

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Diane R. Eggeman, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management

Date: November 19, 2015

Subject: Proposed Rule Changes for Hunting 2016 – 2017

Purpose:

Present draft rule amendments to revise select statewide hunting regulations, and specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs) and Miscellaneous Areas and to conform hunting dates to calendar year date changes.

Summary:

Draft rule amendments will be presented to 1) shift the antlerless deer season in DMU A3 to align it with the antlered deer season in DMU A3; 2) shift the season for harvest of otter to begin and end 2 weeks earlier; 3) revise Babcock Ranch Preserve rules to facilitate the Florida Forest Service becoming the lead managing agency for the property, with the Commission as cooperator, and to continue the hunting program consistent with the previous private land manager; 4) require quota permits during the entire archery season and reduce the number of quota permits issued for archery, muzzleloading gun and general gun hunts on Citrus WMA; 5) revise the dog hunt area to resolve dog hunting related conflicts on Osceola WMA; 6) restrict hunting during the general gun-walk season to only north of the East/West Airboat Trail and allow the use of airboats and tracked vehicles south of the East/West Airboat Trail in Water Conservation Area 2A of Everglades and Francis S. Taylor WMA; 7) prohibit motorized vessels during quota hunts in John G. and Susan H. Dupuis WEA; 8) require permits for camping on Dinner Island Ranch WMA and John C. and Mariana Jones / Hungryland WEA; 9) reduce the number of hunting days during September duck season from 9 days to 3 days on Guana River WMA; 10) provide additional opportunities for hunting small game (quail, rabbit, squirrel and migratory birds) with any dog during small game season on 23 areas; 11) provide additional vehicle access during hunting season on 2 areas; 12) change the issuance method or increase the number of quota permits on 2 areas; 13) shift hunting season dates on 5 areas; 14) establish new wild hog hunts on 3 areas; 15) establish a new archery hunt on 1 area; 16) establish a new general gun hunt on 2 areas; 17) provide additional opportunities for hunting wild hogs on 2 areas; 18) reduce the number of days or hunts that require quota permits on 2 areas; 19) provide additional fishing opportunities on 1 area; 20) expand the legal methods of take on 1 area; 21) establish additional youth spring turkey hunts on 1 area; 22) require antlerless deer permits to take antlerless deer on 1 area; and 23) establish or expand small game seasons on 2 areas.

FWC staff has been and is continuing to gather input on all proposed rule amendments via an online poll. Thousands of comments have been received to date and are generally supportive of most proposals.

Staff Recommendation:

- (a) Approve proposals for rule amendments for advertising in the Florida Administrative Register.
- (b) Provide direction or guidance for staff as we continue working with the public.
- (c) Consider for final adoption at February 2015 Commission meeting.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Diane Eggeman, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management