Public Hearings

Applying to 2016–2017
Fishing, Hunting & Trapping Seasons

January 2016

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
ncwildlife.org
State of North Carolina
Pat McCrory, Governor

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

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John A. Stone ........................................................... Jackson Springs
Brian White ................................................................. Manteo
Landon Zimmer .......................................................... Wilmington

Gordon Myers, Executive Director ........................................ Raleigh
Thank you for attending this public hearing. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appreciates the investment of your time here, to show your concern for fish and wildlife programs in North Carolina. We welcome your opinions and suggestions about these programs.

All state regulatory agencies must follow certain procedures that govern how rules are adopted under the Administrative Procedure Act. Public notice is required and proposed regulations are published in the North Carolina Register. A lengthy comment period follows, which includes these public hearings. These procedures are designed to give the proposed regulations wide public exposure and to offer the public opportunities to respond with support, opposition or suggestions.

For fish and wildlife regulations, this process begins at the previous year's hearings and continues throughout the year. We consider all suggestions presented to us during the past year as starting points for these proposed regulations. As a result, the proposals presented in this document are a reflection of public, staff and committee input. The commissioners approved these proposals for publication in the North Carolina Register and for presentation at these public hearings.

In February 2016, after considering comments from the public and consulting with staff, the Wildlife Resources Commission will make final decisions on the proposed regulations. The rules that are adopted will then be available in the N.C. Inland Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest for 2016–2017. The Regulations Digest will be available on August 1, 2016 from your licensing agent and on the NCWRC website at ncwildlife.org.

We appreciate your participation and look forward to hearing your comments. With your help, we will provide the best possible fish and wildlife programs for your enjoyment today and in the future.

Sincerely,

John Litton Clark, Chairman
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
To Sportsmen Attending
Regulations Public Hearings

This booklet is designed to assist those in attendance at the public hearings in the nine wildlife districts. It contains a brief description of the major changes that the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is proposing.

Hearing Procedures

For a schedule of hearings, see page 3, visit our website, ncwildlife.org, or call the Wildlife Resources Commission.

Please review the proposals in this booklet when you arrive and complete the record form if you want to comment. During the hearing, a Commission official will ask for your comments, opinions or suggestions. Your comments are welcome, and each will be considered. In the interest of time and fairness to others who want to speak, please be concise. We ask that your comments on each proposed change be confined to the period allotted for discussions of that proposal. Adequate time to discuss each proposal will be allowed before moving to the next item.

After the proposed changes contained in this booklet are discussed, time will be allotted to discuss other matters of interest that you may want to present to the Commission for consideration. We earnestly solicit your input toward better ideas for wildlife regulations. We also ask you to remember that changing regulations in the N.C. Administrative Code can be a lengthy process. It often takes more than one year to change regulations to include your proposals. These public hearings are, however, the proper starting point for your suggestions.

What Happens Next?

A written record of all public comments will be compiled and reviewed by Commission staff and by the commissioners. Your recommendations, biological information from field surveys, harvest records, changes in habitat, fish and wildlife populations, breeding stocks, game lands use and other conditions that affect wildlife will be considered.

You are encouraged to speak at the public hearings or to write to the Commission, if you have recommendations. We will accept public input about changes to the fishing, hunting and trapping regulations until the close of the public comment period on Jan. 25, 2016. You can also comment on regulation proposals during the comment period on the Commission website, ncwildlife.org.

The Part that Hearings Play

The Commission has been charged with managing North Carolina’s wildlife resources since 1947. Setting forth rules is one means by which we manage those resources to serve the recreational and economic interests of the state’s citizens. We rely on the public’s cooperation and assistance in this endeavor. Thus, we urge you to participate in these public hearings and to submit your opinions, either verbally or in writing, to the staff of the Commission.
Schedule for the 2016 Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Public Hearings

Before you make final plans to attend, check the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission website for current updates, including weather-related rescheduling, at ncwildlife.org.

Hearing Time: 7 p.m.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>District</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tue., Jan. 5</td>
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<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Bladen Community College</td>
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<td>Graham</td>
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<td>Thu., Jan. 14</td>
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<td>Tue., Jan. 19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Edenton</td>
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<td>Wed., Jan. 20</td>
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<td>New Bern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu., Jan. 21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rocky Mount</td>
<td>Nash Community College</td>
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Limits to the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Rule-making Process

The General Assembly declares, through state statutes, which matters of fish, wildlife and land management the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission can regulate through its rules. Some aspects of wildlife and fish management, hunting, fishing and human/wildlife interaction are legislated directly. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appreciates the interest of North Carolina’s sportsmen in the state’s wildlife resources and respectfully considers all suggestions within its authority to change regulations.

Get N.C. Wildlife Update—news including season dates, bag limits, legislative updates and more—delivered to your Inbox from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Go to ncwildlife.org/enews.
RULE-MAKING PROCESS

**Step 1:** The public, Commission staff, Commission committees, conservation partners and other stakeholders propose new or amended hunting, fishing, trapping, land management or other regulations.

**Step 2:** Commission staff consider proposals from conservation, enforcement and management perspectives.

**Step 3:** Proposals and staff analysis are presented to the Executive Director for his consideration.

**Step 4:** Proposals are reviewed by Commission committees. Full Commission votes on which proposals to be presented at public hearings.

**Step 5:** The public comments on proposals through an online comment form at ncwildlife.org, e-mails, letters and in person at statewide public hearings.
Step 6: The Commission considers comments submitted during the comment period and votes to reject proposals, adopt as presented or adopt in a modified form.

Step 7: Adopted rules are filed with the Rules Review Commission for approval.

Step 8: The Rules Review Commission approves or disapproves rules. Rules that receive 10 or more letters requesting legislative review are delayed pending legislative review.

Step 9: Approved rules are entered into the Administrative Code and written into the Regulations Digest.
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Districts

Report Wildlife Violations

Toll-Free Number
800-662-7137

In the Raleigh area, call: 919-707-0040
Proposed Changes in Fishing Regulations for 2016–2017

The following changes in the statewide fishing regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Trout

F1. Modify the lower boundary of Delayed Harvest Trout Waters on the Ararat River in Surry County, adding approximately 1.2 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The designated reach will be the portion of the Ararat River adjacent to the Ararat River Greenway in Mount Airy.

   **Justification:** The City of Mount Airy is lengthening the Ararat River Greenway. The proposed change will provide additional angling opportunities on the Ararat River under Delayed Harvest Trout Waters classification.

F2. Modify the lower boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on the East Prong Roaring River in Wilkes County, removing approximately 1.3 miles of Public Mountain Trout Waters. The new designated reach will be from the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary to the S.R. 1002 bridge.

   **Justification:** The reach to be removed from Public Mountain Trout Waters is under private ownership and is posted against trespass. The proposed change will modify the designated reach to reflect the section accessible to the public and being stocked.

F3. Clarify that the portion of Three Top Creek located on Three Top Creek Game Land in Ashe County is classified as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters.

   **Justification:** Three Top Creek is currently classified as Hatchery Supported Trout Waters except the portion on game land; however, the entire creek is stocked and accessible to the public. The proposed change will eliminate angler confusion.

F4. Clarify the upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Savannah Creek in Jackson County. The designated reach will be from Shell Branch to Cagle Branch.

   **Justification:** The current upper boundary of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters on Savannah Creek is listed as the S.R. 1300 bridge; however, S.R. 1300 runs alongside of the creek and crosses it multiple times. The proposed change will identify one geographically distinct boundary and will eliminate angler confusion.

Black Bass

F5. Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for black bass in Lake Chatuge (Clay County) by increasing the daily creel limit from 5 fish to 10 fish in aggregate, decreasing the minimum size limit for Largemouth Bass from 14 inches except that two fish less than 14 inches can be retained in the daily creel to
12 inches with no exception, and removing the minimum size limit of 14 inches for Smallmouth and Spotted Bass.

**Justification:** Lake Chatuge is bisected by the North Carolina/Georgia State Line. There is a reciprocal fishing license agreement between the two states, but fishing regulations differ which unnecessarily complicates fishing on the lake. This proposal aligns black bass regulations on Lake Chatuge with the statewide regulations in Georgia. Georgia Department of Natural Resources has traditionally taken the lead on fisheries management at Lake Chatuge in coordination with Commission staff. In the North Carolina portion of the lake, the statewide regulations for black bass currently apply by default.

**F6.** Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for black bass in Lake Hampton (Yadkin County) by allowing no Largemouth Bass between 16 and 20 inches to be possessed. The daily creel limit will remain 5 fish, and the minimum size limit will remain 14 inches except that two fish less than 14 inches can be retained in the daily creel.

**Justification:** Lake Hampton opened to fishing in fall 2014, and since that time fishing pressure has been extremely high. Yadkin County staff has observed harvest of larger Largemouth Bass from the lake. The proposed change will protect Largemouth Bass from overharvest and maintain a quality fishery in Lake Hampton.

**F7.** Modify the exception to the general statewide regulation for black bass in the New River in Alleghany County downstream of Fields Dam (Grayson County, Virginia) by increasing the slot limit of 14 to 20 inches with only one fish greater than 20 inches to a slot limit of 14 to 22 inches with only one fish greater than 22 inches. The daily creel limit will remain 5 fish.

**Justification:** The proposed change will synchronize the black bass size limit in the North Carolina portion of the New River downstream of Fields Dam with the size limit implemented by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries on January 1, 2015 for the Virginia portion of the river. A majority of the river downstream of Fields Dam is located in Virginia, and only a few short sections loop back into North Carolina. There is a reciprocal fishing license agreement between the two states for this reach of the New River. This proposal will eliminate confusion for anglers fishing the interstate reach.

**Crappie**

**F8.** Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for crappie in Lake Chatuge (Clay County) by implementing 30-fish daily creel limit. There is no minimum size limit.

**Justification:** Lake Chatuge is bisected by the North Carolina/Georgia State Line. There is a reciprocal fishing license agreement between the two states, but fishing regulations differ which unnecessarily complicates fishing on the lake. This proposal aligns crappie regulations on Lake Chatuge with the statewide regulations in Georgia. Georgia Department of Natural Resources has traditionally taken the lead on fisheries management at Lake Chatuge in
coordination with Commission staff. In the North Carolina portion of the lake, the statewide regulations for crappie currently apply by default.

**F9.** Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for crappie in Lake Hampton (Yadkin County) by implementing an 8-inch minimum size limit and a 20-fish daily creel limit.

**Justification:** Lake Hampton opened to fishing in fall 2014, and since that time fishing pressure has been extremely high. Crappie anglers are generally harvest-oriented. The proposed size and creel limits will restrict angler harvest of smaller crappie to help maintain a quality fishery in Lake Hampton.

**Striped Bass and Bodie Bass (Hybrid Striped Bass)**

**F10.** Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for Striped Bass and Bodie Bass in Lake Chatuge (Clay County) by increasing the daily creel limit from four fish to 15 fish in aggregate, removing the minimum size limit of 20 inches, and allowing only two fish greater than 22 inches to be retained.

**Justification:** Lake Chatuge is bisected by the North Carolina/Georgia State Line. There is a reciprocal fishing license agreement between the two states, but fishing regulations differ which unnecessarily complicates fishing on the lake. This proposal aligns Hybrid Striped Bass regulations on Lake Chatuge with the statewide regulations in Georgia. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, with the support of the Commission, has been stocking Hybrid Striped Bass in Lake Chatuge since 2010. This management action has been successful in creating a Hybrid Striped Bass fishery. In the North Carolina portion of the lake, the statewide regulations for Hybrid Striped Bass currently apply by default.

**White Perch**

**F11.** Prohibit transport, possession or release of live White Perch in waters in and west of Haywood, Buncombe, and Rutherford counties.

**Justification:** Popular fisheries for White Bass, crappie, and Walleye are becoming increasingly impaired in reservoirs where White Perch have become established. Delaying the introduction of White Perch into additional reservoirs in western North Carolina will help protect these sport fisheries in those reservoirs. The use of Haywood, Buncombe, and Rutherford counties as a boundary will protect all reservoirs of the greater Tennessee River Valley in western North Carolina as well as those of the upper Broad River Basin.

**Blue Catfish**

**F12.** Establish an exception to the general statewide regulation for Blue Catfish in Lake Tillery, Lake Wylie, and Mountain Island Reservoir by allowing only one fish greater than 32 inches to be possessed in the daily creel.

**Justification:** Interest in catfish angling is growing rapidly, and anglers seeking large catfish target the Blue Catfish populations in Lake Tillery, Lake Wylie, and Mountain Island Reservoir. Commission data indicate that Blue Catfish greater than 32 inches are rare in these populations and that it takes on average between
12 and 20 years for Blue Catfish to reach this size. The proposed size limit will restrict harvest of large Blue Catfish to help maintain quality fisheries in these reservoirs. Harvest of fish less than 32 inches remains unrestricted.

**Atlantic Sturgeon**

**F13.** Designate Atlantic Sturgeon as State Endangered when found in inland fishing waters and remove Atlantic Sturgeon from the State Special Concern list. The scientific name of Atlantic Sturgeon will be updated to match currently accepted nomenclature.

**Justification:** The proposed change fulfills a statutory requirement and will not alter the restrictions already required by the endangered species listing under the Endangered Species Act. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 113-334, all federally listed animals in North Carolina shall have the same state designations as their federal status. Atlantic Sturgeon is designated as Endangered by NOAA Fisheries.

**Equipment**

**F14.** Add dip nets when used in conjunction with a licensed hand-crank electrofisher where authorized by local law to the list of equipment that can be used to take nongame fish for bait or personal consumption in inland fishing waters with an inland fishing license.

**Justification:** During the 2013–2014 legislative session, SL 2013-283 established a single Special Device License (resident and nonresident) required to take nongame fish with a special fishing device authorized by the rules of the Commission for use in specified waters and during designated seasons. The fees for the new license were set at $75 for residents and $500 for nonresidents. The new license and fees became effective August 1, 2014. This change significantly increased the costs for individuals who have traditionally fished certain special fishing devices recreationally under a Noncommercial Special Device License.

Hand-crank electrofishing is primarily a social activity with one hand-crank electrofisher used and multiple individuals dipping stunned catfish and other nongame fish. The individuals dipping are often on one or more additional boats. The use of hand-crank electrofishers is currently authorized July 1–March 1 in the Cape Fear River between Locks and Dams 1 and 3 (Bladen County), Black River downstream of NC 1105 bridge to its mouth (Sampson, Pender, and Bladen counties), Lumbar River (Columbus County), and Waccamaw River (Columbus County).

The operator of a hand-crank electrofisher would still be required to have a Special Device License under this proposal and remain restricted to the established seasons and waters. However, individuals dipping the stunned nongame fish not for the purpose of sale would only be required to have an inland fishing license. Given the uniqueness of the device and approach, the number of operating hand-crank electrofishers is thought to be minimal and self-limiting.

The fish harvested under the bait or personal consumption provision cannot be sold. The use of a dip net in conjunction with a licensed hand-crank electrofisher to harvest nongame fish for the purpose of sale would require a Special Device License.
Proposed Changes in Wildlife Management Regulations for 2016–2017

The following changes in the statewide hunting and wildlife management regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Deer

H1. Allow the sale of raw (untanned) deer hides from an animal lawfully taken by hunting, because of depredation, or as road kill. Individuals or deer processors would be allowed to sell raw hides. Current regulations regarding the reporting and identification of harvested deer would apply, but there are no proposed additional tagging requirements for selling hides. Processed hides require a Trophy Sale permit in order to be legally sold.

Justification: This proposed change is necessary to make the Commission’s rules consistent with state law adopted in the 2015 legislative session. It will enable individuals to utilize a part of the animal previously discarded. Due to the low price paid for raw hides, an increase in poaching for financial gain is unlikely.

Bear

H2. Change the definition of a bear cub from any bear weighing less than 50 pounds to any bear weighing less than 75 pounds.

Justification: This proposed change is necessary to make the Commission’s rules consistent with state law adopted in the 2015 legislative session.

H3. Remove Gum Swamp in Pamlico and Beaufort counties from the bear sanctuary program.

Justification: This proposed change is at the request of the landowner, Weyerhaeuser.

Alligators

H4. Allow hunting of American alligators under the following conditions:

• The season for American alligators is from September 1 to October 1.
• Hunting is by permit only.
• The bag limit is one per permit.
• Manner of take is: catch pole, harpoon, gig, wooden peg, bang stick, archery equipment and artificial lights. Firearms shall only be used to dispatch American alligators that are restrained.

Justification: There is increased interest in hunting American alligators in eastern North Carolina and population evaluations indicate that the population can sustain a limited harvest.
**Elk**

**H5.** Open an elk hunting season with the following restrictions:
- The season for elk is from October 1 to November 1.
- Hunting is by permit only.
- The bag limit is one per permit.
- Elk may be taken by any legal firearm or archery equipment.

**Justification:** There is increased interest in hunting elk on private land in western North Carolina and population evaluations indicate that the herd can sustain a limited harvest.

**Sunday Hunting**

**H6.** Change a Commission rule that prohibits hunting on Sundays with firearms to conform to state law that regulates hunting on Sundays. State law passed in the 2015 legislative session allows hunting on Sundays with firearms on private lands with the following restrictions:
- Hunting is limited to any landowner or member of the landowner's family, or any person with written permission from the landowner.
- Hunting on Sunday between 9:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. is prohibited, except on controlled hunting preserves.
- Hunting of migratory birds on Sunday is prohibited.
- The use of a firearm to take deer that are run or chased by dogs on Sunday is prohibited.
- Hunting on Sunday within 500 yards of a place of worship or any accessory structure thereof, or within 500 yards of a residence not owned by the landowner, is prohibited.
- Hunting on Sunday in a county having a population greater than 700,000 people is prohibited (currently Wake and Mecklenburg counties).

The Commission rule will continue to allow hunting on Sundays with archery equipment and falconry on private lands in all counties from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, except migratory game birds cannot be taken.

**Justification:** The state law increases hunting opportunity and the Commission's rule must change so that it is consistent with state law.

**Listed Species**

**H7.** Designate the Red Knot (shorebird) and the Northern Long-eared Bat as federally listed threatened species in North Carolina.

**Justification:** Pursuant to state law, all federally listed animals in North Carolina shall have the same state designations as their federal status. This proposed change will update the state status of these species to the same status as their federal designations.

**H8.** Remove the Eastern Cougar as a federally listed endangered species in North Carolina.

**Justification:** Pursuant to state law, all federally listed animals in North Carolina shall have the same state designations as their federal status. It is anticipated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will remove the Eastern Cougar from
the federal list of endangered species and declare it extinct. This proposed change is needed to update the state status of this species to the same as its federal designation.

H9. Remove the elk from the state list of special concern species.  
**Justification:** The elk herd in North Carolina can be sustainably managed without the special concern status.

**Wildlife Damage Control Agents**

H10. Allow for Wildlife Damage Control Agents (WDCAs) to renew their status every three years by attending the Commission’s training course or completing an equivalent in continuing education courses.  
**Justification:** Currently the only option for recertification is attendance at the Commission’s training course. Recognizing continuing education credits as one recertification option will provide more options and flexibility to WDCAs.
Proposed Changes in Game Land Regulations for 2016–2017

The following changes in game land regulations are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Deer
G1. Move the opening date for hunting deer with all lawful weapons on Lake Mattamuskeet and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) from the Saturday on or nearest October 15 to the Saturday on or nearest September 10.

Justification: Extending the “All Lawful Weapons” season for deer at Lake Mattamuskeet and Alligator River NWRs will conform to season dates already in place on Dismal Swamp, Pocosin Lakes, MacKay Island, and Pee Dee NWRs and will allow refuge managers flexibility to offer gun hunting opportunities for deer earlier in the year, which will reduce the potential for conflict with the primary refuge mission of managing for migratory waterfowl.

Game Lands – Regulations Applying to Game Lands Generally
G2. Prohibit all public use from sunset to sunrise on those portions of game land posted as “Day Use Only Zones”.

Justification: Establishment of Day Use Only Zones has been requested by the landowner (Duke Energy) to address undesirable nighttime disturbance of private residential property owners adjacent to Pee Dee River Game Land; specifically along the shoreline of Blewett Falls Lake in Richmond and Anson counties. Disturbances include all-night bonfires, loud music, trash, and disorderly conduct.

G3. Modify existing game land rules regarding the possession of firearms on US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project lands and waters to comply with current applicable federal regulations contained in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Chapter III, Part 327.13.

Justification: Clarify that the possession of weapons and ammunition on game lands owned by the USACE are subject to the provisions of CFR 327.13 as follows:
(a) The possession of loaded firearms, ammunition, loaded projectile firing devices, bows and arrows, crossbows, or other weapons is prohibited unless:
   (1) In the possession of a Federal, state or local law enforcement officer;
   (2) Being used for hunting or fishing as permitted under Sec. 327.8, with devices being unloaded when transported to, from or between hunting and fishing sites;
   (3) Being used at authorized shooting ranges, or
   (4) Written permission has been received from the District Commander.
Game Lands – Regulations Applying to Specific Game Lands

G4. Allow youth to hunt in managed waterfowl impoundments from ½ hour before sunrise until sunset on the two youth waterfowl days following the end of the regular waterfowl seasons.

   **Justification:** Currently, waterfowl hunting in managed waterfowl impoundments must cease at 1:00 PM and decoys must be removed by 3:00 PM. This proposal will allow additional youth hunting opportunities with no anticipated negative impacts and will encourage recruitment and retention of youth hunters by removing an unnecessary opportunity barrier.

G5. Prohibit the use of dogs for pursuing or taking foxes during the period of March 15 through July 15 on Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land in Bladen County.

   **Justification:** S.L. 2015-144, Outdoor Heritage Act, amends G.S. 113-291.4 by adding a new subsection to read “The Wildlife Resources Commission shall prohibit the use of dogs in hunting foxes during the period from March 15 through July 15 in Bladen Lakes State Forest Game Land.” This proposed rule change is necessary to comply with the amended statute.

G6. Expand the opportunity for horseback riding on R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Land by allowing horses on gated roads and trails that are posted for equestrian use.

   **Justification:** Equestrian use is currently limited to those roads that are open for vehicular traffic. Also allowing equestrian use on designated closed roads and trails that are not otherwise accessible will allow for the development of posted loop trails that will provide for a safer, more enjoyable, and more scenic riding experience.

G7. Remove text from the North Carolina Administrative Code which establishes Catawba Game Land in Catawba County.

   **Justification:** Catawba Game Land has been removed from NC Game Land Program at the request of the landowner (Crescent Resources) and associated regulations are no longer necessary.

G8. Allow horseback riding on Chowan Swamp Game Land anytime from May 16 through August 31 and on Sundays only from September 1 through May 15 on those roads that are open to vehicular traffic and on those gated roads and trails that are specifically posted for equestrian use.

   **Justification:** Continue to allow equestrian use while also reducing the potential for user conflicts, increasing the margin of safety during hunting seasons, and avoiding undesirable impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.
G9. Remove posted Archery Zones from the permit requirement for hunting turkeys on Harris Game Land.

**Justification:** Removing the permit requirement from the 425-acre posted Archery Zone, where the manner of take is already restricted to archery equipment only, is not anticipated to have any significant impact on harvest and is consistent with rules that are already in place for Butner-Falls of Neuse and Jordan Game Lands.

G10. Designate Holly Shelter Game Land as a 6 day per week game land and restrict dog hunting for deer and bear to Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, except as otherwise authorized by permit on the Bear Garden Tract of Holly Shelter Game Land.

**Justification:** This proposed change maintains the current three-day-per-week opportunity for hunting deer and bear with the aid of dogs, while creating three days of additional opportunity for small game and deer/bear still hunters.

G11. Allow geocaching on Holly Shelter and Stones Creek Game Lands during closed seasons and on closed days for taking bear, deer, turkey and waterfowl.

**Justification:** Continue to allow geocaching use while also reducing the potential for user conflicts and increasing the margin of safety during hunting seasons.

G12. Expand opportunity for raccoon and opossum hunting on the J. Robert Gordon Field Trial Area, which is currently limited to open days from the second Monday before Thanksgiving through the Saturday following Thanksgiving, to include all open days from sunrise Monday on or nearest October 15 through the last day of February.

**Justification:** Allow more opportunity for raccoon and opossum hunting in a very accessible, hunter friendly environment. Use is compatible with the field trial area and will not affect field trial activities.

G13. Establish Texas Plantation Game Land in Tyrrell County as a Permit Only game land.

**Justification:** Add the new acquisition to the NC Game Land Program as a permit only game land, due to its unique potential and small size (approx. 1,520 acres).
### 2016–2017 Season Dates

The Commission provides this table of upcoming season dates for planning purposes ONLY. Final season dates are published in the 2016–2017 Regulations Digest, available Aug. 1, 2016.

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<td><strong>Wild Turkey</strong>&lt;br&gt;Youth-only Season&lt;br&gt;(bearded or male turkeys only)</td>
<td>Apr. 2–8, 2016&lt;br&gt;Apr. 1–7, 2017</td>
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<td><strong>Raccoon and Opossum</strong></td>
<td>Oct. 17, 2016–Feb. 28, 2017</td>
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<td><strong>Squirrel</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gray and Red Squirrel:</strong> Oct. 17, 2016–Feb. 28, 2017&lt;br&gt;<strong>Fox Squirrel:</strong> Oct. 17, 2016–Dec. 31, 2016 in selected counties</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rabbit</strong></td>
<td>Nov. 19, 2016–Feb. 28, 2017</td>
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<td>Quail</td>
<td>Nov. 19, 2016–Feb. 28, 2017</td>
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<td>Fox</td>
<td>See “Fox Season Hunting and Trapping Seasons” publication at ncwildlife.org.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of each week between June 1, 2016 and Feb. 28, 2017 plus Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and July 4th.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pheasant</td>
<td>Nov. 12, 2016–Feb. 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Deer Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Type of Season and Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Eastern**     | **Bow and Arrow**: Sept. 10–Sept. 30, 2016  
| **Central**     | **Bow and Arrow**: Sept. 10–Oct. 28, 2016  
**Blackpowder**: Oct. 29–Nov. 11, 2016  
**Gun**: Nov. 12, 2016–Jan. 1, 2017 |
| **Northwestern**| **Bow and Arrow**: Sept. 10–Nov. 4, 2016  
**Blackpowder**: Nov. 5–Nov. 18, 2016  
**Gun**: Nov. 19, 2016–Jan. 1, 2017 |
| **Western**     | **Bow and Arrow**: Sept. 10–Oct. 2 and Oct. 16–Nov. 20, 2016  
**Blackpowder**: Oct. 3–Oct. 15, 2016  
**Gun**: Nov. 21–Dec. 10, 2016 |
| **Gun: Either-Sex Seasons** | **Introductory Season**: Last open day of the applicable gun season.  
**Conservative Season**: Last six open days of the applicable gun season.  
**Moderate Season**: First six open days and last six open days of the applicable gun season.  
**Maximum Season**: All open days of the applicable gun season. |
| **Urban Deer Season** | **Bow and Arrow Only**:  
(open in participating cities only; see Regulations Digest for list and contact information)  
Jan. 14–Feb. 18, 2017 |
# Helpful Phone Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Game Harvest Reporting</td>
<td>800-I-GOT-ONE (800-446-8663)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating Access Areas</td>
<td>919-707-0150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating Safety Course Information</td>
<td>919-707-0031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boater Safety Education–Replacement Certificates</td>
<td>888-248-6834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement Operations Office</td>
<td>919-707-0030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Section</td>
<td>919-707-0150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>919-707-0101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Safety Course Information</td>
<td>919-707-0170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Safety Education–Replacement Certificates</td>
<td>888-248-6834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Fisheries Division</td>
<td>919-707-0220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Water Access Section</td>
<td>919-707-0150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License Information</td>
<td>888-248-6834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License Purchases by Credit Card</td>
<td>888-248-6834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Fisheries</td>
<td>252-726-7021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migratory Bird Hunting Dates &amp; Shooting Hours</td>
<td>800-675-0263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation Information</td>
<td>919-707-0030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vessel Registration and Titling</td>
<td>800-628-3773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violations Reporting</td>
<td>800-662-7137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Calendar</td>
<td>866-945-3746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Education Division</td>
<td>919-707-0170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wildlife in North Carolina Magazine</em></td>
<td>800-786-2721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Management Division</td>
<td>919-707-0050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(TTY machine available for people with hearing disabilities)*
Purchasing Licenses or Magazine Subscriptions
Using MasterCard or Visa

Call 888-248-6834 to use your MasterCard or Visa to purchase most hunting and fishing licenses. Call 800-786-2721 for a subscription to Wildlife in North Carolina magazine. Have your credit card, a pen and paper handy before calling.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1701
Inland Fisheries Division 919-707-0220
Wildlife Management Division 919-707-0050
Land and Water Access Section 919-707-0150

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Additional Comments:
Please check “agree” or “disagree” for the proposals below. If you have no opinion do not check a box.

Additional comments can be written on the back of this form. Please tear off your record form and give it to a Commission staff person at the end of the hearing.