



## **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 11<sup>th</sup> – egg laying) and begin incubating nests (April 24<sup>th</sup>). 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.

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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.*

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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.

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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.*  
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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.

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

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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.*

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