

A scenic landscape featuring a calm pond in the middle ground, reflecting the surrounding environment. The background is a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. The sky is a clear, deep blue. In the foreground, there are some bare, thin tree branches and green vegetation. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Summary of Proposed Hunting, Trapping and Wildlife Regulation Changes

Presentation Tonight

- The Division will only address questions regarding clarification of the proposed regulations changes.
- No debate or opinion comments will be entertained at this time.
- To keep this meeting flowing orderly, we ask you to please hold all clarification questions until prompted and enter these questions into the chat box.
- Questions will be addressed periodically throughout the presentation.

Public Comments

The proposed regulation changes will be available in the State Register on November 1 (Tomorrow) including information about providing public comments, which will open tomorrow.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife will conduct a public hearing on these proposed regulation revisions on **December 13, 2023**.

The open period for public written comments will be open until COB January 12, 2024 (30 days).

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1.0 - Definitions

- Define Auxiliary Markers for released gamebirds.
- Define Direct Supervision for youth hunters – within 30 yards and direct line of sight.
- Define Furbearers – beavers, coyotes, red and gray fox, mink, muskrats, nutria, opossums, otters, raccoons, skunk and weasels.
- Define Pen-raised Released Quail.
- Clarify Baited Field – considered baited for 10 days after removal of bait.
- Add chukar Partridge and Hungarian Partridge to list of Liberated Game Species.

2.0 – Method of Take

- Add crossbows to the list of approved methods of take for hunting.
- Allow .17 rimfire rifles and smaller muzzleloaders for taking raccoons and opossums.
- Clarify both bullfrogs and green frogs can be harvested by hand.
- Clarify the type of ammunition approved for Sharp's Rifles while deer hunting.
- Clarify types and features of foothold traps allowed – jaw thickness.
- Clarify what rifles can be used for hunting squirrels – no pellet guns.
- Require snapping turtle trappers to report their harvest.

3.0 – Federal Laws and Regulations Adopted

- Rename Old Squaw Duck to Long-tailed Duck.
- Clarify that only youth hunters are allowed to hunt waterfowl during the special youth waterfowl seasons. Previously Delaware included non-ambulatory hunters using a wheelchair for mobility.

4.0 - Seasons

- Close the terrapin season.
- Allow green frogs to be harvested with bullfrogs and clarify that the daily bag limit of 24 is in aggregate.
- Crow depredation requirements are now consistent with federal regulations – simplified.
- Extend gray squirrel season one week later – second Saturday in February.
- Establish a Chukar Partridge season to coincide with Pheasant season.

4.0 – Seasons – Quail

- Close the Wild Bobwhite Quail Season.
- Allow landowners with sufficient suitable habitat (minimum of 40 acres) and implementing beneficial quail management practices to apply for a Wild Bobwhite Quail hunting permit to promote quail management.
- Establish a Pen-raised Released Quail Season – Monday before Thanksgiving through second Saturday in February.
- Division will evaluate the Wild Bobwhite Quail season closure every three years.

4.0 – Seasons – Trapping

- Adjust the trapping season dates for raccoons and opossums in Kent and Sussex Counties to coincide with New Castle County – season will open two weeks earlier and close 5 days earlier.
- Allow raccoon hunters to chase raccoons (no harvest) one month earlier to now open on August 1st to allow additional training opportunities and reduce the number of firearm deer seasons in which raccoon hunters are not allowed to hunt at night with the aid of a dog and clarify the hunting hours.
- Open the red fox season one month earlier - 1 November – consistent with the hunting season for red fox.

4.0 – Seasons – Trapping Cont.

- Adjust the weather criteria used to justify a muskrat season extension to account for large snow events. February snowfall of 20 and 32 inches would extend the season 1 and 2 weeks, respectively.
- Establish trapping seasons for mink and otter to coincide with muskrat season.
- Eliminate the annual bag limit for beaver, an overabundant species in Delaware.

5.0 – Wild Turkeys

- Clarify the possession of Wild Turkeys requires a permit, establishes criteria if turkeys escape captivity and prohibits the taking of live turkeys or their eggs from the wild.
- Clarify the types of courses accepted for fulfillment of turkey specific hunter education requirements including online courses.
- Clarify the size shot allowed for turkey hunting (nothing larger than size 4 shot) to promote the technical advancement of shot shells while maintaining human safety considerations.
- Clarify the prohibition of hunting turkeys using bait or dogs.

5.0 – Wild Turkeys Cont.

- Eliminate the requirement to wear camouflage while turkey hunting and clarify that the prohibition on wearing the colors of white, red, or blue while turkey hunting only pertains to external garments.
- Formally establish season dates for wild turkey hunting and establish registration procedures for hunters to report their harvests via an automated registration system like our existing deer registration system once the turkey system has been developed.

7.0 – Deer

- Clarify that the Harvest Report Card must be in possession at all times when hunting deer and when a deer is not in the hunter's possession a carcass tag with the deer registration number and harvest date must be affixed to the deer.
- Remove the restriction on hunting game, other than deer, with the aid of a dog during the firearms deer seasons.
- To minimize the risk of Chronic Wasting Disease occurring in Delaware, restrict the import of selected deer parts from high-fenced and captive facilities.

7.0 – Deer Seasons

- Simplify the firearm deer seasons by combining the either sex, antlerless and special youth/disabled seasons as “Shotgun Seasons”.
- Allow straight-walled pistol caliber rifles and handguns to be used during all seasons when it is legal to harvest a deer with a shotgun.
- Clarify that antlered deer may be harvested with archery equipment throughout the entire Archery and Crossbow Deer seasons.
- Clarify that Archery and Crossbow seasons close on January 31st or the last day of the January Muzzleloader season, whichever is later.

7.0 – Deer Seasons Cont.

- Restore the October Antlerless Deer Season to only 3 days/week, by eliminating Mondays, thereby providing a Friday-Sunday season to promote “opening day effects” to maximize harvest.
- Establish a second Special Shotgun Season for Youth and Disabled Hunters to occur the last Saturday and Sunday weekend in September.

8.0 – Regulations Governing Lands and Waters Administered by the Division

- Clarify that motorized vehicles may only be on established and maintained roads prohibit speeding and reckless driving on these roads.
- Prohibit the use radio-controlled drones, boats, and other vehicles or to launch model rockets on lands and waters administered by the Division without a permit.
- Clarify that horses and bikes may only be used on roads and trails that have been designated by the Division.
- Prohibit the use of metal detectors on lands administered by the Division without a permit.

8.0 – Regulations Governing Lands and Waters

Administered by the Division – Cont.

- For purposes other than hunting trapping or fishing, expand the hours of entry on lands administered by the Division to be between ½ hour before and after sunset to promote additional wildlife watching opportunities.
- Restrict fishing on state wildlife areas to avoid conflicts with hunting seasons, i.e., Unlawful to fish from 1 September- 31 January and Monday-Saturday during the Spring Turkey Season.
- Clarify that shotguns and muzzleloaders with rifled barrels can be used for deer hunting on the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.
- Clarify that all users of state wildlife areas must follow area map rules, not just those hunting or trapping these areas.

8.0 – Regulations Governing Lands and Waters Administered by the Division – Cont.

- Prohibit crabbing and fishing on any dike, water control structure, or within any impoundment found on lands administered by the Division.
- Clarify that non-resident hunters are allowed to participate in deer drives conducted on lands administered by the Division where deer drives are permitted.
- Prohibit the release of domestic or wild animals onto lands administered by the Division unless they are lawfully permitted during dog training activities.

9.0 – Wildlife Theft Prevention

- Add and clarify various offenses for which informants may receive rewards through the Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund if they provide tips that result in the arrest and conviction of the violator.

10.0 - Nuisance Wildlife

- Include rabbits in the list of wildlife that may be controlled without a permit when causing damage within the limits of residential or commercial areas of incorporated cities or towns using box/cage live traps.
- Clarify who needs a nuisance wildlife control operator permit, under what conditions a company needs to register for a permit and under what conditions an individual needs to be trained and certified.
- Require nuisance wildlife control operators to abide by conditions of their permit.

14.0 - Falconry

- Extend the hunting season from February 28th to March 31st for falconers and clarify the types of game species (rabbits, squirrels, etc.) that may be taken by the aid of a falcon.

15.0 – Collection or Sale of Native Wildlife

- Clarify which species of wildlife may be possessed, bought, and sold and under which circumstance each is permissible, ex. Rabies vector – coyotes, foxes, groundhogs, opossums, skunks and raccoons may not be possessed.
- Update the common and scientific names of the list of reptiles and amphibians that could be possessed.

16.0 – Endangered Species

- Add the Saltmarsh Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudacuta*) to the state endangered species list based numerous criteria including that under current conditions this species is unlikely to persist beyond 2050.
- Add the Carpenter Frog (*Lithobates virgatipes*) to the state endangered species list based numerous criteria including only occurring at 4 known locations in Delaware.
- Add the tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) to the state endangered species list based on numerous criteria including proposed for federal Endangered Species Listing due to impacts of White-nose Syndrome.

17.0 – Transferring Harvested Game

- All transferred game and non-native/invasive wildlife must have a tag attached signed by the hunter stating their address, the total number and species harvested, and the date such animals were killed. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the transfer procedures for harvested deer and turkeys shall follow the requirements described by regulation of the Department; which states a registration number shall be indicated on a possession tag that is affixed to the animal.

19.0 – Permits

- Establish a regulation prohibiting the violation of terms and conditions as outlined in permits issued by the Division.

20.0 – Game Bird Releases

- Require anyone releasing gamebirds into the wild to obtain a permit from the Division and provide the release location.
- All birds released must be properly marked according to Division criteria as to identify them from wild birds.

21.0 – Guide Licenses

- Clarify when holders of a guide license are required to submit an annual report (1 July annually) and the criteria for which a nonresident can be exempt from obtaining a guide license if they are guiding snow goose hunters, consistent with resident guides, i.e., not convicted of wildlife violations for the previous 3 years.

22.0 – Hunter and Trapper License Exempt Number

- Clarify the rules for obtaining a License Exempt Number (LEN), including:
 - Requiring a separate LEN for each activity (hunting and trapping).
 - Making it unlawful to obtain more than one hunting or trapping LEN in a license year.
 - Making it unlawful to obtain a LEN after purchasing a hunting or trapping license for the same activity.

23.0 – Non-native/Invasive Wildlife

- Clarify the types of traps allowed to take coyotes and extends the trapping season one month (open November 1st instead of December 1st), similar to red fox.
- Clarifying that captured nutria are not to be released alive.
- Change the phrase “feral swine” to “free-roaming swine” to reflect more accurately what most of these animals are and restrict landowners from knowingly harboring free-roaming swine.

24.0 – Wildlife Management Zone Boundaries

- Define the boundaries of Delaware's 18 wildlife management zones.

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Any Questions?

