina General Assembly*

BREAK FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

APPROVAL OF APRIL 18, 2024 MEETING MINUTES – Take action on the April 18, 2024 Wildlife Resources Commission meeting minutes as written in the exhibit. **(EXHIBIT A)**

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT – Receive Financial Status Report on the Wildlife Resources Commission General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and the Endowment Fund. – *Jason Cottle, Chief Financial Officer (EXHIBIT B)*

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Rules Committee – May 14, 2024 – *Wes Seegars, Chair*

Land Acquisition & Property Committee – June 5, 2024 – *Tom Berry, Chair*

Habitat, Nongame, & Endangered Species Committee – June 5, 2024 – *Kelly Davis, Chair*

Big Game Committee – June 5, 2024 – *David Hoyle, Chair*

Finance, Audit & Compliance Committee – June 5, 2024 – *Brad Stanback, Vice Chair*

Committee of the Whole – June 5, 2024 – *Monty Crump, Chair*

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – Searching for Sound – *Aubrey Greene, Wildlife Diversity Biologist*

RECIPROCAL HUNTING LICENSE FEES FOR NON-RESIDENTS – Consider adoption of a resolution to allow changes in nonresident hunting license fees for neighboring states to establish parity, under the authority of NCGS 113-275(a1) – *Brian Daniels, Customer Service Manager, Customer Support Services. (EXHIBIT C)*

CONSIDERATION OF NONGAME WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APPOINTMENTS – Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §113-335, consider appointment of members to the Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee – *Kyle Briggs, Chief Deputy Director (EXHIBIT D)*

LAND AND WATER ACCESS DIVISION

Land Acquisitions and Property Matters

Phase II Land Acquisition – Consider final approval to proceed with acquisition of the following property – *Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager (EXHIBIT E)*

- Rash Heirs – Ashe County (E)

Other Property Matters – Consider approval of the following other property matters - *Ben Solomon (EXHIBITS F-1, F-2)*

- Easement Request – Request from Dominion Energy to purchase an easement through a portion of R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land in Caswell County (F-1)
- Easement Request – Request from Tyr Energy Development Renewables to purchase an easement through a portion of Bertie County Game Land in Bertie County (F-2)

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SPECIES CONSERVATION PLAN – Consider staff recommendation for final adoption of the Sea Turtles Conservation Plan – *Dr. Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief (EXHIBIT G)*

RULEMAKING

Temporary/Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 2024-2025 Land and Water Access - 10D .0252 Needmore Game Land Rule – Consider request to notice proposed rule text with an open comment period and public hearing for the 2024-2025 Annual Cycle deer season companion rule. Review and consider approval of fiscal note – *Melva Bonner* (EXHIBITS H-1, H-2)

Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 2024-2025 Land and Water Access Rules – Review public comments and consider request to amend the 2024-2025 Annual Cycle deer season companion rules – *Melva Bonner* (EXHIBITS I-1, I-2)

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Land and Water Access Rules – Consider request to notice proposed rule text with an open comment period and public hearing for amendments to Land and Water Access rules. Review and consider approval of fiscal note – *Daron Barnes, Land and Water Access Division Chief* (EXHIBITS J-1, J-2)

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Wildlife Management Rules – Consider request to notice proposed rule text with an open comment period and public hearing for amendments to Wildlife Management rules. Review and consider approval of fiscal note – *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief* (EXHIBITS K-1, K-2)

Permanent Rulemaking Notice of Text – 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Inland Fisheries Rules – Consider request to notice proposed rule text with an open comment period and public hearing for amendments to Inland Fisheries rules. Review and consider approval of fiscal note – *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief* (EXHIBITS L-1, L-2)

Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 10C .0422 Striped Mullet and White Mullet Rule – Review public comments and consider request to amend 10C .0422 Striped Mullet and White Mullet rule – *Christian Waters* (EXHIBITS M-1, M-2)

Temporary Rulemaking Adoption – 10C .0218 Harvest Reporting Requirements Rule – Review public comments and consider request to adopt 10C .0218 Harvest Reporting Requirements rule – *Christian Waters* (EXHIBITS N-1, N-2)

Temporary Rulemaking Notice of Text – 10C .0307 Flounder Rule – Consider request to notice proposed rule text with an open comment period and public hearing for temporary amendments to the flounder rule – *Christian Waters* (EXHIBIT O)

COMMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN – *Chairman Crump*

ADJOURN

EXHIBIT A



MINUTES

April 18, 2024

**N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Meeting
Raleigh, North Carolina
Hotel Ballast, Cape Fear/Starboard Room
Wilmington, North Carolina**

Chairman Monty Crump called the April 18, 2024 N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Cape Fear/Starboard Room at the Hotel Ballast in Wilmington. Crump reminded everyone that the meeting is being audio streamed live and will be available at www.ncwildlife.org.

Commissioner Landon Zimmer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Mike Alford gave the invocation.

ROLL CALL

Margo Minkler, Commission Liaison, called the roll. Tommy Fonville, Ray Clifton, John Stone, Hayden Rogers, and J.C. Cole were absent.

COMMISSIONER ATTENDANCE

Monty Crump	Jim Ruffin	Steve Windham	Mike Alford
Mark Craig	John Coley	Wes Seegars	Joe Budd
David Hoyle	Tom Berry	Kelly Davis	John Alexander
Brad Stanback	Landon Zimmer	Tom Haislip	

VISITORS

Reid Smith, Prospective Commissioner

MANDATORY ETHICS INQUIRY

Chairman Crump advised the Commission of the mandatory ethics inquiry as mandated in NCGS §138A-15. Vice Chairman Craig recused himself from discussion and action on **EXHIBIT E-4** and Commissioner Coley recused himself from discussion and action on **EXHIBIT K-2**.

MINUTES

On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Wes Seegars, the Commission approved the Minutes of the following meetings:

DECEMBER 19, 2023 MEETING – The Wildlife Resources Commission Minutes of the December 19, 2023 meeting were approved with an amendment to attendance, as presented in **EXHIBIT A**.

FEBRUARY 22, 2024 MEETING – The Wildlife Resources Commission Minutes of the February 22, 2024 meeting were approved as presented in **EXHIBIT B**.

EXHIBITS A and B are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

Jason Cottle, Chief Financial Officer, presented a status report in **EXHIBIT C** on the Wildlife Resources Commission General Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, and the Endowment Fund.

ENDOWMENT FUND EXPENDABLE INCOME ALLOCATION – On a motion by Landon Zimmer and second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the Calendar Year 2023 Investment Income Allocation presented in **EXHIBIT D** by *Jason Cottle*

EXHIBITS C and D are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMITTEE MEETING REPORTS

Habitat, Nongame, & Endangered Species Committee – April 17, 2024 – *Kelly Davis, Chair*, reported the Habitat Nongame Endangered Species Committee met on April 17, 2024. *Sarah Finn, Coastal Wildlife Diversity Biologist*, who focuses primarily on sea turtles, provided an informative presentation on the five federally and state listed sea turtles that occur in North Carolina during nesting and wintering seasons. Sarah highlighted threats faced by sea turtles, both on land and in water, as well as conservation actions WRC biologists, partners, and volunteers are taking to avoid or alleviate the impacts from these threats. Likely a result of dedicated conservation actions, the numbers of loggerhead sea turtle nests have increased slightly since the early 1990s. North Carolina boasts more than 2,000 volunteers contributing their time to sea turtle conservation.

Dr. Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief, followed Sarah Finn's presentation with a summary of the Sea Turtles and Virginia Big-eared Bat conservation plans.

The Committee voted to release the Sea Turtles Conservation Plan for public comment and endorsed the approval of the Virginia Big-eared Bat Conservation Plan to the full Commission.

Dr. Heather Evans, Conservation Genetics Manager, provided a presentation on the Roanoke Logperch and use of environmental DNA (eDNA) to increase detection of this small, endemic fish in tributaries to the Roanoke River. Detections of Roanoke Logperch using eDNA were much greater, less time-consuming, and less costly than those from backpack electrofishing. Environmental DNA survey data can be used to direct focused electrofishing efforts to confirm species presence and collect samples. Finally, she outlined plans for continued use of eDNA in other projects. There being no further business, the committee was adjourned.

Migratory Birds & Waterfowl Committee – April 17, 2024 – *John Coley, Chair*, reported the Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Committee met on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. First, *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*, presented the committee with staff recommendations on peregrine falcon take for use in falconry. Next, the Committee received information from *Doug Howell, Migratory Game Bird Coordinator*, on the federal migratory bird hunting season frameworks and staff recommendations for migratory bird hunting seasons including the special falconry season. Doug also provided the Committee with an update on the impoundment at Mattamuskeet that had issues with lead last year and gave us an update on the Atlantic Flyway's eastern mallard project. Having no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Fisheries Committee – April 17, 2024 – *John Stone, Chair*, reported the Fisheries Committee met on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief*, shared 10 rule proposals to be considered during the 2025-2026 annual rules cycle. Eight proposals address Public Mountain Trout Waters with the other two dealing with Harris Reservoir crappie and mullet. Christian then presented temporary rules on Mandatory Fish Harvest Reporting and the creel limit for Striped and White Mullet to be noticed for public comment. Christian provided an update on the Watha State Fish Hatchery located in Pender County. It is the Commission's primary warmwater fish hatchery producing Striped Bass, Bodie Bass, Channel Catfish, and other species. Commissioners are invited to tour the hatchery and see the work firsthand. There being no further business, the committee was adjourned.

Big Game Committee – April 17, 2024 – *David Hoyle, Chair*, reported the Big Game Committee met on Wednesday April 17, 2024. The meeting began with a summary of this past year's deer and bear harvest. Harvest for both species were all time highs. Next, *Chris Kreh, Wildlife Management Division Assistant Chief*, gave an update on the CWD sampling results for this year. Over 36,000 deer were sampled this year with 13 new positive deer detected. Thankfully, we did not find CWD in any new counties this year. The total CWD positives count is now up to 24. Staff presented their recommendations for next year's Surveillance Area counties and mandatory testing windows. The Surveillance Area counties will not change next year but the number of mandatory testing days will be reduced in both areas, there will be 3 days in SA1 which is the original area in the northwest and 8 days in SA2 which is the southeast area. Finally, the committee had a roundtable discussion of where we are with CWD and what the future might look like. Lots of good questions and ideas discussed with plenty more to come. Having no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Land Acquisition & Property Committee – April 17, 2024 – *Brad Stanback, Chair*, reported the Land Acquisition and Property Committee met on April 17, 2024. The Land Acquisition and

Property Committee began by reviewing the 2025-2026 Land and Water Access rule proposals. The Committee also reviewed and approved 13 real property proposals which included 6 Phase I land acquisition proposals, 6 Phase II land acquisition proposals, and 1 disposition request from the City of Salisbury. The Committee approved the conceptual phase of the disposition request and directed staff to gather more information before the project returns to the Board for final approval. There being no further business, the committee adjourned.

Committee of the Whole Report – April 17, 2024 – *Monty Crump, Chair*, reported the Committee of the Whole met on April 17, 2024. The meeting began with *Jason Cottle, Chief Financial Officer*, presenting an update on the Endowment Fund balance and the expendable income calculation for 2023. Next, *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*, presented two rule proposals for the 2025-2026 annual rules cycle. *Melva Bonner, Regulatory Analyst*, then presented permanent rulemaking for license fees, commercial use permitting, and 2024-2025 Land and Water Access Rules to align deer seasons on game lands with the changes already approved in the western deer season. Finally, *Betsy Haywood, Water Safety Rules Coordinator*, presented no wake zone rules for Pender, Bladen, Dare, and New Hanover counties. There being no further business, the committee adjourned.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT – Law Enforcement Technology in the 21st Century –*Lt. Scott Strickland* gave a presentation titled “Law Enforcement in the 21st Century.” The presentation provided an overview of the Law Enforcement Division’s Drone Program and how officers use of drones in law enforcement work. He discussed the use of drones in detecting violations, search and rescue operations and accident investigations. He highlighted the emergence of thermal and night vision scopes in hunting and how some people are using them to violate the law. Lastly, he covered the Body Worn Cameras that are employed by our officers and how they have been very beneficial for officers’ safety and accountability.

Land Acquisitions and Property Matters

Phase II Land Acquisition – On a motion by Tom Berry and second by David Hoyle, the Commission approved the acquisition of the following properties presented in **(EXHIBITS E-1, E-2, E-3, E-5, E-6)** by *Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager*.

- Hancock Tract – Halifax County **(E-1)**
- Klatt Wetland Tract – Macon County **(E-2)**
- Huckleberry Hill – Surry County **(E-3)**
- Southport White Springs Tract – Brunswick County **(E-5)**
- Taylor Swamp Tract – Hertford County **(E-6)**

With Vice Chairman Craig recused, and on a motion by Brad Stanback and second by Mike Alford, the Commission approved the acquisition of the following property presented in **(EXHIBIT E-4)** by *Ben Solomon*

- Mayo Tract – Beaufort County **(E-4)**

EXHIBITS E-1, E-2, E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

2024-2025 Webless Migratory Birds, Resident Canada Geese, Extended Falconry, and Waterfowl Seasons – On a motion by *David Hoyle* and a second by *John Coley*, the Commission reviewed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service frameworks (**EXHIBIT F-1**), public comments (**EXHIBIT F-2**), and approved staff recommendations for the 2024-2025 season dates and bag limits for webless migratory birds, resident Canada geese, extended falconry, and waterfowl presented in (**EXHIBITS F-3, F-4**) by *Brad Howard, Wildlife Management Division Chief*

2024 Migrant Peregrine Falconry - On a motion by John Coley and a second by Landon Zimmer, the Commission approved staff recommendations to allow the take of up to 5 migrant peregrine falcons for use in falconry in 2024 presented in (**EXHIBIT G**) by *Brad Howard*

Species Conservation Plan – On a motion by Kelly Davis and a second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved the final adoption of the Virginia Big-eared Bat Conservation Plan presented in (**EXHIBIT H**) by *Dr. Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Management Assistant Chief*

EXHIBITS F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, G, H are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

WATER SAFETY RULEMAKING

On a motion by Wes Seegars and second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission approved the following water safety rules presented in **EXHIBITS I-2 & J-2** by *Betsy Haywood, Water Safety Rules Coordinator*

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0304 Bladen County –The Commission reviewed public comments presented in (**EXHIBIT I-1**) and adopted proposed changes to create a no-wake zone at the Elwell Ferry adjacent to the Elwell’s Ferry Boating Access Area (BAA) on the Cape Fear River, clarify the description and regulated activities in the Restricted Area at White Lake, and incorporate into the NC Administrative Code (NCAC) BAA’s on the Cape Fear River and one BAA on the Black River presented in (**EXHIBIT I-2**) by *Betsy Haywood, Water Safety Rules Coordinator*

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0310 Dare County –The Commission reviewed public comments presented in (**EXHIBIT J-1**) and adopted an amendment to correct a coordinate at a point near the mouth of Motts Creek at Cape Hatteras National Seashore presented in (**EXHIBIT J-2**) by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS I-1, I-2, J-1, J-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 15A NCAC 10F .0314 New Hanover County – With Commissioner Coley recused, and on a motion by Steve Windham and a second by John Alexander, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in (**EXHIBIT K-1**) and approved the rulemaking petition to extend the no-wake zone in Bradley Creek shore to shore to a point closer to the mouth of the creek presented in (**EXHIBIT K-2**) by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS K-1, K-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Permanent Rulemaking Application and Fiscal Note – 15A NCAC 10F .0321 Pender County – On a motion by Steve Windham and a second by John Coley, the Commission approved to publish Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and public hearing, to create two no-wake zones in parts of Topsail Sound and Topsail Creek, north and south of the Intracoastal Waterway from east of the N.C. Highway 210 Surf City Bridge to points approximately 500 yards eastward; and to incorporate into the NC Administrative Code (NCAC) four BAA's in Pender County presented in **(EXHIBIT L-1)** and approved fiscal notes for proposed rules presented in **(EXHIBIT L-2)** by *Betsy Haywood*

EXHIBITS L-1, L-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

RULEMAKING

Permanent Rulemaking Adoption – 10A .1601 License Fees Rule – On a motion by Landon Zimmer and a second by Jim Ruffin, the Commission reviewed public comments presented in **(EXHIBIT M-1)** and adopted 10A .1601 License Fees rule. **(EXHIBIT M-2)** by *Melva Bonner, Regulatory Analyst*

EXHIBITS M-1, M-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Notice of Text – 10H .1800 Commercial Use Permitting Rules – On a motion by David Hoyle and a second by John Coley, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for the proposed rule 10H .1801 through .1803 Commercial Permitting rules presented in **(EXHIBIT N-1)** and approved fiscal notes for proposed rules presented in **(EXHIBIT N-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

EXHIBITS N-1, N-2 are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Notice of Text – 2024-2025 Land and Water Access Rules – On a motion by John Alexander and a second by Mike Alford, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for the 2024-2025 Annual Cycle deer season companion rules presented in **(EXHIBIT O-1)** and approved fiscal notes for proposed temporary and permanent rules presented in **(EXHIBIT O-2)** by *Melva Bonner*

EXHIBITS O-1, O-2, are incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Notice of Text – 10C .0422 Striped Mullet and White Mullet Rule – On a motion by *Tom Berry* and a second by *John Coley*, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC Register* with an open comment period and a public hearing for 10C .0422 Striped Mullet and White Mullet temporary rule presented in **(EXHIBIT P)** by *Christian Waters, Inland Fisheries Division Chief*

EXHIBIT P is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

Notice of Text – 10C .0218 Harvest Reporting Requirements Rule – On a motion by Jim Ruffin and a second by Brad Stanback, the Commission approved publishing Notice of Text in the *NC*

Register with an open comment period and a public hearing for 10C .0218 Harvest Reporting Requirements temporary rule presented in **(EXHIBIT Q)** by *Christian Waters*

EXHIBIT Q is incorporated into the official record of this meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN – *Chairman Crump* opened his comments by expressing his gratitude to Commissioner Windham and Commissioner Zimmer for their gracious hospitality in welcoming the board to their community. He also expressed appreciation to the staff for their diligent efforts in coordinating and executing a successful away commission meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – *Executive Director Ingram* opened his comments by reiterating Chairman Crump's appreciation for Commissioner Windham and Commissioner Zimmer's hospitality, as well as the diligent efforts of staff in ensuring the success of the away commission meeting. He further extended gratitude to Orton Plantation for graciously hosting the board and providing a tour showcasing their commendable conservation efforts. Additionally, he thanked Chairman Crump for the opportunity to convene the away commission meeting, underscoring the value of such gatherings in fostering collaboration and progress within the commission's mission.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the WRC webinar meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m. All exhibits are incorporated into the official record of this meeting by reference and are filed with the minutes.

Monty Crump, Chairman

Date

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

Date

NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

CAFR 52G - STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES and CHANGES
in FUND BALANCES
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS AS OF APR 30, 2024

	FY 2024 General Fund	FY 2024 Capital Improvement Fund
REVENUES		
Federal funds	\$24,324,915.73	\$2,497,467.88
Local funds	\$2,595.92	\$0.00
Investment earnings	\$455,678.28	\$0.00
Sales and services	\$9,573,356.89	\$0.00
Rental and lease of property	\$46,696.80	\$0.00
Fees, licenses and fines	\$26,857,109.08	\$0.00
Contributions, gifts and grants	\$542,073.95	\$50,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$255,280.86	\$274.00
Unclassified/invalid accounts	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Financing Sources - Sale of capital assets	\$491,754.05	\$0.00
Other Financing Sources - Insurance recoveries	\$2,668.95	\$108,551.38
Other Financing Sources - Transfers in	\$68,359,575.74	\$6,515,118.87
Other Financing Sources - Appropriations	\$14,217,987.00	\$0.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$145,129,693.25	\$9,171,412.13
EXPENDITURES		
Personal services	\$34,002,027.37	\$0.00
Employee benefits	\$16,471,789.63	\$0.00
Contracted personal services	\$10,331,430.54	\$234,230.13
Supplies and materials	\$7,860,309.46	\$21,282.55
Travel	\$452,266.09	\$0.00
Communication	\$949,768.20	\$0.00
Utilities	\$586,011.98	\$0.00
Data processing services	\$515,085.42	\$0.00
Other services	\$3,619,265.30	\$76,096.83
Claims and benefits	\$1,271,944.39	\$0.00
Principal Retirement	\$10,565.00	\$0.00
Interest and Fees	\$435.00	\$0.00
Other fixed charges	\$243,767.91	\$7,879.48
Capital outlay	\$6,302,672.09	\$8,292,396.90
Grants, state aid and subsidies	\$4,746,398.37	\$0.00
Insurance and bonding	\$161,386.19	\$0.00
Other expenditures	\$2,948,557.12	\$0.00
Reimbursements	(\$715,920.35)	\$0.00
Unclassified/invalid accounts	\$24,684.20	\$0.00
Other Financing (Uses) - Transfers out	\$49,988,910.89	\$0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$139,771,354.80	\$8,631,885.89
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER (UNDER) EXPENDITURES	\$5,358,338.45	\$539,526.24
FUND BALANCE - JULY 1, 2023	\$21,214,381.32	\$3,362,551.08
FUND BALANCE - APR 30, 2024	\$26,572,719.77	\$3,902,077.32

NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION ENDOWMENT PORTFOLIO

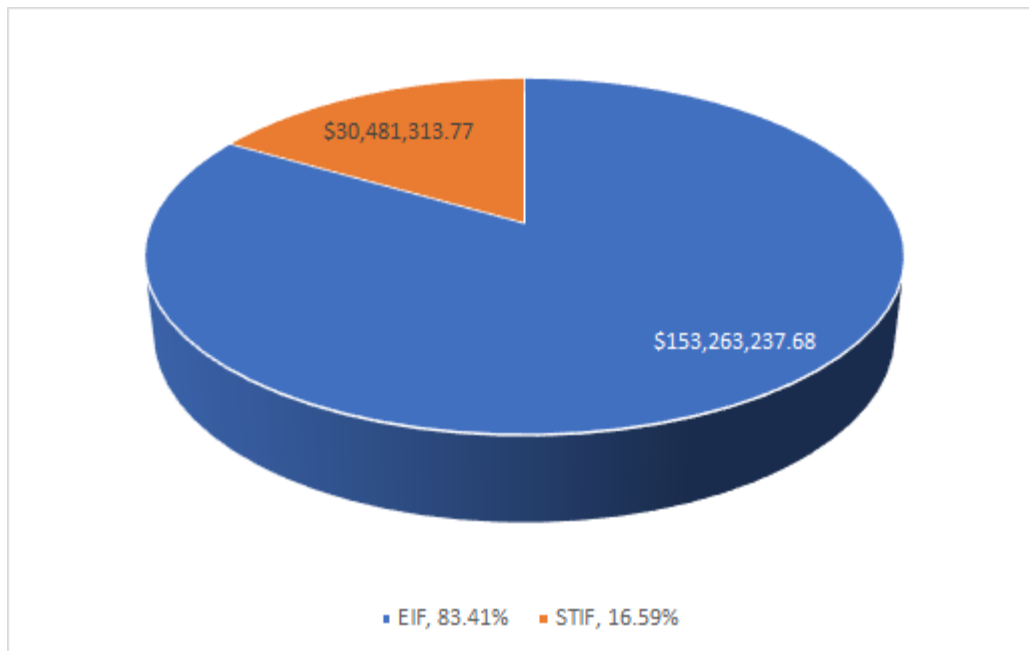
Fund Balance*: April 2024 \$183,744,551.45

* Based On Financial Institutions' Data And Does Not Include Time-Lag Entries.

§ 143-250.1. Wildlife Endowment Fund

- (d) (3). No expenditure or disbursement shall be made from the principal of the Wildlife Endowment Fund except as otherwise provided by law.
- (d) (4). The income received and accruing from the investments of the Wildlife Endowment Fund must be spent only in furthering the conservation of wildlife resources and the efficient operation of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission in accomplishing the purposes of the agency as set forth in G.S. 143-239.
- (g) The Wildlife Endowment Fund and the investment income therefrom shall not take the place of State appropriations or Agency receipts placed in the Wildlife Resources Fund, or any part thereof, but any portion of the income of the Wildlife Endowment Fund available for the purpose set out in subdivision (4) of subsection (d) shall be used to supplement other income of and appropriations to the Wildlife Resources Commission to the end that the Commission may improve and increase its services and become more useful to a greater number of people.

ASSET ALLOCATION



2024 April					
Status:		Principal	ANI Nonexpendable	ANI Expendable	Total
Adult		\$ 85,062,629.20		\$ 57,561,529.02	\$ 142,624,158.22
Magazine		\$ 1,573,477.50		\$ 1,096,195.32	\$ 2,669,672.82
Contributions		\$ 857,564.80		\$ 2,764,233.23	\$ 3,621,798.03
Diversity		\$ 231,138.57		\$ 35,390.58	\$ 266,529.15
Infant		\$ 21,591,293.50	\$ 9,254,934.28		\$ 30,846,227.78
Youth		\$ 3,047,770.00	\$ 744,928.53		\$ 3,792,698.53
					\$ 183,821,084.53
Total		\$ 112,363,873.57	\$ 9,999,862.81	\$ 61,457,348.15	\$ 183,821,084.53
					\$ -
				Total from detail area >>	\$ 183,821,084.53
					\$ -

Of the amount noted above as expendable income, the figures below reflect WRC's known obligations for Endowment income over the next three years:

Setzer Hatchery Renovation	\$17,000,000.00
<u>Samarcand Training Facility</u>	\$10,380,000.00
Other Capital Projects	\$ 3,870,000.00
<u>Debt Service</u>	<u>\$ 5,615,219.00</u>

Remaining Available Expendable Income \$24,592,129.15

EXHIBIT C

June 6, 2024



Establish Equality for Nonresident Hunting License Fees with Neighboring States Pursuant to Statutory Authority

Whereas, nonresident hunting license fees in neighboring states, as presented at the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) meeting of June 6, 2024 in Exhibit C, are no longer comparable to fees in North Carolina; and

Whereas, G.S. 113-275(a1) gives NCWRC the authority to equalize nonresident fees under these circumstances; and

Whereas, NCWRC staff shall analyze nonresident hunting license fees of neighboring states annually and recommend amendments for Commission consideration;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, in official session on June 6, 2024, that North Carolina nonresident annual hunting and annual big game license fees along with the nonresident 10-day hunting and 10-day big game license fees for residents of the states of Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia shall be set to those fees presented in the table below. These fees are effective July 1, 2024, and remain in effect until amended as prescribed above. This Resolution supersedes the previous resolution adopted by the Commission regarding North Carolina nonresident hunting license fees for neighboring states.

License Type	GA	SC	TN	VA
Annual Hunt	\$100	\$125	\$110	\$110
Annual Big Game	\$225	\$310	\$195	\$85
10-Day Hunt	\$74	\$75	\$88	\$110
10-Day Big Game	\$202	\$310	\$195	\$85

Monty R. Crump
Chairman

Cameron N. Ingram
Executive Director

**Summary of nonresident hunting licenses sold
for the period July 1, 2023 – May 28, 2024**

State	Annual Nonresident Hunt Sold	Annual Nonresident Big Game Sold	10-Day Nonresident Hunt Sold	10-Day Nonresident Big Game Sold	Total
GA	446	273	402	122	1,243
SC	2,010	1,202	1,254	202	4,668
TN	479	305	225	159	1,168
VA	3,289	1,701	272	63	5,325
Other	3,929	2,644	5,298	4,132	16,003
Total	10,153	6,125	7,451	4,678	28,407

**Proposed reciprocal nonresident hunting license fees
based upon April 2024 fee analysis**

The tables below represent the fees North Carolina residents would pay to hunt in each state and the proposed fees each state’s resident would pay to hunt in North Carolina effective July 1, 2024. To create an equitable proposed fee for states without equal short-term basic hunting licenses, fees were calculated by formulating a compromise of what it would cost to hunt each day in the neighboring states. If the short-term license cost exceeded the annual license cost, the fee proposed is equal to the annual fee. Only those proposed fees in “red” are being modified.

Georgia				
License Types	NC’s Fees for All Other Nonresidents	NC’s Current Fees for GA Residents	GA’s Current Fees for NC Residents	NC’s Proposed Fees for GA Residents
Annual Hunt	\$119	\$100	\$100	\$100
Annual Big Game	\$119	\$195	\$225	\$225
10-Day Hunt	\$95	\$60	\$20 (1-day, \$6 each additional day=\$74)	\$74
10-Day Big Game	\$95	\$195	\$130 (1-day, \$8 each additional day=\$202)	\$202

South Carolina				
License Types	NC's Fees for All Other Nonresidents	NC's Current Fees for SC Residents	SC's Current Fees for NC Residents	NC's Proposed Fees for SC Residents
Annual Hunt	\$119	\$125	\$125	\$125
Annual Big Game	\$119	\$100	\$100; plus 2 bucks @ \$70 & 4 does @ \$40=\$110 & \$100 for 2 turkey tags	\$310
10-Day Hunt	\$95	\$75	\$75 10-day	\$75
10-Day Big Game	\$95	\$100	N/A*	\$310

*SC does not offer a short-term big game privilege license. To hunt big game short-term in SC, nonresident hunters must purchase an annual big game license.

Tennessee				
License Types	NC's Fees for All Other Nonresidents	NC's Current Fees for TN Residents	TN's Current Fees for NC Residents	NC's Proposed Fees for TN Residents
Annual Hunt	\$119	\$90	\$111	\$111
Annual Big Game	\$119	\$160	\$194	\$194
10-Day Hunt	\$95	\$70	\$61.50 7-day (\$8.79/day x 10=\$87.90)	\$88
10-Day Big Game	\$95	\$105	N/A*	\$194

*TN does not offer a stand-alone big game license. To hunt big game in TN, nonresident hunters must purchase either a \$305 annual or \$214.50 7-day "all game" license.

Virginia				
License Types	NC's Fees for All Other Nonresidents	NC's Current Fees for VA Residents	VA's Current Fees for NC Residents	NC's Proposed Fees for VA Residents
Annual Hunt	\$119	\$110	\$111	\$110
Annual Big Game	\$119	\$85	\$86	\$85
10-Day Hunt	\$95	\$110	\$60 3-day (\$20/day x 10=\$200)	\$110
10-Day Big Game	\$95	\$85	N/A*	\$85

*VA does not offer a short-term big game license. To hunt big game short-term in VA, nonresident hunters must purchase an annual big game license. VA prices include a \$1 issuance fee which is not included in the base price of the license.

EXHIBIT D

June 6, 2024



CONSIDERATION OF NONGAME WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §113-335, consider appointment of members to the Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee – Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

NWAC Nominations - 2024

Nominee	Seat	Nominated By	Staff Recommendation
J. Edward Corey III	Expert	Self-Nomination	Re-appointment
Gilbert Grant	Expert	William Tarplee	
Jared Gray	Government	Self-Nomination	Re-appointment
J. Worth McAlister IV	At-Large	Self-Nomination	
G. Lane Sauls	Industry	Self-Nomination	Re-appointment
Dustin Smith	At-Large	Self-Nomination	Re-appointment
Bruce White	Industry	Self-Nomination	Re-appointment

Governmental Affiliate

1. Jared Gray, North Carolina Department of Transportation (*Recommended for Re-appointment*)

Length of NWAC membership: since 2016

Current Position: Environmental Program Supervisor

Expertise: Reviews environmental documents prepared by other state and federal agencies to determine the effects on the NCDOT program, experience doing threatened and endangered species plant studies, natural resource inventories, wetland delineation and the required mapping of each, mussel surveys, fish surveys.

Expert Affiliate

2. J. Edward Corey III, North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation (*Recommended for Re-appointment*)

Length of NWAC membership: since 2015

Current Position: Inventory Biologist

Expertise: Works on monitoring Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat; Neuse River Waterdog, Common Mudpuppy, Eastern Hellbender, Green Salamander, and Wehrle's Salamander; Cape Fear Threetooth; New River Crayfish and New River Spiny Crayfish; Little Metalmark; Broad-winged Sedge Grasshopper; Belle's Sanddragon and Sandhills Clubtail (two species rediscovered in NC in 2007); *Hypochilus coylei*; Venus Flytrap, Small Butterwort, Douglass' Bittercress, Golden Sedge, Cooley's Meadowrue, and Carolina Least Trillium.

3. Gilbert Grant

Nominee: William Tarplee

Current Position: Independent consultant

Expertise: Extensive experience as an independent consultant for several conservation agencies including Nature Conservancy in NC, Independent alligator research, published nature photographer, Educator, lifelong conservationist, accomplished ornithologist.

Industry Affiliate

4. G. Lane Sauls, VHB, Inc (*Recommended for Re-appointment*)

Length of NWAC membership: since 2015

Current Position: Principal Owner/ Natural Resources Manager

Expertise: Environmental mitigation projects, including stream, wetland, and riparian buffer restoration, enhancement, and preservation. Extensive training in the science of Natural Channel Design and has completed specialized coursework in both stream and wetland delineation, storm water management, and the collection of benthic macroinvertebrates.

5. Bruce White, GFR Forestry Consultants, PLLC (*Recommended for Re-appointment*)

Length of NWAC membership: since 2021

Current Position: Staff Consulting Forester

Expertise: Provide consulting services to private landowners. Front line resource manager having landscape-scale effects on wildlife and incorporates wildlife diversity and conservation considerations. Committed to sustainable and diverse management practices. Member of timberland investment management organizations, forest industry, and conservation groups.

Affiliate or At-large Affiliate

6. J. Worth McAlister IV

Nominee: Self-Nomination

Current Position: Residential Construction Management

Expertise: Professional work experience includes the field study of threatened and endangered eastern bats, snowshoe hares, Atlantic south slope mussels, threatened and endangered NC freshwater fishes, and wild NC canids including the red wolf.

7. Dustin Smith, North Carolina Zoo (*Recommended for Re-appointment*)

Length of NWAC membership: since 2021

Current Position: Curator of Reptiles, Amphibians, and Invertebrates

Expertise: Reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates; specifically, gopher frogs and ornate chorus frogs, hellbender salamanders, pine barrens tree frogs (population surveys in Sandhills Game Land).

Exhibit E

June 6, 2024

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Land Acquisition Investigation Form

Phase II: FINAL ACQUISITION DETAILS

Tract Name: Rash Heirs

WRC Action/Approval to Pursue (Date): August 23, 2023

Acquisition Plan (specify total project costs AND sources of funding):

Blue Ridge Conservancy LWF Grant	\$87,000
Wildlife Restoration Funds	\$90,000
	\$177,000

Acquisition Plan Includes Bargain Sale? Yes No N/A

If Yes, Explain Details:

Total Cost Based on Appraisal? Yes No N/A

If Yes, Describe in Table:

Requested By	Appraiser	Effective Date	Appraised Value
Blue Ridge Conservancy	Sweeting Appraisal Services	January 16, 2024	\$179,800

Appraisal Handled by State Property Office? Yes No N/A

Source(s) of Stewardship Funds (indicate federal:state match rates):

Federal (PR) 75% : State 25%

Five-Year Stewardship Costs & Revenue Projections (worksheet attached):

Total Stewardship Expenditures	\$ 3,400
Total Projected Revenue	\$

Exhibit E

June 6, 2024

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Land Acquisition Investigation Form

Phase II: COSTS AND REVENUE WORKSHEET

Estimated Five Year Stewardship Costs and Revenue Projections:

Estimated Stewardship Costs				
Activity	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Boundary Establishment (Contract Survey)	24	acres	\$100	\$2,400
Parking Area	1	Each	\$1,000	\$1,000
TOTAL				\$ 3,400

Estimated Revenue Projections				
Source	Quantity	Unit	Unit Revenue	Total Revenue
TOTAL				

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Land Acquisition Investigation Form
– PHASE I: INITIAL INVESTIGATION –

WRC Staff Contact:	Paul Thompson
Date First Presented to Commission:	8/23/2023
Tract Name:	Rash Heirs (Three Top Mountain GL)
County:	Ashe
Acreage:	24 acres
Tax Value:	\$90,000
Property Owner/Representative:	Blue Ridge Conservancy (Eric Hiegl)
Phone:	
Email Address:	
Address:	

Primary Purpose:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resource Protection
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Resource Management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	User Access
<input type="checkbox"/>	WRC Facility

Program Potential:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Game Land
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife Conservation Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	None

Type of Acquisition:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Purchase
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lease
<input type="checkbox"/>	Easement

Type of Parcel:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tract
<input type="checkbox"/>	Riparian Corridor

Grant Potential:

<input type="checkbox"/>	CWMTF
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Federal Aid (PR, WB, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Endowment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Owner Interest:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Tax Value:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Year Assessed
<input type="checkbox"/>	PUV?

Stewardship Considerations:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PR	Source: Federal Aid: 75%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State	Match: State: 25%

Funding Considerations:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Donation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bargain Sale
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partner Contribution

Reviewed Appraisal & Purchase Requirements?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Recommendation:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pursue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do Not Pursue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Defer

Additional Comments:

Blue Ridge Conservancy submitted a LWF grant to cover 1/2 of the purchase price. This tract will be a great addition to Three Top Mountain GL for resource protection and solidifying WRC ownership in this area. It will also compliment 96 acres located nearby that will soon be donated to WRC by The Nature Conservancy. Blue Ridge Conservancy feels optimistic that they can also acquire an additional 12 acres located between the Rash Heir tract and the future TNC donation. There is also a strong interest in an adjoining 1.5 acre tract that will provide direct public access to the Rash Heir tract via Hardin Gilley Rd. The Rash Heir tract does, however, have an existing 60 ft. right-of-way through this 1.5 acre tract.

August 23, 2023

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Land Acquisition Investigation Form
– PHASE I: INITIAL INVESTIGATION –

Tract Name:	Rash Heirs
County:	Ashe

Resources Assessment and Biological Benefits (brief):

The property adjoins Three Top Mountain GL. The property is part of the Three Top Mountain Natural Area and documented on this tract are high quality Northern Hardwood (rich subtype) and Rich Cove Forest (montane rich subtype) natural communities. The property will add buffer and protection to the Amphibolite Mountains and serve to further protect habitat for neotropical migrant songbirds and SCGN's. A couple of small unnamed tributaries are found on the property and this acquisition will help protect aquatic resources within the New River Basin. SGCN's likely found on the tract include ruffed grouse, eastern box turtle, wood thrush, worm-eating warbler, northern pygmy salamander, northern long-eared bat, tri-colored bat, and little brown bat. Common game species found on the tract include white-tailed deer, black bear, wild turkey, and gray squirrel. Management objectives will include maintaining/restoring priority wildlife habitats, and continuing to provide public access and increased opportunity for hunting and other outdoor recreational activities.

Tract Name	Rash Heirs
Date	July 7, 2023
Staff Completing Form	Paul Thompson

Species	0.296
	Terrestrial
Overall Biodiversity	2
SGCN Species	2
Game Species	2
	Wetland
Overall Biodiversity	0
SGCN Species	0
Game Species	0
	Aquatic
Overall Biodiversity	1
SGCN Species	1
Game Species	0

Comments
Moderate biodiversity is based on large abundance of closed canopy Appalachian oak forest. Only small, unnamed tributary streams are found on the property thus aquatic diversity is low. Neither rare species nor habitats have been documented on the tract.

Habitat	0.667
Size	1
Quality	2
Diversity	1
Rare/Important	2
Connectivity	3
Buffer	3

Comments
The quality of the habitat on the tract is good, but it's mostly closed canopy forest with little diversity. The property has been noted by Natural Heritage to have several unique habitat communities. The property does provide good connectivity and buffer for these natural communities that are also found on Three Top Mountain GL.

Public Access	0.333
Hunting/Viewing	3
Fishing	0
Boating	0

Comments
This tract will provide a connection to other portions of land soon to be donated and enrolled into the game land. No significant water is located on the tract, so there no fishing/boating opportunity. The tract has a 60 ft ROW that may provide additonal public access to the game

Wildlife Uses	0.333
Hunting	2
Viewing	2
Fishing	0
Boating	0
Education	1

Comments
The property offers good hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities. Educational opportunities will be low. No significant water is located on the tract, so there is no fishing/boating opportunity.

Other Values	0.556
Timber Harvest	1
Local Economy	2
Quality of Life	2

Comments
The tract can produce good timber, but the value can only be considered low due likely NHP dedication restrictions.

Feasibility & Logistics	0.600
Existing Infrastructure	0
Compatibility of Multiple Uses on Tract	2
Compatibility with Adjoining Land	2
Inholding/Corridor	3
Proximity to Users	2

Comments
No infrastructure exists on this tract. The existance of multiple uses on the tract and the compatibility with adjoining land shouldn't create any issues. This tract will help solidify WRC ownership and become part of a large corridor at Three Top Mountain.

Restoration/Mitigation Potential	0.750
Species Restoration	2
Habitat Restoration	2
Access Improvement	2
Threat Mitigation	3

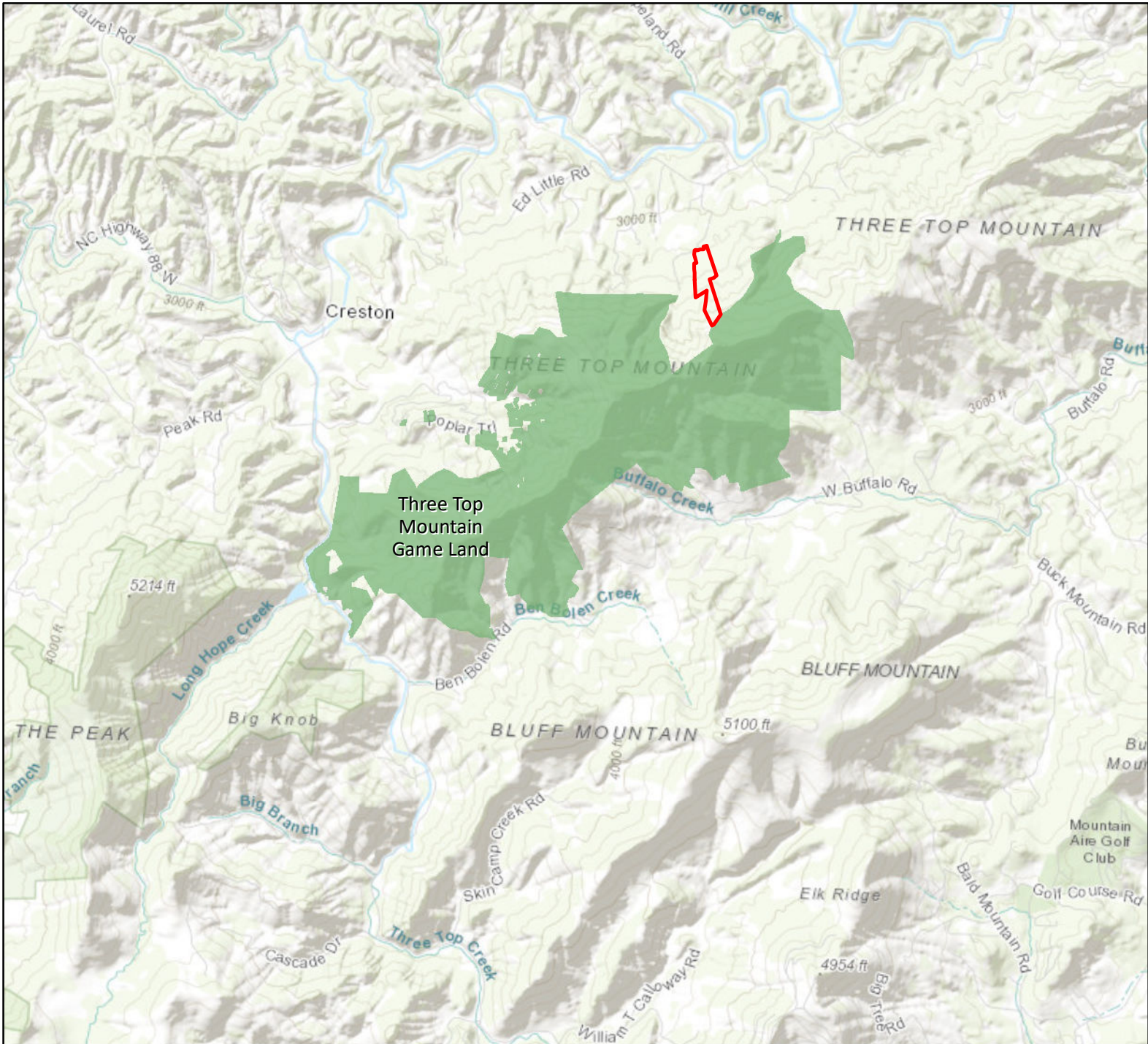
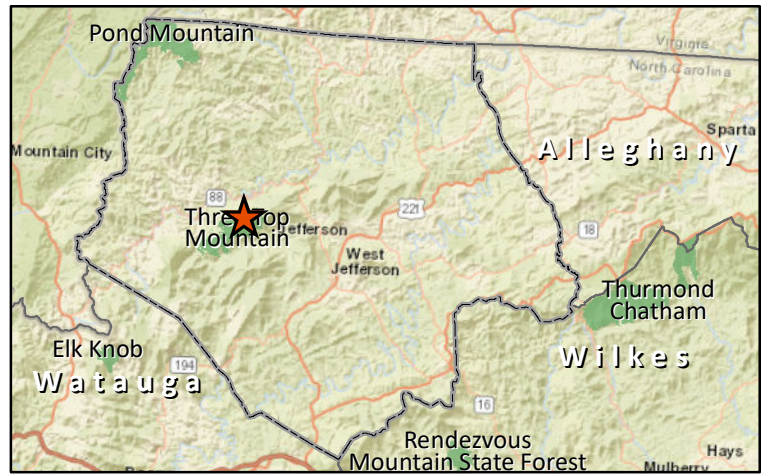
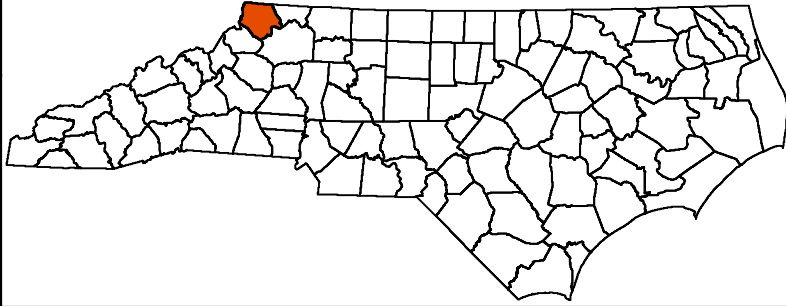
Comments
Restoration and maintenance of the habitats/species on the tract is good, thus the rank is moderate. This tract will ensure continued public access across the Three Top Mtn GL, thus the rank is high.



Threats	0.000
Number	0
Severity	0
Imminence	0
Manageability	0
Management Cost	0

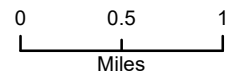
Comments
Blue Ridge Conservancy has a purchase contract on this tract with a closing date in the near future, so threats should be avoidable.

Overall Score	3.535
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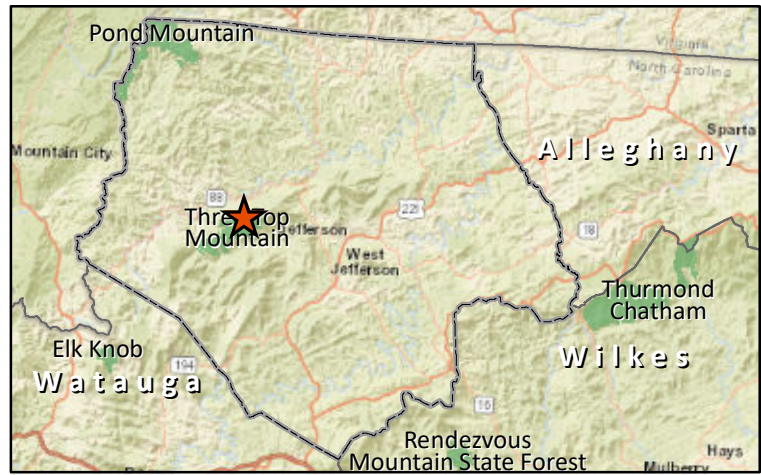
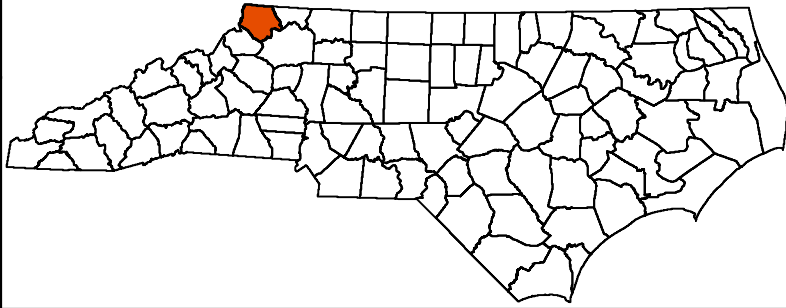
**Rash Heirs Tract
Ashe County
24 Acres**





-  Rash Heirs Tract
-  Game Land



**Rash Heirs Tract
Ashe County
24 Acres**



-  Rash Heirs Tract
-  Game Land

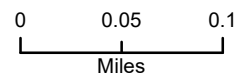


EXHIBIT F-1

June 6, 2024



☒ NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION ☒

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

June 6, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Daron Barnes, Division Chief
Land and Water Access

FROM: Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager
Land and Water Access

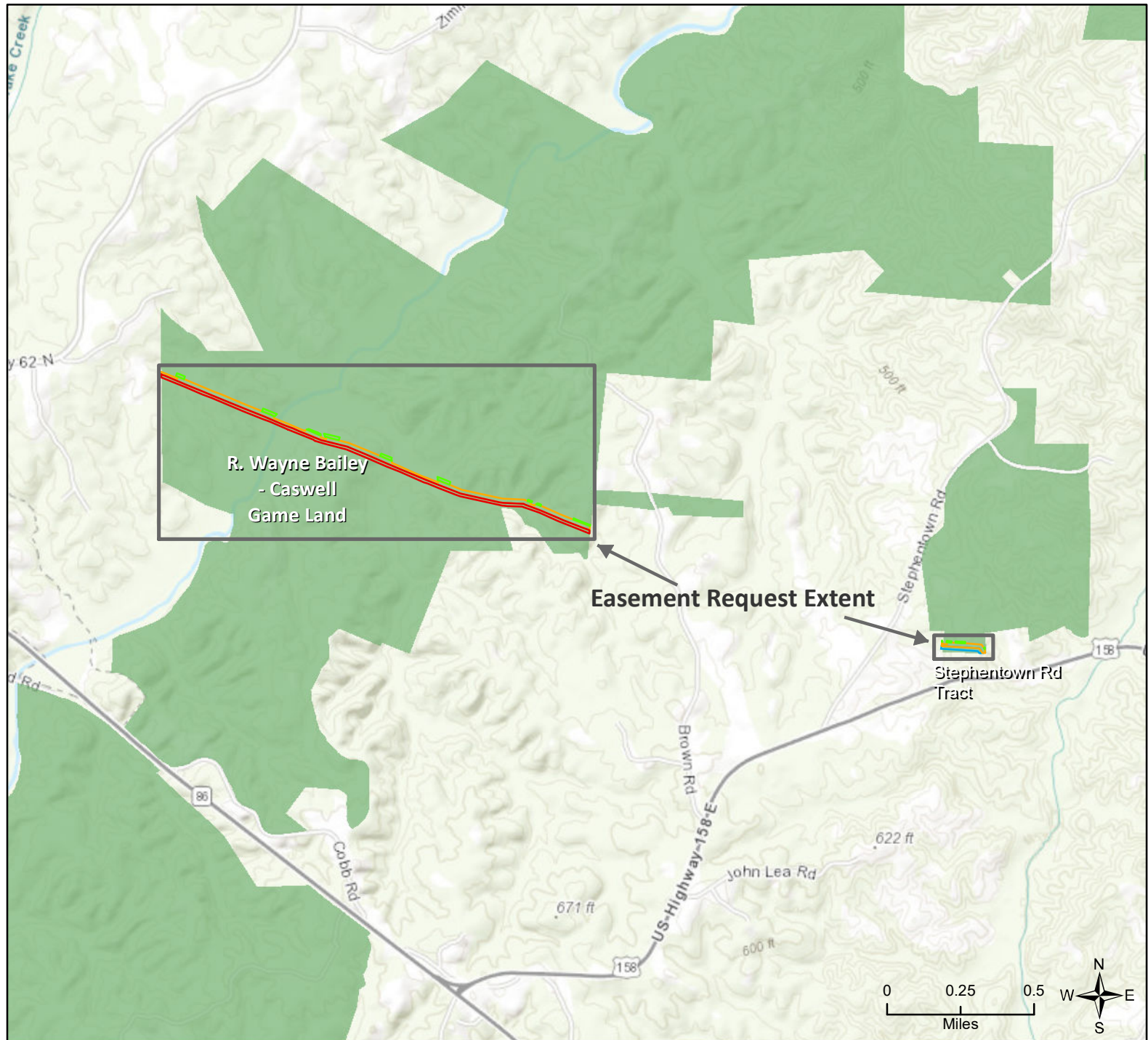
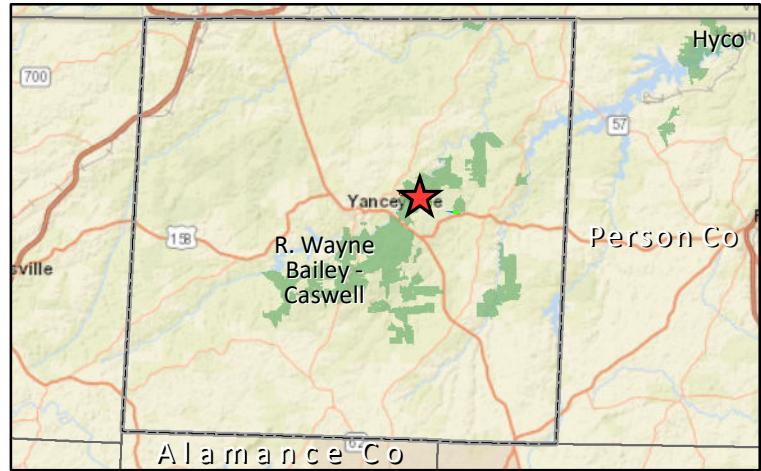
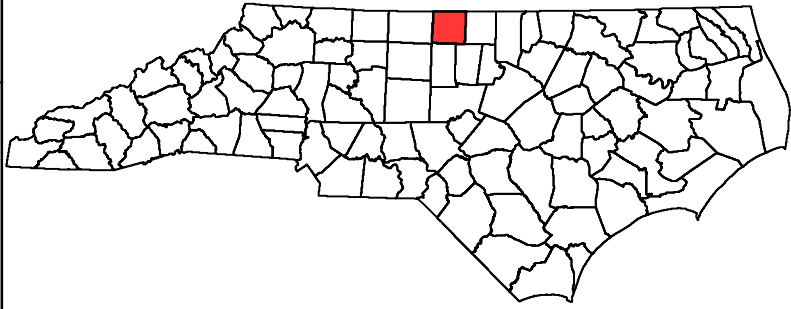
SUBJECT: Dominion Energy Easement Request - Caswell County

Dominion Energy seeks a temporary construction easement of 11.18 acres and a permanent utility easement of 0.84 acres on R. Wayne Bailey Caswell Game Land in Caswell County. The permanent easement will be for the installation of 30-36 inch natural gas pipeline. The temporary easement will allow the installation crew to stage and work outside of an existing easement area during installation. If approved, the value of these easements will be determined by the State Property Office.

Dominion Energy Easement Request

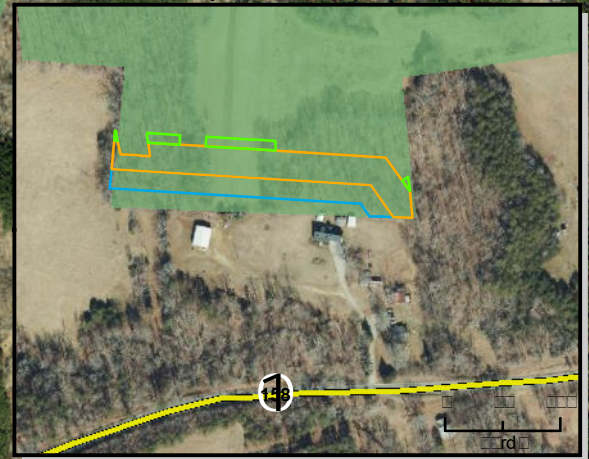
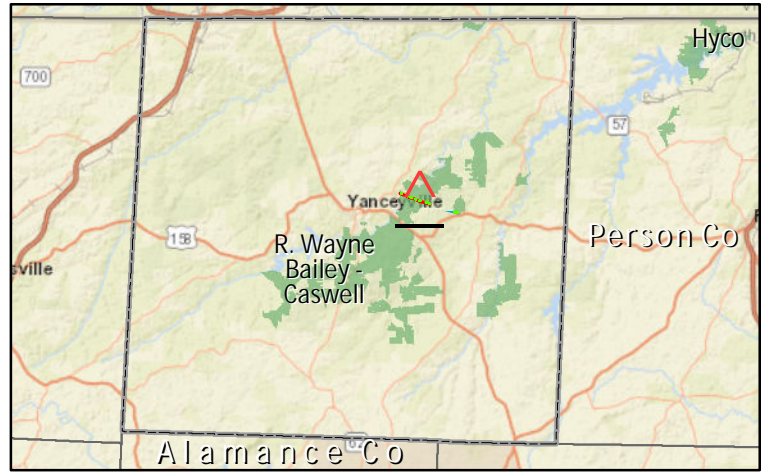
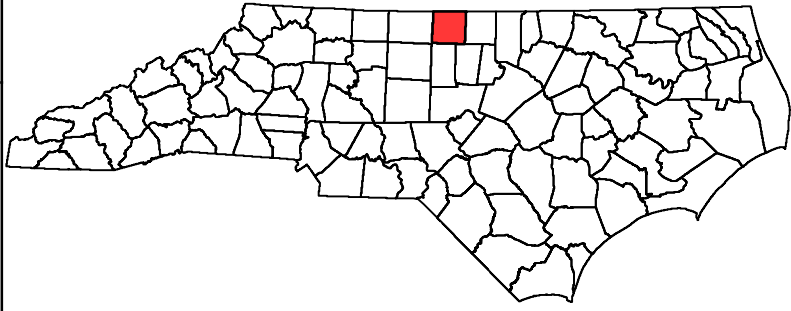
R. Wayne - Caswell Game Land

Caswell County



- Existing Permanent Easement, 9.4 ac.
- Temporary Workspace 9.3 ac. total
- New Permanent Easement 0.84 ac.
- Additional Temporary Workspace 1.88 ac. total

Dominion Energy Easement Request R. Wayne - Caswell Game Land Caswell County



	Easement		Tract
	Easement		Easement

EXHIBIT F-2

June 6, 2024



☒ NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION ☒

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

June 6, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Daron Barnes, Division Chief
Land and Water Access

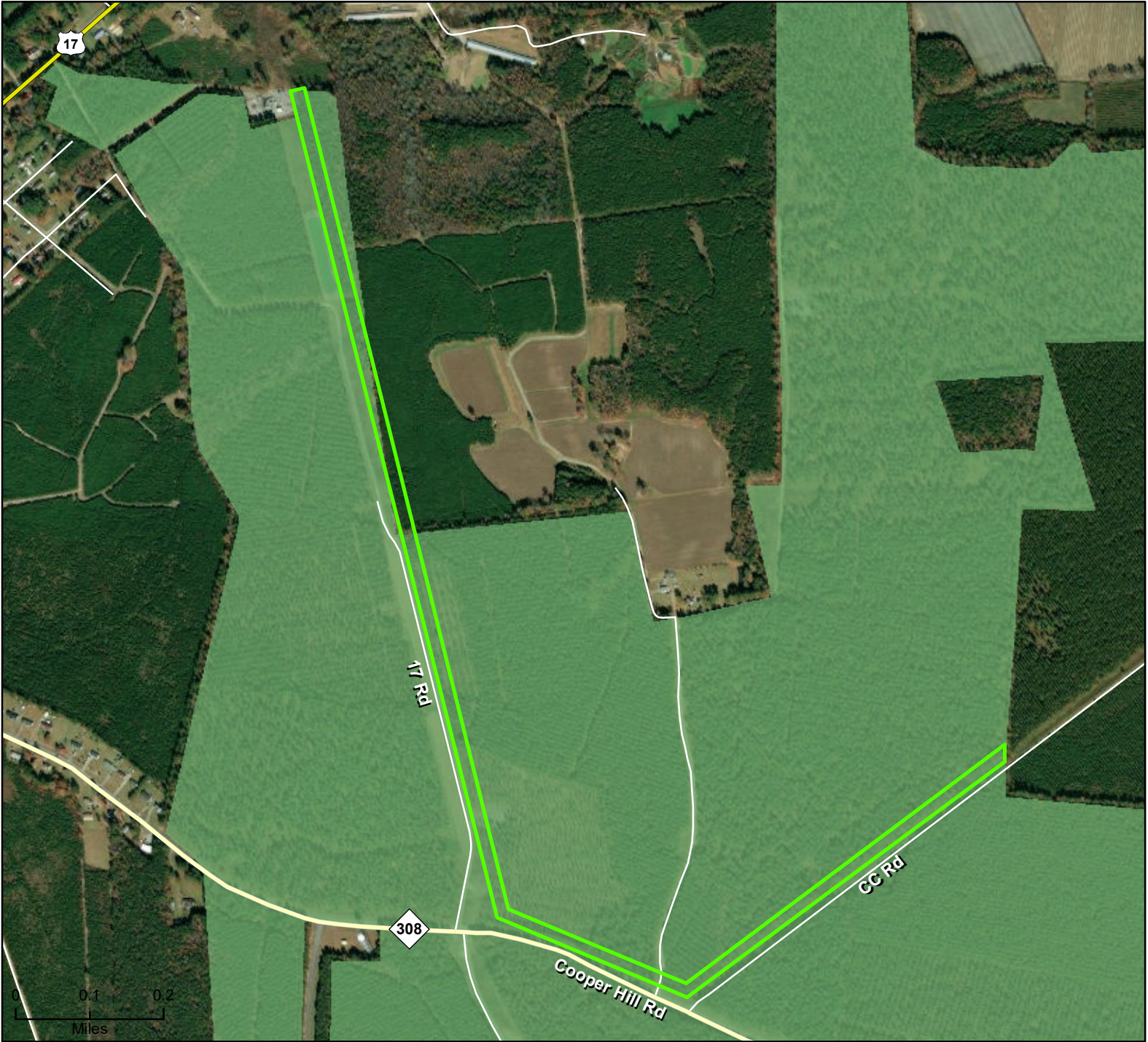
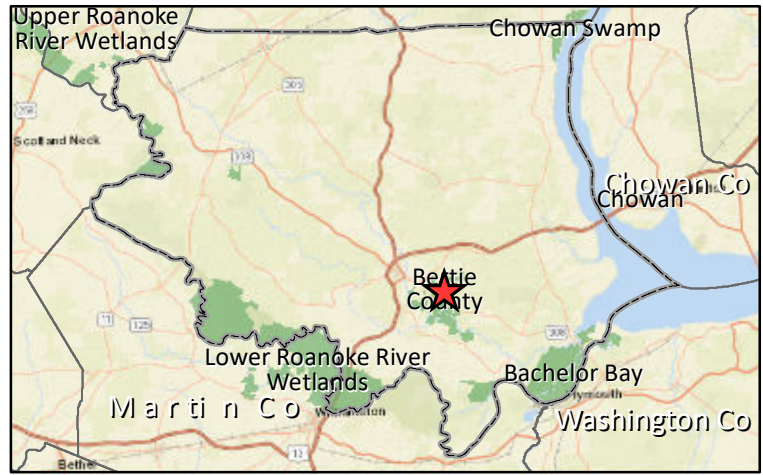
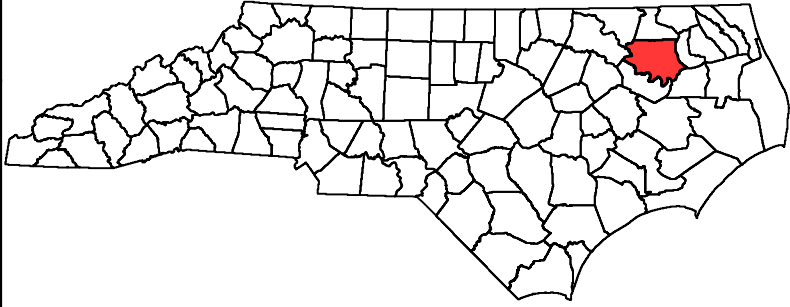
FROM: Ben Solomon, Assistant Chief and Land Acquisition Manager
Land and Water Access



SUBJECT: TED Renewables Easement Request - Bertie County

Tyr Energy Development (TED) Renewables seeks a utility easement on Bertie County Game Land in Bertie County for the purpose of power transmission for a new solar energy generating facility. The easement area is approximately 2 miles in length and 100 ft. wide.

If approved, the value of the utility easement will be determined by the State Property Office.

TED Renewables Easement Request Bertie County Game Land 100-ft wide, ~2 miles long, ~23 acres



-  Requested Transmission Easement
-  Bertie County Game Land

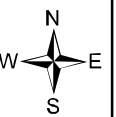
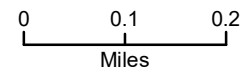




EXHIBIT G

LOGGERHEAD, GREEN, KEMP'S RIDLEY, LEATHERBACK, AND HAWKSBILL SEA TURTLE

CONSERVATION PLAN for NORTH CAROLINA

JUNE 6, 2024



NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION	4
Description and Taxonomic Classification	4
Life History and Habitat	6
Distribution and Population Status.....	9
THREAT ASSESSMENT	13
Reason for Listing	13
Present and Anticipated Threats.....	14
Summary of Threats	18
Historic and Ongoing Conservation Efforts	19
CONSERVATION GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	24
Overarching Goal	24
Objectives	24
CONSERVATION ACTIONS	25
Action A.....	25
Action B.....	25
Action C:	25
Action D:	25
Action E:	25
Action F:	25
Action G:	25
Action H:	25
Summary of Actions Needed	26
GLOSSARY	31
LITERATURE CITED	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Five species of sea turtles occur in coastal North Carolina, the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempi*), Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). Loggerhead and Green Sea Turtles are listed as Threatened at state and federal levels, while the Kemp's Ridley, Leatherback, and Hawksbill Sea Turtles are listed as Endangered at state and federal levels. Adult female sea turtles lay eggs on open sandy beaches along coastal barrier islands of North Carolina primarily between May and August, with hatchling emergences from nests occurring mainly between July and early November. Juvenile Loggerhead, Green, and Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles commonly forage in coastal estuarine waters, while large juveniles and adults of all five species regularly traverse through North Carolina's coastal waters. Steep population declines relative to historical levels, high rates of anthropogenic mortality, and habitat degradation were primary reasons for original federal listing of these species. Ongoing threats to sea turtles in North Carolina include loss and degradation of habitat due to incompatible coastal development, exposure to visible artificial lighting at night, beach driving during the nesting and hatchling emergence seasons in certain parts of the state, incidental bycatch in recreational and commercial fishing gear, collisions with boats and other marine traffic, and lack of state authority to enforce federal rules for the protection of sea turtles when in state waters. Climate change poses another significant threat to sea turtles in North Carolina. Climate change threats include alteration and loss of habitat due to sea level rise and temperature changes, reduced abundance of prey species (seagrass, mollusks, and shellfish), altered seasonality of reproduction, and reduced hatching success from weather extremes. The goal of the conservation plan is for recovery of all sea turtle populations in North Carolina so they serve the ecological roles they had before population declines started over a century ago.



Leatherback Sea Turtle hatchlings (Muhammad Qbal)

BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Description and Taxonomic Classification

The Loggerhead Sea Turtle can grow to greater than 100 centimeters carapace length and weigh more than 100 kilograms. They are characterized by a large head with blunt strong jaws, which aid crushing shellfish and mollusks, its main prey. Adults and subadults have a yellowish to reddish-brown carapace and head, and yellow flippers and plastron. The normal scute pattern on the carapace is five pairs of costal (lateral) scutes and five vertebral scutes. Adult males are characterized by an elongated tail that extends well beyond the end of the carapace; large, recurved claws on the front flippers; and a concave plastron. There is little difference in carapace length between adult males and adult females (Figgner et al. 2022). Juvenile Loggerhead Sea Turtles are not sexually dimorphic.

Linnaeus described the species as *Testudo caretta* in 1758, based on a specimen from Bermuda or the Bahamas (Dodd 1988). Subsequently nearly three dozen binomial names were assigned to the species until 1873, when Leonhard Stejneger was the first to use *Caretta caretta* (Dodd 1988). Genetic evidence does not support the existence of subspecies of Loggerheads (Bowen 2003).



Loggerhead Sea Turtle (Jenn Merlo)



Green Sea Turtle (Matthew Godfrey)

The Green Sea Turtle can reach greater than 110 centimeters carapace length and weigh more than 175 kilograms. The Green Turtle has a small head with a serrated edge on its lower jaw. Juvenile and adult Green Turtles primarily eat seagrass or algae. The carapace is heart-shaped with four pairs of costal (lateral) scutes and five vertebral scutes. The name “Green Turtle” derives from the color of the internal fat that lines the body cavity. The carapace color ranges from light to dark brown, with or without mottled patterns. The plastron is white to yellow, although in some regions it may also be gray. Adult males are characterized by an elongated tail that extends well beyond the end of the carapace; large, recurved claws on the front flippers; and a concave plas-

tron. Adult female carapaces are several centimeters longer on average than those of adult males (Godley et al. 2002). Juvenile Green Turtles are not sexually dimorphic.

Linnaeus described the species as *Testudo mydas* in 1758, based on a turtle from Ascension Island in the central Atlantic Ocean. The binomial name in use today, *Chelonia mydas*, was assigned by Schweigger in 1812 (Rhodin et al. 2010). While some have described a specific or subspecies status to the “black turtle” in the eastern Pacific, this taxonomic distinction is not supported by genetic evidence (Bowen et al. 1992). No subspecies of Green Sea Turtles are currently accepted.

The Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle can reach 65 centimeters carapace length and weigh up to 50 kilograms. The head is large with a semi-curved upper beak that helps it eat mollusks and shellfish. The carapace has five or more pairs of costal (lateral) scutes and five vertebral scutes, and ranges in color from dark grey to light olive grey. The plastron color ranges from yellow to cream. On the right and left bridges that join the carapace to the plastron there are four scutes, each with a visible pore that is associated with the Rathke's gland. Adult males are characterized by an elongated tail that extends well beyond the end of the carapace; large, recurved claws on the front flippers; and a concave plastron. There is little difference in carapace length between adult males and adult females (Figgener et al. 2022). Juvenile Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are not sexually dimorphic.

This turtle was originally named *Thalassochelys kempii* (or *Colpochelys kempii*) by Garman in 1880, in honor of Richard M. Kemp, a fisher in Florida who submitted the type specimen to Garman. The etymology of the name "ridley" is unknown (Dundee 2001). In 1942, *Lepidochelys kempii* was the binomial name recognized by Carr (1942), as a congeneric of *Lepidochelys olivacea*, the Olive Ridley Sea Turtle. The species distinction between Olive and Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles is fully supported by genetic evidence (Bowen et al. 1991). No subspecies of Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are currently accepted.



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (Joshua Liverman)



Leatherback Sea Turtle (Matthew Godfrey)

The Leatherback Sea Turtle is the largest living species of turtle. Its carapace length can exceed 170 centimeters and individuals may weigh more than 600 kilograms (James et al. 2007). While the carapace and plastron of hatchlings have visible scales, the adult carapace has 6 or 7 prominent keels and is covered by dark leathery skin without scales that is sometimes mottled with white spots. The adult jaw features two prominent cusps used for grasping jellyfish and other soft bodied prey. The top of the head features a distinctive pink patch, and the front flippers are long and clawless. Adult males are characterized by an elongated tail that extends well beyond the end of the carapace. There is little difference in carapace length between adult males

and adult females (Figgener et al. 2022). There is limited published information about juvenile Leatherback Sea Turtles (Stewart and Johnson 2006).

In 1761, the Leatherback was named *Testudo coriacea* by Vandelli based on a type specimen found in Italy. It was reclassified as *Dermochelys coriacea* nearly 100 years later and this is the accepted binomial name currently. It is the only member of its Family Dermochelyidae (Rhodin et al. 2010). No subspecies of Leatherback Sea Turtles are currently accepted.



Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Julia Plaszynski*)

The Hawksbill Sea Turtle is a medium sized sea turtle and can reach a carapace length greater than 90 centimeters and weigh more than 90 kilograms. It has an elongated head and a distinctive beaked mouth that is the basis of its common name. The carapace has thick overlapping scutes that have a classic “tortoiseshell” coloration and have been used historically for jewelry, eyeglass frames, and other luxury items. The carapace has four pairs of costal (lateral) scutes and five vertebral scutes, and the posterior edges appear serrated. Adult males are characterized by an elongated tail that extends well beyond the end of the carapace; large, recurved claws on the front flippers; and a concave plastron. There is little difference in carapace length between adult males and adult females (Figgenger et al. 2022). Juvenile Hawksbill Sea Turtles are not sexually dimorphic.

The Hawksbill was given the name *Testudo imbricata* in 1766, and in 1843, it was given its current binomial, *Eretmochelys imbricata*, by Fitzinger (Rhodin et al. 2010). No subspecies of Hawksbill Sea Turtles are currently accepted.

Life History and Habitat

All sea turtles share similar life histories, with some species-specific differences. Adult female sea turtles prepare for reproduction in their foraging areas months or years before they begin their migration to mating areas, which can be hundreds or thousands of kilometers from their foraging areas. Little is known about the migratory patterns of Green, Leatherback, Kemp's Ridley, and Hawksbill Sea Turtles that nest in North Carolina, although it is assumed they are similar to the Loggerhead Sea Turtles. When not breeding, adult Loggerhead Sea Turtles along the Southeast Coast of the U.S. generally remain in neritic waters along the continental shelf, taking advantage of northerly foraging sites, from the Mid-Atlantic Bight up to Atlantic Canada, when ocean temperatures are warmer in late spring, summer, and early autumn months; they will move farther south or farther east beyond the Gulf Stream during cold water months between late autumn and early spring (Arendt et al. 2012; Griffin et al. 2013). When in breeding condition, males and females will congregate in nearshore coastal areas of North Carolina to mate before the nesting season. Anecdotal observations of mating pairs of loggerheads are reported each year in April and early May, primarily around Cape Lookout bight, although it is likely that mating occurs elsewhere along the North Carolina coast. During their seasonal and reproductive migrations, sea turtles occupy state waters (estuarine waters and up to 4.8 km [3 miles] from the coastline of North Carolina), federal waters (between 4.8 to 322 km [3 to 200 miles] from the coastline), and international waters (beyond 322 km [200 miles] from the coastline). While in North Carolina state waters and federal waters, sea turtles fall under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration - National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-NMFS), and legal protections can be enforced by NOAA-NMFS law enforcement and the US Coast Guard. The state of North Carolina has codified some specific rules for the protection of sea turtles that can be enforced by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) law enforcement. These include time-area closures for commercial fisheries, and the required use of Turtle Excluder Devices in otter and skimmer trawlers. When in international waters, sea turtles may be afforded certain protections associated with international agreements such as the Convention on Migratory Species or the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, or Regional Fisheries Management Organizations such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Tiwari 2002).

Males and females mate with multiple partners, and multiple paternity in sea turtle clutches has been documented in all sea turtle species (Lee et al. 2017). For all sea turtles, successful egg laying and hatchling production occurs on beaches that have the following minimum requirements: the sandy habitat must be accessible from the ocean; the nesting zone must be sufficiently high above the water table to escape daily or overly frequent inundation from high tides; the sand supports the construction of nest cavities; and the sand is within the range of temperatures conducive to embryonic development (Mortimer 1990). Reproductively active females tend to lay several clutches of eggs during the nesting season, almost exclusively at night.

For each female, their successively laid clutches are separated by 10-15 days during which the females remain in waters of the nearby coastal shelf. Most sea turtles exhibit nest site fidelity, tending to return to the same coastal location to lay eggs over the season and over years, although some individuals may move several hundred kilometers between successive nesting locations. Research using maternally inherited DNA has demonstrated that females tend to return to nest in the general region where they were produced as hatchlings, creating discrete population segments of adult females (Meylan et al. 1992). However, adult males can and do mate across regions, providing sufficient male-mediated gene flow to inhibit subspecies differentiation (Karl et al. 1992).

Most sea turtle eggs laid in North Carolina are from Loggerhead Sea

Turtles. Typical clutch size is 110 eggs, with an average clutch frequency per reproductive female of 4.3 nests per nesting season (Shamblin et al. 2017). Loggerhead Sea Turtle nesting generally occurs between May and the end of August. Some Green Sea Turtle eggs are laid each year in North Carolina from June through September, with occasional nesting in October or later. The average clutch size for Green Sea Turtles is 120 eggs. Typically, at least one Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle nest is found each year in North Carolina, generally from May through July, with an average clutch size of 110 eggs. Leatherback Sea Turtles infrequently nest on North Carolina's beaches, generally in May and June, with an average clutch size of 83 eggs. Only two clutches laid by Hawksbill Sea Turtles have been documented in North Carolina (Finn et al. 2016).

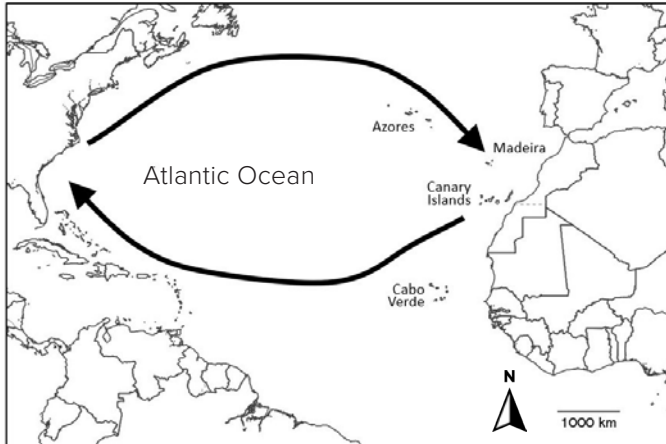
All sea turtles exhibit temperature dependent sexual differentiation (TSD), with warmer egg incubation temperatures producing more females, and cooler egg incubation temperatures producing more males (Wibbels 2003). The incubation period for sea turtle eggs ranges from 50 to 70 days, depending on temperature. Sea turtle hatchlings normally emerge from their nest cavities at night, scramble down the beach to the swash zone, and swim



Daily morning patrols in the summer are conducted by volunteers and cooperators on North Carolina beaches, to find and protect freshly laid sea turtle nests. (Matthew Godfrey)

directly offshore toward deep water. Loggerhead Sea Turtle hatchlings eventually migrate to the Northeast Atlantic Ocean where they spend several years growing to roughly 50-centimeters carapace length, after which they return to the Northwest Atlantic Coast (Bolten et al. 1998). Loggerhead Sea Turtles reach maturity at approximately

30-35 years (Avens & Snover 2017). Large juvenile and adult Loggerhead Sea Turtles move along the east coast of the United States, exploiting suitable foraging habitat in northern areas during periods of warmer water temperatures between April and December. They move to warmer waters during cooler winter months, either farther south or to the east near the Gulf Stream (McClellan and Read 2007; Griffin et al. 2013).



Stylized map of the developmental migration of Loggerhead Sea Turtles produced on nesting beaches in the Southeast USA. Created using Maptool (SEATURTLE.ORG, Inc. <http://www.seaturtle.org/maptool/> (17 December 2023).

For hatchling Green, Leatherback, Kemp's Ridley, and Hawksbill Sea Turtles produced on North Carolina's beaches, relatively little is known about their behavior and life cycle. Because juvenile Green and Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are smaller than juvenile Loggerhead Sea Turtles in Northwest Atlantic coastal waters, it is assumed that they do not have a protracted developmental migration similar to Loggerhead Sea Turtles. Little is known about

the behavior or migration of immature Leatherback Sea Turtles (Eckert 2002) and relatively few observations exist for immature Leatherback Sea Turtles. Hawksbill Sea Turtles are considered a tropical species, and their primary developmental habitats in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean are largely confined to the Caribbean, the Bahamas, and southern Florida (Meylan and Redlow 2006).

Loggerhead Sea Turtle hatchlings emerge from their nests in approximately 50 to 70 days, depending on weather, and scramble down to the swash zone where they swim offshore toward deep water.

(Shutterstock)



Distribution and Population Status

Loggerhead Sea Turtles are globally distributed, with nesting occurring in tropical, subtropical, and some temperate beaches in the North and South Atlantic Oceans (including the Mediterranean Sea), North and South Indian Oceans, and the Western Pacific. Juvenile and adult Loggerheads can be found throughout marine and estuarine waters worldwide. In the Atlantic Ocean, they are found as far south as Argentina and as far north as Canada and the United Kingdom. Within North Carolina, Loggerhead Sea Turtles normally frequent coastal and estuarine waters between April and December, leaving coastal waters when temperatures drop below 11 °C (Braun-McNeill et al. 2008). Adult females use all ocean-facing sandy beaches in North Carolina to lay their eggs during the nesting season (May through August). Hatchlings can emerge from these eggs from July into October and November if

Loggerhead Sea Turtles comprise the majority of nests laid in North Carolina, while only two Hawksbill Sea Turtle nests have been documented in the state.

conditions are favorable. Juvenile and sub-adults frequent deep and shallow estuarine waters of North Carolina as foraging grounds, targeting crustaceans, mollusks and other invertebrates (McClellan et al. 2009).

The global population of Loggerhead Sea Turtles is considered reduced relative to historical levels due to a variety of threats including: direct harvest, habitat degradation or loss, inci-

idental capture in fisheries and by dredging activities, and exposure to other anthropogenic impacts (Witherington 2003). Loggerhead Sea Turtles in the Carolinas were first described by Catesby (1731-1743). Loggerhead Sea Turtles were subject to a directed fishery in estuarine waters in North Carolina through the end of the 19th Century until the stocks were deemed depleted (Epperly 1995). At the federal level, the Loggerhead Sea Turtle was listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act throughout its entire range in 1978 (FR Doc. 78-21047). In 2011, nine distinct population segments (DPSs) of Loggerhead Sea Turtles were recognized by the NOAA-NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), including the Northwest Atlantic DPS, which is listed as Threatened and includes Loggerheads nesting in North Carolina (FR Doc. 2011-23960). Loggerhead Sea Turtles are listed as Threatened in North Carolina (15A NCAC 10I .0104(a)(7)(D)).

Green Sea Turtles are globally distributed, with nesting occurring in tropical, subtropical, and some temperate beaches in the North and South Atlantic Oceans (including the Mediterranean Sea), North and South Indian Oceans, and the Western, Central, and Eastern Pacific Oceans. In the Atlantic Ocean, they occur as far south as Argentina and as far north as Canada and the United Kingdom. Small juvenile Green Sea Turtles (25- to 40-centimeters carapace length) are the most common life stage found in both coastal and estuarine waters of North Carolina between April and December, or when water temperatures remain above 11 °C (Braun-McNeill et al. 2008). These juveniles generally forage in seagrass beds in shallow estuarine areas in North Carolina (McClellan et al. 2009). Green Sea Turtle nests have been documented on every barrier island on the coast of North Carolina from May to September, with emergent hatchlings produced from July to October or early November.



A Green Sea Turtle hatchling approaches the ocean after leaving its nest on Cape Lookout National Seashore. (Matthew Godfrey)

The global population of Green Sea Turtles is considered reduced relative to historical levels, due to various threats including direct harvest, habitat degradation or loss, incidental captures in fisheries and dredging activities, and disease (McClenachan et al. 2006). Green Sea Turtles were subjected to a directed fishery in coastal Florida and in estuarine waters in North Carolina through the end of the 19th Century until the stocks were deemed depleted (Brimley 1920; Epperly 1995). At the federal level, the Green Sea Turtle was listed as Threatened in 1978 under the Endangered Species Act throughout its range, except for turtles nesting in Florida and the Pacific Coast of Mexico (FR Doc. 78-21047). In 2016, eight DPSs of Green Sea Turtles were recognized by NOAA-NMFS and the USFWS. The North Atlantic DPS, which includes Green Turtles nesting in North Carolina, is listed as Threatened (FR Doc. 2016-07587). Green Sea Turtles are listed as Threatened in North Carolina (15A NCAC 10I .0104(a)(7)(C)).

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are largely restricted to the North Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, and are rarely observed in the Caribbean (Fretey 1999). Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are regularly observed along the east coast of the U.S. and the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, with infrequent observations in the Mediterranean. The primary nesting area for Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles includes beaches along the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, along the western side of the Gulf of Mexico, with some nesting along adjacent areas of the coast, including Padre Island in Texas. Juvenile Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are common in coastal and estuarine waters of North Carolina when water temperatures are above 11 °C, often corresponding to April through November (Brimley 1920; Braun-McNeill et al. 2008; Epperly 1995). Juvenile Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles use deep and shallow estuarine waters of North Carolina as foraging grounds, targeting crustaceans, mollusks and other invertebrates (McClellan et al. 2009). Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle nests occur in North Carolina nearly every year, but in small numbers (<25). They have been found on ocean facing beaches in every county except Hyde. Nesting in North Carolina generally occurs from May to July, with hatchlings emerging from nests in July through September.

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are considered depleted relative to historical levels, largely due to overharvest of eggs, bycatch in commercial trawl fisheries, habitat degradation, and exposure to oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico (Conant and Shearer 2015). The Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle was listed as Endangered in 1970 under the Endangered Species Act (FR Doc. 1970-16173); there are no separate DPSs recognized for Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles. In North Carolina, Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles are listed as Endangered (15A NCAC 10I .0103(a)(7)(A)).

Leatherback Sea Turtles have physiological adaptations that allow them to remain in cold waters. They have the widest distribution of any reptile species, ranging from latitudes as far north as the United Kingdom and Denmark in the North Atlantic Ocean to New Zealand in the South Pacific Ocean. Nesting sites for Leatherback Sea Turtles occur in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans. The earliest documentation of Leatherback Sea Turtles in North Carolina waters is the capture of an adult off Bogue Banks in Carteret County in 1897 (Schwartz 1976). Leatherback Sea Turtles are commonly observed swimming in coastal waters of North Carolina during spring and summer months and are often associated with jellyfish aggregations (Grant et al. 1996; Eckert et al. 2006). Nesting activity by Leatherback Sea Turtles in North Carolina is infrequent, ranging from 0-8 nests per year (Rabon et al. 2003).



Rehabilitated Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle being released into ocean (Matthew Godfrey)



Leatherback Sea Turtle nests are relatively rare in North Carolina, accounting for only 0-8 nests per YEAR. (Matthew Godfrey)

The species is considered to have been greatly reduced relative to historical levels, due to incidental capture in fishing gear, directed harvest, ocean pollution, and reduction or loss of suitable nesting habitat. The Leatherback Sea Turtle was listed as Endangered in 1970 under the Endangered Species Act (FR Doc. 1970-16173). In 2020, the NOAA-NMFS and USFWS determined that sufficient information was available to identify seven different Leatherback Sea Turtle populations as DPSs, including the Northwest Atlantic DPS that includes Leatherback Sea Turtles in North Carolina (NMFS & USFWS 2020). Currently Leatherback Sea Turtles remain listed as Endangered throughout their range under the Endangered Species Act. In North Carolina, Leatherback Sea Turtles are listed as Endangered (15A NCAC 101 .0103(a)(7)(C)).

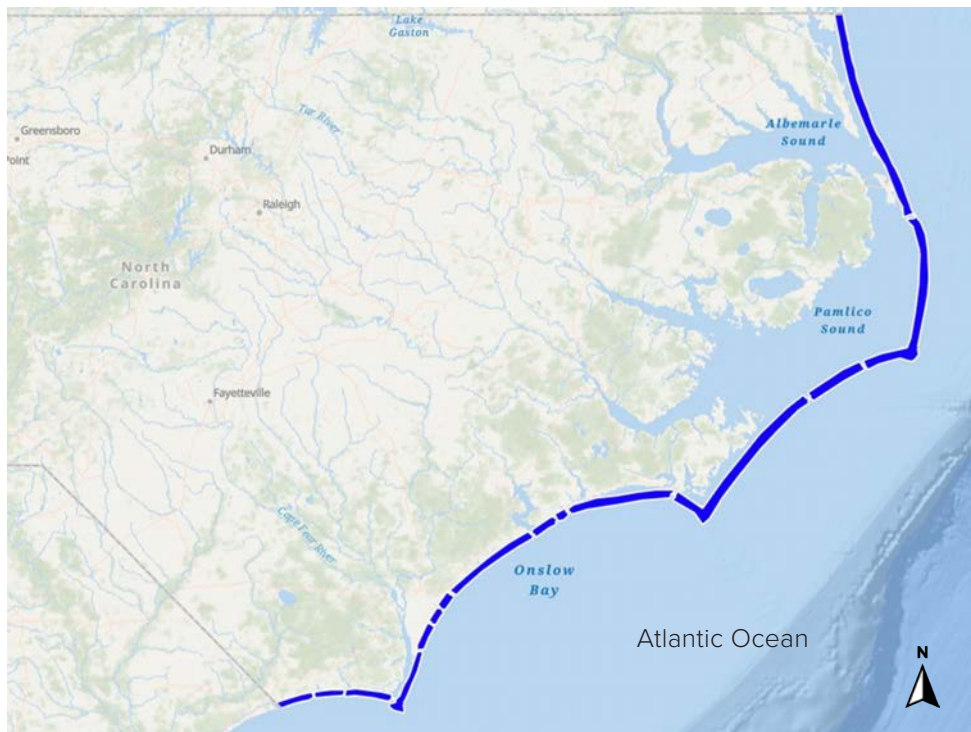
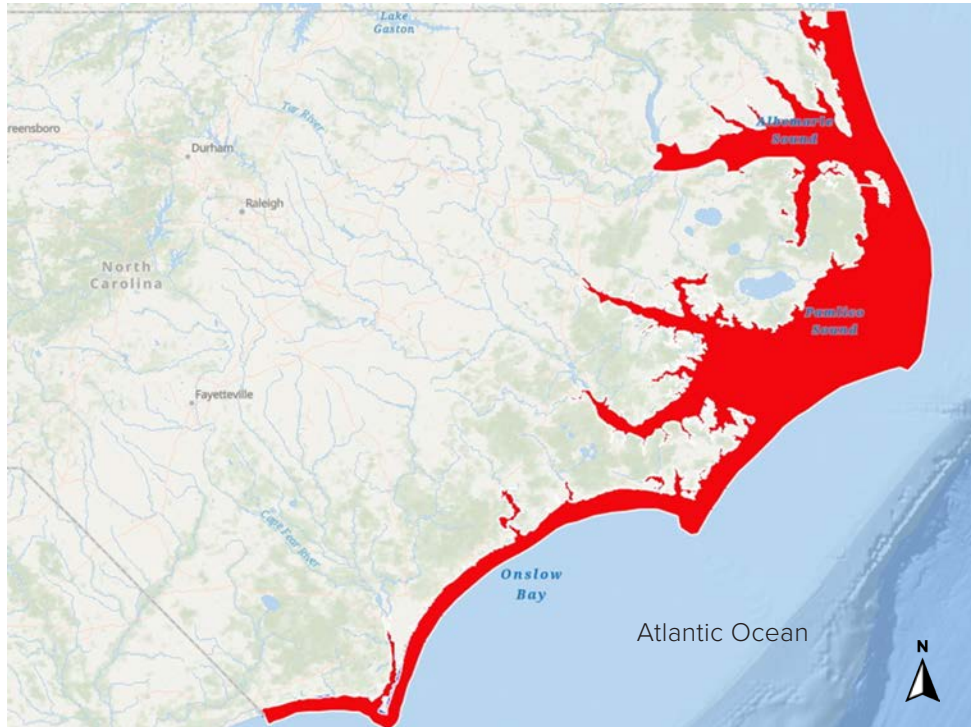
Hawksbill Sea Turtles are distributed globally, although they are commonly associated with coral reef habitat found in tropical and subtropical regions including the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans. Major nesting locations occur in the Caribbean, the Western Indian Ocean, and the South Pacific Ocean. In U.S. territories in the North Atlantic, major nesting and foraging sites are found in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Hawksbill Sea Turtles are infrequent visitors to North Carolina waters, likely due to the lack of coral reef habitat, and only two Hawksbill Sea Turtle nests have been confirmed in North Carolina (Finn et al. 2016).

Throughout their range, Hawksbill Sea Turtles are considered depleted, largely due to directed harvest (Jackson 1997). In 1970, The Hawksbill Sea Turtle was listed as Endangered throughout its range under the Endangered Species Act (FR Doc. 1970-16173). In 2013, the NOAA-NMFS and USFWS suggested that available data warranted an assessment of possible determinations of DPSs for Hawksbill Sea Turtles, although this has not been finalized. In North Carolina, Hawksbill Sea Turtles are listed as Endangered (15A NCAC 101 .0103(a)(7)(B)).



Infrequent visitors to the North Carolina coast, Hawksbill Sea Turtles are commonly associated with coral reef habitats found in tropical and subtropical ocean regions.

Andrei Armiagov



Habitats used by the Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), Green (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) Sea Turtles in North Carolina, in estuarine and coastal state waters (top) and on ocean-facing sandy beaches along coastal barrier islands (bottom). Data come from the North Carolina Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network and the North Carolina Sea Turtle Nesting database. Maps were created using the ESRI Mapmaker (<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/atlas/index.html>).

THREAT ASSESSMENT

Reason for Listing

All species of sea turtles are considered depleted relative to historic or pre-historic levels (Bjorndal and Bolten 2003). When Loggerhead Sea Turtles were listed as Threatened by NOAA-NMFS and USFWS, major factors contributing to the species' status included: habitat degradation due to human encroachment and activities on nesting beaches; directed harvest of eggs, juveniles, and adults; incidental capture in fisheries; and lack of comprehensive protections. Similarly for Green Sea Turtles, when they were listed as Threatened (except for the breeding populations in Florida and Pacific Mexico, which were listed as Endangered) by NOAA-NMFS and USFWS, the major factors contributing to population decline included: loss or modification of habitats including nesting and foraging habitats; overutilization for commercial and other purposes, including directed harvest of eggs and adult turtles; disease and predation; lack of adequate protections; and incidental capture in fisheries. Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles were listed as Endangered based on the following risk factors: degradation of nesting and foraging habitats in the Gulf of Mexico; overcollection of eggs from nesting beaches; exposure to predators both on beaches and in the water; lack of comprehensive regulatory mechanisms in marine and terrestrial habitats; exposure to incidental bycatch in fishing gear; and vulnerability to oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico. When Leatherback Sea Turtles were listed as Endangered, the primary threat factors included loss and modification of nesting habitats, overutilization of eggs and adults, exposure of eggs and hatchlings to predators, inadequacy of existing protections, and exposure to incidental capture in fishing gear. Hawksbill Sea Turtles were initially listed as Endangered due to loss of nesting and foraging habitats; overutilization of eggs, juveniles, and adults (primarily for their shell); exposure of eggs and hatchlings to predators; inadequate protections for different life stages; and exposure to incidental capture by fisheries.

Degradation, modification or loss of habitat due to human encroachment is one contributing factor to all sea turtle species' status as either Threatened (Loggerhead, Green) or Endangered (Kemp's Ridley, Leatherback, Hawksbill).



Present and Anticipated Threats

All species of sea turtles are subject to ongoing threats in North Carolina. In North Carolina waters, juvenile and adult sea turtles are exposed to injury and death from anthropogenic threats including incidental capture by fishing gear (both commercial and recreational), collision with ocean vessels, impingement by hopper dredges, and pollution (McClellan et al. 2011). While all sea turtles are protected from harm by state law in North Carolina (NC General Statute § 113-189), when sea turtles are in coastal fishing waters (NC General Statute 113-129(4)), they are not considered wild animals in North Carolina (NC General Statute 113-129(15)). As a result, NCWRC does not have state authority to manage sea turtles while in coastal waters. Additionally, the lack of a Joint Enforcement Agreement between NCDMF and NOAA-NMFS means that state law enforcement agents working in coastal waters cannot enforce federal laws related to the protection of sea turtles in state waters, unless there are state laws passed that mirror federal rules (McClellan et al. 2011). This lack of clear legal authority to enforce rules is an impediment to minimizing threats to sea turtles in North Carolina coastal waters.



Interactions with recreational and commercial fishing gear are common in North Carolina, such as this Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle incidentally captured by a hook and line angler on Jennette's Pier in Nags Head. The turtle was brought to the pier with a hoop net so the hook could be successfully removed. (NC Aquariums)

In many parts of the North Carolina coastline, sea turtle nesting habitat overlaps with high human presence, both in terms of housing developments adjacent to nesting beaches and presence of visitors using beaches for recreation. Sea turtles lay eggs during the cover of night, and later, most hatchlings emerge from the nests at night; thus, unless carefully managed, the presence of people on the beach at night (both pedestrians and those driving motorized vehicles, where allowed) can negatively impact adult females and hatchlings that are also using the beach. During the day, beach visitors will avoid disturbing incubating eggs because the nest locations are clearly marked for protection as part of the daily monitoring for newly laid sea turtle eggs on North Carolina beaches. However, no monitoring program is perfect, and it is estimated that daily sea turtle nest patrols have a detection rate error as high as 9% (Ceriani et al. 2019). Therefore, it is assumed that each summer there are many unmarked eggs incubating in the sand on various beaches in North Carolina and they are exposed to accidental take by beach visitors and others using the beach.

Various aspects of beach development can have negative impacts to nesting sea turtles, incubating eggs, and/or emergent hatchlings. For instance, the presence of homes and businesses adjacent to nesting habitat often results in artificial nighttime lighting reaching the nesting beach, with higher rates of illumination in more densely developed areas (Windle et al. 2018). Artificial light reaching the beach can misorient nesting females (or dissuade them from nesting) and attract emergent hatchlings away from the ocean (Witherington and Martin 1996). Disrupted seafinding of hatchlings can result in depleted energy reserves, increased

exposure to terrestrial predators, and increased mortality from vehicle traffic if hatchlings reach roads adjacent to the nesting beach. Beach driving by service vehicles, such as garbage pickup, lifeguards, and beach furniture delivery services, can leave ruts in the sand that can impede the sea-finding progress of emergent hatchlings (Hosier et al. 1981), and accidentally crush unmarked incubating eggs. Nesting females can be impeded or impinged by inappropriately placed items used to stabilize the primary dune, such as sand fencing that is placed too closely together, or recycled Christmas trees placed between areas of sand fencing. Beach mats used to facilitate public access to the beach can reduce available nesting habitat to sea turtles by covering over the surface of the sandy beach. Finally, items placed or left by beach visitors on the open beach at night, including furniture, tents, decks, boats, and volleyball nets, can interrupt or impede the nesting process of female sea turtles (Sobel 2002).

Additionally, developed beaches regularly undergo construction activities to counter erosion. These activities include the construction of terminal and/or temporary groins, bulldozing sand from the swash zone to the primary dune (beach scraping), and beach widening projects using material dredged from the ocean or removed from upland areas; often these events are implemented concurrently or in succession. While the outcome of these activities can result in an increase in available nesting habitat for sea turtles, they can also have negative impacts. For example, construction activities occurring during the nesting and/or hatching seasons pose a direct threat to nesting females, incubating eggs, and emergent hatchlings (Wilgus et al. 2002). Relocating eggs to other beach areas safe from construction activities is a commonly employed tool during summer beach construction projects, but this action can have potential negative impacts to the resultant hatchlings (Crain et al. 1995; Mrosovsky 2006). Non-beach compatible material that is used when constructing beaches can have long term negative impacts on nesting sea turtles and their eggs. For example, material with a high rock (or shell) content, or a high silt and/or clay content, can impede both the successful construction of sea turtle nests and the hatching rate of incubating nests (Crain et al. 1995). Beach construction projects that use beach compatible material that is darker in color can result in higher incubation temperatures in sea turtle nests (Shamblott et al. 2021). Dune slope on nesting beaches has been identified as a cue used by sea turtles for nest site selection (Wood and Bjorndal 2000); thus, the slope of dunes created by beach construction projects is an important variable affecting sea turtles. For instance, a turtle may be unable to ascend a steep front-side angle of a constructed dune or may become entrapped by a steep angle on the backside of a constructed dune. The final step of a beach construction project often involves the planting of stabilizing vegetation on constructed dunes, but inappropriate placement of plants on the beach can accelerate root invasion of incubating turtle nests and result in reduced hatching success and/or impingement of hatchlings in the nest cavity (Dodd 1988).

LIGHTS OUT!

Artificial light reaching the beach at night can deter sea turtles from nesting and misorient emerging hatchlings, which can deplete their energy reserves, expose them to terrestrial predators and draw them toward busy roadways.



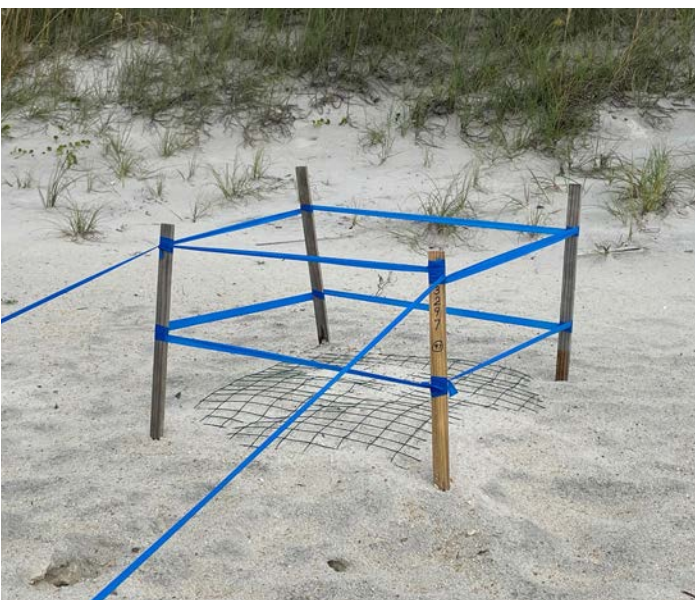
Jodie Owen

Incubating eggs are threatened by various predators such as unleashed dogs, coyotes, red foxes, raccoons, ghost crabs, fire ants, and mole crickets. Armadillos are a potential future predator as their range is expanding into eastern North Carolina. Historically, nesting beaches with excessive egg predation rates (95% of all clutches being preyed upon) have required direct predator control to reduce egg loss (Engemann et al. 2012). Most sea turtle eggs incubating on beaches in North Carolina are protected from mammalian predation by installing mesh above the eggs that still allows hatchlings to emerge. When predation rates on particular beaches or islands are high, more direct predator control programs have been implemented, and these generally result in at least short-term reduction of predation rates (Urbanek and Sutton 2019).

Brian E Kushner



Red foxes (above), along with other predators such as unleashed dogs, coyotes and raccoons, are a major threat to incubating eggs. Wire mesh (below) placed over nests helps deter these predators.



Jodie Owen

Several wind energy projects offshore from the North Carolina coast are being considered or planned. The construction and operation of these projects may pose threats to sea turtles, including increased exposure to vessel strikes, impacted sensory systems associated with construction, altered prey availability, and potential alteration of magnetic field reception near electrical transmission cables, including where the cables come ashore (Stearns et al. 2015; Gitschlag et al. 2021).

Exposure to pollutants in coastal waters of North Carolina is a threat to sea turtles. Research on juvenile sea turtles in North Carolina reported a correlation between concentrations of organic pollutants, including PCBs and pesticides, and several blood chemistry values, suggesting exposure to organochlorines negatively impacts sea turtle health (Keller et al. 2004). In addition, inorganic compounds, including mercury, have been documented in juvenile loggerheads in North Carolina waters (Day et al. 2010). Marine debris such as plastic bags and sheets pose a threat to sea turtles in North Carolina, in particular leatherbacks, likely due to the visual similarity between floating plastic debris and jellyfish, which leatherbacks forage on (Mrosofsky et al. 2009). Microplastics have been documented in the gastrointestinal tracts of all species of sea turtle that occur in North Carolina, although more research is needed to understand potential health impacts of this exposure (Duncan et al. 2019).

There are several anticipated impacts to sea turtles due to climate change. Sea levels in North Carolina and elsewhere along the U.S. Coast are predicted to rise 25-30 centimeters (10-12 inches) by 2050

(Sweet et al. 2022). This may result in “coastal squeeze” whereby there is a reduction in available open beach habitat for nesting (Fish et al. 2008). This in turn could cause reduced hatching success from issues related to increased nest density such as greater bacterial loads in the sand and higher rates of accidental destruction of incubating eggs by subsequently nesting females (Patricio et al. 2021). Future sea level rise may also lead to increased use of hardened structures (sandbags, rock revetments, seawalls, groins, etc.) to protect developed areas of coastline. The presence of beach protection or stabilization structures can reduce numbers of nests laid and reduce the hatching success of any adjacent nests (Bouchard et al. 1998; Rizkella and Savage 2011). Additionally, climate change is predicted to increase the strength and number of tropical storms occurring in the Northwest Atlantic, which are a driver of reduced hatching success of incubating sea turtle eggs (Fuentes et al. 2019).

Increasing air and sea water temperatures associated with climate change are expected to result in warmer conditions for incubating sea turtle eggs during the nesting season (Patricio et al. 2021). Increased incubation temperatures can lead to more or possibly exclusive production of female hatchlings, due to temperature-dependent sexual differentiation and reduced hatching success (Hawkes et al. 2007). There is also growing evidence that hatchling quality (size, speed, mobility) is affected by increasing incubation temperatures (Fisher et al. 2014). Extreme incubation temperatures and/or reduced hatching success of nests may require management intervention, such as adding water to nests during incubation (Smith et al. 2021).

Increasing ocean temperatures may also affect the phenology of sea turtle reproduction, with turtles arriving earlier and/or remaining later than what is currently understood to be the nesting season (Patricio et al. 2021). Early-season or late-season incubating eggs found on North Carolina beaches may be exposed to impacts that would otherwise be managed during the current nesting season. For juvenile turtles, increasing ocean temperatures may increase the number of weeks in the year that they occur in North Carolina estuarine waters, potentially increasing the risk that they will become cold-stunned (Griffin et al. 2019) or exposed to other threats that previously did not greatly overlap with seasonal sea turtle presence (e.g., fishing gear use, hopper dredge projects).

Direct and indirect impacts of climate change on sea turtle nesting success are anticipated. The increased use of hardened structures, such as sandbags, to protect developed coastline areas from washing away, can block access of reproductive female sea turtles to nesting habitat, and potentially negatively impact adjacent incubating nests. (Anya Douglas)



Summary of Threats

- Incidental capture in commercial and recreational fishing gear
- Collision with watercraft
- Impingement in hopper dredges
- Exposure to pollution
- Disease outbreaks, including fibropapillomatosis
- Offshore wind development activities, including altered magnetic fields
- Visible artificial lights at night on ocean-facing beaches
- Human presence on beaches at night, both on foot and driving motorized vehicles
- Blocked access to nesting habitat by furniture, tents, mats, fencing, and other structures remaining on the beach over night
- Excessive predation of eggs and hatchlings by predators
- Destruction of eggs or hatchlings during beach construction activities conducted in the summer and fall
- Placement of incompatible material on the beach during coastal storm reduction projects (nourishment events)
- Motorized vehicle traffic on beaches in summer and fall
- Sea level rise
- Climate change induced reduction of hatching success
- Climate change induced changes to nesting seasonality of sea turtles
- Climate change induced changes to seasonal estuarine water temperature patterns
- Climate change induced increases in the number and severity of tropical cyclones



Historic and Ongoing Conservation Efforts

Monitoring and protecting nesting females, their incubating eggs, and emergent hatchlings in North Carolina were initiated in the 1970s on coastal federal and state managed properties including Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Cape Lookout National Seashore, Hammocks Beach State Park, and Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base. In the early 1980s, the NCWRC conducted summertime aerial surveys of all coastal beaches in the state, revealing widespread sea turtle nesting activities along the coast (Crouse 1984). Biologists with the NCWRC recruited volunteers and other collaborators along the coast, to monitor and protect sea turtles during nesting, egg incubation, and hatchling emergence. Volunteers and cooperators also regularly engage with the public to raise awareness about sea turtles and their conservation needs. By the early to mid-1990s, nearly all ocean facing beaches in North Carolina had standardized monitoring and protection protocols that were implemented from May through November by NCWRC, partners, and volunteers. An exception included some ocean-facing beaches of Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base that are designated as off-limits due to safety concerns. Currently, the NCWRC, in cooperation with the USFWS, coordinates the standardized monitoring and protection of sea turtle nests on ocean-facing beaches in the state, and is the centralized clearinghouse for data on reproductive success associated with this monitoring. These data are invaluable for recovery assessment, recognizing and minimizing threats, and helping improve technical guidance.

Around the same time that nesting beach monitoring projects were established, the NCWRC, in cooperation with the NOAA-NMFS, established the North Carolina Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (NCSTSSN) to respond to and document sick, injured, or dead sea turtles that were found along the coast. Many of the cooperators and volunteers who participate in the nest-

ing beach monitoring also participate in the NCSTSSN, in addition to others. Standardized data continue to be collected from reported stranded sea turtles, and NCWRC is the centralized clearinghouse for NCSTSSN data collected in the state. These data provide important information on relative abundance of species, temporal distributions, and threats. In addition, North Carolina has two dedicated, full time sea turtle rehabilitation centers: the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in Surf City, and the Sea Turtle Assistance and Rehabilitation Center, part of the NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island. These facilities provide medical treatment for sick or injured turtles, with the goal of returning them to the wild as quickly as possible. These facilities also engage in various educational activities to raise public awareness of sea turtles and their conservation needs. Other institutions and facilities in North Carolina will admit sick or injured sea turtles for rehabilitation if there is a need. These include the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher, the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, SEA LIFE Charlotte Aquarium, and the Greensboro Science Center.



Volunteers play an immensely important role helping biologists monitor and protect sea turtles during nesting, egg incubation and hatchling emergence. (Melissa McGaw)

Different regulatory actions have been established in North Carolina for the conservation of sea turtles at local, state, and federal levels. At the local level, several coastal towns have been recognized as Sea Turtle Sanctuaries by the North Carolina State Legislature (Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Oak Island, Caswell Beach, Bald Head Island, Wrightsville Beach, Topsail Beach, Surf City Beach, North Topsail Beach, Emerald Isle, Pine Knoll Shores, and Atlantic Beach). Sea Turtle Sanctuary status reinforces the protections afforded to Endangered and Threatened sea turtles by state law (15A NCAC 101 .0102). Although not recognized as a Sanctuary, the town of Duck has enacted a town ordinance (§ 94.07) protecting sea turtles and their eggs. Additionally, several coastal municipalities or counties have enacted local ordinances requiring that unattended beach equipment be removed from the beach at night so it does not interfere with nesting sea turtles or emergent hatchlings (Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Oak Island, Caswell Beach, Kure Beach, Carolina Beach, Wrightsville Beach, Figure Eight Island, Emerald Isle, Topsail Beach, Surf City, North Topsail Beach, Emerald Isle, Pine Knoll Shores, Atlantic Beach, Nags Head, Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, Southern Shores, and Currituck County). Some towns have ordinances that require no artificial lights be visible on the beach at night: Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Oak Island, Wrightsville Beach, Kure Beach, Figure Eight Island, Topsail Beach, Surf City, North Topsail Beach, Nags Head, Kitty Hawk, and Southern Shores. Several towns and counties explicitly prohibit the planting of the invasive beach vitex, in part due to concerns for negative impacts to sea turtle nests (Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Oak Island, Caswell Beach, Bald Head Island, Kure Beach, Carolina Beach, Wrightsville Beach, Figure Eight Island, Surf City, Emerald Isle, Indian Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, Atlantic Beach, Duck, and Currituck County). The use of private vehicles on the oceanside beach is restricted during the nesting season in several towns, including Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Oak Island, Caswell Beach, Bald Head Island, Kure Beach, Carolina Beach Wrightsville Beach, Figure Eight Island, Topsail Beach, Surf City, North Topsail Beach, Emerald Isle, Indian Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, and Atlantic Beach.



Among the conservation efforts to protect sea turtles and their nests is prohibiting the planting of invasive beach vitex on coastal beaches because of the negative impacts to sea turtle nests. (Jodie Owen)

Summary of protective measures established at the municipal level for the conservation of sea turtles, for towns and unincorporated villages that are directly adjacent to sea turtle nesting beaches along the North Carolina coast. See text for more details.

	SEA TURTLE SANCTUARY	LIGHTING ORDINANCE	BEACH FURNITURE ORDINANCE	BEACH VITEX RESTRICTED	BEACH DRIVING RESTRICTED	COMMENT
Sunset Beach	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Ocean Isle Beach	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Holden Beach	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Oak Island	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Caswell Beach	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Bald Head Island	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Kure Beach	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Carolina Beach	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes/No*	*Beach driving allowed in Freeman Park
Wrightsville Beach	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Figure Eight Island	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Topsail Beach	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Surf City	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
North Topsail Beach	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Emerald Isle	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Indian Beach	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
Pine Knoll Shores	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Atlantic Beach	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hyde County (unincorporated village)	No	No	No	No	Yes/No*	*Some beach driving during daylight allowed in summer
Dare County (unincorporated villages)	No	No	No	No	Yes/No"	*Some beach driving during daylight allowed in summer
Nags Head	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Kill Devil Hills	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Kitty Hawk	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	

	SEA TURTLE SANCTUARY	LIGHTING ORDINANCE	BEACH FURNITURE ORDINANCE	BEACH VITEX RESTRICTED	BEACH DRIVING RESTRICTED	COMMENT
Southern Shores	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Duck	No*	No	No	Yes	Yes	*Town ordinance protecting sea turtles and their eggs
Currituck County	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes/No*	*Beach driving allowed from Corolla northwards

At the state level, NC General Statute 113-189 protects all sea turtles from harm. In addition, 15A NCAC 03R .0101 describes a sea turtle sanctuary in the waters adjacent to Bear Island, Browns Island, and Onslow Beach in Onslow County: commercial fisheries activity is prohibited within the bounds of the sanctuary between 01 June and 31 August, for the protection of reproductively active female sea turtles. More recently, NCDMF developed a management plan that includes federal authorization for incidental take of sea turtles by gill nets used by

A DMF management plan that calls for time-area closures and close monitoring of incident captures of sea turtles by gill nets has resulted in a decline in lethal interactions between turtles and estuarine gill net gear in the state.

commercial fisheries and recreational anglers in estuarine waters of North Carolina (NOAA Incidental Take Permit Number 16230, expired 31 August 2023). Through time-area closures and closely monitoring incidental captures by gill nets, the NCDMF management plan has resulted in a decline in lethal interactions between sea turtles and estuarine gill net gear in North Carolina (Rawls 2022). NCDMF has applied for a subsequent Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for estuarine gill nets in North Carolina, which outlines management actions similar to

ITP 16320 and requests authorization for less than 120 estimated lethal and less than 370 non-lethal sea turtle interactions per season, with observers used to calculate bycatch rates. For shrimp trawl gear, a state requirement was enacted in 2009 to require the use of a Turtle Excluder Device (TED) in each trawl net used by otter shrimp trawls in North Carolina waters (15A NCAC 03L.0103(h)), which mirrors the federal law requiring the use of a TED, but which before 2009 was unenforceable by NCDMF Law Enforcement due to the lack of a Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA-NMFS.

At the federal level, in 2001, NOAA-NMFS closed the Pamlico Sound to large mesh gill nets between September and December of each year, to reduce bycatch of sea turtles (66 FR 50350; Byrd et al. 2011). In 2002, NOAA-NMFS finalized the closure of all federal waters off North Carolina to large mesh gill nets targeting monkfish, except for waters north of Currituck Beach Light between January and March, to reduce bycatch of sea turtles (67 FR 71895). In 2014, USFWS and NOAA-NMFS assigned critical habitat for Loggerhead Sea Turtles in the Northwest Atlantic (79 FR 39855). In North Carolina, Loggerhead Sea Turtle critical habitat includes nearshore reproductive waters that run parallel to ocean beaches and out 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) from the beaches that are

designated nesting beach critical habitat for Loggerheads (Bogue Banks, Topsail Island, Pleasure Island, Bald Head Island, Oak Island, Holden Beach, and Ocean Isle Beach); a constricted migratory corridor and winter habitat that occurs between Cape Lookout Point and the central portion of the Outer Banks (approx. 34.58° N and 36° N) from the edge of the islands of the Outer Banks to the edge of the continental shelf; and the southern portion of the area of winter concentration of juvenile and adult Loggerheads, which includes water depths from 20 to 100 meters (66 to 328 feet) between Cape Fear and Cape Lookout (approx. 33.29° N and 34.58° N). NOAA-NMFS published several Biological Opinions for the operation of some recreational fishing piers in North Carolina such as the Bonner Pier in Dare County, the Straights Pier in Carteret County, the Swansboro waterfront pier in Onslow County, and the Carolina Beach State Park fishing dock in New Hanover County. Incidental captures of sea turtles at these piers must be reported to the NCSTSSN.

In 2012, the National Park Service at Cape Hatteras National Seashore established an off-road vehicle (ORV) management plan for the protection of sea turtles that occur on the beach, including nesting females, incubating eggs, and emergent hatchlings (77 FR 3123). Management actions include restricting nighttime ORV use during the nesting season and controlling ORV access around known incubating sea turtle eggs. The Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune has an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP; expired 2020 but in effect until updated) that identifies management actions to minimize impacts of the military presence at the base on sea turtles that occur on its beaches. These actions include reducing visible artificial light on the beach and/or use of lights with wavelengths less likely to affect the behavior of sea turtles on the beach; restricting recreational driving on the beach during the nesting season; relocation of eggs away from the amphibious training area; and nighttime monitoring of the nesting beach during nighttime training activities elsewhere. These management activities continue while a new INRMP is being developed.



The National Park Service at Cape Hatteras National Seashore Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan restricts nighttime driving during the nesting season as well as controls vehicle access around known incubating sea turtle eggs. (Cape Hatteras National Seashore)

CONSERVATION GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Overarching Goal

The conservation goal for sea turtles that occur in North Carolina is to facilitate the recovery of their populations by protecting them from anthropogenic threats and maintaining and/or enhancing the functionality of their habitats (terrestrial and aquatic).

Objectives

1. Monitor the number of nests laid by each species in North Carolina, with the goal that annual totals are not declining over any twenty-year period, and that the trend in nests laid corresponds to the trend in number of nesting females.
2. Monitor the abundance of juvenile sea turtles in North Carolina waters, with the goal that numbers of individuals are increasing at a greater rate than the number of recorded stranded sea turtles of similar size classes.
3. Manage North Carolina coastal beaches for successful nesting by working with partners and stakeholders, to avoid excessive rates (>65%) of nesting crawls that do not result in egg deposition.
4. Manage coastal in-water habitat in North Carolina for successful migration, foraging, development, and reproduction by working with partners and stakeholders, including the establishment of index monitoring sites.
5. Use scientifically based best practices for managing sea turtles, their incubating eggs, and emergent hatchlings in North Carolina, including minimizing nest predation to less than 20% of all eggs laid, while maintaining >65% annual hatching success rates over any ten-year period.
6. Minimize lethal bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries in North Carolina by working with partners and stakeholders to develop and implement relevant management measures, including maintaining adequate observer programs for fishing gear known to interact with sea turtles.
7. Reduce injuries and mortality caused by vessel strikes in North Carolina by working with partners and stakeholders to develop and implement relevant management measures so that vessel strike mortalities are stable or decreasing over any ten-year period.
8. Respond appropriately to mass stranding events or mass mortality/disease events.
9. Monitor for impacts of climate change and adapt conservation actions appropriately, to reduce negative impacts.
10. Develop and implement local and state legislation for the protection of sea turtles in North Carolina.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS

Action A

Maintain and support current nest monitoring and protection programs to ensure data on nest numbers and hatchling production are sufficient to assess trends in numbers of nests laid and females nesting (see Objectives 1, 3, 5).

Action B

Maintain and support current sea turtle stranding and salvage network activities to detect changes in relative abundance of species, size classes, and threats (see Objective 2).

Action C:

Work with local, state, and federal partners to reduce threats on nesting beaches during sea turtle reproductive periods, including minimizing visible artificial light on the beach, restricting ORV use, restricting beach construction activities to outside of the nesting and hatching seasons, and ensuring beach development actions are compatible with sea turtle reproduction (see Objectives 3, 5, 9, 10).

Action D:

In addition to working with local, county and state legislators to establish rules that benefit sea turtles, work with USFWS and other stakeholders to establish a coastal beach Habitat Conservation Plan to protect nesting females, their incubating eggs, and emergent hatchlings while on beaches in North Carolina (see Objectives 3, 5, 9, 10).

Action E:

Work with local, state, and federal partners to establish a committee to review and assess threats to sea turtles through reduction of in-water anthropogenic threats, including incidental capture by recreational and commercial fishing gear, dredges, vessel strikes, and marine debris (see Objectives 4, 6, 7).

Action F:

Establish protocols for responding appropriately to mass stranding events, including cold stun events, disease outbreaks, and mass mortality associated with an emergent threat (see Objective 8).

Action G:

Based on future changes to sea turtle phenology, distribution, and threats associated with climate change, prepare to adapt current conservation actions and protocols to ensure sea turtles continue to be protected in the future (see Objective 9).

Action H:

Support and conduct research to better understand sea turtle biology, physiology, and behavior in North Carolina to improve or confirm best practices for sea turtle conservation actions (see Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

Summary of Actions Needed

Due to their long-distance migratory behavior, sea turtles are challenging to monitor in the marine environment. Therefore, tracking numbers of egg clutches (nests) laid is the most commonly used metric for assessing population trends. Comparing the average numbers of nests laid in North Carolina during an earlier ten-year period (2003-2012) to the later ten-year period (2013-2022), annual number of nests laid by Loggerhead Sea Turtles increased from 748 to 1362; annual Green Sea Turtle nests increased from 13 to 36; annual Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle nests increased from one to five; annual Leatherback Sea Turtle nests declined from three to one, and annual Hawksbill Sea Turtle nests remained unchanged at zero (only two nests laid in North Carolina have been documented to date). Except for Leatherback and Hawksbill Sea Turtles, which nest in low numbers, all species showed increasing numbers of nests laid per year over the past two decades. Continued monitoring of sea turtle nesting activities will provide annual data against which to assess nesting trends, both for North Carolina (see Objective 1) and for NOAA-NMFS and USFWS, who are responsible for assessing regional trends against the current Federal Recovery Plans. In addition, the monitoring and protection of sea turtle nests in North Carolina establishes a baseline against which to assess potential climate change impacts (see Objective 9), such as alterations in phenology, new threats to incubating eggs and emergent hatchlings, and the potential influx of other species nesting in North Carolina (Patricio et al. 2021).

Similarly, continued operation of the NCSTSSN is important because it provides information on the relative abundance, life stage, behavior, and threats to sea turtles in North Carolina waters. NOAA-NMFS tracked relative abundance of sea turtles by monitoring incidental captures of sea turtles in pound nets in Core and Pamlico Sounds and reported a relative increase in abundance in juvenile Loggerhead, Green, and Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles between 1995-2009 (Braun-McNeil et al. 2018). Currently, there are no dedicated abundance surveys for sea turtles in North Carolina waters. It would be beneficial to have one or more long-term index surveys of sea turtles in North Carolina waters, against which to compare trends in stranded sea turtles, with the goal of maintaining rates of stranding that is less than rates of growth of the nesting populations (see Objective 2). One or

more index survey sites would facilitate more research on different life stages of sea turtles in North Carolina and allow baseline monitoring of metrics such as growth and health.

The suite of threats to nesting females, their incubating eggs, and emergent hatchlings on North Carolina Beaches, including beach driving, beach construction, and nighttime artificial light visible from the beach could be effectively managed through development of a

A Habitat Conservation Plan, authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, would allow beach development activities, including beach construction, but would be managed so the take of sea turtles is avoided or minimized.

beach Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) with all coastal stakeholders. A coastal North Carolina HCP, authorized by USFWS, would allow beach development activities, including beach construction, but would be managed so the take of sea turtles is avoided or minimized (see Objectives 3 and 10). The HCP would codify best practices for the conservation of sea turtles (see Objective 5). The HCP also would allow beach construction activities to occur in coastal North Carolina but would delineate when they could be conducted to minimize impacts to sea turtles. An added benefit from development of an HCP is that consideration of other coastal listed species could be included to also minimize impacts to those species, including piping plovers, red knots, and seabeach amaranth.

Despite several efforts to protect sea turtles in the waters of North Carolina (establishment of a sea turtle sanctuary in Onslow County, implementation of an estuarine gill net management plan to reduce incidental capture of sea turtles, and construction of a diversionary structure in Southport to exclude sea turtles from impingement in the intake canal of the Brunswick Steam Electric Plant), there remain many other threats to sea turtles in inshore and offshore waters. The Sea Turtle Advisory Committee of the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission (NCMFC) reported that there are several fishing gears of concern for bycatch of sea turtles in estuarine waters. In addition to gill nets and shrimp trawls that are currently managed through rules, gear types that should be considered for rules that could reduce impacts to sea turtles include: pound nets, recreational rod and reel, butterfly net, channel net, long haul seine, swipe net, crab pots, and crab trawls (Sea Turtle Advisory Committee 2006). Many other types of fishing gear that occur in North Carolina ocean waters and that impact sea turtles were not reviewed by the committee. Additional in-water threats include

impacts by vessels, impingement by hopper dredges, and risk of entanglement in passive gear associated with research. The Sea Turtle Advisory Committee was disbanded in 2016 by the NCMFC. It would be beneficial to establish a new review committee that expands its purview beyond assessing sea turtle interactions with fishing gear in estuarine waters to encompass all threats to sea turtles in state waters and address the lack of state authority to enforce rules to protect sea turtles in state waters. Potential members of the committee would be made up of stakeholders, including representatives of federal, state, county, and local governments; researchers; biologists; conservationists; NGOs; commercial fishers; and recreational anglers. The goal of this

committee would be to review threats and make recommendations that would reduce impacts of the recognized threats, possibly including management actions and changes to state rules (see Objectives 4, 6, 7, 10).

Nearly every winter in North Carolina, hundreds of juvenile sea turtles in estuarine waters become cold-stunned and are taken to rehabilitation facilities for treatment and eventual release (Niemuth et al. 2020). While these events have been managed relatively effectively to date, it is possible that the number of animals affected may expand and thus become more challenging to respond to. Additionally, other disease events such as exposure to brevetoxin associated with harmful algal blooms or fibropapillomatosis, or mortality associated with oil spills or other types of pollution, could affect sea turtles in North Carolina waters. While it is challenging to anticipate the contours of a major stranding event, it would be beneficial to establish basic protocols for dealing with high numbers of stranded turtles occurring within a short period of time (see Objective 8). These protocols could be expanded to include other coastal marine wildlife, including birds and marine mammals.

In anticipation of impacts to sea turtles in North Carolina due to climate change, including phenological changes, reduced fertility of eggs and/or fitness of hatchlings, emergence of new or altered threats, and expanded ranges

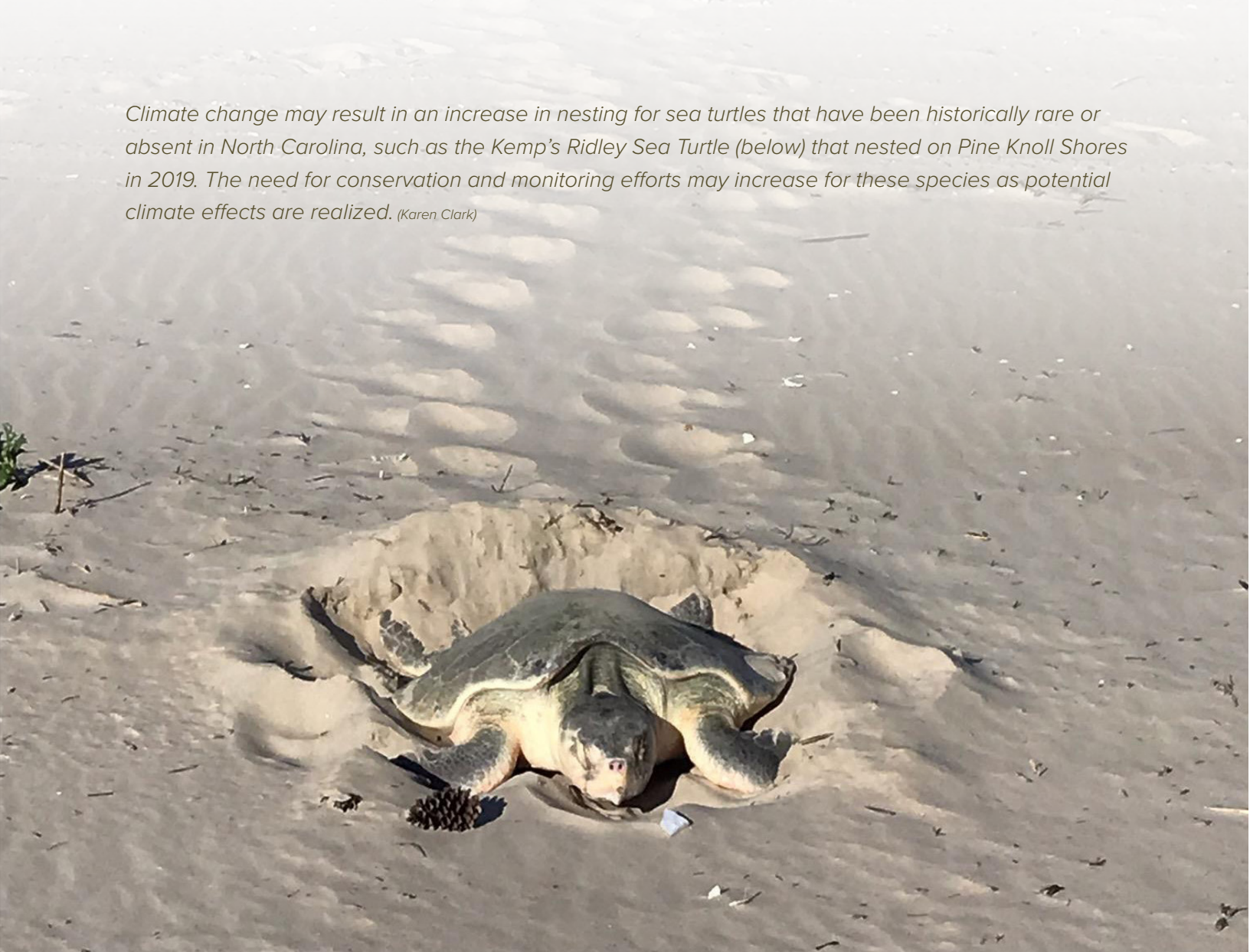


The number of cold-stunned turtles that need rescuing and rehabilitation may increase in the ensuing years, becoming more challenging to manage. (Matthew Godfrey)

of rare or currently absent species (Leatherback Sea Turtles; Hawksbill Sea Turtles; Olive Ridley Sea Turtles), ongoing monitoring of nests and stranded turtles needs to be continued to help identify these types of changes. However, consideration of different approaches to managing these changes is imperative, including identifying thresholds against which management actions should take place (see Objective 9). For example, if extreme incubation temperatures are implicated in greatly reduced hatching success, then adding water to incubating egg clutches may help improve the production of hatchlings by reducing incubation temperatures (Smith et al. 2021).

Although much has been learned about sea turtle biology related to reproduction and migratory behavior of adult females, there remain many gaps in our understanding of their life history, physiology, and behavior, particularly for populations in North Carolina. For example, little is known about the survivorship or average reproductive longevity of adult females, yet these factors are critical for assessing lethal threats at the adult stage. Information on survivorship rates of hatchlings and juveniles is lacking yet is critical for prioritizing management actions for threats affecting these life stages. There is also a lack of information about techniques to reduce the likelihood of interactions between sea turtles in the water and different types of fishing gear, including commercial and recreational. Potentially promising methods are being tested elsewhere, including visual and acoustic deterrents on gear (Wang et al. 2010; Allman et al. 2021). As possible, research findings should be used to inform management actions and regulatory updates (see Objectives 5, 6).

Climate change may result in an increase in nesting for sea turtles that have been historically rare or absent in North Carolina, such as the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (below) that nested on Pine Knoll Shores in 2019. The need for conservation and monitoring efforts may increase for these species as potential climate effects are realized. (Karen Clark)



A summary of conservation actions needed to address the goals, the partners involved, and the desired outcomes of each action. These actions are listed generally in order of priority, though all actions are considered important and necessary.

#	ACTIONS	SPECIFICS	PARTNERS	DESIRED OUTCOMES	DATES ACTIONS PERFORMED
A	Maintain Nest Monitoring and Protection Network	Continue standardized monitoring and protection of sea turtle nests on North Carolina beaches	USFWS, National Seashores, National Wildlife Refuges, Department of Defense, North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, North Carolina Audubon, Bald Head Island Conservancy, volunteer organizations	Use standardized data to assess population trends and monitor for changes to hatching success, fertility, and other reproductive metrics (see Objectives 1, 3, 5)	May through November Annually
B	Maintain Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network	Continue to respond to and document sick, injured, dead sea turtles	NOAA-NMFS, USFWS, National Seashores, National Wildlife Refuges, Department of Defense, North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Audubon North Carolina, Bald Head Island Conservancy, volunteer organizations	Continue standardized data collection, and help transfer sick or injured turtles to appropriate rehabilitation centers (see Objective 2)	Ongoing
C	Coordinate with partners to reduce threats on nesting beaches	Minimize impacts of artificial light, ORVs, and development during the reproductive period	USFWS, National Seashores, National Wildlife Refuges, Department of Defense, North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, North Carolina Audubon, Bald Head Island Conservancy, coastal towns and counties, volunteer organizations	Encourage conservation measures, use of BMPs, and/or development of local ordinances to minimize impacts of human activity on sea turtles using beach habitat, including through public engagement and outreach (see Objectives 3, 5, 9, 10)	May through November Annually
D	Develop a coastal beach Habitat Conservation Plan with USFWS	Minimize impacts of coastal development on sea turtles that use North Carolina beaches	USFWS, National Seashores, National Wildlife Refuges, Department of Defense, North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, Audubon North Carolina, Bald Head Island Conservancy, volunteer organizations	Establish conservation measures to minimize impacts of coastal development on sea turtles and other listed species that use beach habitat (see Objectives 3, 5, 9, 10)	To be developed

#	ACTIONS	SPECIFICS	PARTNERS	DESIRED OUTCOMES	DATES ACTIONS PERFORMED
E	Establish Sea Turtle In-water Threats Committee	Review and assess threats to sea turtles in North Carolina waters	NOAA-NMFS, National Seashores, National Wildlife Refuges, Department of Defense, North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Audubon North Carolina, Bald Head Island Conservancy, volunteer organizations, recreational anglers, boating groups	Develop and implement actions to reduce threats to sea turtles in North Carolina waters, including potential changes to state law and fisheries management rules (see Objectives 4, 6, 7)	To be established
F	Develop protocols for mass stranding events	Research protocols developed for other regions or ocean basins and adapt to North Carolina	USFWS, NOAA-NMFS, North Carolina Aquariums, North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, National Seashores, National Wildlife Refuges, Department of Defense, North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, Audubon North Carolina, Bald Head Island Conservancy, volunteer organizations	Establish protocols and actions for responding to mass stranding events (see Objective 8)	To be developed
G	Monitor and prepare for threats related to climate change	Analyze data collected during nest monitoring and protection	USFWS, NOAA-NMFS, universities, and other researchers	Keep abreast of changes related to climate change and prepare for management responses (see Objective 9)	To be developed
H	Conduct research	Improve our understanding of biology, physiology, and behavior	NCWRC staff, universities, and other researchers	Improve our understanding of juvenile abundance and survivorship, threats and help prioritize management actions (see Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)	Ongoing

GLOSSARY

Biological Opinion:

An analysis of the impacts of actions of any federal agency on species listed as Endangered or Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. A biological opinion usually includes recommendations to further the recovery of listed species potentially impacted by actions under consideration and can include specific measures to minimize take.

Carapace:

Thick shell which covers the back or dorsal side of the turtle.

Clutch:

The group of eggs laid at one time by a nesting female. Sometimes used synonymously with nest.

Cold stunning:

A state of reduced activity or lethargy that sea turtles enter when exposed to water 10° C or less. They become susceptible to stranding, accidental boat strikes, and even death if the exposure is prolonged or water temperatures drop.

Endangered species:

In North Carolina, "Any native or once-native species of wild animal whose continued existence as a viable component of the State's fauna is determined by the Wildlife Resources Commission to be in jeopardy or any wild animal determined to be an 'endangered species' pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act."

Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP):

A planning document approved by USFWS that is associated with an Incidental Take Permit. The Plan includes information on level of take, how impacts are minimized, what conservation measures will be enacted to protect the species covered, and how the actions will be funded.

Incidental Take Permit (ITP):

A permit issued by USFWS or NOAA-NMFS to non-federal entities that authorizes otherwise lawful activities that may result in take of a listed species.

Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP):

A comprehensive management plan developed for natural resource conservation and management on US military installations.

Neritic:

The relatively shallow zone of the ocean adjacent to the coast, extending out to edge of the continental shelf (approximately 200 meters depth).

Nest:

The excavated cavity in the sand into which the reproductively active female will deposit her eggs.

North Carolina Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network (NCSTSSN):

A network of volunteers and cooperators from federal, state, local and private organizations that responds to sick, injured, or dead sea turtles, and collects standardized information from each stranded turtle observed in North Carolina.

ORV:

Off-road vehicle, typically with four-wheel drive.

Phenology:

The study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, particularly related to environmental influences on plant and animal populations.

Plastron:

The shell that covers the underside or ventral side of the turtle.

Scute:

A horny or keratinized plate that is part of the shell of a turtle. The number and pattern of scutes on the shell are usually distinguishing characteristics of the species.

Threatened species:

In North Carolina, "Any native or once-native species of wild animal that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range or one that is designated as a 'threatened species' pursuant to the Endangered Species Act."

Turtle Excluder Device (TED):

A gear modification for shrimp trawls that allows sea turtles to escape a trawl net before they drown.

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EXHIBIT H-1

June 6, 2024



Proposed Temporary/Permanent Amendments to Land and Water Access Rule for 2024-2025 Deer Season Recommended by Agency Staff for Public Notice, Comment, and Presentation at Public Hearing

The antlerless deer harvest during the introductory gun season is limited by 15A NCAC 10D .0251 (51)(B) on Nantahala Game Land solely to that portion which is located in Transylvania County. The majority of Nantahala Game Land is outside of Transylvania County and will not have an antlered or antlerless gun season. This proposal will standardize the antlered or antlerless blackpowder and gun seasons between Needmore and Nantahala Game Land. This is particularly important as both game lands have a shared boundary. If the Nantahala Game Land had a more conservative antlered or antlerless season than Needmore, the additional hunting pressure could result in negative impacts to resources and game land use during that period.

This proposal will remove the one day of introductory antlerless deer harvest during the gun season on the Needmore Game Land in Macon and Swain County and will align Needmore Game Land with the same antlerless deer season structure as Nantahala Game Land in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties.

15A NCAC 10D .0252 NEEDMORE GAME LAND IN MACON AND SWAN COUNTIES

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0252 NEEDMORE GAME LAND IN MACON AND SWAIN COUNTIES**

2 Needmore game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31, and all
4 horseback riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15.
- 5 (2) On posted dove fields, dove hunting on the opening day of dove season is by permit only.
- 6 (3) No antlerless deer may be taken during the first open Saturday of the Deer With Visible Antlers
7 season on Needmore Game Land.

8

9 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

10 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

11

EXHIBIT H-2

June 6, 2024



Fiscal Note for 2024-2025 Annual Cycle Rule Proposals Wildlife Resources Commission - Land and Water Access

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10D .0103 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING HUNTING ON GAME LANDS
15A NCAC 10D .0209 BUFFALO COVE GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0215 R. WAYNE BAILEY-CASWELL GAME LAND IN CASWELL COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0216 CHATHAM GAME LAND IN CHATHAM COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0225 DOVER BAY GAME LAND IN CRAVEN COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0233 HARRIS GAME LANCE IN CHATHAM, HARNETT, AND WAKE COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0243 KINGS CREEK GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0245 LEE GAME LAND IN LEE COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0252 NEEDMORE GAME LAND IN MACON AND SWAIN COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0256 NORTH RIVER GAME LAND IN CAMDEN AND CURRITUCK COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0276 SOUTH MOUNTAINS GAME LAND IN BURKE, CLEVELAND, MCDOWELL, AND RUTHERFORD COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0283 THURMOND CHATHAM GAME LAND IN ALLEGHANY AND WILKES COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0293 YADKIN RIVER GAME LAND IN DAVIDSON, DAVIE, MONTGOMERY, ROWAN, AND STANLY COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0294 NORTH BEND GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY

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

Authority: G.S. 113-134; 113:264; 113-291.2; 113:291.5; 113-296; 113-305

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.

Many of the proposed rule changes will modify the use of game lands and hunting seasons on game lands, some will increase outdoor recreation opportunities, while others are expected to restrict such opportunities. A summary of the proposed rule amendments is shown below, with the full rule text included in Appendix A.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY CATEGORY AND RULE

USE OF GAME LANDS:

15A NCAC 10D .0103 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING HUNTING ON GAME LANDS (pg. 16)

Hunting Under the Influence:

The proposed amendment will broaden the prohibition of hunting under the influence of alcohol and narcotics to include all impairing substances. This will allow Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers (WLEOs) to enforce the rule more effectively and provide a safer environment on game lands for all users.

WLEOs periodically encounter individuals hunting on game lands that are under the influence of or in possession of impairing substances. The current rule only prohibits hunting while under the influence of alcohol or narcotic drugs. Per G.S. 90-87, marijuana is not a narcotic drug; therefore, officers are unable to charge individuals for hunting while under the influence of marijuana and other substances not included in the definition of narcotics.

G.S. 20-4.01(14a) defines an impairing substance as, "Alcohol, controlled substance under Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, any other drug or psychoactive substance capable of impairing a person's physical or mental faculties, or any combination of these substances." Amending the language to "under the influence of an impairing substance as defined by G.S. 20-4.01(48b)" will allow WLEOs to enforce this rule more effectively. Having the explicit prohibition on use of other impairing substances could also act as a deterrent to some hunters planning to use these substances before engaging in hunting activities.

Either-Sex Definition:

This rule proposal adds the definition of "either-sex" to mean antlered or antlerless.

The Commission does not regulate harvest based on sex or gender. Regulations are based on whether a deer is antlered or not. Current language in the NCAC using either-sex is antiquated and inconsistent with deer management terminology in the southeast. Changing the definition will make rules consistent with the terminology used on the Big Game Harvest Report Card and the regulations digest produced for the Commission’s regulated public each year.

Adding this definition will clarify that the Commission means antlered or antlerless where either-sex already exists in rule. As rules are amended over time, “either-sex” will be modified to state “antlered or antlerless”.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed amendment will allow the agency WLEOs to cite individuals hunting under the influence of marijuana and other impairing substances. With this addition, it is anticipated that additional citations will be issued, requiring additional WLEOs effort in staff time, as some of the cited individuals will likely go to court. Unfortunately, the agency has no way to quantify the anticipated time with available data.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment is expected to increase the number of citations issued which will increase the local courts’ revenues from citations. Currently, G.S. 7A-304 imposes a fee of \$183 per citation. In addition, pursuant to G.S. 115C-452, any clear proceeds from penalties and fines issued by WRC would go to the local schools.

Private Impact

Updating the rule language will allow WLEOs to more effectively enforce the rule and enhance safety on game lands for all user groups. However, this will likely have an adverse impact on individuals hunting under the influence of marijuana, as officers will be able to cite them for violation of this rule. Hunting under the influence -- a violation of WRC rule -- carries a fine of \$25 (G.S. 113-135-1) plus cost of court (approximately \$183).

15A NCAC 10D .0225 DOVER BAY GAME LAND IN CRAVEN COUNTY (pg. 24)

The proposed amendment will prohibit target shooting on the Dover Bay Game Land. Non-licensed use of this game land has substantially increased over the past year. Most target shooters are shooting towards leased hunting property and the path into the game land. Target shooting routinely occurs at or near the parking area, which is unsafe and increases potential conflict.

Opportunities currently exist for target shooting at alternative sites within a reasonable driving distance to the game land that are appropriately constructed and monitored to provide a safe environment. This change is consistent with other game lands where target shooting is prohibited within an acceptable radius of shooting ranges.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Cost

Agency staff are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the game lands. Individuals target shooting on this game land regularly leave broken glass, plastic bottles, paper, and steel cans on the property, which must be cleaned up by staff. Game lands staff typically clean frequented target shooting areas at each game land three times per year. Based on the recent increase in non-licensed target shooting in the area, and assuming 100% compliance with the proposed amendment, prohibiting this activity is projected to save the agency approximately \$816/year in staff time ($\$34/\text{hr} \times 8 \text{ hours/clean up} \times 3 \text{ clean-ups/year} = \816). Additional signage will be needed at the game land kiosk to indicate that target shooting is not allowed. Staff will post signage as part of their regular duties. New signage will cost the agency approximately \$0.90 ($\$0.90/\text{sign} \times 1 \text{ sign}$).

Benefit

Targets are often placed on trees in the area, many of which have been damaged to the point that mortality has already occurred or is imminent. This proposed amendment should help to eliminate the damage caused to live trees that are currently being used as targets. The agency has no way to quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impacts.

Private Impact

Cost

The proposed amendment could affect private individuals who want to target shoot, as they will now have to travel to a shooting range. Depending on where the individual is traveling from, this could impose an additional financial burden by requiring more money for gas. There is no way to quantify this impact.

Benefit

Prohibiting target shooting will improve safety for both target shooters and other users of the game lands. Currently, popular shooting areas on this game land contain no back-stop berms and are located near boundaries with private property, and roads. The agency has no way to quantify this benefit.

15A NCAC 10D .0216 CHATHAM GAME LAND IN CHATHAM COUNTY (pg. 23)
15A NCAC 10D .0233 HARRIS GAME LAND IN CHATHAM, HARNETT, AND WAKE
COUNTIES (pg. 25)
15A NCAC 10D .0245 LEE GAME LAND IN LEE COUNTY (pg. 27)

The proposed amendment will restrict the use of bicycles, except by hunters engaged in the act of hunting, during the days of the seasons for game birds and game animals on Chatham, Harris, and Lee game lands. This proposed amendment, requested by Duke Energy (landowner), is necessary to reduce conflicts between recreational bike riders and hunters during the hunting seasons and damage caused by unauthorized bike trails.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed amendment may have a limited positive impact on the agency resources by reducing staff time required to address conflicts related to recreational bike riding during hunting seasons. The Commission does not have data on how much time is spent by staff on this game land, so there is no way to quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Cost

The proposed amendment will impact bike riders currently using these three game lands, as they will need to find new locations to recreate. These costs cannot be quantified with available data.

Benefit

The proposed amendment will benefit hunters who are negatively impacted by recreational bike riders. It will also reduce and eventually eliminate the expenses incurred by Duke Energy to routinely rehabilitate unauthorized bike trails, correct erosion issues, and remove bridges, ramps, and jumps. The agency has no way to quantify these benefits.

15A NCAC 10D .0256 NORTH RIVER GAME LAND IN CAMDEN AND CURRITUCK
COUNTIES (pg. 29)

The proposed amendment will establish a “Scouting-only Zone” on North River Game Land for waterfowl impoundments to limit the disturbance to migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds.

A “Scouting-only Zone” is a tool used to manage non-hunting and trapping activities on waterfowl impoundments to decrease disturbances during the migration and wintering periods. The North River Game Land waterfowl impoundments have significant human disturbances including people

walking the dikes of the impoundments and interfering with permitted hunts during the migration and wintering periods. Human presence is a disturbance that most waterfowl species do not tolerate, and they will flee the area.

To mitigate this issue, an observation tower adjacent to the parking area near the impoundments will be installed. This will provide opportunities to view the posted waterfowl impoundments, while limiting the disturbance. The Scouting-only Zone will be limited to the observation tower from November 1 through March 15. Outside of these dates, the area will be open to public use. This Scouting-only Zone will reduce the amount of disturbance to waterfowl, provide a higher quality hunt for permitted waterfowl hunters, and better align management of the posted waterfowl impoundments with the guidelines of the grant used to create the site.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This proposed amendment is anticipated to have an estimated cost of \$5,100 to the agency for the construction of an observation tower and post regulatory signage. Costs include \$5,000 for the construction of the observation tower (labor and materials) and conservation technicians will put up signage as part of their regular duties. New signage (sign, post, and hardware) will cost the agency, at most, \$100 (\$25/sign x 4 signs).

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Cost

Wildlife viewers using the impoundments will have fewer areas to view waterfowl, but the quality of their experience may improve as they will not disturb the waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds from the viewing tower.

Benefit

Waterfowl hunters should experience an increased quality of their hunts, as disturbances to waterfowl in the area will be limited and birds should remain in the area. Neither the costs nor benefits can be quantified.

15A NCAC 10D .0283 THURMOND CHATHAM GAME LAND IN ALLEGHANY AND WILKES COUNTIES (pg. 31)

The proposed amendment will restrict camping on the Thurmond Chatham Game Land to September 1 through the last day of February, and March 31 through May 14.

The use of camping areas by non-licensed individuals has increased substantially over the years, both during and outside the hunting seasons. WLEOs routinely encounter violations including

illegal drugs, littering, indecent exposure, and extended camping. Trash, tents, drug paraphernalia, and human waste pose safety issues for staff and other users. Restricting camping to dates within the hunting seasons will limit use and undesirable activity, decrease the required maintenance at these areas, and make camping on this game land consistent with other game lands.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This proposed amendment is expected to have positive fiscal impacts on the agency, as the additional time and expenses required to enforce and maintain these areas will be reduced. The Commission does not have data on how much time is spent by staff on this game land, so this anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Hunters and other campground users will lose the opportunity to camp outside of the seasons, but the impacts are anticipated to be minimal, as camping is available at nearby Stone Mountain State Park.

HUNTING SEASON CHANGES:

15A NCAC 10D .0209 BUFFALO COVE GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES (pg. 21)

15A NCAC 10D .0243 KINGS CREEK GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES (pg. 26)

15A NCAC 10D .0276 SOUTH MOUNTAINS GAME LAND IN BURKE, CLEVELAND, MCDOWELL, AND RUTHERFORD COUNTIES (pg. 30)

Buffalo Cove, South Mountains, and Kings Creek game lands have acreage lying in both the western and northwestern deer zones. Currently, the deer season framework for these game lands is consistent with the western season. The proposed amendment will shift the western blackpowder and gun season allowing the blackpowder season to begin two Saturdays before Thanksgiving and run for two weeks, and the gun season to begin the Saturday after Thanksgiving and run through January 1. This amendment will reduce complexity and align the seasons for these game lands to reflect the newly adopted framework.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This proposed amendment is expected to have positive fiscal impacts on the agency, as the staff time and expenses required to enforce and maintain these areas will be reduced. The Commission does not have data on how much time is spent by staff on this game land, so there is no way to

quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment is expected to increase hunter participation, which may result in additional visitation to the area and increase revenues of local businesses. This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

Increased hunter participation during blackpowder season is expected, as a result of the cooler hunting conditions during November and the proximity to the rut. Gun season opportunities will increase as a result of adding days, which will allow opportunities to gun hunt during peak rut, and open days through Christmas and New Year's. This anticipated benefit cannot be unquantified.

**15A NCAC 10D .0252 NEEDMORE GAME LAND IN MACON AND SWAIN COUNTIES
(pg. 28)**

The proposed amendment will remove the one day of introductory antlerless deer harvest during the gun season on the Needmore Game Land in Macon and Swain Counties and will align Needmore Game Land with the same antlerless deer season structure as Nantahala Game Land in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties.

Currently, antlerless deer harvest during the introductory gun season is limited by 15A NCAC 10D .0251(b) on Nantahala Game Land solely to that portion which is located in Transylvania County. The majority of Nantahala Game Land is outside of Transylvania County and will not have an antlered or antlerless gun season. This proposal will standardize the antlered or antlerless blackpowder and gun seasons between Needmore and Nantahala Game Lands. This is particularly important as both game lands have a shared boundary. If the Nantahala Game Land had a more conservative antlered or antlerless season than Needmore, the additional hunting pressure could result in negative impacts to resources and game land use during that period.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This proposed amendment is expected to have positive fiscal impacts on the agency, as the staff time and expenses required to enforce and maintain these areas will be reduced. The Commission does not have data on how much time is spent by staff on this game land, so there is no way to quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

A proposed amendment prohibits antlerless deer harvest during the first open Saturday of the deer with visible antlers season and aligns Needmore to the same antlered or antlerless season as

Nantahala Game Land. This will reduce the complexity of regulations between State and Federal game lands that have a shared boundary.

15A NCAC 10D .0293 YADKIN RIVER GAME LAND IN DAVIDSON, DAVIE, MONTGOMERY, ROWAN, AND STANLY COUNTIES (pg. 32)

The proposed amendment will change the gun antlered or antlerless season in the Montgomery County portions of the Yadkin River Game Land from moderate to maximum. This change will align the Montgomery County portion of the Yadkin River Game Land with the rest of the game land and align the antlered or antlerless season dates with surrounding private land seasons.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This proposed amendment is expected to have positive fiscal impacts on the agency, as the staff time and expenses required to enforce and maintain these areas will be reduced. The Commission does not have data on how much time is spent by staff on this game land, so, there is no way to quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment is expected to increase hunter participation, which may result in additional visitation to the area and increase revenues of local businesses. This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

The proposed amendment will reduce the complexity of antlered or antlerless harvest dates on the Yadkin River Game Land and deer hunters will have more opportunities to hunt on this portion of game land.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GAME LANDS:

15A NCAC 10D .0215 R. WAYNE BAILEY-CASWELL GAME LAND IN CASWELL COUNTY (pg. 22)

The proposed addition to this rule will establish a 4,830-acre portion of the R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land as the Caswell Small Game Focal Area (CSGFA). The CSGFA will be a permit only area for all quail and woodcock hunting and for rabbit and squirrel hunting outside the normal three days per week framework. Hunting for big game and small game, other than those previously mentioned, will still be allowed during the regular hunting days (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturday) without a permit.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Cost

This proposed addition is anticipated to have an estimated one-time cost to the agency of \$10,800 to establish the 50.33 mile perimeter boundary and interior roads of the new CSGFA. These areas are currently marked with signs and painted, but new signage will be needed to clearly post the defined area at a cost of approximately \$6,000 ($\$3/\text{sign} \times 2000 \text{ signs} = \$6,000$). Additional costs of \$4,800 ($\$30/\text{hr} \times 160 \text{ hours} = \$4,800$) are anticipated for staff time to remove the old signage and install the new signage. Game land boundaries are typically painted every five years and they were recently repainted making this rule change less labor intensive.

Benefit

Though this area of the Caswell Game Land is currently managed for small game hunting by permit only, the proposed addition is expected to draw more small game hunters to the game land by increasing small game hunting permit opportunities. Hunters pay \$8 plus a transaction fee for permits (transaction fees vary from \$4 to \$0 depending on the sales channel). In 2022-23, a similar area with two lottery hunts, one for rabbit and one for quail had 18 and 163 permit applications respectively, resulting in \$1,448 in permit fees ($\$8/\text{permit} \times 181 \text{ applications} = \$1,448$). Assuming an average \$2 transaction fee on each of those permit applications, the total agency revenue was \$1,810 ($\$1,448 + \$362 (\$2/\text{transaction} \times 181 \text{ applications} = \$362) = \$1,810$).

Due to the increased opportunities, the agency does anticipate some increased revenue because of this amendment. Unfortunately, because there is no way to know how many hunters will participate and the number of permits to be issued, there is no way to accurately quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed addition is expected to increase hunter participation, which may result in additional visitation to the area and increase revenues of local businesses. This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

This proposed addition will increase small game hunting opportunities on Caswell Game Land. This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

15A NCAC 10D .0294 NORTH BEND GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY (pg. 33)

The proposed rule will establish the North Bend Game Land and open it to hunting by permit only. The Commission acquired 1,225 acres from Duke Energy below Lake James in Burke County for the Game Land Program. The North Bend Game Land has proximity to multiple residences, portions of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, and the Fonta Flora Trail. North

Bend will provide unique, quality permit hunting opportunities, and serve user groups from surrounding municipalities such as Marion and Morganton.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Cost

The agency anticipates a one-time cost of approximately \$80,800 to establish the new game land. This will include boundary survey and markings (\$12,000), new access road (\$22,500), gates to control vehicle access (\$4,500), parking areas (\$40,000), and kiosks (\$1,800).

Benefit

The game land will provide revenue through permit hunts. Permits cost hunters \$8 plus a transaction fee (transaction fees vary from \$4 to \$0 depending on the sales channel). Though expected revenue can vary greatly in any given year, as many factors can influence the number of hunts and the interest in those hunts, based on similar game lands, the agency can likely anticipate at least \$330 (\$8/permit x 33 applications = \$264) (average \$2/transaction x 33 applications = \$66) (\$264 + 66 = \$330) in permit and transaction fees for permit hunts at this new game land.

Local Impact

Creating a new game land will likely increase the number of people visiting local businesses, which may result in an increase in the purchase of goods and services as they relate to needs of this user group (e.g., food, gas, camping supplies, etc.). Based on data collected on similar sized game lands in North Carolina, the State and local governments could see an increase in tax-based revenue at a minimum of \$25,000¹. The amount may vary, as each game land's tax-based revenue is specific to its location and size. The Commission is unable to give an exact estimate as tax-based revenue varies depending on activities allowed on the game lands, its proximity to local amenities, and its size.

Additionally, game lands have been shown to generate game land related expenditures. In 2018, a study conducted by N.C. State University estimated that North Carolina game lands received approximately 2.2 million visits. This evaluation estimates that these visits generated \$180 million in game land related expenditures (gross), contributing a net added value of \$140 million to the State's economic activity². This same study found that non-licensed activity users spent an average of \$119.83 per trip while hunters and anglers spent on average \$84.19 per trip.³

This game land is likely to increase home values in the area as well, increasing property tax revenue.

Private Impact

This game land will provide additional opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation. Game land users will have increased opportunities for wildlife-based recreation and 1,225 acres of

¹ Casola, William et.al. Determining Use, Economic Impacts and Value of Game Lands in North Carolina. October 2020.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

undeveloped land will be conserved. There is currently not a game land in this area of the State and wildlife and outdoor recreationists from surrounding municipalities can take advantage of this public land for hunting, hiking, and nature watching.

Adding an additional game land should bolster recreational activity. The value of game land access to recreationists can be assumed to be at least as much as they spend per trip, although there are additional benefits that are not captured in trip expenditures. This same study found that non-licensed activity users spent an average of \$119.83 per trip while hunters and anglers spent on average \$84.19 per trip.⁴

This game land is likely to increase home values in the area as well. It has been shown that game lands can either raise home values or decrease them. Researchers found that homes in the mountain and piedmont regions have the most increase in home values while homes at the coast had the most decrease.

The concept of willingness to pay (WTP) can provide a more comprehensive estimate of how much users value game lands, including those aesthetic, environmental, and inter-generational benefits that cannot be measured directly in the market through expenditures or home values. However, WTP values come with a greater degree of uncertainty. The estimates are sensitive to research methods used to elicit the values including the design and delivery of the contingent valuation exercise.

The study assessed users' WTP (one time) to conserve 20% of North Carolina's game lands. Values varied by user type. Non-licensed users valued the proposed conservation at \$130 compared to licensed users at \$120. Dual users that pursue both licensed and non-licensed activities valued game lands most highly at \$160. More detailed studies would be needed to determine WTP on an annual or per-acre basis for both users and non-users.

⁴ Ibid.

SUMMARY

Quantifiable Impacts

State

The following quantifiable costs to the State are anticipated:

- Use of Game Lands
 - Dover Bay Game Land
 - One-time signage change = \$0.90 + negligible staff time
 - North River Game Land
 - One-time observation tower construction and signage = \$5,100
- Establishment of Game Lands
 - Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land
 - One-time signage change = \$10,800
 - North Bend Game Land
 - One-time boundary survey and markings = \$12,000
 - One-time new access road = \$22,500
 - One-time access gates = \$4,500
 - One-time parking areas = \$40,000
 - One-time kiosks = \$1,800

The following quantifiable benefits to the State are anticipated:

- Hunting Season Changes
 - Dover Bay Game Land
 - Clean-up savings = \$816/year
 - Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land
 - Increase in license sales = at least \$1,810
 - North Bend Game Land
 - Increase in license sales = at least \$330

The total quantifiable costs to the State is estimated to be approximately \$96,700 in year one and the total quantifiable benefits to the State is estimated to be approximately \$2,956 annually.

Unquantifiable Impacts

The following unquantifiable costs were identified for the proposed rule changes:

State

- Allowing WLEOs to enforce the rule more effectively and provide a safe environment on game lands for all users has the potential to increase the amount of WLEOs staff time as

some of the cited individuals may go to court.

- Establishing a permit only on the North Bend Game Land will add additional ongoing costs associated with maintenance and enforcement, which will be comparable to other similarly-sized game land areas in the State.

Local

- Allowing WLEOs to enforce the rule more effectively and provide a safe environment on game lands for all users has the potential to increase expenses (case load) and revenues (court costs) for the local court system.

Private

- Prohibiting hunting while under the influence of additional impairing substances has the potential to increase out of pocket expenses for impaired hunters, which carries a fine of \$208 (\$25 plus \$183 in court costs).
- Prohibiting target shooting on Dover Bay Game Land may increase the distance target shooters will have to travel to target shoot at nearby ranges.
- Restricting the use of bicycles, except by hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the days of the seasons for game birds and game animals on Chatham, Harris, and Lee game lands will reduce the expenses incurred by Duke Energy to routinely rehabilitated unauthorized bike usage.
- Restricting the use of bicycles, except by hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the days of the seasons for game birds and game animals on Chatham, Harris, and Lee game lands will require bike riders to find new locations to recreate.
- Establishing a “Scouting-only Zone” on the North River Game Land for waterfowl impoundments to limit the disturbance to migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds will decrease the wildlife viewer’s choice of viewing areas, but the quality of their experience may improve.
- Restricting the number of consecutive days for camping will reduce the number of days an individual may hunt who stayed longer than the new limit in the past.

The following unquantifiable benefits were identified for the proposed rule changes:

State

- Prohibiting hunting while under the influence of additional impairing substances has the potential to increase revenue to public schools from citations (\$25/citation).
- Prohibiting target shooting on Dover Bay Game Land may help eliminate damage caused to live trees being used as targets.
- Restricting the use of bicycles, except by hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the days of the seasons for game birds and game animals on Chatham, Harris, and Lee game lands will reduce staff time required to address conflicts related to recreational bike riding during hunting seasons.
- Restricting the number of consecutive days one can camp will allow the Commission to have more control over camp site users and control misuse of these camp sites.
- Shifting the hunting season framework for Buffalo Cove, Kings Creek, and South Mountains

game lands to align with the western season, allowing the blackpowder season to begin the Saturday after Thanksgiving and run through January 1 will reduce staff time and expenses required to enforce and maintain these areas.

- Removing the one day introductory antlerless deer harvest during gun season on the Needmore Game Land and aligning with the seasons in other counties will reduce staff time and expenses required to enforce and maintain the game land.
- Changing the gun antlered or antlerless season in the Montgomery County portion of the Yadkin River Game Land will reduce staff time and expenses required to enforce and maintain these areas.
- Establishing the CSGFA for all quail and woodcock hunting and for rabbit and squirrel hunting outside the normal three days per week framework will increase opportunities and increase agency revenue.
- Establishing North Bend Game Land and opening it to hunting by permit will increase agency revenue and bring more hunters to the land.

Local

- Citations for hunting under the influence of impairing substances may increase county court caseloads but will also increase revenues by \$183 per citation (for court costs).
- Establishing North Bend Game Land and opening it to hunting by permit will increase non-traditional and traditional users per trip local revenues.
- Pursuant to G.S. 115C-452, any clear proceeds from penalties and fines would go to the local schools.

Private

- Prohibiting hunting under the influence of additional impairing substances may improve the safety of game land users.
- Prohibiting target shooting on Dover Bay Game Land will improve the safety for users of the game land.
- No bikers on Chatham, Harris, and Lee game lands will improve hunting experience and decrease and eventually eliminate cost of repairs and maintenance for landowner.
- Establishing a “Scouting-only Zone” on the North River Game Land for waterfowl impoundments to limit the disturbance to migrating and wintering waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds will increase the quality of waterfowl hunters experience.
- Shifting the hunting season framework for Buffalo Cove, Kings Creek, and South Mountains game lands will reduce the complexity for deer hunters, increase hunter participation during blackpowder season, and increase hunting opportunities as a result of adding days.
- Removing the one-day introductory antlerless deer harvest and aligning the Needmore Game Land will reduce the complexity for deer hunters. The additional six days of blackpowder antlered or antlerless above the one day currently provided, will increase opportunities for harvest.
- Changing the gun antlered or antlerless season in the Montgomery County portion of the Yadkin River Game Land will reduce the complexity of regulations and opportunities.
- Establishing a CSGFA for all quail and woodcock hunting and for rabbit and squirrel hunting outside the normal three days per week framework will increase quality of small game hunting opportunities.
- Establishing the North Bend Game Land will provide additional opportunities for hunting

and outdoor recreation.

While many of the impacts of the proposed amendments are unquantifiable, the Commission believes that ongoing benefits to both the State and local government, and private entities will outweigh the costs.

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0103 GENERAL REGULATIONS REGARDING HUNTING ON GAME LANDS**

2 (a) The following shall be prohibited on game lands:

- 3 (1) hunting on a designated game land while under the influence of ~~alcohol or a narcotic drug~~; an
- 4 impairing substance, as defined by G.S. 20-4.01(48b);
- 5 (2) failing to comply with restrictions enacted by the National Park Service regarding the use of the
- 6 Blue Ridge Parkway where it adjoins game lands;
- 7 (3) parking a vehicle on game lands in a manner that blocks traffic or gates, or prevents vehicles from
- 8 using a roadway; and
- 9 (4) erecting or occupying a tree stand or platform attached by nails, screws, bolts, or to a tree on a game
- 10 land to hunt. This prohibition does not apply to lag-screw steps or portable stands that are removed
- 11 after use with no metal remaining in or attached to the tree.

12 (b) Unless allowed by permit, hunting on game lands shall be during the open season for game animals and game

13 birds.

14 (c) Individual game lands or parts of game lands may be closed to hunting or limited to specific dates by this

15 Subchapter.

16 (d) Persons shall hunt with weapons lawful for the open game animal or game bird seasons.

17 (e) On managed waterfowl impoundments, persons shall:

- 18 (1) not enter the posted impoundment areas earlier than 4:00 a.m. on the permitted hunting dates;
- 19 (2) not hunt after 1:00 p.m. on the permitted hunting dates;
- 20 (3) not set decoys out prior to 4:00 a.m.;
- 21 (4) remove decoys by 3:00 p.m. daily; and
- 22 (5) not operate a vessel or vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine.

23 (f) On Sundays, the following shall be prohibited:

- 24 (1) hunting with a firearm between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.;
- 25 (2) the use of a firearm to take deer that are run or chased by dogs;
- 26 (3) hunting with a firearm within 500 yards of a place of religious worship, as defined by G.S. 14-
- 27 54.1(b), or an accessory structure thereof; and
- 28 (4) hunting migratory game birds.

29 (g) On designated Youth Waterfowl ~~Days~~ Days, the following shall apply:

- 30 (1) hunting on managed waterfowl impoundments shall be from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset;
- 31 (2) Subparagraphs (e)(1), (e)(3), and (e)(5) of this Rule; and
- 32 (3) youth may hunt on a game land and on an impoundment without a special hunt permit, including
- 33 permit-only areas, except where prohibited in Paragraph (a) of this Rule.

34 (h) On designated Veterans and Military Waterfowl Days veterans, as defined in 38 USC 101, and members of the

35 Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty other than for

36 training, with valid credentials may hunt on game lands and impoundments not designated as permit-only areas from

37 one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Subparagraphs (e)(1), (e)(3), and (e)(5) of this Rule shall apply.

1 (i) On waterfowl impoundments that have a posted "Scouting-only Zone," trapping during the trapping season and
2 waterfowl hunting on designated waterfowl hunting days are the activities allowed on the portion of the impoundment
3 outside of the posted "Scouting-only Zone."

4 (j) Definitions:

5 (1) For purposes of this Subchapter, "Dove Only Area" refers to a Game Land on which doves may be
6 taken and dove hunting is limited to Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, Thanksgiving Day,
7 Christmas Day, and New Year's Days within the federally-announced season.

8 (2) For purposes of this Subchapter, "Three Days per Week Area" refers to a Game Land on which
9 game may be taken during the open seasons and hunting is limited to Mondays, Wednesdays,
10 Saturdays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King Day, and New
11 Year's Days, except for game lands in this Rule that specifically allow hunting on Tuesdays,
12 Thursday, and Fridays. Hunting is not allowed on Christmas Day, Veterans Day, and New Year's
13 Day when these holidays fall on Sunday. Falconry may also be practiced on Sundays. These "open
14 days" also apply to antlerless deer hunting seasons listed for each game land. Raccoon and opossum
15 hunting may continue until 7:00 a.m. on Tuesdays, until 7:00 a.m. on Thursdays, and until midnight
16 on Saturdays.

17 (3) For purposes of this Subchapter, "Six Days per Week Area" refers to a Game Land on which game
18 may be taken on the open days of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday
19 during the open seasons. Falconry may be practiced on Sundays.

20 (4) For purposes of this Subchapter, "Seven Days per Week Area" refers to a Game Land on which
21 game may be taken during the open season on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays,
22 Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

23 (5) For purposes of this Subchapter, "Four Days per Week Area" refers to a Game Land on which game
24 may be taken during the open seasons and hunting is limited to Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays,
25 Sundays, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Martin Luther King Day.
26 Raccoon and opossum hunting may continue until 7:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, 7:00 a.m. on Fridays,
27 and 7:00 a.m. on Mondays.

28 (6) For purposes of this Subchapter, "Permit" means a written authorization from the Commission
29 required for take or other activities listed on the permit during open seasons, if applicable, in a
30 specified area and subject to annual limitations imposed by the Commission to meet wildlife, hunter,
31 or land management objectives, unless otherwise specified. Individuals may apply for available
32 permits online at ncwildlife.org, by phone, or in person at a wildlife service agent location. The
33 Commission shall issue permits to applicants selected at random by computer in accordance with
34 G.S. 113-264. Permits shall be non-transferrable. The laws and rules regarding the species or activity
35 shall apply.

36 (7) For the purposes of this Subchapter, "Either-Sex" means antlered or antlerless.

37 (k) Deer shall not be taken with the use of dogs on game lands in counties or parts of counties where taking deer with

- 1 dogs is prohibited as described in 15A NCAC 10B .0109.
- 2 (l) On permit hunts, ~~deer of either sex~~ antlered or antlerless deer may be taken on the hunt dates indicated on the
3 permit. Completed applications shall be received by the Commission not later than the first day of September next
4 preceding the dates of hunt. Permits shall be issued by random computer selection, shall be mailed to the permittees
5 prior to the hunt, and are nontransferable. A hunter making a kill shall validate the kill and report the kill to a wildlife
6 cooperator agent or by phone.
- 7 (m) The following game lands and refuges are closed to hunting except to individuals who have obtained a valid and
8 current permit from the Wildlife Resources Commission:
- 9 (1) Bertie, ~~Halifax~~ Halifax, and Martin counties—Roanoke River Wetlands;
10 (2) Bertie County—Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge;
11 (3) Bladen County—Suggs Mill Pond Game Lands;
12 (4) Dare County—Dare Game Lands (Those parts of bombing range posted against hunting);
13 (5) Dare County—Roanoke Sound Marshes Game Lands; and
14 (6) Henderson and Transylvania counties—DuPont State Forest Game Lands.
- 15 (n) Access to Hunting Creek Swamp Waterfowl Refuge in Davie County requires written permission from the
16 Commission. Written permission may be granted when entry onto the Waterfowl Refuge shall not compromise the
17 primary purpose for establishing the Waterfowl Refuge and the person requesting entry can demonstrate a valid need
18 or the person is a contractor or agent of the Commission conducting official business. "Valid need" includes issues of
19 access to private property, scientific investigations, surveys, or other access to conduct activities in the public interest.
- 20 (o) Feral swine may be taken by licensed hunters during the open season for a game animal or game bird using a legal
21 manner of take allowed during those seasons. Dogs may not be used to hunt feral swine except on game lands that
22 allow the use of dogs for hunting deer or bear, and during the open deer or bear season.
- 23 (p) The Commission may designate special hunts for participants of the disabled sportsman program by permit. The
24 Commission may schedule these permit hunts during the closed season. Hunt dates and species to be taken shall be
25 identified on the permit. If the hunt has a limited weapon choice, the allowed weapons shall be stated on the permit.
- 26 (q) As used in the rules of this Subchapter, horseback riding includes all equine species.
- 27 (r) When waterfowl hunting is authorized on Christmas and New Years' Day and those days fall on Sundays, the open
28 waterfowl hunting day shall be the following day.

29

30 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
31 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*
32 *Temporary Amendment Eff. October 3, 1991;*
33 *Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996; September 1, 1995; July 1, 1995; September*
34 *1, 1994; July 1, 1994;*
35 *Temporary Amendment Eff. October 1, 1999; July 1, 1999;*
36 *Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;*
37 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002; July 1, 2001;*

1 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (approved by RRC on 06/21/01 and 04/18/02);*
2 *Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;*
3 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17, 2003);*
4 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; May 1, 2015; August 1, 2014;*
5 *January 1, 2013; August 1, 2012; August 1, 2011; August 1, 2010; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2008; May*
6 *1, 2007; October 1, 2006; August 1, 2006; May 1, 2006; February 1, 2006; June 1, 2005; October*
7 *1, 2004;*
8 *Temporary Amendment Eff. August 1, 2018;*
9 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2020; August 1, 2019;*
10 *Temporary Amendment Eff. September 25, 2020;*
11 *Temporary Amendment Eff. August 1, 2021;*
12 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023; November 1, 2022; October 1, 2022; August 23, 2022.*
13

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0209 BUFFALO COVE GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES**

2 Buffalo Cove game land is a Seven Days per Week Area. The following shall apply:

- 3 (1) The Deer With Visible Antlers ~~season~~ Season for deer consists of the ~~open hunting days from the~~
4 ~~Monday before~~ begins on the Saturday after Thanksgiving Day through ~~the third Saturday after~~
5 ~~Thanksgiving.~~ January 1. ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery
6 equipment ~~on open days~~ beginning the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the ~~Sunday~~
7 ~~day~~ immediately preceding the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this rule ~~and the Sunday~~
8 ~~immediately following the closing of Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this rule through~~
9 ~~the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day.~~ ~~Deer with visible antlers may be taken with archery~~
10 ~~equipment the Sunday immediately following the closing of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season,~~
11 ~~as described in this Part, through January 1.~~ Rule. ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may
12 be taken with blackpowder firearms ~~on open days~~ beginning two Saturdays preceding the first day
13 of the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in this Rule ~~the Monday on or nearest~~
14 ~~October 1~~ through the ~~Saturday of the second week~~ Friday thereafter.
- 15 (2) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable
16 Deer With Visible Antlers Season.
- 17 (3) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31 and horseback
18 riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15.
- 19 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.

20
21 *History Note:* *Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
22 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*
23

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0215 R. WAYNE BAILEY-CASWELL GAME LAND IN CASWELL COUNTY**

2 (a) R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell is a Three Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

3 (1) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken from the first open day of the All Lawful Weapons Season
4 for Deer With Visible Antlers through the second Wednesday thereafter.

5 (2) Horseback riding, including all equine species, is allowed seven days per week from May 16 through
6 August 31, and on Sundays only, September 1 through May 15. Horseback riding is allowed on
7 roads opened to vehicular traffic and on those gated roads and trails that are posted for equestrian
8 use. People age 16 or older horseback riding on this game land shall possess a Game Lands license
9 as required by G.S. 270.3(b)(3).

10 ~~(3) The area encompassed by the following roads is permit only for quail and woodcock hunting and~~
11 ~~bird dog training: From Yanceyville south on NC 62 to the intersection of SR 1746, west on SR~~
12 ~~1746 to the intersection of SR 1156, south on SR 1156 to the intersection of SR 1783, east on SR~~
13 ~~1783 to the intersection of NC 62, north on NC 62 to the intersection of SR 1736, east on SR 1736~~
14 ~~to the intersection of SR 1730, east on SR 1730 to NC 86, north on NC 86 to NC 62.~~

15 ~~(4)~~(3) On the posted waterfowl impoundment, waterfowl hunting is by permit after November 1.

16 ~~(5)~~(4) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
17 14.

18 ~~(6)~~(5) Target shooting is prohibited, except at the R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Shooting Range.

19 (b) Hunting shall be by permit for the following species in the area posted as the Caswell Small Game Focal Area:

20 (1) quail and woodcock; and

21 (2) rabbit and squirrel on days outside of the three days per week framework.

22
23 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
24 *Eff. October 1, 2022;*
25 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*
26

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0216 CHATHAM GAME LAND IN CHATHAM COUNTY**

2 Chatham game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open day of the applicable Deer
4 With Visible Antlers Season through the second Friday thereafter.
- 5 (2) Horseback riding, including all equine species, is allowed seven days per week from May 16 through
6 August 31, and on Sundays only September 1 through May 15.
- 7 (3) The use of bicycles is restricted, except for hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the open
8 days of the seasons for game birds and game animals.
- 9 ~~(3)~~(4) Target shooting is prohibited.

10

11 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
12 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

13

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0225 DOVER BAY GAME LAND IN CRAVEN COUNTY**

2 (a) Dover Bay game land is a Six Days per Week Area.

3 (b) On this game land ~~deer of either sex~~ antlered or antlerless deer may be taken on the days of the applicable Deer

4 With Visible Antlers ~~season.~~ Season.

5 (c) Target shooting is prohibited.

6

7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

8 *Eff. November 1, 2022.*

9

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0233 HARRIS GAME LAND IN CHATHAM, HARNETT, AND WAKE COUNTIES**

2 Harris game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open day of the applicable Deer
4 With Visible Antlers Season through the second Friday thereafter.
- 5 (2) Waterfowl on posted waterfowl impoundments may be taken on the following days:
6 (a) the opening and closing days of the applicable waterfowl seasons;
7 (b) Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Days; and
8 (c) Tuesdays and Saturdays of the applicable waterfowl season.
- 9 (3) The use or construction of permanent hunting blinds shall be prohibited.
- 10 (4) Wild turkey hunting is by permit only, except on those areas posted as an archery zone.
- 11 ~~(5) Target shooting is prohibited.~~
- 12 (5) The use of bicycles is restricted, except for hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the open
13 days of the seasons for game birds and game animals.
- 14 (6) Horseback riding is prohibited.
- 15 (7) Target shooting is prohibited.

16

17 *History Note:* Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;

18 Eff. October 1, 2022

19

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0243 KINGS CREEK GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES**

2 Kings Creek game land is a Six Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) The Deer With Visible Antlers ~~season~~ Season for deer consists of the open hunting days from the
4 ~~Monday Saturday before~~ after Thanksgiving Day through ~~the third Saturday after Thanksgiving,~~
5 January 1. Deer of either sex Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment on
6 open days beginning the Saturday on or nearest September 10 ~~to~~ through the ~~third Saturday~~
7 ~~thereafter, and Monday on or nearest October 15 to the Saturday before Thanksgiving Day. day~~
8 immediately preceding the Black powder Firearms Season described in the Rule. Deer with visible
9 ~~antlers may be taken with archery equipment the Monday immediately following the closing of the~~
10 ~~Deer With Visible Antlers Season, as described in this Part, through January 1. Deer of either sex~~
11 Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with blackpowder firearms on open days beginning the
12 ~~Monday on or nearest October 1~~ two Saturdays preceding the first day of the open season for Deer
13 With Visible Antlers described in this Rule through the ~~Saturday of the second week~~ Friday
14 thereafter.
- 15 (2) ~~Deer of either sex Antlered or antlerless deer~~ may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable
16 Deer With Visible Antlers Season.

17
18 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
19 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*
20

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0245 LEE GAME LAND IN LEE COUNTY**

2 Lee game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open day of the applicable Deer
4 With Visible Antlers Season through the second Friday thereafter.
- 5 (2) The use of bicycles is restricted, except for hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the open
6 days of the seasons for game birds and game animals.
- 7 ~~(2)~~(3) Target shooting is prohibited.

8

9 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

10 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

11

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0252 NEEDMORE GAME LAND IN MACON AND SWAIN COUNTIES**

2 Needmore game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31, and all
4 horseback riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15.
- 5 (2) On posted dove fields, dove hunting on the opening day of dove season is by permit only.
- 6 (3) No antlerless deer may be taken during the first open Saturday of the Deer With Visible Antlers
7 season on Needmore Game Land.

8

9 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

10 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

11

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0256 NORTH RIVER GAME LAND IN CAMDEN AND CURRITUCK COUNTIES**

2 North River game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

3 (1) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken all the open days of the applicable Deer
4 With Visible Antlers Season.

5 (2) The boundary of the Game Land shall extend five yards from the edge of the marsh or shoreline.

6 (3) Hunting on the posted waterfowl impoundment is by permit.

7 (4) During the period November 1 through March 15, all activities, except waterfowl hunting and
8 trapping during the trapping season on North River Game Land Waterfowl Impoundments, are
9 restricted to the posted Scouting-only Zone.

10 ~~(4)~~(5) Bear shall not be harvested on Sunday.

11

12 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

13 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

14

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0276 SOUTH MOUNTAINS GAME LAND IN BURKE, CLEVELAND, MCDOWELL,**
2 **AND RUTHERFORD COUNTIES**

3 South Mountains game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 4 (1) The Deer With Visible Antlers ~~season~~ Season for deer begins on the Saturday after ~~consists of the~~
5 ~~open hunting days from the Monday before~~ Thanksgiving Day through ~~the third Saturday after~~
6 ~~Thanksgiving, January 1. Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery
7 equipment ~~on open days~~ beginning the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the ~~Sunday~~
8 ~~day~~ immediately preceding the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this ~~rule and the Sunday~~
9 ~~immediately following the closing of Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this rule through~~
10 ~~the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day. Deer with visible antlers may be taken with archery~~
11 ~~equipment the Sunday immediately following the closing of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season,~~
12 ~~as described in this Part, through January 1. Rule. Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may
13 be taken with blackpowder firearms ~~on open days~~ beginning ~~the Monday on or nearest October 1~~
14 ~~two Saturdays preceding the first day of the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in~~
15 ~~this Rule through the Saturday of the second week~~ Friday thereafter.
16 (2) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable
17 Deer With Visible Antlers Season.
18 (3) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails during the following dates:
19 (a) January 2 through March 31;
20 (b) May 16 through August 31;
21 (c) Sundays only - April 1 through May 15; and
22 (d) Sundays only - September 1 through January 1.
23 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.
24 (5) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
25 14 in areas both designated and posted as camping areas.
26 (6) The maximum period of consecutive overnight camping at any posted and designated camping area
27 is 14 days within any 30-day period.

28
29 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
30 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0283 THURMOND CHATHAM GAME LAND IN ALLEGHANY AND WILKES**
2 **COUNTIES**

3 Thurmond Chatham game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 4 (1) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open day of the applicable Deer
5 With Visible Antlers Season through the second Friday thereafter.
- 6 (2) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31, and all
7 horseback riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15. People age 16 or older horseback
8 riding on this game land shall possess a Game Lands license as required by G.S. 270.3(b)(3).
- 9 (3) ~~The maximum period of consecutive overnight camping at any designated campground is 14 days~~
10 ~~within any 30-day period from May 1 through August 31. After 14 consecutive days of camping all~~
11 ~~personal belongings must be removed from the game land. Camping is restricted to September 1~~
12 ~~through the last day of February; and March 31 through May 14.~~

13
14 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
15 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*
16

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0293 YADKIN RIVER GAME LAND IN DAVIDSON, DAVIE, MONTGOMERY,**
2 **ROWAN, AND STANLY COUNTIES**

3 Yadkin River game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 4 (1) ~~Deer of either sex Antlered or antlerless deer~~ may be taken ~~the first open day of the applicable Deer~~
5 ~~With Visible Antlers Season through the second Friday thereafter in that portion in Montgomery~~
6 ~~county, and deer of either sex may be taken all~~ on the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible
7 Antlers ~~Season in those portions in Davidson, Davie, Rowan, and Stanly counties.~~ Season.
8 (2) On the Lick Creek Tract, deer and bear hunting is archery only.

9
10 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
11 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0294 NORTH BEND GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY**

2 North Bend game land is hunting by permit only. The following shall apply:

- 3 (1) The use of bicycles is restricted to designated trails, except for hunters engaged in the act of hunting
4 during the open days of the seasons for game birds and game animals.
- 5 (2) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February; and March 31 through May
6 14.
- 7 (3) Horseback riding is prohibited.
- 8 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.

9

10 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

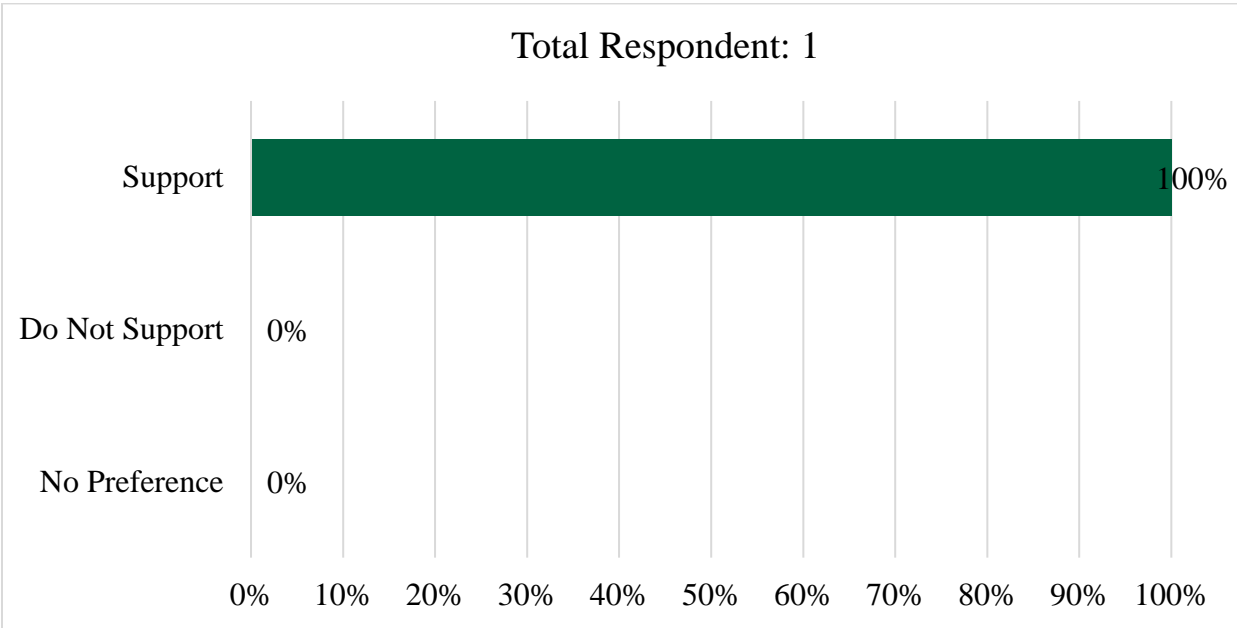
11

EXHIBIT I-1

June 6, 2024



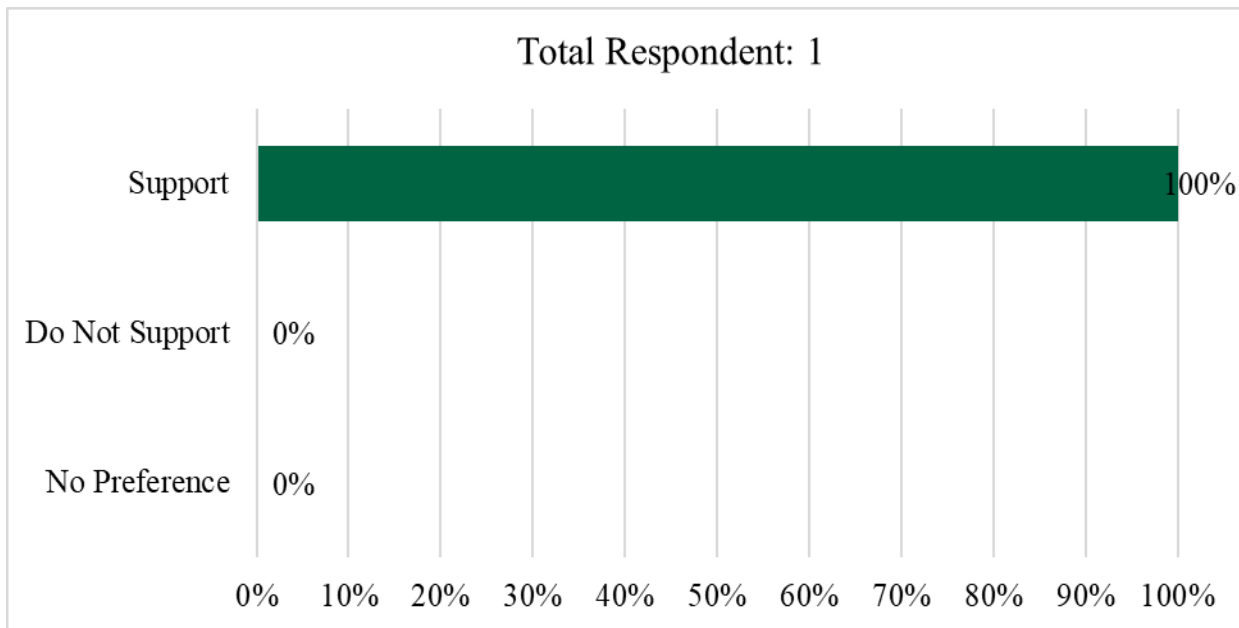
Summary of Public Comments on Proposed Temporary Amendments to Buffalo Cove Game Land in Caldwell and Wilkes Counties Rule 15A NCAC 10D .0209



District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	NC - Not Specified	Out of State	Totals
Support	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Do Not Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Preference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1



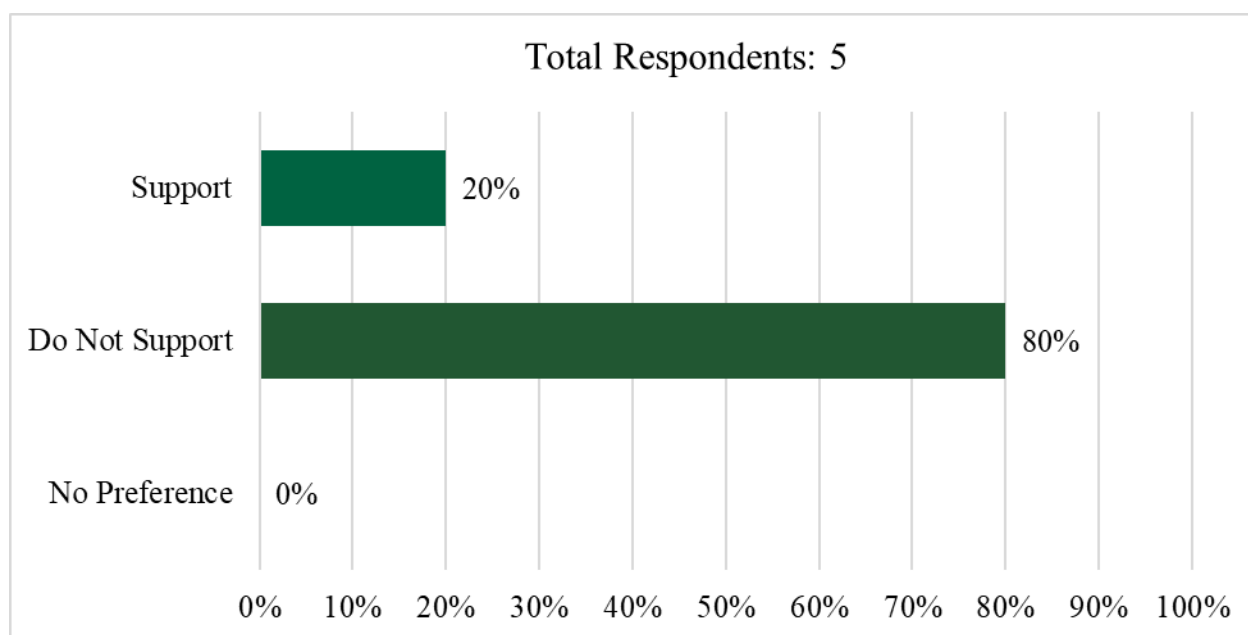
**Summary of Public Comments on
Proposed Temporary Amendments to Kings Creek Game Land in Caldwell
and Wilkes Counties Rule
15A NCAC 10D .0243**



District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	NC - Not Specified	Out of State	Totals
Support	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Do Not Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Preference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1



**Summary of Public Comments on
Proposed Temporary Amendments to South Mountains Game Land in Burke,
Cleveland, McDowell, and Rutherford Counties Rule
15A NCAC 10D .0276**



District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	NC - Not Specified	Out of State	Totals
Support	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Do Not Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
No Preference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	5

One public hearing was held on May 14, 2024.

EXHIBIT I-2

June 6, 2024



Proposed Temporary Amendments to Land and Water Access Rules for 2024-2025 Deer Season Recommended by Agency Staff for Adoption

Buffalo Cove, South Mountains, and Kings Creek Game Lands all have acreage in both the western and northwestern deer zones. The current deer season framework for these game lands is consistent with the western season. Changes to the deer rule were adopted as part of the 2024-2025 Annual Cycle, shifting the western blackpowder and gun season to allow the blackpowder season to begin two Saturdays before Thanksgiving and run for two weeks, and the gun season to begin the Saturday after Thanksgiving and run until January 1.

15A NCAC 10D .0209 BUFFALO COVE GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES

15A NCAC 10D .0243 KINGS CREEK GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES

15A NCAC 10D .0276 SOUTH MOUNTAINS GAME LAND IN BURKE, CLEVELAND, MCDOWELL, AND RUTHERFORD COUNTIES

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0209 BUFFALO COVE GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES**

2 Buffalo Cove game land is a Seven Days per Week Area. The following shall apply:

- 3 (1) The Deer With Visible Antlers ~~season~~ Season for deer consists of the ~~open hunting days from the~~
4 ~~Monday before~~ begins on the Saturday after Thanksgiving Day through ~~the third Saturday after~~
5 ~~Thanksgiving.~~ January 1. ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery
6 equipment ~~on open days~~ beginning the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the ~~Sunday~~
7 ~~day~~ immediately preceding the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this rule ~~and the Sunday~~
8 ~~immediately following the closing of Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this rule through~~
9 ~~the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day.~~ ~~Deer with visible antlers may be taken with archery~~
10 ~~equipment the Sunday immediately following the closing of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season,~~
11 ~~as described in this Part, through January 1.~~ Rule. ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may
12 be taken with blackpowder firearms ~~on open days~~ beginning two Saturdays preceding the first day
13 of the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in this Rule ~~the Monday on or nearest~~
14 ~~October 1~~ through the ~~Saturday of the second week~~ Friday thereafter.
- 15 (2) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable
16 Deer With Visible Antlers Season.
- 17 (3) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31 and horseback
18 riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15.
- 19 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.

20
21 *History Note:* *Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
22 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*
23

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0243 KINGS CREEK GAME LAND IN CALDWELL AND WILKES COUNTIES**

2 Kings Creek game land is a Six Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) The Deer With Visible Antlers ~~season~~ Season for deer consists of the open hunting days from the
4 ~~Monday Saturday before~~ after Thanksgiving Day through ~~the third Saturday after Thanksgiving,~~
5 January 1. Deer of either sex Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment on
6 open days beginning the Saturday on or nearest September 10 ~~to~~ through the ~~third Saturday~~
7 ~~thereafter, and Monday on or nearest October 15 to the Saturday before Thanksgiving Day. day~~
8 immediately preceding the Black powder Firearms Season described in the Rule. Deer with visible
9 ~~antlers may be taken with archery equipment the Monday immediately following the closing of the~~
10 ~~Deer With Visible Antlers Season, as described in this Part, through January 1. Deer of either sex~~
11 Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with blackpowder firearms on open days beginning the
12 ~~Monday on or nearest October 1~~ two Saturdays preceding the first day of the open season for Deer
13 With Visible Antlers described in this Rule through the ~~Saturday of the second week~~ Friday
14 thereafter.
- 15 (2) ~~Deer of either sex Antlered or antlerless deer~~ may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable
16 Deer With Visible Antlers Season.

17
18 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
19 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*
20

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0276 SOUTH MOUNTAINS GAME LAND IN BURKE, CLEVELAND, MCDOWELL,**
2 **AND RUTHERFORD COUNTIES**

3 South Mountains game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 4 (1) The Deer With Visible Antlers ~~season~~ Season for deer begins on the Saturday after ~~consists of the~~
5 ~~open hunting days from the Monday before~~ Thanksgiving Day through ~~the third Saturday after~~
6 ~~Thanksgiving, January 1. Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery
7 equipment ~~on open days~~ beginning the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the ~~Sunday~~
8 ~~day~~ immediately preceding the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this ~~rule and the Sunday~~
9 ~~immediately following the closing of Blackpowder Firearms Season described in this rule through~~
10 ~~the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day. Deer with visible antlers may be taken with archery~~
11 ~~equipment the Sunday immediately following the closing of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season,~~
12 ~~as described in this Part, through January 1. Rule. Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may
13 be taken with blackpowder firearms ~~on open days~~ beginning ~~the Monday on or nearest October 1~~
14 ~~two Saturdays preceding the first day of the open season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in~~
15 ~~this Rule through the Saturday of the second week~~ Friday thereafter.
- 16 (2) ~~Deer of either sex~~ Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable
17 Deer With Visible Antlers Season.
- 18 (3) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails during the following dates:
- 19 (a) January 2 through March 31;
- 20 (b) May 16 through August 31;
- 21 (c) Sundays only - April 1 through May 15; and
- 22 (d) Sundays only - September 1 through January 1.
- 23 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.
- 24 (5) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
25 14 in areas both designated and posted as camping areas.
- 26 (6) The maximum period of consecutive overnight camping at any posted and designated camping area
27 is 14 days within any 30-day period.

28
29 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
30 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

EXHIBIT J-1

June 6, 2024



Proposed Amendments to Land and Water Access Rules for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Recommended by Agency Staff for Public Notice, Comment, and Presentation at Public Hearing

Use of Game Lands

1. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Prohibit target shooting on the Cold Mountain Game Land in Haywood County.

Justification:

Opportunities currently exist for target shooting at alternative sites appropriately constructed and monitored to provide a safe environment for participants. The Wayne E. Smith/Cold Mountain Shooting Range located on the Cold Mountain Game Land is within a 30-50-mile radius. This change is consistent with other game lands where target shooting is prohibited within an acceptable radius of shooting ranges and would limit potential issues of unsafe target shooting practices or conflict between game land user groups. The exclusion of this prohibition in rule was an oversight following the construction of the shooting range.

15A NCAC 10D .0219 COLD MOUNTAIN GAME LAND IN HAYWOOD COUNTY (Pg. 4)

2. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Add Bates-Bay River Tract, in Pamlico County, to the Goose Creek Game Land Program. Hunting for deer, bear, and turkey will be by permit only.

Justification:

This 407-acre tract is made of several small parcels with residential homes on multiple sides. By enrolling this new land into the Special Permit Hunt Opportunity Program for deer, bear, and turkey, we are limiting the chance for negative interactions between hunters and the homeowners, while also offering high-quality hunting opportunities for successful applicants.

15A NCAC 10D .0229 GOOSE CREEK GAME LAND IN BEAUFORT AND PAMLICO COUNTIES (Pg. 5)

3. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Distinguish the two waterfowl impoundments on the Gull Rock Game Land. Name the impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract, the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment. Name the impoundment on the new Willow Point Tract (aka Spencer Bay), the Willow Point Waterfowl Impoundment. Hunting on the Willow Point Impoundment will be by permit only.

Justification:

The State is acquiring the Spencer Bay Tract to be added to the Gull Rock Game Land. This tract has a 214-acre waterfowl impoundment and is proposed to be permit only. To reduce confusion, aid in enforcement, and to maintain the hunting framework on the impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract, the proposal seeks to name the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract in rule. The impoundment is already named on NCWRC maps.

The Willow Point Tract is a new acquisition with a 214-acre waterfowl impoundment to be incorporated into the Gull Rock Game Land. The impoundment lies within a marsh peninsula between the confluence of the Pungo and Pamlico rivers, and Spencer Bay. The impoundment is a featureless expansion subject to overhunting if open to the framework established for the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract of Gull Rock Game Land. Permitting access to this impoundment will limit disturbances while promoting a higher quality waterfowl hunting experience.

15A NCAC 10D .0232 GULL ROCK GAME LAND IN HYDE COUNTY (Pg. 6)

4. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

During the open days of the seasons for game birds and game animals, restrict the use of bicycles on Johns River Game Land in Burke County to hunters engaged in the act of hunting.

Justification:

Johns River Game Land offers quality hunting experiences by permit only, and disabled and youth hunts occur here throughout the season. Most blinds and wildlife openings are located along interior access roads which increases accessibility. However, it is along these same roads where bicycling occurs and is allowed 7 days per week. The game land has proximity to several large municipalities, numerous access roads, and gentle topography, making it a convenient destination for hikers, bicyclists, dog walkers, and other non-licensed users. An increase in this type of usage is starting to generate conflict among user groups and compromise user experience.

Restricting bicycles from these areas during open hunting seasons for game birds and game animals will increase public safety and alleviate user conflicts.

15A NCAC 10D .0239 JOHNS RIVER GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY (Pg. 7)

5. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Restrict access on the Lantern Acres Game Land posted waterfowl impoundments to permitted hunters only, to reduce disturbance to waterfowl during open waterfowl hunting seasons.

Justification:

In 2007, two waterfowl impoundments were created to provide habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds, and for the public waterfowl hunting opportunities. To provide for quality hunts, turkey hunting, and waterfowl hunting on the posted waterfowl impoundments is by permit only. Hunting outside of the impoundments does not require a special hunt permit.

The posted waterfowl impoundments offer excellent turkey and quail nesting habitat in spring and summer. Both turkey hunters and deer hunters hunt the impoundments prior to flooding for the waterfowl season. Once the impoundments are flooded, deer, and bear hunters primarily stay on the dikes and trails.

In contrast to the limited disturbances deer and bear hunters have on waterfowl, woodcock and snipe hunting have a tremendous negative impact on waterfowl use. Most waterfowl species do not tolerate human presence and will flee the area when disturbed.

The current rule allows all hunters to access the impoundments 6-days per week. This unrestricted use occurs on days prior to and during the permitted waterfowl hunts. This flushes waterfowl from the impoundments and is in opposition to the quality waterfowl hunting experience that the NCWRC wants to offer.

15A NCAC 10D .0244 LANTERN ACRES GAME LAND IN TYRRELL AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES (Pg. 8)

6. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Expand the Little Fork State Forest Game Land from a Three Days per Week Area to a Six Days per week Area.

Justification:

The North Carolina Forest Service requested the expansion of the game land from a Three Days per Week to a Six Days per Week Area due to its proximity to the educational forest.

15A NCAC 10D .0263 LITTLE FORK STATE FOREST GAME LAND IN WILKES COUNTY (Pg. 9)

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0219 COLD MOUNTAIN GAME LAND IN HAYWOOD COUNTY**

2 Cold Mountain game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31 and all
4 horseback riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15.
- 5 (2) Deer of either sex may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
6 Season.
- 7 (3) Target shooting is prohibited.

8

9 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

10 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

11

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0229 GOOSE CREEK GAME LAND IN BEAUFORT AND PAMLICO COUNTIES**

2 Goose Creek game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken on all the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
4 Season.
- 5 (2) Except as provided in 15A NCAC 10D .0103(d)(2), waterfowl in posted waterfowl impoundments
6 shall be taken only on the following days:
 - 7 (a) the opening and closing days of the applicable waterfowl seasons;
 - 8 (b) Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Days; and
 - 9 (c) Tuesdays and Saturdays of the applicable waterfowl seasons.
- 10 (3) Beginning on the first open waterfowl season day in October through the end of all waterfowl
11 seasons, waterfowl hunting is by permit only on the following waterfowl impoundments: Pamlico
12 Point, Campbell Creek, Hunting Creek, Spring Creek, Smith Creek, and Hobucken.
- 13 (4) On Spring Lake, Pamlico Point, and Campbell Creek Waterfowl Impoundments, all activities,
14 except waterfowl hunting on designated waterfowl hunting days and trapping during the trapping
15 season, are restricted to the posted Scouting-only Zone during the period November 1 through
16 March 15.
- 17 (5) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
18 14 in areas both designated and posted as camping areas.
- 19 (6) Hunting and vehicular access on the Parker Farm Tract is restricted from September 1 through
20 January 1 and April 1 through May 15 to individuals that possess a valid hunting opportunity permit.
- 21 (7) Pursuing or chasing deer or bear with dogs for the purposes of training or hunting is prohibited on
22 the Beaufort County portion north of NC 33 except for that portion east of Smith Creek and south
23 of Campbell Creek.
- 24 (8) Bear shall not be harvested on Sunday.
- 25 (9) Hunting for deer, bear, and turkey on the Bates-Bay Tract is by permit only.

26
27 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
28 *Temporary Adoption Eff. December 1, 2022;*
29 *Eff. March 15, 2023.*

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0232 GULL ROCK GAME LAND IN HYDE COUNTY**

2 Gull Rock is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken all the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
4 Season.
- 5 (2) Waterfowl on ~~posted waterfowl impoundments~~ the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Impoundment
6 shall be taken only on the following days:
7 (a) the opening and closing days of the applicable waterfowl seasons;
8 (b) Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Days; and
9 (c) Tuesdays and Saturdays of the applicable waterfowl season.
- 10 (3) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
11 14 in areas designated and posted as camping areas.
- 12 (4) Bear may only be taken the first Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday of the November Bear Season and
13 the second Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday of the December Bear Season.
- 14 (5) Waterfowl hunting on posted waterfowl impoundments on the Willow Point tract is by permit only.

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16 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
17 *Eff. October 1, 2022;*
18 *Temporary Amendment Eff. December 1, 2022;*
19 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2023.*
20

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0239 JOHNS RIVER GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY**

2 Johns River game land is hunting by permit only. The following shall apply:

- 3 (1) During permitted deer hunts, antlered or antlerless deer may be taken by permit holders.
- 4 (2) The construction of permanent hunting blinds is prohibited.
- 5 (3) Camping is restricted to August 31 through the last day of February and March 31 through May 14.
- 6 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.
- 7 (5) During the open days of the seasons for game birds and game animals, the use of bicycles is
- 8 restricted to hunters engaged in the act of hunting.

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10 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
11 *Eff. October 1, 2022;*
12 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*
13

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0244 LANTERN ACRES GAME LAND IN TYRRELL AND WASHINGTON**
2 **COUNTIES**

3 Lantern Acres game land is a Six Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 4 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken on all the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
5 Season.
- 6 (2) Wild turkey hunting is by permit only.
- 7 (3) The use of dogs for hunting deer on the Godley Tract is prohibited.
- 8 ~~(4) Waterfowl hunting on posted waterfowl impoundments is by permit only.~~
- 9 (4) Hunting on posted waterfowl impoundments from October 1 through February 14 is by permit only.

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11 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
12 *Eff. November 1, 2022.*

13

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0263 LITTLE FORK STATE FOREST GAME LAND IN WILKES COUNTY**

2 Little Fork State Forest game land is a ~~Three~~ Six Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken the first open day of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
4 Season through the ~~second Wednesday~~ first Friday thereafter.
5 (2) Bear hunting is prohibited.

6
7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
8 *Eff. November 1, 2022;*
9 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*

10

EXHIBIT J-2

June 6, 2024



Fiscal Note for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Rule Proposals Wildlife Resources Commission - Land and Water Access

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10D .0219 COLD MOUNTAIN GAME LAND IN HAYWOOD COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0229 GOOSE CREEK GAME LAND IN BEAUFORT AND PAMLICO
COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0232 GULL ROCK GAME LAND IN HYDE COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0239 JOHNS RIVER GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY
15A NCAC 10D .0244 LANTERN ACRES GAME LAND IN TYRRELL AND WASHINGTON
COUNTIES
15A NCAC 10D .0263 LITTLE FORK STATE FOREST GAME LANCE IN WILKES COUNTY

Agency Contact: Melva Bonner
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Fiscal Impact: State Government: Yes
Local Government: Yes
Private Impact: Yes
Substantial Economic Impact: No

Authority: G.S. 113-134; 113:264; 113-291.2; 113:291.5; 113-296; 113-305

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.

The proposed rule changes will modify the use of game lands, some will increase outdoor recreation opportunities, while others are expected to restrict such opportunities. A summary of the proposed rule amendments is shown below, with the full rule text included in Appendix A.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY CATEGORY AND RULE

USE OF GAME LANDS:

15A NCAC 10D .0219 COLD MOUNTAIN GAME LAND IN HAYWOOD COUNTY (pg. 10)

The proposed amendment prohibits target shooting on Cold Mountain Game Land in Haywood County. The exclusion of this prohibition was an oversight following the construction of the shooting range.

Opportunities currently exist for target shooting at alternative sites appropriately constructed and monitored to provide a safe environment for target shooters. The Wayne E. Smith/Cold Mountain Shooting Range located on the Cold Mountain Game Land is within a 30- to 50-mile radius. This change is consistent with other game lands where target shooting is prohibited within an acceptable radius of shooting ranges and would limit potential issues of unsafe target shooting practices or conflict between game land user groups.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Cost

Agency staff are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the game lands. Individuals target shooting on game lands regularly leave broken glass, plastic bottles, paper, and steel cans on the property, which must be cleaned up by staff. Game lands staff typically clean frequented target shooting areas at each game land three times per year. Assuming 100% compliance with the proposed amendment, prohibiting this activity is projected to save the agency approximately \$816/year in staff time (\$34/hr x 8 hours/clean up x 3 clean-ups/year = \$816). Additional signage will be needed at the game land kiosk to indicate that target shooting is not allowed. Staff will post signage as part of their regular duties. New signage will cost the agency approximately \$0.90 (\$0.90/sign x 1 sign).

Benefit

Targets on game lands are often placed on trees in the area, many of which have been damaged to the point that mortality has already occurred or is imminent. This proposed amendment should prohibit the damage caused to live trees. The agency has no way to quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impacts.

Private Impact

Cost

The proposed amendment could affect private individuals who want to target shoot, as they will now have to travel to a shooting range. Depending on where the individual is traveling from, this could impose an additional financial burden. There is no way to quantify this impact.

Benefit

Prohibiting target shooting will improve safety for both target shooters and other users of the game lands. The agency has no way to quantify this benefit.

15A NCAC 10D .0229 GOOSE CREEK GAME LAND IN BEAUFORT AND PAMLICO COUNTIES (pg. 11)

This proposed amendment will add the Bates-Bay River Tract, in Pamlico County, to the Goose Creek Game Land. This 407-acre tract is made of several small parcels with residential homes on multiple sides. Hunting on this tract for deer, bear, and turkey will be by permit only.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Cost

The proposed addition is anticipated to have an estimated one-time cost to the agency of approximately \$18,142. This will include boundary survey and markings (\$7,392), gates to control vehicle access (\$750) and parking areas (\$10,000).

Benefit

The new addition will provide revenue through permit hunts. Permit applications cost hunters \$8 plus a transaction fee (transaction fees vary from \$0 to \$4 depending on the sales channel). Though expected revenue can vary greatly in any given year, as many factors can influence the number of hunts and the interest in those hunts, based on similar game lands, the agency can likely anticipate at least \$1,000 ($\$8/\text{permit} \times 100 \text{ applications} = \800) (average $\$2/\text{transaction} \times 100 \text{ applications} = \200) ($\$800 + 200 = \$1,000$) in permit and transaction fees for permit hunts at this new addition.

Local Impact

Adding additional permit hunt opportunities will likely increase the number of people visiting

local businesses, which may result in an increase in the purchase of goods and services as they relate to needs of this user group (e.g., food, gas, camping supplies, etc.). This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

Cost

The proposed amendment would impact hunters who choose to hunt in the Bates-Bay River Tract, as they will have to purchase a permit for the hunt opportunity. Permit applications cost \$8 plus a transaction fee (up to \$4).

Benefit

The new addition will provide additional opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation. Game land users will have increased opportunities for wildlife-based recreation and 407 acres of land will be conserved.

By enrolling this new area into the Special Permit Hunt Opportunity Program for deer, bear, and turkey, the agency is limiting the chances of negative interactions between hunters and homeowners, while also offering high-quality hunting opportunities for successful applicants. Additionally, an increased user presence may provide increased revenue for local businesses. There is no way to quantify this impact.

15A NCAC 10D .0232 GULL ROCK GAME LAND IN HYDE COUNTY (pg. 12)

Distinguish the two waterfowl impoundments on the Gull Rock Game Land. Name the impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract, the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment, and name the impoundment on the new Willow Point Tract (aka Spencer Bay), the Willow Point Waterfowl Impoundment. Hunting on the Willow Point Impoundment will be by permit only.

To reduce confusion, aid in enforcement, and to maintain the hunting framework on the impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract, the proposal seeks to name the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract in rule. The impoundment is already named on WRC maps.

The Willow Point Tract is a new acquisition with a 214-acre waterfowl impoundment to be incorporated into the Gull Rock Game Land and is proposed to be permit only. The impoundment lies within a marsh peninsula between the confluence of the Pungo and Pamlico rivers, and Spencer Bay. The impoundment is a featureless expansion subject to overhunting if open to the framework established for the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract of Gull Rock Game Land. Permitting access to this impoundment will limit disturbances while promoting a higher quality waterfowl hunting experience.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Cost

The proposed addition is anticipated to have an estimated one-time cost to the agency of approximately \$8,850. This will include boundary survey and markings (\$7,050) and a kiosk (\$1,800).

Renaming the impoundment on the Outfall Canal Tract, the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment, is anticipated to have an estimated cost of \$0.90 (\$0.90/sign x 1 sign). Conservation technicians will put up signage as part of their regular duties.

Benefit

The Willow Point Tract will provide revenue through permit hunts. Permit applications cost hunters \$8 plus a transaction fee (transaction fees vary from \$0 to \$4 depending on the sales channel). Though expected revenue can vary greatly in any given year, as many factors can influence the number of hunts and the interest in those hunts, based on similar game lands, the agency can likely anticipate at least \$500 ($\$8/\text{permit} \times 50 \text{ applications} = \400) (average $\$2/\text{transaction} \times 50 \text{ applications} = \100) ($\$400 + 100 = \500) in permit and transaction fees for permit hunts at this new addition.

Local Impact

Adding additional permit hunt opportunities will likely increase the number of people visiting local businesses, which may result in an increase in the purchase of goods and services as they relate to needs of this user group (e.g., food, gas, camping supplies, etc.). This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

Cost

The proposed amendment will impact hunters that choose to hunt in these areas, as they will have to purchase a permit for the hunt opportunity. Permit applications cost \$8 plus transaction fee (up to \$4).

Benefit

With the expansion of the Gull Rock Game Land, waterfowl hunters will have increased opportunities for quality waterfowl hunts.

15A NCAC 10D .0239 JOHNS RIVER GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY (pg. 13)

The proposed amendment will restrict the use of bicycles during the open days of the seasons for game birds and game animals on Johns River Game Land in Burke County. The limitation will not apply to hunters engaged in the act of hunting during open days of the applicable seasons.

Johns River Game Land offers quality hunting experiences by permit only, and disabled and youth hunts also occur here throughout the season. Most blinds and wildlife openings are located along interior access roads which increases accessibility. However, it is along these same roads where bicycling occurs and is allowed 7 days per week. The game land has proximity to several large municipalities, numerous access roads, and gentle topography, making it a convenient destination for hikers, bicyclists, dog walkers, and other non-licensed users. An increase in this type of use is starting to generate conflict among user groups and compromise user experience.

Restricting bicycles during the open seasons will increase public safety, prevent the harassment of wildlife, and alleviate user conflicts.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed amendment may benefit the agency by reducing staff time required to address conflicts related to bikers using trails during hunting seasons. The Commission does not have data on how much time is spent by staff on this game land, so there is no way to quantify this benefit.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Cost

The proposed amendment will impact bike riders currently using this game land during open hunting seasons, as they will need to find new locations to recreate. However, the Wilderness Gateway State Trail has plans for a section of trail to be built on Johns River Game Land, and the Pisgah National Forest, Lake James State Park, Catawba River Greenway, Oak Hill Community Park, Valdese Lakeside Park, and other public areas nearby offer numerous bicycling opportunities.

Benefit

The proposed amendment will benefit permit hunters, to include youth and disable hunters, who are negatively impacted by bikers using trails during open hunting seasons with less interference.

15A NCAC 10D .0244 LANTERN ACRES GAME LAND IN TYRRELL AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES (pg. 14)

The proposed amendment will restrict access on the Lantern Acres Game Land posted waterfowl

impoundments to permitted hunters only, to reduce disturbance to waterfowl during open waterfowl hunting seasons.

In 2007, two waterfowl impoundments were created to provide habitat for waterfowl, waterbirds, and for the public waterfowl hunting opportunities. To provide for quality hunts, turkey hunting, and waterfowl hunting on the posted waterfowl impoundments is by permit only. Hunting outside of the impoundments does not require a special hunt permit.

The posted waterfowl impoundments offer excellent turkey and quail nesting habitat in spring and summer. Both turkey hunters and deer hunters hunt the impoundments prior to flooding for the waterfowl season. Once the impoundments are flooded, deer and bear hunters primarily stay on the dikes and trails.

In contrast to the limited disturbances deer and bear hunters have on waterfowl, woodcock and snipe hunting have a tremendous negative impact on waterfowl use. Most waterfowl species do not tolerate human presence and will flee the area when disturbed.

The current rule allows all hunters to access the impoundments 6-days per week. This unrestricted use occurs on days prior to and during the permitted waterfowl hunts. This flushes waterfowl from the impoundments and is in opposition to the quality waterfowl hunting experience that the WRC wants to offer.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed amendment will align with the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant guidelines, which is a major funding source for the impoundment, and the management of the waterfowl impoundments.

Local Impact

The proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

The proposed amendment should increase waterfowl use and in turn, waterfowl hunter satisfaction. The restriction to waterfowl hunting between October 1 to February 14 will reduce the amount of disturbance to waterfowl. Other hunters without a permit will have to obtain a permit to hunt snipe and woodcock.

15A NCAC 10D .0263 LITTLE FORK STATE FOREST GAME LAND IN WILKES COUNTY (pg. 15)

The proposed amendment will expand the Little Fork State Forest Game Land in Wilkes County from a Three Days per Week Area to a Six Days per Week Area.

The North Carolina Forest Service requested the expansion of the game land from a Three Days per Week to a Six Days per Week Area due to its proximity to the educational forest.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This proposed amendment is expected to provide better alignment with CWD monitoring efforts within the primary surveillance area.

Local Impact

Adding additional hunting days will likely increase the number of visits to local businesses, which may result in an increase in the purchase of goods and services as they relate to needs of this user group (e.g., food, gas, camping supplies, etc.). This anticipated benefit cannot be quantified.

Private Impact

The proposed amendment will allow for more opportunities to hunt on the Little Fork State Forest Game Land.

SUMMARY

Quantifiable Impacts

State

The following quantifiable costs to the State are anticipated:

- Use of Game Lands
 - Cold Mountain Game Land
 - One-time signage change = \$0.90 + negligible staff time
 - Goose Creek Game Land
 - Bates-Bay River Tract
 - One-time boundary survey and markings = \$7,392
 - One-time access gates = \$750
 - One-time parking areas = \$10,000
 - Gull Rock Game Land
 - E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Waterfowl Impoundment
 - One-time signage change = \$0.90 + negligible staff time
 - Willow Point Waterfowl Impoundment
 - One-time boundary survey and markings = \$7,050
 - One-time kiosks = \$1,800

The following quantifiable benefits to the State are anticipated:

- Use of Game Lands
 - Cold Mountain Game Land
 - Clean-up savings = \$816/year
 - Goose Creek Game Land
 - Bates-Bay River Tract
 - Increase in license sales = at least \$1,000
 - Gull Rock Game Land
 - Willow Point Waterfowl Impoundment
 - Increase in license sales = at least \$500

The total quantifiable cost to the State is estimated to be approximately \$26,993 in year one, and the total quantifiable benefit to the State is estimated to be approximately \$2,316 annually.

Unquantifiable Impacts

The following unquantifiable costs were identified for the proposed rule changes:

Private

- Prohibiting target shooting on Cold Mountain Game Land may increase the distance target shooters will have to travel to target shoot at nearby ranges.

The following unquantifiable benefits were identified for the proposed rule changes:

State

- Prohibiting target shooting on Cold Mountain Game Land may help eliminate damage caused to live trees being used as targets.
- Adding the Bates-Bay Tract to the Goose Creek Game Land and opening it to hunting by permit will increase agency revenue and bring more hunters to the land.
- Adding the Willow Point Tract to the Gull Rock Game Land and opening it to hunting by permit will increase agency revenue and bring more hunters to the land.
- Restricting the use of bicycles during the open hunting season, except for hunters engaged in the act of hunting game birds and game animals on Johns River Game Land will benefit permit hunters, to include youth and disable hunters, who are negatively impacted by bikers using trails during open hunting seasons with less interference.

Private

- Prohibiting target shooting on Cold Mountain Game Land will improve the safety for users of the game land.
- Adding the Bates-Bay River Tract to the Goose Creek Game Land will provide additional

- opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation.
- Adding the Willow Point Tract to the Gull Rock Game Land will provide additional opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation.

Local

- Adding the Bates-Bay River Tract to the Goose Creek Game Land and the Willow Point Tract to the Gull Rock Game Land as well adding hunting days to the Little Fork State Forest Game Land will provide additional opportunities for hunting and outdoor recreation. Adding additional hunting and recreational opportunities will likely increase the number of visits to local businesses, which may result in an increase in the purchase of goods and services as they relate to needs of these user groups (e.g., food, gas, camping supplies, etc.).

While many of the potential impacts of the proposed amendments are unquantifiable, the Commission believes that benefits to both the State and local government, and private entities will outweigh the costs.

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0219 COLD MOUNTAIN GAME LAND IN HAYWOOD COUNTY**

2 Cold Mountain game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Horseback riding is prohibited except on designated trails May 16 through August 31 and all
4 horseback riding is prohibited from September 1 through May 15.
- 5 (2) Deer of either sex may be taken the first open Saturday of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
6 Season.
- 7 (3) Target shooting is prohibited.

8

9 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*

10 *Eff. October 1, 2022.*

11

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0229 GOOSE CREEK GAME LAND IN BEAUFORT AND PAMLICO COUNTIES**

2 Goose Creek game land is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken on all the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
4 Season.
- 5 (2) Except as provided in 15A NCAC 10D .0103(d)(2), waterfowl in posted waterfowl impoundments
6 shall be taken only on the following days:
7 (a) the opening and closing days of the applicable waterfowl seasons;
8 (b) Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Days; and
9 (c) Tuesdays and Saturdays of the applicable waterfowl seasons.
- 10 (3) Beginning on the first open waterfowl season day in October through the end of all waterfowl
11 seasons, waterfowl hunting is by permit only on the following waterfowl impoundments: Pamlico
12 Point, Campbell Creek, Hunting Creek, Spring Creek, Smith Creek, and Hobucken.
- 13 (4) On Spring Lake, Pamlico Point, and Campbell Creek Waterfowl Impoundments, all activities,
14 except waterfowl hunting on designated waterfowl hunting days and trapping during the trapping
15 season, are restricted to the posted Scouting-only Zone during the period November 1 through
16 March 15.
- 17 (5) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
18 14 in areas both designated and posted as camping areas.
- 19 (6) Hunting and vehicular access on the Parker Farm Tract is restricted from September 1 through
20 January 1 and April 1 through May 15 to individuals that possess a valid hunting opportunity permit.
- 21 (7) Pursuing or chasing deer or bear with dogs for the purposes of training or hunting is prohibited on
22 the Beaufort County portion north of NC 33 except for that portion east of Smith Creek and south
23 of Campbell Creek.
- 24 (8) Bear shall not be harvested on Sunday.
- 25 (9) Hunting for deer, bear, and turkey on the Bates-Bay Tract is by permit only.

26
27 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
28 *Temporary Adoption Eff. December 1, 2022;*
29 *Eff. March 15, 2023.*

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0232 GULL ROCK GAME LAND IN HYDE COUNTY**

2 Gull Rock is a Seven Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken all the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
4 Season.
- 5 (2) Waterfowl on ~~posted waterfowl impoundments~~ the E. Merle Edwards/Loop Road Impoundment
6 shall be taken only on the following days:
7 (a) the opening and closing days of the applicable waterfowl seasons;
8 (b) Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Days; and
9 (c) Tuesdays and Saturdays of the applicable waterfowl season.
- 10 (3) Camping is restricted to September 1 through the last day of February and March 31 through May
11 14 in areas designated and posted as camping areas.
- 12 (4) Bear may only be taken the first Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday of the November Bear Season and
13 the second Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday of the December Bear Season.
- 14 (5) Waterfowl hunting on posted waterfowl impoundments on the Willow Point tract is by permit only.

15
16 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
17 *Eff. October 1, 2022;*
18 *Temporary Amendment Eff. December 1, 2022;*
19 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2023.*

20

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0239 JOHNS RIVER GAME LAND IN BURKE COUNTY**

2 Johns River game land is hunting by permit only. The following shall apply:

- 3 (1) During permitted deer hunts, antlered or antlerless deer may be taken by permit holders.
- 4 (2) The construction of permanent hunting blinds is prohibited.
- 5 (3) Camping is restricted to August 31 through the last day of February and March 31 through May 14.
- 6 (4) Target shooting is prohibited.
- 7 (5) The use of bicycles is restricted to hunters engaged in the act of hunting during the open days of the
- 8 seasons for game birds and game animals.

9
10 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
11 *Eff. October 1, 2022;*
12 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*
13

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0244 LANTERN ACRES GAME LAND IN TYRRELL AND WASHINGTON**
2 **COUNTIES**

3 Lantern Acres game land is a Six Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 4 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken on all the open days of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
5 Season.
6 (2) Wild turkey hunting is by permit only.
7 (3) The use of dogs for hunting deer on the Godley Tract is prohibited.
8 ~~(4) Waterfowl hunting on posted waterfowl impoundments is by permit only.~~
9 (4) Hunting on posted waterfowl impoundments from October 1 through February 14 is by permit only.

10

11 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
12 *Eff. November 1, 2022.*

13

1 **15A NCAC 10D .0263 LITTLE FORK STATE FOREST GAME LAND IN WILKES COUNTY**

2 Little Fork State Forest game land is a ~~Three~~ Six Days per Week Area, in which the following applies:

- 3 (1) Deer of either sex may be taken the first open day of the applicable Deer With Visible Antlers
4 Season through the ~~second Wednesday~~ first Friday thereafter.
5 (2) Bear hunting is prohibited.

6
7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-264; 113-291.2; 113-291.5; 113-296; 113-305;*
8 *Eff. November 1, 2022;*
9 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*

10

EXHIBIT K-1

June 6, 2024



Proposed Amendments to Wildlife Management Rules for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Recommended by Agency Staff for Public Notice, Comment, and Presentation at Public Hearing

Furbearers

1. General Description of Proposed Change:

Establish a definition in rule for a submersion trapping system and apply the 72-hour trap attendance requirement that exists for completely submerged conibear-type traps to other legal trap-types that are set as a submersion trapping system.

Justification:

The main difference between fully submerged conibear®-type traps and submersion trapping systems is the trap-type (e.g., foothold, colony trap) used and how the trap is set. The result of submersion trapping systems is the same as fully submerged conibear®-type traps, and that is for the captured animal to become fully submerged during capture. Longer than 24-hour trap check for submersion trapping systems is consistent with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Best Trapping Practices. This change would likely increase the efficiency of both trappers and Wildlife Control Agents (WCAs).

15A NCAC 10B .0301 DEFINITIONS (Pg. 4)

15A NCAC 10B .0306 ATTENDANCE AND TAGGING OF TRAPS (Pg. 5)

2. General Description of Proposed Change:

Change reporting requirements for licensed fur dealers from monthly to annually to make reporting consistent with other licenses and permit reporting requirements that are based on the July 1 to June 30 license period.

Justification:

This rule change will reduce regulatory complexity and increase reporting compliance.

Most fur dealers purchase fur four to five months out of the year. However, the current rule language requires fur dealers to submit a form with "no activity" during months of no activity which is unnecessary. In addition, although the forms are currently required to

be submitted monthly, the data is compiled annually. Monthly reporting for fur dealers is not necessary for appropriate management of furbearer species.

15A NCAC 10B .0405 FUR DEALERS (Pgs. 6-7)

Turkey

1. General Description of Proposed Change:

Shift turkey harvest to later in the spring when most hens have begun laying eggs to keep with NCWRC's goal to "*maximize continued increases in population size and distribution.*" Specifically, shift the opening date of the regular turkey season to the Saturday on or immediately after April 11th, with season length unchanged. Shift the opening date for the Youth-only season to the Saturday before April 11th and reduce the Youth-only season from seven to two days. This change also defines eligibility for the youth-only season as individuals less than 16 years of age.

Justification:

Trends in turkey harvest across much of North Carolina have been increasing steadily for many years. However, trends in reproduction (i.e. brood survey observations) point to long-term declines and have reached all-time lows, with substantially fewer than two poults per hen in recent years. The largest wild turkey ecology research project in North Carolina recently concluded, documenting low nesting success, poor brood survival, and low overall productivity across all regions of the state. The research also identified the average dates that hens initiate nests (April 11th – egg laying). Hens begin incubating nests (April 24th) and these dates are consistent across the state.

Adjusting hunting seasons is critical to ensure that turkeys have adequate time for breeding and nesting before substantial harvest occurs and is therefore, necessary to maintain high levels of harvest and to promote hunter satisfaction over time.

This rule proposal would shift the harvest to later in the spring, thus moving the timing of the harvest of male turkeys into agreement with statewide turkey breeding and nesting chronology dates. Since the length of the regular season would remain unchanged, and the majority of Youth-only harvest occurs during the first two days, this proposed change is expected to result in only minimal changes to total harvest. Gobbling activity is a key component of hunter satisfaction and this proposed change would have relatively little impact on the amount of gobbling activity that occurs during the time that turkeys are hunted.

15A NCAC 10B .0209 WILD TURKEY (Pg. 3)

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0209 WILD TURKEY**

2 (a) The open season for wild turkey is from the ~~second~~ Saturday on or after ~~in~~ April 11 through the fourth Saturday
3 thereafter on bearded or male turkeys only.

4 (b) The daily bag limit is one, the possession limit is two, and the season limit is two.

5 (c) The use of dogs for hunting wild turkeys is prohibited.

6 (d) The following shall apply to Spring Youth Only Wild Turkey Season:

7 (1) the open season is ~~from the first~~ Saturday and Sunday ~~in prior to~~ April 11 ~~through the Friday~~
8 ~~thereafter~~ on bearded or male wild turkeys ~~only~~. only;

9 (2) the season limit is ~~one~~. one; and

10 (3) youth are individuals under 16 years of age.

11

12 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-276.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.5;*

13 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*

14 *Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996; July 1, 1995; July 1, 1994; July 1, 1993;*

15 *July 1, 1992;*

16 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;*

17 *Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;*

18 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2001;*

19 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002;*

20 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (approved by RRC on 06/21/01 and 04/18/02);*

21 *Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;*

22 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this amendment replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17,*
23 *2003);*

24 *Amended Eff. February 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; January 1, 2013; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2007;*

25 *November 1, 2005;*

26 *Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022.*

27

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0301 DEFINITIONS**

2 As used in this Section, the following definitions apply:

- 3 (1) "Box trap", "corral trap", and "cage trap" are a device designed so that the animal enters the trap
4 through a door that closes and is meant to prevent the animal from exiting.
- 5 (2) "Breakaway device" means a device incorporated into a snare or snare component that allows the
6 loop to break open, and an animal to escape completely free of the snare, when a specified amount
7 of force is applied.
- 8 (3) "Collarum™-type trap" means a power-activated snare that is activated when the trigger is pulled
9 and that is designed to capture and restrain the animal by a cable around the neck.
- 10 (4) "Conibear®", "Conibear®-type", and "bodygrip" traps are designed to catch an animal in a body
11 hold resulting in a quick kill.
- 12 (5) "Leghold" and "foothold" mean a trap designed to hold an animal by the foot.
- 13 (6) "Loop stop" means a device that is attached to the snare cable to prevent the loop from closing
14 beyond a specified point.
- 15 (7) "Power-activated" means a snare on which the speed or direction of the loop closure is initiated or
16 augmented by a powering device like a spring.
- 17 (8) "Relaxing lock" means a snare lock that allows the snare loop to release constriction pressure on the
18 captured animal when the cable is not taut.
- 19 (9) "Snare" means a cable restraining device.
- 20 (10) "Steel-jaw" means a leghold or foothold trap in which the jaws are made of metal.
- 21 (11) "Submersion trapping systems" are traps, other than snares and Conibear®-type traps, that are set
22 in a manner that allow or cause the captured animal to become irreversibly submerged in water.

23

24 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-291.1; 113-291.6;*
25 *Eff. January 1, 2011;*
26 *Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022;*
27 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*

28

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0306 ATTENDANCE AND TAGGING OF TRAPS**

2 (a) Traps shall be visited daily and animals caught shall be removed, except for completely submerged Conibear®-
3 type, Conibear®, ~~or bodygrip traps~~ traps, and submersion trapping systems, as defined in 15 NCAC 10B .0301, which
4 shall be visited once per 72 hours and animals caught shall be removed.

5 (b) Steel-jaw, leghold, Conibear®, Conibear®-type traps, Collarum™-type traps, snares, box traps, and cage traps
6 must have a weather-resistant permanent tag attached legibly giving the trapper's name and address or the trapper's
7 trapper identification number provided by the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Wildlife Resources
8 Commission's telephone number to report wildlife violations. Box traps for rabbits shall have a weather-resistant
9 permanent tag attached legibly giving the hunter's name and address or the hunter's Wildlife Resources Commission
10 customer number and the Wildlife Resources Commission's telephone number to report wildlife violations.

11 (c) Remote trap checking systems may be used in lieu of visiting the trap, provided the system has the following
12 features:

- 13 (1) a control unit that monitors the trap in real-time and reports trap status and unit status to a centralized
14 application database a minimum of once every two hours;
- 15 (2) a software application that notifies the user of unit status, trap activity, and system health issues
16 within 10 minutes of these events via email, text-based messaging systems, or an in-application
17 notification; and
- 18 (3) an on-demand test procedure that is used at deployment of a unit to confirm that the unit is placed
19 in a location where its wireless communication can be received and processed.

20 (d) If the remote trap checking system control unit reports a trap closure, the trap shall be physically visited within
21 24 hours of the time the trap was reported closed.

22 (e) If a remote trap checking system control unit fails to report its status after a 12-hour period, or reports a system
23 health issue, the trap shall be physically visited within 24 hours of the last time a status report was sent.

24 (f) Remote trap checking system users shall maintain records of trap status and notification alarms for a minimum of
25 seven days after receipt. Records shall be made available for inspection upon request by a representative of the
26 Commission.

27
28 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-291.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.12;*
29 *Eff. August 1, 2023.*

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0405 FUR DEALERS**

2 (a) Any individual wanting to engage in the business of buying or selling fur-bearing animals or other wild animals
3 that may lawfully be sold, as specified in G.S. 113-273(f), shall first obtain a fur dealer license from the Commission.

4 (b) Application for a fur dealer license shall be made online at www.ncwildlife.org or at the Commission headquarters
5 located at 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606. Information required from the applicant shall include:

6 (1) the applicant's name, address, telephone number, date of birth; and

7 (2) a list of all employees to be covered under the license.

8 (c) The fur dealer license shall not be transferable.

9 (d) Any individual working on behalf of the licensed fur dealer shall have a copy of the fur dealer's current license.

10 (e) It is unlawful for any fur dealer, or person acting on his or her behalf, to import, buy, or accept delivery of a
11 carcass or pelt of any fur-bearing animal or other wild animal from a source located in any other state that has not
12 been affixed with a tag in accordance with the tagging requirements of the state from which the animal was taken,
13 unless documentation of the date and hour of the arrival of such carcass or pelt at the fur dealer's place of business is
14 available for inspection.

15 (f) Imported carcasses and pelts shall not be resold or removed from a fur dealer's place of business without having
16 been tagged as required by Paragraph (e) of this Rule.

17 (g) Except as provided by Paragraph (e) of this Rule, it is unlawful for any licensed fur dealer to have in his or her
18 possession the carcass or pelt of any bobcat, otter, or fox which has not been affixed with a fur tag provided by the
19 Commission unless the fox was taken from a county exempt from fox tagging requirements.

20 (h) Licensed fur dealers shall maintain records of all acquisitions of carcasses and pelts of beaver, bobcat, coyote,
21 mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, otter, raccoon, striped skunk, spotted skunk, weasel, and foxes. Such records shall
22 consist of receipts, copies of receipts, or other written evidence of the transactions showing the sources and numbers
23 of acquisition.

24 (i) ~~Monthly~~ Annual reports shall be submitted to the Commission ~~on or before the 15th day of the succeeding month~~
25 within 15 days following the date of license expiration on forms supplied by the Commission at www.ncwildlife.org
26 or at the Commission headquarters located at 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606-2576. Reports shall include the
27 following:

28 (1) all acquisitions of carcasses and pelts, except those which have been acquired from and reported by
29 other fur dealers licensed by the State;

30 (2) all acquisitions made during each month beginning with October and ending with March of the
31 following year;

32 (3) distinguishment between acquisitions made within the State and those made from outside the State;
33 and

34 (4) counties in which the animals were taken if within the State.

35 In the case of nonresident fur dealers licensed to do business in this State, the records and reports required by this
36 Paragraph apply only to carcasses or pelts of animals acquired from within this State, and no reports are required from
37 nonresident fur dealers who acquire pelts only from other fur dealers licensed in the State.

1 (j) The records required by Paragraph (i) of this Rule and the inventory of carcasses and pelts on hand shall be made
2 available for inspection by representatives of the Commission upon request or during the fur dealer's business hours.

3

4 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-129; 113-134; 113-273; 113-291.3; 113-291.4; 50 C.F.R. 23; 87 Stat. 884;*
5 *Eff. November 14, 1978;*

6 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2010; January 1, 1992; December 1, 1981; August 1, 1981; February 2,*
7 *1981;*

8 *Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

9

EXHIBIT K-2

June 6, 2024



Fiscal Note for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Rule Proposals Wildlife Resources Commission – Wildlife Management

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10B .0209 WILD TURKEY
15A NCAC 10B .0301 DEFINITIONS
15A NCAC 10B .0306 ATTENDANCE AND TAGGING OF TRAPS
15A NCAC 10B .0405 FUR DEALERS

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

Authority: G.S. 113:129; 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-273; 113-276.1; 113-291.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.3; 113-291.4; 113-291.5; 113-291-6; 113-291.12; 50 CFR 23; 87 Stat. 884

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 rule amendments is shown below, with the full rule text included in Appendix A. The proposed amendments will shift or align season dates, establish definitions and change reporting requirements to provide clarity for hunters. All the proposed changes are intended to help ensure future hunting opportunities while minimizing costs to the regulated community.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY RULE

15A NCAC 10B .0209 WILD TURKEY

The proposed amendments will shift the turkey harvest to later in the spring to keep with WRC's goal to "*maximize continued increases in population size and distribution*" and define in rule the age of youth wild turkey hunters. Specifically, the proposed amendments shift the opening date of the Youth-only season from the first to the second Saturday in April and reduce the Youth-only season from seven to two days. The opening date for the regular season will shift from the second to the third Saturday in April, with the season length unchanged.

Trends in turkey harvest across much of North Carolina have been increasing steadily for many years. However, trends in reproduction (i.e. brood survey observations) point to long-term declines and have reached all-time lows, with substantially fewer than two poults per hen in recent years. The largest wild turkey ecology research project in North Carolina recently concluded, documenting low nesting success, poor brood survival, and low overall productivity across all regions of the state. The research also identified the average dates that hens initiate nests (April 11th – egg laying) and begin incubating nests (April 24th). These dates are consistent across the state.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed amendments have no anticipated state impact.

Local Impact

The proposed amendments have no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Adjusting hunting seasons is critical to ensure that turkeys have adequate time for breeding and nesting before harvest occurs and is therefore necessary to maintain high levels of harvest and to promote hunter satisfaction over time. The proposed change is not expected to change the behavior of hunters other than requiring them to shift the dates they hunt wild turkey by one week. The WRC does not expect a change to overall participation in wild turkey hunting, at least in the near term. If the change to the season results in a more abundant and healthy wild turkey population, that could promote wild turkey hunting in the longer term.

15A NCAC 10B .0301 DEFINITIONS

15A NCAC 10B .0306 ATTENDANCE AND TAGGING OF TRAPS

The proposed amendments to these rules will establish a definition for a submersion trapping system and apply the 72-hour trap attendance requirement that exists for completely submerged conibear®-type traps to other legal trap-types that are set as a submersion trapping system.

The main difference between fully submerged conibear®-type traps and submersion trapping systems is the trap-type (e.g., foothold, colony trap) used and how the trap is set. The result of submersion trapping systems is the same as fully submerged conibear®-type traps. Longer than 24-hour trap check for submersion trapping systems is consistent with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Best Trapping Practices. This change would likely increase the efficiency of both trappers and Wildlife Control Agents (WCAs).

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

The proposed amendments have no anticipated state impact.

Local Impact

This proposed amendments have no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

The 72-hour trap attendance change will likely benefit submersion trap users, as it will allow trappers and WCAs to spend less time and resources such as fuel traveling to sites to check traps daily. As a secondary benefit, it may also increase the number of jobs they can accept and expand their coverage area. As trappers and WCAs become more efficient, they are likely to set more traps and have longer traplines, resulting in higher harvests of abundant aquatic species, such as beaver, muskrat, and nutria. The agency has no way to quantify these benefits.

15A NCAC 10B .0405 FUR DEALERS

The proposed amendment to the rule will change reporting requirements for licensed fur dealers from monthly to annually to make reporting consistent with current practice as well as with other licenses and permit reporting requirements that are based on the July 1 to June 30 license period.

Most fur dealers purchase fur during four to five months out of the year. The current rule contains a requirement for the licensed fur dealers to submit a form to WRC monthly and does not contain an exception for months in which there is no activity. The reporting of “no activity” is an unnecessary step that provides no added value to the regulation of licensed fur dealers. In addition, although the current rule states that forms should be submitted monthly, WRC compiles the data annually. Monthly reporting for fur dealers is not necessary for appropriate management of furbearer species.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

As compared to ongoing practice, this rule amendment is anticipated to minimally decrease the time and effort that agency staff spend on managing fur dealer reports, data, and non-compliance. The proposed rule change will more closely align with current practice, as most fur dealers have been submitting reports just after the trapping/fur buying period rather than monthly.

Local Impact

This proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

This rule amendment may decrease time and effort that some fur dealers spend on reporting. This potential time savings could benefit the 12 currently licensed fur dealers as well as fur dealers who become licensed in the future. The completion of the form and submission process requires relatively little time, so the amount of time savings will be small. There could be an additional benefit in that fur dealers' compliance with the reporting requirement could improve as a result of the less burdensome reporting schedule. At a minimum, the proposed change will reduce regulatory complexity and make compliance easier for licensees.

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0209 WILD TURKEY**

2 (a) The open season for wild turkey is from the ~~second~~ third Saturday in April through the fourth Saturday thereafter
3 on bearded or male turkeys only.

4 (b) The daily bag limit is one, the possession limit is two, and the season limit is two.

5 (c) The use of dogs for hunting wild turkeys is prohibited.

6 (d) The following shall apply to Spring Youth Only Wild Turkey Season:

7 (1) the open season is from the ~~first~~ second Saturday in April through the ~~Friday~~ Sunday thereafter on
8 bearded or male wild turkeys ~~only~~; only;

9 (2) the season limit is ~~one~~; one; and

10 (3) youth are individuals under 18 years of age.

11

12 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-276.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.5;*

13 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*

14 *Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996; July 1, 1995; July 1, 1994; July 1, 1993;*
15 *July 1, 1992;*

16 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;*

17 *Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;*

18 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2001;*

19 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002;*

20 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (approved by RRC on 06/21/01 and 04/18/02);*

21 *Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;*

22 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this amendment replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17,*
23 *2003);*

24 *Amended Eff. February 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; January 1, 2013; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2007;*
25 *November 1, 2005;*

26 *Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022.*

27

28

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0301 DEFINITIONS**

2 As used in this Section, the following definitions apply:

- 3 (1) "Box trap", "corral trap", and "cage trap" are a device designed so that the animal enters the trap
4 through a door that closes and is meant to prevent the animal from exiting.
- 5 (2) "Breakaway device" means a device incorporated into a snare or snare component that allows the
6 loop to break open, and an animal to escape completely free of the snare, when a specified amount
7 of force is applied.
- 8 (3) "Collarum™-type trap" means a power-activated snare that is activated when the trigger is pulled
9 and that is designed to capture and restrain the animal by a cable around the neck.
- 10 (4) "Conibear®", "Conibear®-type", and "bodygrip" traps are designed to catch an animal in a body
11 hold resulting in a quick kill.
- 12 (5) "Leghold" and "foothold" mean a trap designed to hold an animal by the foot.
- 13 (6) "Loop stop" means a device that is attached to the snare cable to prevent the loop from closing
14 beyond a specified point.
- 15 (7) "Power-activated" means a snare on which the speed or direction of the loop closure is initiated or
16 augmented by a powering device like a spring.
- 17 (8) "Relaxing lock" means a snare lock that allows the snare loop to release constriction pressure on the
18 captured animal when the cable is not taut.
- 19 (9) "Snare" means a cable restraining device.
- 20 (10) "Steel-jaw" means a leghold or foothold trap in which the jaws are made of metal.
- 21 (11) "Submersion trapping systems" are traps, other than Conibear®-type traps, that are set in a manner
22 that allow or cause the captured animal to become irreversibly submerged in water.

23
24 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-291.1; 113-291.6;*
25 *Eff. January 1, 2011;*
26 *Readopted Eff. February 1, 2022;*
27 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2023.*
28
29

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0306 ATTENDANCE AND TAGGING OF TRAPS**

2 (a) Traps shall be visited daily and animals caught shall be removed, except for completely submerged Conibear®-
3 type, Conibear®, ~~or~~ bodygrip traps, and submersion trapping systems, as defined in 15 NCAC 10B .0301, which
4 shall be visited once per 72 hours and animals caught shall be removed.

5 (b) Steel-jaw, leghold, Conibear®, Conibear®-type traps, Collarum™-type traps, snares, box traps, and cage traps
6 must have a weather-resistant permanent tag attached legibly giving the trapper's name and address or the trapper's
7 trapper identification number provided by the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Wildlife Resources
8 Commission's telephone number to report wildlife violations. Box traps for rabbits shall have a weather-resistant
9 permanent tag attached legibly giving the hunter's name and address or the hunter's Wildlife Resources Commission
10 customer number and the Wildlife Resources Commission's telephone number to report wildlife violations.

11 (c) Remote trap checking systems may be used in lieu of visiting the trap, provided the system has the following
12 features:

- 13 (1) a control unit that monitors the trap in real-time and reports trap status and unit status to a centralized
14 application database a minimum of once every two hours;
- 15 (2) a software application that notifies the user of unit status, trap activity, and system health issues
16 within 10 minutes of these events via email, text-based messaging systems, or an in-application
17 notification; and
- 18 (3) an on-demand test procedure that is used at deployment of a unit to confirm that the unit is placed
19 in a location where its wireless communication can be received and processed.

20 (d) If the remote trap checking system control unit reports a trap closure, the trap shall be physically visited within
21 24 hours of the time the trap was reported closed.

22 (e) If a remote trap checking system control unit fails to report its status after a 12-hour period, or reports a system
23 health issue, the trap shall be physically visited within 24 hours of the last time a status report was sent.

24 (f) Remote trap checking system users shall maintain records of trap status and notification alarms for a minimum of
25 seven days after receipt. Records shall be made available for inspection upon request by a representative of the
26 Commission.

27
28 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-291.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.12;*
29 *Eff. August 1, 2023.*
30
31

1 **15A NCAC 10B .0405 FUR DEALERS**

2 (a) Any individual wanting to engage in the business of buying or selling fur-bearing animals or other wild animals
3 that may lawfully be sold, as specified in G.S. 113-273(f), shall first obtain a fur dealer license from the Commission.

4 (b) Application for a fur dealer license shall be made online at www.ncwildlife.org or at the Commission headquarters
5 located at 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606. Information required from the applicant shall include:

- 6 (1) the applicant's name, address, telephone number, date of birth; and
- 7 (2) a list of all employees to be covered under the license.

8 (c) The fur dealer license shall not be transferable.

9 (d) Any individual working on behalf of the licensed fur dealer shall have a copy of the fur dealer's current license.

10 (e) It is unlawful for any fur dealer, or person acting on his or her behalf, to import, buy, or accept delivery of a
11 carcass or pelt of any fur-bearing animal or other wild animal from a source located in any other state that has not
12 been affixed with a tag in accordance with the tagging requirements of the state from which the animal was taken,
13 unless documentation of the date and hour of the arrival of such carcass or pelt at the fur dealer's place of business is
14 available for inspection.

15 (f) Imported carcasses and pelts shall not be resold or removed from a fur dealer's place of business without having
16 been tagged as required by Paragraph (e) of this Rule.

17 (g) Except as provided by Paragraph (e) of this Rule, it is unlawful for any licensed fur dealer to have in his or her
18 possession the carcass or pelt of any bobcat, otter, or fox which has not been affixed with a fur tag provided by the
19 Commission unless the fox was taken from a county exempt from fox tagging requirements.

20 (h) Licensed fur dealers shall maintain records of all acquisitions of carcasses and pelts of beaver, bobcat, coyote,
21 mink, muskrat, nutria, opossum, otter, raccoon, striped skunk, spotted skunk, weasel, and foxes. Such records shall
22 consist of receipts, copies of receipts, or other written evidence of the transactions showing the sources and numbers
23 of acquisition.

24 (i) ~~Monthly~~ Annual reports shall be submitted to the Commission ~~on or before the 15th day of the succeeding month~~
25 within 15 days following the date of license expiration on forms supplied by the Commission at www.ncwildlife.org
26 or at the Commission headquarters located at 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh, NC 27606-2576. Reports shall include the
27 following:

- 28 (1) all acquisitions of carcasses and pelts, except those which have been acquired from and reported by
29 other fur dealers licensed by the State;
- 30 (2) all acquisitions made during each month beginning with October and ending with March of the
31 following year;
- 32 (3) distinguishment between acquisitions made within the State and those made from outside the State;
33 and
- 34 (4) counties in which the animals were taken if within the State.

35 In the case of nonresident fur dealers licensed to do business in this State, the records and reports required by this
36 Paragraph apply only to carcasses or pelts of animals acquired from within this State, and no reports are required from
37 nonresident fur dealers who acquire pelts only from other fur dealers licensed in the State.

1 (j) The records required by Paragraph (i) of this Rule and the inventory of carcasses and pelts on hand shall be made
2 available for inspection by representatives of the Commission upon request or during the fur dealer's business hours.

3

4 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-129; 113-134; 113-273; 113-291.3; 113-291.4; 50 C.F.R. 23; 87 Stat. 884;*
5 *Eff. November 14, 1978;*

6 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2010; January 1, 1992; December 1, 1981; August 1, 1981; February 2,*
7 *1981;*

8 *Readopted Eff. October 1, 2022.*

9

EXHIBIT L-1

June 6, 2024



Proposed Amendments to Inland Fisheries Rules for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Recommended by Agency Staff for Public Notice, Comment, and Presentation at Public Hearing

Trout

1. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Remove the Hatchery Supported Trout Waters section on Henry Fork in Burke County from Public Mountain Trout Waters. This proposal will remove approximately 3.1 miles from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

This section of river is on private property, and most of the angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(5)(C) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

2. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Reclassify the section of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on the Linville River within the U.S. Forest Service's Linville Gorge Wilderness Area (LGWA) in Burke County to Wild Trout Waters. This proposal will not remove any water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

Recent changes to the National Park Service stream stocking policy prevent trout from being stocked into waters on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Stocking from U.S. Forest Service lands is difficult due to steep terrain and is no longer attempted for safety reasons. Additionally, reclassifying this portion of river to Wild Trout Waters aligns with current U.S. Forest Service management of designated Wilderness Areas, where stockings typically are not allowed.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(5)(C) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

3. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on the Hungry River in Henderson County. The new reach will be from Little Hungry River to Green River. This proposal will remove approximately 1.0 mile from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

This section of river is on private property, and most of the angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(11)(B) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

4. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Remove the Hatchery Supported Trout Waters section on Little Rock Creek in Mitchell County from Public Mountain Trout Waters. This proposal will remove approximately 7.0 miles from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

This section of the creek is on private property, and most of the angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(16)(B) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

5. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Modify the lower boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Big Rock Creek in Mitchell County. The new reach will be from the headwaters to the S.R. 1325 bridge. This proposal will remove approximately 2.3 miles from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

This section of the creek is on private property, and most of the angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(16)(B) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

6. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Clarify that the Delayed Harvest Trout Waters section on the Ararat River in Surry County is the portion of the river bordering the Ararat River Greenway downstream of the N.C. 103 bridge. This proposal will not remove any water from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

The current NCAC text does not clearly describe the boundaries of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters section since Hatchery Supported Trout Waters section is also located along the Ararat River Greenway.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(20)(A) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

7. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Modify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on the Ararat River in Surry County. The new reach will be the portion of the river adjacent to the Ararat River Greenway upstream of the N.C. 103 bridge. This proposal will add approximately 0.5 miles to Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

The Ararat River Greenway was recently extended upstream, and the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters needs to be extended.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(20)(B) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

8. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Modify the lower boundary of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on the East Fork French Broad River in Transylvania County. The new reach will move from the East Fork Baptist Church to 350 yards downstream of Whitmire Falls. This proposal will remove approximately 1.0 mile from Public Mountain Trout Waters.

Justification:

This section of the river is on private property, and the angler access and stocking locations have been posted against trespassing.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(d)(22)(B) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

9. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Modify the age of youth from under the age of 18 to under the age of 16.

Justification:

The Commission is standardizing the age of youth throughout all its rules to under the age of 16.

15A NCAC 10C .0205(a)(5) PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS (Pgs. 5-17)

Crappie

1. **General Description of Proposed Change:**

Establish an 8-inch minimum size limit and a 20-fish daily creel limit for crappie at Shearon Harris Reservoir.

Justification:

While catch rates of crappie in Commission sampling have remained relatively constant over the past decade, the maximum age of crappie collected has declined more than 50 percent. Sampling results from the fall of 2023 indicated the fishery was supported by only two year-classes (ages 2 and 3), and no age 1 fish were collected. Anglers have expressed concern that crappie are being overharvested in the reservoir and have indicated they would prefer a size and creel limit for crappie.

Mullet

1. General Description of Proposed Change:

Reduce the daily creel limit for Striped and White Mullet from 200 to 100 fish in aggregate and establish a limit of no more than 400 fish total per boat.

Justification:

Striped Mullet is considered overfished, and the Striped Mullet Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 2 indicates harvest reductions are required. This change will be consistent with the FMP's preferred management option as selected by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission at their February business meeting.

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS**

2 (a) For purposes of this Rule, the following definitions apply:

- 3 (1) "Natural bait" means a living or dead plant or animal, or parts thereof, or prepared substances
4 designed to attract fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- 5 (2) "Single hook" means a fish hook with only one point.
- 6 (3) "Artificial lure" means a fishing lure that neither contains nor has been treated by a substance that
7 attracts fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- 8 (4) "Artificial fly" means one single hook dressed with feathers, hair, thread, tinsel, rubber, or a similar
9 material to which no additional hook, spinner, ~~spoon~~ spoon, or similar device is added.
- 10 (5) "Youth anglers" are individuals under ~~18~~ 16 years of age.

11 (b) For purposes of this Rule, 15A NCAC 10C .0316, and 15A NCAC 10D .0104, the following classifications apply:

- 12 (1) "Public Mountain Trout Waters" are the waters included in this Rule and those designated in 15A
13 NCAC 10D .0104.
- 14 (2) "Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters
15 where only artificial flies and lures having one single hook may be used. No trout may be possessed
16 or harvested while fishing these streams. Waters with this designation include tributaries unless
17 otherwise noted.
- 18 (3) "Delayed Harvest Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where between October 1 and
19 one-half hour after sunset on the Friday before the first Saturday of the following June, it is unlawful
20 to possess natural bait, use more than one single hook on an artificial lure, or harvest or possess trout
21 while fishing. From 6:00 a.m. until noon on the first Saturday in June, only youth anglers may fish
22 and these waters have no bait or lure restrictions. From noon on the first Saturday in June until
23 October 1, anglers ~~of all ages~~ may fish ~~and~~ these waters ~~have~~ with no bait or lure restrictions. Waters
24 with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 25 (4) "Hatchery Supported Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters that have no bait or lure
26 restrictions. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 27 (5) "Special Regulation Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where watercourse-specific
28 regulations apply. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 29 (6) "Wild Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters identified in this Rule or 15A NCAC 10D
30 .0104. Only artificial lures having only one single hook may be used. No person shall possess natural
31 bait while fishing these waters. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless
32 otherwise noted.
- 33 ~~(7) "Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where artificial lures and
34 natural baits, except live fish, may be used provided they are fished using only one single hook.
35 Waters with this designation include tributaries unless otherwise noted.~~
- 36 ~~(8)~~(7) "Undesignated Waters" are the other waters in the State. These waters have no bait or lure
37 restrictions.

1 (c) Seasons, creel, and size limits. Seasons, creel, and size limits for trout are listed in Rule .0316 of this Subchapter.

2 (d) Classifications. This Paragraph designates waters in each county that have a specific classification. Waters on
3 game lands are designated in 15A NCAC 10D .0104, unless otherwise indicated in this Paragraph. The other waters
4 are classified as Undesignated Waters.

5 (1) Alleghany

6 (A) ~~Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:~~

7 ~~Little River from the S.R. 1133 bridge to 275 yards downstream of the intersection of S.R.~~
8 ~~1128 and S.R. 1129, marked by a sign on both banks~~

9 ~~(B)~~(A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

10 Big Pine Creek

11 Bledsoe Creek

12 Brush Creek from the N.C. 21 bridge to the confluence with the Little River, except where
13 posted against trespassing

14 Cranberry Creek

15 Glade Creek

16 Little River from ~~275~~ 400 yards ~~downstream~~ upstream of the ~~intersection of S.R. 1128 and~~
17 ~~S.R. 1129, bridge, marked by a sign on both banks, each bank, to McCann Dam~~

18 Meadow Fork

19 Pine Swamp Creek

20 Piney Fork

21 Prathers Creek

22 ~~(C)~~(B) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:

23 The waters located on Stone Mountain State Park

24 (2) Ashe County

25 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:

26 Big Horse Creek from the Virginia state line to Mud Creek at S.R. 1363, excluding
27 tributaries

28 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

29 Big Horse Creek from the S.R. 1324 bridge to the North Fork New River

30 Helton Creek from 900 yards upstream of the S.R. 1372 bridge, marked by a sign on both
31 banks to ~~the North Fork New River~~ a point adjacent to intersection of N.C. 16 and S.R.
32 1536

33 South Fork New River from the upstream end of Todd Island to the S.R. 1351 bridge

34 Trout Lake

35 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

36 Beaver Creek from N.C. 221 to the confluence of Beaver Creek and South Beaver Creek

37 Big Horse Creek from Mud Creek at S.R. 1363 to the S.R. 1324 bridge

- 1 Big Laurel Creek from the S.R. 1315 bridge to the confluence with the North Fork New
2 River
3 Buffalo Creek from the S.R. 1133 bridge to the N.C. 194-88 bridge
4 Cranberry Creek from the Alleghany Co. line to the South Fork New River
5 Nathans Creek
6 North Fork New River from the Watauga Co. line to Sharp Dam
7 Old Fields Creek from N.C. 221 to the South Fork New River
8 Peak Creek from the upper boundary of the NCDA-NCSU Upper Mountain Research
9 Station to Trout Lake
10 Roan Creek
11 Three Top Creek
12 (3) Avery County
13 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
14 Elk River, the portion on Lees-McRae College property, excluding the millpond
15 Lost Cove Creek, the game land portion, excluding Gragg Prong and Rockhouse Creek
16 Wilson Creek, the game land portion
17 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
18 Boyde Coffey Lake
19 Elk River from the S.R. 1305 crossing immediately upstream of Big Falls to the Tennessee
20 state line
21 Linville River from S.R. 1504 to the Blue Ridge Parkway boundary line, except where
22 posted against trespassing
23 Milltimber Creek
24 North Toe River from Watauga St. to Roby Shoemaker Wetlands and Family Recreational
25 Park, except where posted against trespassing
26 North Toe River from S.R. 1164 to Mitchell Co. line, except where posted against
27 trespassing
28 Squirrel Creek
29 Wildcat Lake
30 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
31 Birchfield Creek
32 Cow Camp Creek
33 Cranberry Creek from the headwaters to the U.S. 19E, N.C. 194, bridge
34 Gragg Prong
35 Horse Creek
36 Kentucky Creek
37 North Harper Creek

- 1 Plumtree Creek
2 Roaring Creek
3 Rockhouse Creek
4 Shawneehaw Creek, the portion adjacent to Banner Elk Greenway
5 South Harper Creek
6 Webb Prong
- 7 (4) Buncombe County
- 8 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
9 Carter Creek, the game land portion
- 10 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
11 Bent Creek from the headwaters to the N.C. Arboretum boundary line
12 Cane Creek from the headwaters to the S.R. 3138 bridge
13 Corner Rock Creek from Little Andy Creek to the confluence with Walker Branch
14 Dillingham Creek from Corner Rock Creek to Ivy Creek
15 Ivy Creek from Dillingham Creek to the U.S. 19-23 bridge
16 Lake Powhatan
17 Reems Creek from Sugar Camp Fork to the U.S. 19-23 bridge, except where posted against
18 trespassing
19 Rich Branch from downstream of the confluence with Rocky Branch
20 Stony Creek
21 Swannanoa from the S.R. 2702 bridge near Ridgecrest to the Wood Avenue bridge, at the
22 intersection of N.C. 81 and U.S. 74A in Asheville, except where posted against trespassing
- 23 (5) Burke County
- 24 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
25 Henry Fork, the portion on South Mountains State Park
- 26 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
27 Jacob Fork from Shinnycreek to the lower South Mountains State Park boundary
- 28 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
29 Carroll Creek, the game land portion above S.R. 1405
30 ~~Henry Fork from the lower South Mountain State Park line to S.R. 1919 at Ivy Creek~~
31 Linville River, ~~the portion within Linville Gorge Wilderness area and~~ the portion below
32 Lake James powerhouse from the upstream bridge on S.R. 1223 to Muddy Creek
- 33 (D) Special Regulation Trout Waters are as follows:
34 Catawba River from Muddy Creek to the City of Morganton water intake dam
- 35 (E) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
36 The waters located on South Mountains State Park, except those waters identified in Parts
37 A (A) and B (B) of this Subparagraph

- 1 (6) Caldwell County
- 2 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 3 Wilson Creek, the game land portion below Lost Cove Creek to Philips Branch
- 4 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 5 Boone Fork Pond
- 6 Buffalo Creek from the mouth of Joes Creek to McCloud Branch
- 7 Joes Creek from the first falls upstream of S.R. 1574 to the confluence with Buffalo Creek
- 8 Wilson Creek from Phillips Branch to Brown Mountain Beach Dam, except where posted
- 9 against trespassing
- 10 Yadkin River from the Happy Valley Ruritan Community Park to S.R. 1515
- 11 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
- 12 Buffalo Creek from the Watauga Co. line to Long Ridge Branch including game land
- 13 tributaries
- 14 Joes Creek from the Watauga Co. line to the first falls upstream of the end of S.R. 1574
- 15 Rockhouse Creek
- 16 (7) Cherokee County
- 17 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 18 Davis Creek from the confluence of Bald Creek and Dockery Creek to Hanging Dog Creek
- 19 Hyatt Creek from Big Dam Branch to the Valley River
- 20 Junaluska Creek from Ashturn Creek to the Valley River
- 21 Shuler Creek from the Joe Brown Hwy, S.R. 1325 bridge, to the Tennessee state line
- 22 Valley River from S.R. 1359 to the U.S. 19 Business bridge in Murphy
- 23 (B) Special Regulation Trout Waters are as follows:
- 24 Apalachia Reservoir
- 25 ~~(C) Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters are as follows:~~
- 26 ~~Bald Creek, the game land portion~~
- 27 ~~Dockery Creek, the game land portion~~
- 28 (8) Clay County
- 29 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 30 Fires Creek from Rockhouse Creek to the foot bridge in the USFS Fires Creek Picnic Area
- 31 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 32 Buck Creek, the game land portion downstream of the U.S. 64 bridge
- 33 Fires Creek from the foot bridge in the USFS Fires Creek Picnic Area to S.R. 1300
- 34 Tusquitee Creek from Compass Creek to the lower S.R. 1300 bridge
- 35 (9) Graham County
- 36 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 37 Snowbird Creek from the USFS footbridge at the old railroad junction to USFS Rd. 2579

- 1 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
2 Calderwood Reservoir from Cheoah Dam to the Tennessee state line
3 Cheoah Reservoir
4 Panther Creek from the confluence of Stand Creek and Rock Creek to Lake Fontana
5 Santeetlah Creek from Johns Branch to Lake Santeetlah
6 Snowbird Creek from USFS Rd. 2579 to the S.R. 1127 bridge
7 Stecoah Creek from the upper game land boundary to Lake Fontana
8 Tulula Creek from S.R. 1201 to the lower bridge on S.R. 1275
9 West Buffalo Creek
10 Yellow Creek from Lake Santeetlah hydropower pipeline to the Cheoah River
- 11 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
12 Little Buffalo Creek
13 South Fork Squally Creek
14 Squally Creek
- 15 ~~(D) Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters are as follows:
16 Long Creek, the game land portion~~
- 17 (10) Haywood County
- 18 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
19 West Fork Pigeon River from Queen Creek to the first game land boundary upstream of
20 Lake Logan
- 21 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
22 Cold Springs Creek from Fall Branch to the Pigeon River
23 Jonathan Creek from upstream of the S.R. 1302 bridge to the Pigeon River, except where
24 posted against trespassing
25 Pigeon River from Stamey Cove Branch to the upstream U.S. 19-23 bridge
26 Richland Creek from the Russ Avenue, U.S. 276, bridge to the U.S. 19 bridge
27 West Fork Pigeon River from Tom Creek to Queen Creek, ~~including the game land portion,~~
28 ~~except Middle Prong Creek~~
- 29 (11) Henderson County
- 30 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
31 North Fork Mills River, the game land portion below the Hendersonville watershed dam
- 32 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
33 Broad River from the end of S.R. 1611 to the Rutherford Co. line
34 Cane Creek from the railroad bridge upstream of the S.R. 1551 bridge to the U.S. 25 bridge
35 Clear Creek from Laurel Fork to S.R. 1582
36 Green River from the Lake Summit powerhouse to the game land boundary
37 Hungry River from ~~S.R. 1885~~ Little Hungry River to the Green River

- 1 (12) Jackson County
- 2 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
- 3 Flat Creek
- 4 Tuckasegee River, the game land portion upstream of Tanasee Creek Lake, including the
- 5 Duke Energy powerline corridor
- 6 Tuckasegee River the portion upstream from the Clark property
- 7 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 8 Tuckasegee River from downstream of the N.C. 107 bridge to the falls located 275 yards
- 9 upstream of the U.S. 23-441 bridge, marked by a sign on both banks
- 10 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 11 Balsam Lake
- 12 Bear Creek Lake
- 13 Cedar Cliff Lake
- 14 Cullowhee Creek from Tilley Creek to the Tuckasegee River
- 15 Dark Ridge Creek from Jones Creek to Scott Creek
- 16 Greens Creek from Greens Creek Baptist Church on S.R. 1370 to Savannah Creek
- 17 Savannah Creek from Shell Branch to Cagle Branch
- 18 Scott Creek from Dark Ridge Creek to the Tuckasegee River, except where posted against
- 19 trespassing
- 20 Tanasee Creek Lake
- 21 Tuckasegee River from John Brown Branch to the downstream N.C. 107 bridge
- 22 Tuckasegee River from the falls located 275 yards upstream of the U.S. 23-441 bridge,
- 23 marked by a sign on both banks, to the S.R. 1534 bridge at Wilmont
- 24 Wolf Creek Lake
- 25 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
- 26 Gage Creek
- 27 North Fork Scott Creek
- 28 Tanasee Creek
- 29 Whitewater River from Silver Run Creek to the South Carolina state line
- 30 Wolf Creek except Balsam Lake and Wolf Creek Lake
- 31 ~~(E) Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters are as follows:~~
- 32 ~~Chattooga River from the S.R. 1100 bridge to the South Carolina state line~~
- 33 (13) Macon County
- 34 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 35 Nantahala River from Whiteoak Creek to the Nantahala hydropower discharge canal
- 36 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 37 Burningtown Creek from Left Prong to the Little Tennessee River

- 1 Cartoogechaye Creek from downstream of the U.S. 64 bridge to the Little Tennessee River
 2 Cliffside Lake
 3 Cullasaja River from Sequoyah Dam to the U.S. 64 bridge near the junction of S.R. 1672
 4 Nantahala River from Dicks Creek to Whiteoak Creek
 5 Nantahala River from the Nantahala hydropower discharge canal to the Swain Co. line
 6 Queens Creek Lake
 7 (C) ~~Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters are as follows:~~
 8 ~~Chattooga River from the S.R. 1100 bridge to the South Carolina state line~~
 9 ~~Kimsey Creek~~
 10 ~~Park Creek~~
 11 (14) Madison County
 12 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 13 Big Laurel Creek from the N.C. 208 bridge to the U.S. 25-70 bridge
 14 Shelton Laurel Creek from the N.C. 208 bridge at Belva to the confluence with Big Laurel
 15 Creek
 16 Spring Creek from the N.C. 209 bridge at the Hot Springs city limits to the iron bridge at
 17 end of Andrews Ave.
 18 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 19 Big Laurel Creek from Puncheon Fork to the S.R. 1318, Big Laurel Rd., bridge downstream
 20 of Bearpen Branch
 21 Big Pine Creek from the S.R. 1151 bridge to the French Broad River
 22 Little Ivy Creek from the confluence of Middle Fork and Paint Fork at Beech Glen to the
 23 confluence with Ivy Creek at Forks of Ivy
 24 Max Patch Pond
 25 Meadow Fork Creek from Meadow Fork Campground to Spring Creek
 26 Puncheon Fork from Wolf Laurel Branch to Big Laurel Creek
 27 Roaring Fork from Fall Branch to Meadow Fork
 28 Shelton Laurel Creek from the confluence of Big Creek and Mill Creek to the N.C. 208
 29 bridge at Belva
 30 Shut-in Creek
 31 Spillcorn Creek
 32 Spring Creek from the junction of N.C. 209 and N.C. 63 to the confluence with Meadow
 33 Fork
 34 West Fork Shut-in Creek from the lower game land boundary to the confluence with East
 35 Fork Shut-in Creek
 36 (15) McDowell County
 37 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:

- 1 Newberry Creek, the game land portion
- 2 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 3 Catawba River, the portion adjacent to the Marion Greenway
- 4 Curtis Creek, the game land portion downstream of the USFS boundary at Deep Branch
- 5 Mill Creek from the U.S. 70 bridge to the I-40 bridge
- 6 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 7 Armstrong Creek from the Cato Holler line downstream to the upper Greenlee line
- 8 Catawba River from the Catawba Falls Campground to the Old Fort Recreation Park
- 9 Little Buck Creek, the game land portion
- 10 North Fork Catawba River from the headwaters to North Cove School at the S.R. 1569
- 11 bridge
- 12 (16) Mitchell County
- 13 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 14 Cane Creek from the N.C. 226 bridge to the S.R. 1189 bridge
- 15 North Toe River from the U.S. 19E bridge to the N.C. 226 bridge
- 16 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 17 Big Rock Creek from the headwaters to ~~the N.C. 226 bridge at the S.R. 1307 intersection~~
- 18 the S.R. 1325 bridge
- 19 Cane Creek from S.R. 1219 to the N.C. 226 bridge
- 20 East Fork Grassy Creek
- 21 Grassy Creek from East Fork Grassy Creek to the mouth
- 22 ~~Little Rock Creek from the Green Creek bridge to Big Rock Creek, except where posted~~
- 23 ~~against trespassing~~
- 24 North Toe River from the Avery Co. line to the S.R. 1121 bridge
- 25 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
- 26 Green Creek from the headwaters to the Green Creek bridge, except where posted against
- 27 trespassing
- 28 Little Rock Creek the portion upstream of the Green Creek bridge, including the tributaries,
- 29 except where posted against trespassing
- 30 Wiles Creek from the game land boundary to the mouth
- 31 (17) Polk County
- 32 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 33 Green River from the Fishtop Falls Access Area to the confluence with Cove Creek
- 34 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 35 Green River from the mouth of Cove Creek to the natural gas pipeline crossing
- 36 North Pacolet River from Joels Creek to the N.C. 108 bridge
- 37 (18) Rutherford County

- 1 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
2 Broad River from the Henderson Co. line to the U.S. 64/74 bridge, except where posted
3 against trespassing
- 4 (19) Stokes County
- 5 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
6 Dan River from the Virginia state line downstream to a point 200 yards below the end of
7 S.R. 1421
- 8 (20) Surry County
- 9 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
10 Ararat River, the portion adjacent to the Ararat River Greenway downstream of the N.C.
11 103 bridge
12 Mitchell River from 0.6 miles upstream of the end of S.R. 1333 to the lowermost bridge
13 on S.R. 1330
- 14 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
15 Ararat ~~River from the S.R. 1727 bridge to~~ River, the portion adjacent to the Ararat River
16 Greenway upstream of the N.C. 103 bridge
17 Big Elkin Creek from the dam 440 yards upstream of the N.C. 268 bridge to a point 265
18 yards downstream of N.C. 268, marked by a sign on both banks
19 Fisher River from the Virginia state line to the I-77 bridge
20 Little Fisher River from the Virginia state line to the N.C. 89 bridge
21 Lovills Creek from the U.S. 52 Business bridge to the Ararat River
22 Pauls Creek from the Virginia state line to 0.3 miles below the S.R. 1625 bridge
- 23 (21) Swain County
- 24 (A) Delayed Harvest Waters Trout Waters are as follows:
25 Tuckasegee River from the U.S. 19 bridge to the Slope Street bridge
- 26 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
27 Alarka Creek from the game land boundary to Fontana Reservoir
28 Calderwood Reservoir from Cheoah Dam to the Tennessee state line
29 Cheoah Reservoir
30 Connelly Creek from Camp Branch to the Tuckasegee River
31 Deep Creek from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Boundary line to the
32 Tuckasegee River
33 Nantahala River from the Macon Co. line to the existing Fontana Lake water level
- 34 (22) Transylvania County
- 35 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
36 Davidson River from the headwaters to Avery Creek, excluding Avery Creek, Looking
37 Glass Creek, Grogan Creek, Cedar Rock Creek and John Rock Branch

- 1 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
2 East Fork French Broad River from East Fork Baptist Church to ~~the~~ 350 yards downstream
3 S.R. 1107 of Whitmire Falls, marked by a sign on both banks
4 bridge
5 Little River from the confluence of Lake Dense to 100 yards downstream of Hooker Falls
- 6 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
7 Davidson River from Avery Creek to the lower USFS boundary
8 French Broad River from the confluence of the North Fork French Broad River and West
9 Fork
10 French Broad River to the Island Ford Rd., S.R. 1110, Access Area
11 Middle Fork French Broad River from upstream of the U.S. 178 bridge to the French Broad
12 River
13 West Fork French Broad River from S.R. 1312 to confluence with North Fork French
14 Broad River
- 15 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
16 The waters located on Gorges State Park
17 Whitewater River from Silver Run Creek to the South Carolina state line
- 18 ~~(E) Wild Trout Natural Bait Waters are as follows:
19 North Fork French Broad River, the game land portion downstream of S.R. 1326
20 Thompson River from S.R. 1152 to the South Carolina state line, except where posted
21 against trespassing~~
- 22 (23) Watauga County
- 23 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
24 Laurel Creek from the confluence of North Fork Laurel Creek and South Fork Laurel Creek
25 to Elk Creek, excluding tributaries
26 Pond Creek from the headwaters to the Locust Ridge Rd. bridge, excluding the pond
27 adjacent to Coffee Lake
- 28 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
29 Lake Coffey
30 Watauga River from the S.R. 1114 bridge to the Valle Crucis Community Park lower
31 boundary
32 Watauga River from the S.R. 1103 bridge to the confluence with Laurel Creek
- 33 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
34 Beaverdam Creek from the confluence of Beaverdam Creek and Little Beaverdam Creek
35 to an unnamed tributary adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1201 and S.R. 1203
36 Beech Creek
37 Buckeye Creek from Buckeye Creek Reservoir dam to Grassy Gap Creek

1 Buckeye Creek Reservoir
2 Cove Creek from the S.R. 1233 bridge at Zionville to the S.R. 1214 bridge at Sherwood
3 Dutch Creek from the second S.R. 1136 bridge to the mouth
4 Elk Creek from the S.R. 1510 bridge at Triplett to the Wilkes Co. line, except where posted
5 against trespassing
6 Laurel Creek from the S.R. 1123 bridge at the S.R. 1157 intersection to the Watauga River
7 Meat Camp Creek from the S.R. 1340 bridge at the S.R. 1384 intersection to N.C. 194
8 Middle Fork New River from adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1539 and U.S. 321 to the
9 South Fork New River
10 Norris Fork Creek
11 South Fork New River from the canoe launch 70 yards upstream of U.S. 421 bridge to the
12 lower boundary of Brookshire Park
13 Stony Fork from the S.R. 1500 bridge at the S.R. 1505 intersection to the Wilkes Co. line
14 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
15 Dutch Creek from the headwaters to the second S.R. 1136 bridge
16 Howard Creek
17 Maine Branch from the headwaters to the North Fork New River
18 North Fork New River from the confluence with Maine Branch and Mine Branch to the
19 Ashe Co. line
20 ~~Watauga River from the Avery Co. line to the S.R. 1580 bridge~~
21 Winkler Creek from the lower bridge on S.R. 1549 to the confluence with the South Fork
22 New River
23 (24) Wilkes County
24 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
25 East Prong Roaring River from Bullhead Creek to the Stone Mountain State Park lower
26 boundary
27 Elk Creek from the Watauga Co. line to the lower boundary of the Blue Ridge Mountain
28 Club
29 Elk Creek, the portion on Leatherwood Mountains development
30 Reddies River from the Town of North Wilkesboro water intake dam to the confluence
31 with the Yadkin River
32 Stone Mountain Creek from the falls at the Alleghany Co. line to the confluence with the
33 East Prong Roaring River and Bullhead Creek
34 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
35 Basin Creek from the S.R. 1730 bridge to the confluence with Lovelace Creek
36 Bell Branch Pond
37 Boundary Line Pond

- 1 Cub Creek from 0.5 miles upstream of the S.R. 2460 bridge to the S.R. 1001 bridge
- 2 Darnell Creek from the downstream ford on S.R. 1569 to the confluence with the North
- 3 Fork Reddies River
- 4 East Prong Roaring River from the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary to the ~~S.R.~~
- 5 ~~4002~~ Low Meadows Lane bridge
- 6 Fall Creek from the S.R. 1300 bridge to the confluence with South Prong Lewis Fork,
- 7 except where posted against trespassing
- 8 Middle Fork Reddies River from the headwaters to the bridge on S.R. 1580
- 9 Middle Prong Roaring River from the headwaters to the second bridge on S.R. 1736
- 10 North Fork Reddies River from the headwaters to the Union School bridge on S.R. 1559
- 11 Pike Creek
- 12 Pike Creek Pond
- 13 South Fork Reddies River from the S.R. 1355 bridge to the confluence with the Middle
- 14 Fork Reddies River
- 15 South Prong Lewis Fork from Fall Creek to the U.S. 421 bridge adjacent to the S.R. 1155
- 16 intersection
- 17 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
- 18 The waters located on Stone Mountain State Park, except East Prong Roaring River from
- 19 Bullhead Creek to the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary where Delayed Harvest
- 20 Trout Waters regulations apply, and Stone Mountain Creek from the falls at the Alleghany
- 21 Co. line to the confluence with the East Prong Roaring River and Bullhead Creek in Stone
- 22 Mountain State Park where Delayed Harvest Trout Waters regulations apply
- 23 (25) Yancey County
- 24 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
- 25 South Toe River from the headwaters to Upper Creek
- 26 Upper Creek
- 27 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
- 28 Cane River from Blackberry Ridge Rd. to the downstream boundary of Cane River County
- 29 Park
- 30 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 31 Bald Mountain Creek, except where posted against trespassing
- 32 Cane River from Bee Branch, S.R. 1110, to Bowlens Creek
- 33 Price Creek from the junction of S.R. 1120 and S.R. 1121 to Indian Creek
- 34 South Toe River from Clear Creek to the lower boundary line of Yancey Co. Recreation
- 35 Park, except where posted against trespassing
- 36 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
- 37 Cattail Creek from the bridge at Mountain Farm Community Rd. to the N.C. 197 bridge

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Licksillet Creek
Middle Creek from the game land boundary to the mouth

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-272; 113-292;
Eff. February 1, 1976;
Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996; July 1, 1995; July 1, 1994; July 1, 1993;
October 1, 1992;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2001;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (approved by RRC on 6/21/01 and 04/18/02);
Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;
Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this amendment replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17,
2003);
Amended Eff. August 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; August 1, 2015; August 1, 2014;
August 1, 2013; August 1, 2012; August 1, 2011; August 1, 2010; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2008; May
1, 2007; May 1, 2006; June 1, 2005;
Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023; August 1, 2022; August 1, 2021; August 1, 2020.

1 **CRAPPIE**

2 (a) There is no daily creel limit for Crappie, except in waters identified in Paragraphs (d) through (h) of this Rule.

3 (b) There is no minimum size limit except in waters identified in Paragraphs (f) through (h) of this Rule.

4 (c) There is no closed season.

5 (d) In Buckhorn Reservoir in Wilson and Nash counties, the daily creel limit is 20 fish.

6 (e) In Lake Chatuge in Clay County, the daily creel limit is 30 fish.

7 (f) In the following waters, the daily creel limit is 20 fish and the minimum size limit is 10 inches:

8 (1) Roanoke River and its tributaries downstream of Roanoke Rapids dam;

9 (2) Cashie River and its tributaries;

10 (3) Middle River and its tributaries;

11 (4) Eastmost River and its tributaries; and

12 (5) Lake Mattamuskeet in Hyde County.

13 (g) In the following waters, the daily creel limit is 20 fish and the minimum size limit is eight inches:

14 (1) Lake Norman;

15 (2) Lake Hyco;

16 (3) Cane Creek Lake in Union County;

17 (4) Lake Hampton in Yadkin County;

18 (5) B. Everett Jordan Reservoir;

19 (6) Shearon Harris Reservoir;

20 ~~(5)~~(7) Tar River downstream of Tar River Reservoir Dam including tributaries;

21 ~~(6)~~(8) Neuse River downstream of Falls Lake Dam including tributaries;

22 ~~(7)~~(9) Haw River downstream of B. Everett Jordan Reservoir Dam including tributaries;

23 ~~(8)~~(10) Deep River downstream of Lockville Dam including tributaries;

24 ~~(9)~~(11) Cape Fear River including tributaries;

25 ~~(10)~~(12) Waccamaw River downstream of Lake Waccamaw Dam including tributaries;

26 ~~(11)~~(13) Lumber River including Drowning Creek including tributaries;

27 ~~(12)~~(14) public fishing waters east of Interstate 95, except Tar River Reservoir in Nash County, Sutton Lake
28 in New Hanover County, and waters listed in Paragraph (f) of this Rule; and

29 ~~(13)~~(15) public waters west of Interstate 77, except Lake ~~Chatuge;~~ and Chatuga.

30 ~~(14) B. Everett Jordan Reservoir.~~

31 (h) In John H. Kerr Reservoir, the daily creel limit is 25 fish and the minimum size limit is nine inches.

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33 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292;*

34 *Eff. November 1, 2013;*

35 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; August 1, 2015;*

36 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;*

37 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023; March 15, 2023; August 1, 2020.*

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET**

2 (a) The daily creel limit for striped mullet and white mullet is ~~200~~ 100 fish per person in ~~aggregate~~. aggregate and no
3 more than 400 fish per boat.

4 (b) There is no minimum size limit.

5 (c) There is no closed season.

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7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305;*

8 *Temporary Adoption Eff. September 1, 2022;*

9 *Eff. March 15, 2023.*

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EXHIBIT L-2

June 6, 2024



Fiscal Note for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Rule Proposals Wildlife Resources Commission - Inland Fisheries

Rule Amendments: 15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS
15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE
15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET

Agency Contact: Melva Bonner
Regulatory Analyst
NC Wildlife Resources Commission
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Fiscal Impact: State Government: Yes
Local Government: No
Private Impact: Yes
Substantial Economic Impact: No

Authority: G.S. 113-134; 113-272; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305

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 rule amendments is shown below, with the full rule text included in Appendix A. Many of the proposed amendments change what anglers may harvest in specific waters and where anglers may harvest certain species. Some of the proposed amendments seek to increase restrictions to protect the resources, while others increase angling opportunity or provide clarity to anglers. All the proposed changes are intended to ensure future angling opportunity, and despite the changes, no impact to angling participation is expected.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY RULE

15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT

The WRC manages approximately 5,300 miles and 2,100 acres of the State's coldwater resources within its Public Mountain Trout Waters (PMTW) program, and in 2022 an estimated 369,968 anglers fished for trout in PMTW and contributed approximately \$1.38 billion to the State's economy.¹ As noted within the WRC's Trout Management Plan, the purpose of PMTW is to use science-based decision making and biologically sound management principles to enhance the quality and quantity of trout populations for continued and varied angling opportunities. By designating waters as PMTW, the WRC is able to enact biologically sound management that ensures the conservation and wise use of trout resources (including efforts focused on the State's only native salmonid: Brook Trout), increase awareness of angling opportunities, invest in infrastructure that provides angling access to all anglers regardless of physical ability, produce and stock approximately 1 million trout annually to provide fisheries, and partner with local (municipalities and counties), state (North Carolina State Parks and North Carolina Forest Service), and federal entities (United States Forest Service) to manage important ecological, cultural, and economic resources.

The proposed amendments will modify the list of waters designated as PMTW and further classified as Hatchery Supported Trout or Delayed Harvest Trout Waters. To reflect changes in partnerships with landowners and angler access, approximately 13.4 miles of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters will be removed; approximately 0.5 miles of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters will be added; and approximately 13.3 miles will be reclassified from Hatchery Supported Trout Waters to Wild Trout Waters. Changes to PMTW boundaries are necessary to clarify designations based upon partnerships with landowners, angler access, and overall trout management.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

Proposed rule amendments that modify the classification of PMTWs will not change on-the-ground management activities. Conservation biologists will change signage as part of their regular duties. The change in signage will not require more than one day, at an estimated one-time cost to the agency of approximately \$304 (\$38/hr x 8 hrs = \$304). New signage will cost the agency approximately \$90 (\$0.90/sign x 100 signs). The total one-time cost to the agency is estimated to be approximately \$394 (\$304 + \$90 = \$394).

¹ Evaluation of North Carolina Trout Anglers' Opinions, Participation and Socioeconomic Impact, 2023.

Local Impact

The proposed amendments have no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Changes to PMTW boundaries will result in a net loss of approximately 12.9 miles of PMTW from public access. While this will be a loss of angling opportunity to the public in specific areas, it represents only 0.24% of the total PMTW.

The WRC does not have a mechanism to determine the specific fiscal impact of the proposed changes to private individuals. These changes will affect anglers' ability to use natural bait. In general, fewer people use natural bait compared to artificial in these specific streams. Reclassifying the waters simplifies the different types of classifications and by not allowing natural bait, the catch and release mortality decreases, leaving more fish in the water to be caught. The loss of 12.9 miles of PMTW could reduce fishing activity within the specific waterbodies. Overall participation in recreational fishing, however, is not expected to decline as a result of the changes. It is expected that anglers will move to other PMTW opportunities that may be local.

15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE

The proposed amendment to the rule will establish an eight-inch minimum size limit and a 20 fish daily creel limit for Crappie for Shearon Harris Reservoir.

A Fall 2023 assessment of Crappie in Shearon Harris Reservoir indicated the fishery was supported by only two year-classes (ages 2 and 3), and no age 1 fish were collected. Anglers have expressed concern that Crappie are being overharvested in the reservoir and have indicated they would prefer a size and creel limit for Crappie. Reduced harvest will allow the population to recover, including more age classes to ensure a stable fishery.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This rule amendment is anticipated to have no state impact as the change is part of routine fisheries management and will not require additional staff time or resources for implementation and enforcement.

Local Impact

This proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Private impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Harvest of Crappie will likely be reduced in the Shearon Harris Reservoir in the near term, but anglers will still be able to fish for other species. As such, the change is not expected to impact overall participation in fishing in the reservoir. The creel limit and minimum size limit should increase the abundance of Crappie and help to establish a quality fishery which, in the longer term, could allow increased Crappie harvest opportunity. The WRC does not have a mechanism to determine the specific impacts of the proposed change.

15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET

The proposed amendment to the rule will reduce the daily creel limit for Mullet from 200 fish to 100 fish and establish a limit of no more than 400 fish total per boat.

According to the Striped Mullet Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 2, Striped Mullet is overfished, and overfishing is occurring. A reduced harvest is expected to allow the Mullet population to recover to a more sustainable level. This change is consistent with the FMP's preferred management option as selected by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission.

Fiscal Impact

State Impact

This rule amendment is anticipated to have no state impact as the change is part of routine fisheries management and will not require additional staff time or resources for implementation and enforcement.

Local Impact

This proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

Private Impact

Private impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Harvest opportunities for Striped Mullet and White Mullet in Inland and Joint Fishing Waters will be reduced, but anglers will still be able to fish for other species. As such, the change is not expected to impact overall participation in fishing. This change is expected to allow these fish populations to recover to a more sustainable level which, in the longer term, could allow increased Striped Mullet and White Mullet harvest opportunity. Although the WRC does not have a mechanism to determine the specific fiscal impact of the proposed change, some shift in what anglers may harvest is likely, particularly in areas known to be popular for fishing these species.

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS**

2 (a) For purposes of this Rule, the following definitions apply:

- 3 (1) "Natural bait" means a living or dead plant or animal, or parts thereof, or prepared substances
4 designed to attract fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- 5 (2) "Single hook" means a fish hook with only one point.
- 6 (3) "Artificial lure" means a fishing lure that neither contains nor has been treated by a substance that
7 attracts fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- 8 (4) "Artificial fly" means one single hook dressed with feathers, hair, thread, tinsel, rubber, or a similar
9 material to which no additional hook, spinner, spoon, or similar device is added.
- 10 (5) "Youth anglers" are individuals under 18 years of age.

11 (b) For purposes of this Rule, 15A NCAC 10C .0316, and 15A NCAC 10D .0104, the following classifications apply:

- 12 (1) "Public Mountain Trout Waters" are the waters included in this Rule and those designated in 15A
13 NCAC 10D .0104.
- 14 (2) "Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters
15 where only artificial flies and lures having one single hook may be used. No trout may be possessed
16 or harvested while fishing these streams. Waters with this designation include tributaries unless
17 otherwise noted.
- 18 (3) "Delayed Harvest Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where between October 1 and
19 one-half hour after sunset on the Friday before the first Saturday of the following June, it is unlawful
20 to possess natural bait, use more than one single hook on an artificial lure, or harvest or possess trout
21 while fishing. From 6:00 a.m. until noon on the first Saturday in June, only youth anglers may fish
22 and these waters have no bait or lure restrictions. From noon on the first Saturday in June until
23 October 1, anglers may fish these waters with no bait or lure restrictions. Waters with this
24 designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 25 (4) "Hatchery Supported Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters that have no bait or lure
26 restrictions. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 27 (5) "Special Regulation Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where watercourse-specific
28 regulations apply. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 29 (6) "Wild Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters identified in this Rule or 15A NCAC 10D
30 .0104. Only artificial lures having only one single hook may be used. No person shall possess natural
31 bait while fishing these waters. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless
32 otherwise noted.
- 33 (7) "Undesignated Waters" are the other waters in the State. These waters have no bait or lure
34 restrictions.

35 (c) Seasons, creel, and size limits. Seasons, creel, and size limits for trout are listed in Rule .0316 of this Subchapter.

36 (d) Classifications. This Paragraph designates waters in each county that have a specific classification. Waters on
37 game lands are designated in 15A NCAC 10D .0104, unless otherwise indicated in this Paragraph. The other waters

1 are classified as Undesignated Waters.

2 (1) Alleghany

3 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

4 Big Pine Creek

5 Bledsoe Creek

6 Brush Creek from the N.C. 21 bridge to the confluence with the Little River, except where
7 posted against trespassing

8 Cranberry Creek

9 Glade Creek

10 Little River from 400 yards upstream of the S.R. 1128 bridge, marked by a sign on each
11 bank, to McCann Dam

12 Meadow Fork

13 Pine Swamp Creek

14 Piney Fork

15 Prathers Creek

16 (B) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:

17 The waters located on Stone Mountain State Park

18 (2) Ashe County

19 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:

20 Big Horse Creek from the Virginia state line to Mud Creek at S.R. 1363, excluding
21 tributaries

22 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

23 Big Horse Creek from the S.R. 1324 bridge to the North Fork New River

24 Helton Creek from 900 yards upstream of the S.R. 1372 bridge, marked by a sign on both
25 banks to a point adjacent to intersection of N.C. 16 and S.R. 1536

26 South Fork New River from the upstream end of Todd Island to the S.R. 1351 bridge

27 Trout Lake

28 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

29 Beaver Creek from N.C. 221 to the confluence of Beaver Creek and South Beaver Creek

30 Big Horse Creek from Mud Creek at S.R. 1363 to the S.R. 1324 bridge

31 Big Laurel Creek from the S.R. 1315 bridge to the confluence with the North Fork New
32 River

33 Buffalo Creek from the S.R. 1133 bridge to the N.C. 194-88 bridge

34 Cranberry Creek from the Alleghany Co. line to the South Fork New River

35 Nathans Creek

36 North Fork New River from the Watauga Co. line to Sharp Dam

37 Old Fields Creek from N.C. 221 to the South Fork New River

- 1 Peak Creek from the upper boundary of the NCDA-NCSU Upper Mountain Research
2 Station to Trout Lake
3 Roan Creek
4 Three Top Creek
5 (3) Avery County
6 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
7 Elk River, the portion on Lees-McRae College property, excluding the millpond
8 Lost Cove Creek, the game land portion, excluding Gragg Prong and Rockhouse Creek
9 Wilson Creek, the game land portion
10 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
11 Boyde Coffey Lake
12 Elk River from the S.R. 1305 crossing immediately upstream of Big Falls to the Tennessee
13 state line
14 Linville River from S.R. 1504 to the Blue Ridge Parkway boundary line, except where
15 posted against trespassing
16 Milltimber Creek
17 North Toe River from Watauga St. to Roby Shoemaker Wetlands and Family Recreational
18 Park, except where posted against trespassing
19 North Toe River from S.R. 1164 to Mitchell Co. line, except where posted against
20 trespassing
21 Squirrel Creek
22 Wildcat Lake
23 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
24 Birchfield Creek
25 Cow Camp Creek
26 Cranberry Creek from the headwaters to the U.S. 19E, N.C. 194, bridge
27 Gragg Prong
28 Horse Creek
29 Kentucky Creek
30 North Harper Creek
31 Plumtree Creek
32 Roaring Creek
33 Rockhouse Creek
34 Shawneehaw Creek, the portion adjacent to Banner Elk Greenway
35 South Harper Creek
36 Webb Prong
37 (4) Buncombe County

- 1 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
2 Carter Creek, the game land portion
- 3 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
4 Bent Creek from the headwaters to the N.C. Arboretum boundary line
5 Cane Creek from the headwaters to the S.R. 3138 bridge
6 Corner Rock Creek from Little Andy Creek to the confluence with Walker Branch
7 Dillingham Creek from Corner Rock Creek to Ivy Creek
8 Ivy Creek from Dillingham Creek to the U.S. 19-23 bridge
9 Lake Powhatan
10 Reems Creek from Sugar Camp Fork to the U.S. 19-23 bridge, except where posted against
11 trespassing
12 Rich Branch from downstream of the confluence with Rocky Branch
13 Stony Creek
14 Swannanoa from the S.R. 2702 bridge near Ridgecrest to the Wood Avenue bridge, at the
15 intersection of N.C. 81 and U.S. 74A in Asheville, except where posted against trespassing
- 16 (5) Burke County
- 17 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
18 Henry Fork, the portion on South Mountains State Park
- 19 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
20 Jacob Fork from Shiny Creek to the lower South Mountains State Park boundary
- 21 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
22 Carroll Creek, the game land portion above S.R. 1405
23 ~~Henry Fork from the lower South Mountain State Park line to S.R. 1919 at Ivy Creek~~
24 Linville River, ~~the portion within Linville Gorge Wilderness area and~~ the portion below
25 Lake James powerhouse from the upstream bridge on S.R. 1223 to Muddy Creek
- 26 (D) Special Regulation Trout Waters are as follows:
27 Catawba River from Muddy Creek to the City of Morganton water intake dam
- 28 (E) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
29 The waters located on South Mountains State Park, except those waters identified in Parts
30 (A) and (B) of this Subparagraph
- 31 (6) Caldwell County
- 32 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
33 Wilson Creek, the game land portion below Lost Cove Creek to Philips Branch
- 34 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
35 Boone Fork Pond
36 Buffalo Creek from the mouth of Joes Creek to McCloud Branch
37 Joes Creek from the first falls upstream of S.R. 1574 to the confluence with Buffalo Creek

- 1 Wilson Creek from Phillips Branch to Brown Mountain Beach Dam, except where posted
2 against trespassing
3 Yadkin River from the Happy Valley Ruritan Community Park to S.R. 1515
4 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
5 Buffalo Creek from the Watauga Co. line to Long Ridge Branch including game land
6 tributaries
7 Joes Creek from the Watauga Co. line to the first falls upstream of the end of S.R. 1574
8 Rockhouse Creek
9 (7) Cherokee County
10 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
11 Davis Creek from the confluence of Bald Creek and Dockery Creek to Hanging Dog Creek
12 Hyatt Creek from Big Dam Branch to the Valley River
13 Junaluska Creek from Ashturn Creek to the Valley River
14 Shuler Creek from the Joe Brown Hwy, S.R. 1325 bridge, to the Tennessee state line
15 Valley River from S.R. 1359 to the U.S. 19 Business bridge in Murphy
16 (B) Special Regulation Trout Waters are as follows:
17 Apalachia Reservoir
18 (8) Clay County
19 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
20 Fires Creek from Rockhouse Creek to the foot bridge in the USFS Fires Creek Picnic Area
21 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
22 Buck Creek, the game land portion downstream of the U.S. 64 bridge
23 Fires Creek from the foot bridge in the USFS Fires Creek Picnic Area to S.R. 1300
24 Tusquitee Creek from Compass Creek to the lower S.R. 1300 bridge
25 (9) Graham County
26 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
27 Snowbird Creek from the USFS footbridge at the old railroad junction to USFS Rd. 2579
28 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
29 Calderwood Reservoir from Cheoah Dam to the Tennessee state line
30 Cheoah Reservoir
31 Panther Creek from the confluence of Stand Creek and Rock Creek to Lake Fontana
32 Santeetlah Creek from Johns Branch to Lake Santeetlah
33 Snowbird Creek from USFS Rd. 2579 to the S.R. 1127 bridge
34 Stecoah Creek from the upper game land boundary to Lake Fontana
35 Tulula Creek from S.R. 1201 to the lower bridge on S.R. 1275
36 West Buffalo Creek
37 Yellow Creek from Lake Santeetlah hydropower pipeline to the Cheoah River

- 1 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
 2 Little Buffalo Creek
 3 South Fork Squally Creek
 4 Squally Creek
- 5 (10) Haywood County
- 6 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 7 West Fork Pigeon River from Queen Creek to the first game land boundary upstream of
 8 Lake Logan
- 9 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 10 Cold Springs Creek from Fall Branch to the Pigeon River
 11 Jonathan Creek from upstream of the S.R. 1302 bridge to the Pigeon River, except where
 12 posted against trespassing
 13 Pigeon River from Stamey Cove Branch to the upstream U.S. 19-23 bridge
 14 Richland Creek from the Russ Avenue, U.S. 276, bridge to the U.S. 19 bridge
 15 West Fork Pigeon River from Tom Creek to Queen Creek
- 16 (11) Henderson County
- 17 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 18 North Fork Mills River, the game land portion below the Hendersonville watershed dam
- 19 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 20 Broad River from the end of S.R. 1611 to the Rutherford Co. line
 21 Cane Creek from the railroad bridge upstream of the S.R. 1551 bridge to the U.S. 25 bridge
 22 Clear Creek from Laurel Fork to S.R. 1582
 23 Green River from the Lake Summit powerhouse to the game land boundary
 24 Hungry River from ~~S.R. 1885~~ Little Hungry River to the Green River
- 25 (12) Jackson County
- 26 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
 27 Flat Creek
 28 Tuckasegee River, the game land portion upstream of Tanasee Creek Lake, including the
 29 Duke Energy powerline corridor
 30 Tuckasegee River the portion upstream from the Clark property
- 31 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 32 Tuckasegee River from downstream of the N.C. 107 bridge to the falls located 275 yards
 33 upstream of the U.S. 23-441 bridge, marked by a sign on both banks
- 34 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 35 Balsam Lake
 36 Bear Creek Lake
 37 Cedar Cliff Lake

- 1 Cullowhee Creek from Tilley Creek to the Tuckasegee River
 2 Dark Ridge Creek from Jones Creek to Scott Creek
 3 Greens Creek from Greens Creek Baptist Church on S.R. 1370 to Savannah Creek
 4 Savannah Creek from Shell Branch to Cagle Branch
 5 Scott Creek from Dark Ridge Creek to the Tuckasegee River, except where posted against
 6 trespassing
 7 Tanasee Creek Lake
 8 Tuckasegee River from John Brown Branch to the downstream N.C. 107 bridge
 9 Tuckasegee River from the falls located 275 yards upstream of the U.S. 23-441 bridge,
 10 marked by a sign on both banks, to the S.R. 1534 bridge at Wilmont
 11 Wolf Creek Lake
 12 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
 13 Gage Creek
 14 North Fork Scott Creek
 15 Tanasee Creek
 16 Whitewater River from Silver Run Creek to the South Carolina state line
 17 Wolf Creek except Balsam Lake and Wolf Creek Lake
 18 (13) Macon County
 19 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 20 Nantahala River from Whiteoak Creek to the Nantahala hydropower discharge canal
 21 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 22 Burningtown Creek from Left Prong to the Little Tennessee River
 23 Cartoogechaye Creek from downstream of the U.S. 64 bridge to the Little Tennessee River
 24 Cliffside Lake
 25 Cullasaja River from Sequoyah Dam to the U.S. 64 bridge near the junction of S.R. 1672
 26 Nantahala River from Dicks Creek to Whiteoak Creek
 27 Nantahala River from the Nantahala hydropower discharge canal to the Swain Co. line
 28 Queens Creek Lake
 29 (14) Madison County
 30 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 31 Big Laurel Creek from the N.C. 208 bridge to the U.S. 25-70 bridge
 32 Shelton Laurel Creek from the N.C. 208 bridge at Belva to the confluence with Big Laurel
 33 Creek
 34 Spring Creek from the N.C. 209 bridge at the Hot Springs city limits to the iron bridge at
 35 end of Andrews Ave.
 36 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 37 Big Laurel Creek from Puncheon Fork to the S.R. 1318, Big Laurel Rd., bridge downstream

1 of Bearpen Branch
 2 Big Pine Creek from the S.R. 1151 bridge to the French Broad River
 3 Little Ivy Creek from the confluence of Middle Fork and Paint Fork at Beech Glen to the
 4 confluence with Ivy Creek at Forks of Ivy
 5 Max Patch Pond
 6 Meadow Fork Creek from Meadow Fork Campground to Spring Creek
 7 Puncheon Fork from Wolf Laurel Branch to Big Laurel Creek
 8 Roaring Fork from Fall Branch to Meadow Fork
 9 Shelton Laurel Creek from the confluence of Big Creek and Mill Creek to the N.C. 208
 10 bridge at Belva
 11 Shut-in Creek
 12 Spillcorn Creek
 13 Spring Creek from the junction of N.C. 209 and N.C. 63 to the confluence with Meadow
 14 Fork
 15 West Fork Shut-in Creek from the lower game land boundary to the confluence with East
 16 Fork Shut-in Creek

17 (15) McDowell County

18 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:

19 Newberry Creek, the game land portion

20 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

21 Catawba River, the portion adjacent to the Marion Greenway

22 Curtis Creek, the game land portion downstream of the USFS boundary at Deep Branch

23 Mill Creek from the U.S. 70 bridge to the I-40 bridge

24 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

25 Armstrong Creek from the Cato Holler line downstream to the upper Greenlee line

26 Catawba River from the Catawba Falls Campground to the Old Fort Recreation Park

27 Little Buck Creek, the game land portion

28 North Fork Catawba River from the headwaters to North Cove School at the S.R. 1569
 29 bridge

30 (16) Mitchell County

31 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

32 Cane Creek from the N.C. 226 bridge to the S.R. 1189 bridge

33 North Toe River from the U.S. 19E bridge to the N.C. 226 bridge

34 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

35 Big Rock Creek from the headwaters to ~~the N.C. 226 bridge at the S.R. 1307 intersection~~
 36 the S.R. 1325 bridge

37 Cane Creek from S.R. 1219 to the N.C. 226 bridge

- 1 East Fork Grassy Creek
 2 Grassy Creek from East Fork Grassy Creek to the mouth
 3 ~~Little Rock Creek from the Green Creek bridge to Big Rock Creek, except where posted~~
 4 ~~against trespassing~~
 5 North Toe River from the Avery Co. line to the S.R. 1121 bridge
 6 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
 7 Green Creek from the headwaters to the Green Creek bridge, except where posted against
 8 trespassing
 9 Little Rock Creek the portion upstream of the Green Creek bridge, including the tributaries,
 10 except where posted against trespassing
 11 Wiles Creek from the game land boundary to the mouth
 12 (17) Polk County
 13 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 14 Green River from the Fishtop Falls Access Area to the confluence with Cove Creek
 15 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 16 Green River from the mouth of Cove Creek to the natural gas pipeline crossing
 17 North Pacolet River from Joels Creek to the N.C. 108 bridge
 18 (18) Rutherford County
 19 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 20 Broad River from the Henderson Co. line to the U.S. 64/74 bridge, except where posted
 21 against trespassing
 22 (19) Stokes County
 23 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 24 Dan River from the Virginia state line downstream to a point 200 yards below the end of
 25 S.R. 1421
 26 (20) Surry County
 27 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
 28 Ararat River, the portion adjacent to the Ararat River Greenway downstream of the N.C.
 29 103 bridge
 30 Mitchell River from 0.6 miles upstream of the end of S.R. 1333 to the lowermost bridge
 31 on S.R. 1330
 32 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
 33 ~~Ararat River from the S.R. 1727 bridge to~~ River, the portion adjacent to the Ararat River
 34 Greenway upstream of the N.C. 103 bridge
 35 Big Elkin Creek from the dam 440 yards upstream of the N.C. 268 bridge to a point 265
 36 yards downstream of N.C. 268, marked by a sign on both banks
 37 Fisher River from the Virginia state line to the I-77 bridge

- 1 Little Fisher River from the Virginia state line to the N.C. 89 bridge
2 Lovills Creek from the U.S. 52 Business bridge to the Ararat River
3 Pauls Creek from the Virginia state line to 0.3 miles below the S.R. 1625 bridge
4 (21) Swain County
5 (A) Delayed Harvest Waters Trout Waters are as follows:
6 Tuckasegee River from the U.S. 19 bridge to the Slope Street bridge
7 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
8 Alarka Creek from the game land boundary to Fontana Reservoir
9 Calderwood Reservoir from Cheoah Dam to the Tennessee state line
10 Cheoah Reservoir
11 Connelly Creek from Camp Branch to the Tuckasegee River
12 Deep Creek from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Boundary line to the
13 Tuckasegee River
14 Nantahala River from the Macon Co. line to the existing Fontana Lake water level
15 (22) Transylvania County
16 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
17 Davidson River from the headwaters to Avery Creek, excluding Avery Creek, Looking
18 Glass Creek, Grogan Creek, Cedar Rock Creek and John Rock Branch
19 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
20 East Fork French Broad River from East Fork Baptist Church to ~~the~~ 350 yards downstream
21 S.R. 107 bridge of Whitmire Falls, marked by a sign on both banks
22 Little River from the confluence of Lake Dense to 100 yards downstream of Hooker Falls
23 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
24 Davidson River from Avery Creek to the lower USFS boundary
25 French Broad River from the confluence of the North Fork French Broad River and west
26 Fork
27 French Broad River to the Island Ford Rd., S.R. 1110, Access Area
28 Middle Fork French Broad River from upstream of the U.S. 178 bridge to the French Broad
29 River
30 West Fork French Broad River from S.R. 1312 to confluence with North Fork French
31 Broad River
32 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
33 The waters located on Gorges State Park
34 Whitewater River from Silver Run Creek to the South Carolina state line
35 (23) Watauga County
36 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
37 Laurel Creek from the confluence of North Fork Laurel Creek and South Fork Laurel Creek

- 1 to Elk Creek, excluding tributaries
2 Pond Creek from the headwaters to the Locust Ridge Rd. bridge, excluding the pond
3 adjacent to Coffee Lake
- 4 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
5 Lake Coffey
6 Watauga River from the S.R. 1114 bridge to the Valle Crucis Community Park lower
7 boundary
8 Watauga River from the S.R. 1103 bridge to the confluence with Laurel Creek
- 9 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
10 Beaverdam Creek from the confluence of Beaverdam Creek and Little Beaverdam Creek
11 to an unnamed tributary adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1201 and S.R. 1203
12 Beech Creek
13 Buckeye Creek from Buckeye Creek Reservoir dam to Grassy Gap Creek
14 Buckeye Creek Reservoir
15 Cove Creek from the S.R. 1233 bridge at Zionville to the S.R. 1214 bridge at Sherwood
16 Dutch Creek from the second S.R. 1136 bridge to the mouth
17 Elk Creek from the S.R. 1510 bridge at Triplett to the Wilkes Co. line, except where posted
18 against trespassing
19 Laurel Creek from the S.R. 1123 bridge at the S.R. 1157 intersection to the Watauga River
20 Meat Camp Creek from the S.R. 1340 bridge at the S.R. 1384 intersection to N.C. 194
21 Middle Fork New River from adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1539 and U.S. 321 to the
22 South Fork New River
23 Norris Fork Creek
24 South Fork New River from the canoe launch 70 yards upstream of U.S. 421 bridge to the
25 lower boundary of Brookshire Park
26 Stony Fork from the S.R. 1500 bridge at the S.R. 1505 intersection to the Wilkes Co. line
- 27 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
28 Dutch Creek from the headwaters to the second S.R. 1136 bridge
29 Howard Creek
30 Maine Branch from the headwaters to the North Fork New River
31 North Fork New River from the confluence with Maine Branch and Mine Branch to the
32 Ashe Co. line
33 Winkler Creek from the lower bridge on S.R. 1549 to the confluence with the South Fork
34 New River
- 35 (24) Wilkes County
36 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:
37 East Prong Roaring River from Bullhead Creek to the Stone Mountain State Park lower

- 1 boundary
2 Elk Creek from the Watauga Co. line to the lower boundary of the Blue Ridge Mountain
3 Club
4 Elk Creek, the portion on Leatherwood Mountains development
5 Reddies River from the Town of North Wilkesboro water intake dam to the confluence
6 with the Yadkin River
7 Stone Mountain Creek from the falls at the Alleghany Co. line to the confluence with the
8 East Prong Roaring River and Bullhead Creek
9 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
10 Basin Creek from the S.R. 1730 bridge to the confluence with Lovelace Creek
11 Bell Branch Pond
12 Boundary Line Pond
13 Cub Creek from 0.5 miles upstream of the S.R. 2460 bridge to the S.R. 1001 bridge
14 Darnell Creek from the downstream ford on S.R. 1569 to the confluence with the North
15 Fork Reddies River
16 East Prong Roaring River from the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary to the Low
17 Meadows Lane bridge
18 Fall Creek from the S.R. 1300 bridge to the confluence with South Prong Lewis Fork,
19 except where posted against trespassing
20 Middle Fork Reddies River from the headwaters to the bridge on S.R. 1580
21 Middle Prong Roaring River from the headwaters to the second bridge on S.R. 1736
22 North Fork Reddies River from the headwaters to the Union School bridge on S.R. 1559
23 Pike Creek
24 Pike Creek Pond
25 South Fork Reddies River from the S.R. 1355 bridge to the confluence with the Middle
26 Fork Reddies River
27 South Prong Lewis Fork from Fall Creek to the U.S. 421 bridge adjacent to the S.R. 1155
28 intersection
29 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
30 The waters located on Stone Mountain State Park, except East Prong Roaring River from
31 Bullhead Creek to the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary where Delayed Harvest
32 Trout Waters regulations apply, and Stone Mountain Creek from the falls at the Alleghany
33 Co. line to the confluence with the East Prong Roaring River and Bullhead Creek in Stone
34 Mountain State Park where Delayed Harvest Trout Waters regulations apply
35 (25) Yancey County
36 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
37 South Toe River from the headwaters to Upper Creek

1 Upper Creek

2 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

3 Cane River from Blackberry Ridge Rd. to the downstream boundary of Cane River County
4 Park

5 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

6 Bald Mountain Creek, except where posted against trespassing

7 Cane River from Bee Branch, S.R. 1110, to Bowlens Creek

8 Price Creek from the junction of S.R. 1120 and S.R. 1121 to Indian Creek

9 South Toe River from Clear Creek to the lower boundary line of Yancey Co. Recreation
10 Park, except where posted against trespassing

11 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:

12 Cattail Creek from the bridge at Mountain Farm Community Rd. to the N.C. 197 bridge

13 Licksillet Creek

14 Middle Creek from the game land boundary to the mouth
15

16 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-272; 113-292;*

17 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*

18 *Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996; July 1, 1995; July 1, 1994; July 1, 1993;*
19 *October 1, 1992;*

20 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;*

21 *Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;*

22 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2001;*

23 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002;*

24 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (approved by RRC on 6/21/01 and 04/18/02);*

25 *Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;*

26 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this amendment replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17,*
27 *2003);*

28 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; August 1, 2015; August 1, 2014;*

29 *August 1, 2013; August 1, 2012; August 1, 2011; August 1, 2010; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2008; May*
30 *1, 2007; May 1, 2006; June 1, 2005;*

31 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;*

32 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023; August 1, 2022; August 1, 2021; August 1, 2020.*
33
34

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE**

2 (a) There is no daily creel limit for Crappie, except in waters identified in Paragraphs (d) through (h) of this Rule.

3 (b) There is no minimum size limit except in waters identified in Paragraphs (f) through (h) of this Rule.

4 (c) There is no closed season.

5 (d) In Buckhorn Reservoir in Wilson and Nash counties, the daily creel limit is 20 fish.

6 (e) In Lake Chatuge in Clay County, the daily creel limit is 30 fish.

7 (f) In the following waters, the daily creel limit is 20 fish and the minimum size limit is 10 inches:

8 (1) Roanoke River and its tributaries downstream of Roanoke Rapids dam;

9 (2) Cashie River and its tributaries;

10 (3) Middle River and its tributaries;

11 (4) Eastmost River and its tributaries; and

12 (5) Lake Mattamuskeet in Hyde County.

13 (g) In the following waters, the daily creel limit is 20 fish and the minimum size limit is eight inches:

14 (1) Lake Norman;

15 (2) Lake Hycó;

16 (3) Cane Creek Lake in Union County;

17 (4) Lake Hampton in Yadkin County;

18 (5) B. Everett Jordan Reservoir;

19 (6) Shearon Harris Reservoir;

20 ~~(5)(7)~~ Tar River downstream of Tar River Reservoir Dam including tributaries;

21 ~~(6)(8)~~ Neuse River downstream of Falls Lake Dam including tributaries;

22 ~~(7)(9)~~ Haw River downstream of B. Everett Jordan Reservoir Dam including tributaries;

23 ~~(8)(10)~~ Deep River downstream of Lockville Dam including tributaries;

24 ~~(9)(11)~~ Cape Fear River including tributaries;

25 ~~(10)(12)~~ Waccamaw River downstream of Lake Waccamaw Dam including tributaries;

26 ~~(11)(13)~~ Lumber River including Drowning Creek including tributaries;

27 ~~(12)(14)~~ public fishing waters east of Interstate 95, except Tar River Reservoir in Nash County, Sutton Lake
28 in New Hanover County, and waters listed in Paragraph (f) of this Rule; and

29 ~~(13)(15)~~ public waters west of Interstate 77, except Lake ~~Chatuge;~~ and Chatuga.

30 ~~(14) B. Everett Jordan Reservoir.~~

31 (h) In John H. Kerr Reservoir, the daily creel limit is 25 fish and the minimum size limit is nine inches.

32

33 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292;*

34 *Eff. November 1, 2013;*

35 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; August 1, 2015;*

36 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;*

37 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023; March 15, 2023; August 1, 2020.*

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET**

2 (a) The daily creel limit for striped mullet and white mullet is ~~200~~ 100 fish per person in ~~aggregate.~~ aggregate and no
3 more than 400 fish per boat.

4 (b) There is no minimum size limit.

5 (c) There is no closed season.

6

7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305;*

8 *Temporary Adoption Eff. September 1, 2022;*

9 *Eff. March 15, 2023.*

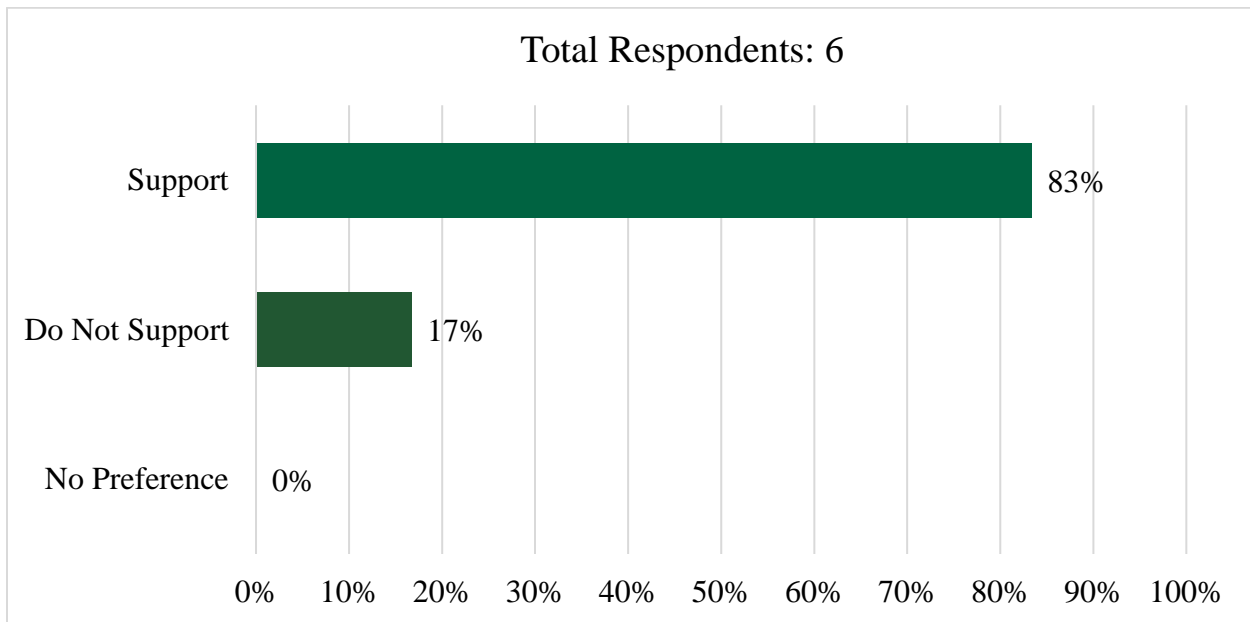
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EXHIBIT M-1

June 6, 2024



Summary of Public Comments on Proposed Temporary Amendments to Striped Mullet and White Mullet Rule 15A NCAC 10C .0422



District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	NC - Not Specified	Out of State	Totals
Support	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	5
Do Not Support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
No Preference	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	6

One public hearing was held on May 14, 2024.

EXHIBIT M-2

June 6, 2024



Proposed Temporary Amendments to 15A NCAC 10C .0422 Striped Mullet and White Mullet Rule Recommended by Agency Staff for Adoption

To be consistent with the preferred management option for the Striped Mullet Fisheries Management Plan Amendment 2, the proposed rule amendment will reduce the daily creel limit for Striped and White Mullet from 200 to 100 fish in aggregate and establish a limit of no more than 400 fish total per boat.

15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET**

2 (a) The daily creel limit for striped mullet and white mullet is ~~200~~ 100 fish per person in aggregate and no more than
3 400 fish per boat.

4 (b) There is no minimum size limit.

5 (c) There is no closed season.

6

7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305;*

8 *Temporary Adoption Eff. September 1, 2022;*

9 *Eff. March 15, 2023.*

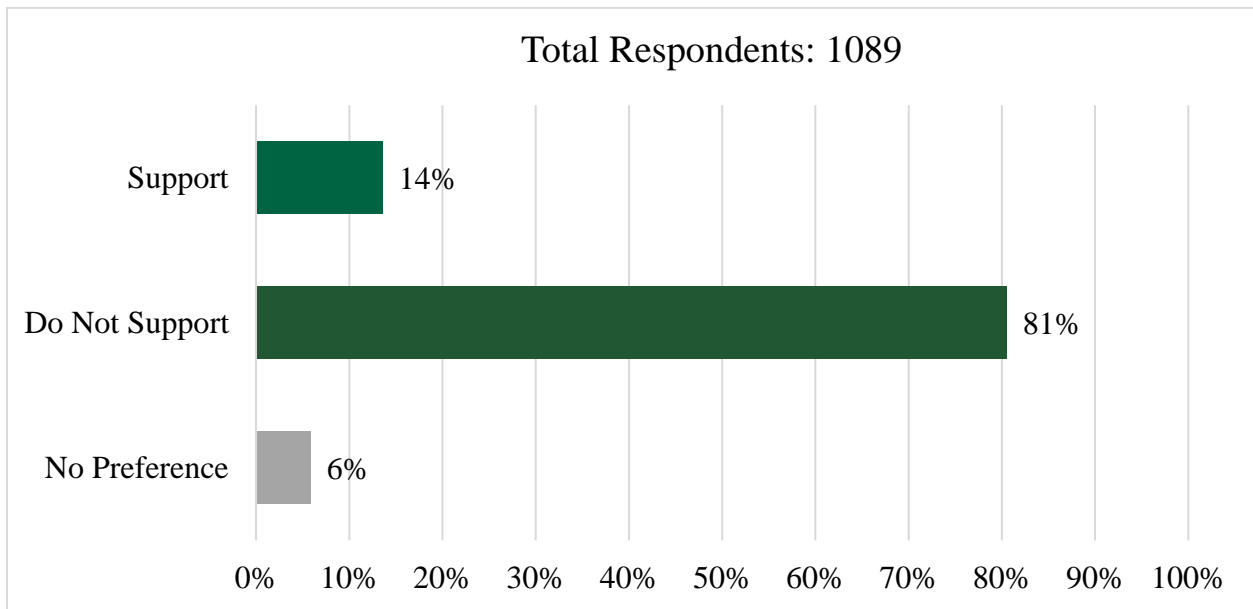
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EXHIBIT N-1

June 6, 2024



Summary of Public Comments on Proposed Temporary Harvest Reporting Requirements Rule 15A NCAC 10C .0218



NOTE: Total % > 100% due to rounding

District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	NC - Not Specified	Out of State	Totals
Support	9	41	33	9	21	11	3	3	9	5	4	148
Do Not Support	57	234	120	71	58	59	49	32	18	142	37	877
No Preference	2	17	5	4	5	3	4	1	1	22	0	64
Total	68	292	158	84	84	73	56	36	28	169	41	1,089

EXHIBIT N-2

June 6, 2024



Proposed Temporary Harvest Reporting Requirements Rule 15A NCAC 10C .0218 Recommended by Agency Staff for Adoption

The North Carolina General Assembly passed Session Law 2023-137 in the fall of 2023, Section 6 of this legislation requires any person who recreationally harvests the following species to report the harvest to the Division of Marine Fisheries:

- Flounder;
- Red Drum;
- Spotted Seatrout;
- Striped Bass; and
- Weakfish.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission must implement rules requiring reporting of harvest of these species from inland and joint fishing waters.

15A NCAC 10C .0218 HARVEST REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1 15A NCAC 10C .0218 is proposed for adoption under temporary procedures as follows:

2
3 **15A NCAC 10C .0218 HARVEST REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

4 (a) For the purpose of this Rule, the following definitions shall apply:

5 (1) “Division” means the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

6 (2) “inland fishing waters adjacent to joint or coastal fishing waters” means inland fishing waters
7 upstream of joint or coastal fishing waters of the Roanoke, Tar, Neuse, and Cape Fear rivers and
8 their tributaries extending upstream to the first impoundment of the main course on the river or its
9 tributaries, and in all other inland fishing waters east of Interstate 95 except in the Lumber River
10 and its tributaries.

11 (3) "harvest" means catching a fish and reducing it to permanent possession.

12 (b) An individual who harvests the following species from joint fishing waters or inland fishing waters adjacent to
13 joint or coastal fishing waters shall report the information required in Paragraph (b) of Rule 15A NCAC 03I .0124 to
14 the Division at <https://www.ncmarinefisheries.net> or record the harvest on a Division-issued report card when harvest
15 is complete:

16 (1) flounder;

17 (2) red drum;

18 (3) spotted seatrout;

19 (4) striped bass; and

20 (5) weakfish.

21 (c) Individuals using a Division-issued report card shall report the information electronically at
22 <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries> <https://www.ncmarinefisheries.net> by midnight the day
23 after harvest is complete.

24 (d) An individual shall not remove the head or tail or otherwise change the appearance of the fish to render it
25 impractical to identify, count, or measure while fishing or afield and until harvest has been recorded or reported.

26 (e) The requirements of this Rule are effective in accordance with the schedule in S.L. 2023-137, s. 6(f).

27
28 History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-170.3;
29

EXHIBIT O

June 6, 2024



Proposed Temporary Amendments to 15A NCAC 10C .0307 Flounder Rule Recommended by Agency Staff for Public Notice, Comment, and Presentation at Public Hearing

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) has stated they will not open the recreational flounder harvest season in 2024 due to the recreational sector exceeding the 2023 harvest allotment last year. To be consistent with the annual quota management measure of the North Carolina Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3 and with the NCDMF closure of the recreational season in coastal waters, the proposed amendments will close the flounder harvest season in 2024.

15A NCAC 10C .0307 FLOUNDER

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0307 FLOUNDER**

2 ~~(a) The daily creel limit for flounder is [one] four fish.~~

3 ~~(b) The minimum size limit is 15 inches.~~

4 ~~(c) The season for taking and possessing flounder is September 1 through September 14.~~

5 Flounder shall not be taken or possessed.

6

7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305;*

8 *Eff. November 1, 2013;*

9 *Readopted Eff. October 1, 2021;*

10 *Temporary Amendment Eff. September 1, 2022;*

11 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; March 15, 2023.*

12