

**Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-15.064
Agenda Item 10A
February 21, 2019**

DRAFT RULE

RULE NO: 68A-15.064

RULE TITLE: Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas – South Region.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT: The purpose of the proposed rule amendment is to revise specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the South Region and conform to calendar year date changes. The effect of the proposed rule amendment will be to enable the agency to better manage fish and wildlife resources and public use on WMAs.

SUMMARY: The proposed rule amendment would adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and revise specific area regulations on WMAs in the South Region as follows:

Big Cypress WMA, Stairsteps (Zones 1-3) and Loop units only - establish that only deer having at least one antler with 4 or more points can be harvested; prohibit hunting with guns other than bows during the general gun season; and establish a bag limit for deer of 1 annually in the Stairsteps and Loop units combined.

Dinner Island Ranch WMA – within posted dove fields, remove daily quota requirement for dove hunts during Phase 2 and 3 of the statewide dove season. A daily quota will still be required during Phase 1 dove field hunts.

Fisheating Creek WMA – during special-opportunity spring turkey hunts (east of U.S. 27 only) the legal shooting hours for turkey hunting shall remain ½ hour before sunrise until 1 p.m.; and during spring turkey quota hunts (west of U.S. 27 only), allow harvested turkeys to be divided in the field provided each portion shall be tagged with the date/time of harvest and the name, address, and hunting license number (if required) of the person that harvested the game. Each portion of the divided turkey would be readily traceable to evidence of the birds sex identification.

Picayune Strand WMA – allow use of swamp buggies and ROVs during quota hunts and associated scouting periods, but only for hunters (and their guests) having a valid quota permit; and limit swamp buggy and ROV access to roads designated by Florida Forest Service within that portion of the area east of Miller Blvd.

Additionally, the proposed rule amendment would provide non-substantive technical changes, such as grammatical corrections, language standardization, or clarification of an existing rule.

THE FULL TEXT OF THE PROPOSED RULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

68A-15.064 Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas – South Region.

(1) J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area.

(a) No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, furbearers and frogs. Deer daily bag one, annual bag two; wild hog daily bag one, annual bag two. The take of wild hog with a shoulder height of less than 20 inches is prohibited. The take of wild hog is prohibited during small game season. Turkeys may not be taken during the archery season. The take of antlerless deer is prohibited except during the last 9 days of archery season. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with three or more points or one antler with a main beam of ten inches or more in length is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age. ~~Gobblers or bearded turkeys may be taken during the spring turkey season from one half hour before sunrise until sunset.~~

(c) through (d) No change.

(2) Holey Land Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Walk, ~~September 29 through~~ October 5-20 14.

2. General gun – Vehicle (tracked vehicles only), October 26 ~~20~~ through November 10 ~~4~~ (tracked vehicles).

3. Archery – August 10 through September 1 ~~4-26~~.

4. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-15~~ ~~1-9~~.

5. Small game – November ~~11~~ ~~5~~ through March ~~1~~ ~~3~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (e) No change.

(3) Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Walk, ~~September 29 through~~ October ~~5-20~~ ~~14~~, Conservation Areas 3A North and 2A (north of the East/West Airboat Trail) only.

2. General gun – Vehicle (airboats and tracked vehicles only), October ~~26~~ ~~20~~ through November ~~10~~ ~~4~~, in Conservation Areas 3A North, 3A South, 2, and the Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area.

3. Archery – August ~~10 through~~ ~~September 1~~ ~~4-26~~, Conservation Area 3A North only.

4. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-15~~ ~~1-9~~, in Conservation Area 3A North only.

5. Small game – November ~~11~~ ~~5~~ through March ~~1~~ ~~3~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (e) No change.

(4) Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Walk, ~~September 29 through~~ October ~~5-20~~ ~~14~~.

2. General gun – Vehicle (tracked vehicles only), October ~~26~~ ~~20~~ through November ~~10~~ ~~4~~ (~~tracked vehicles~~).

3. Archery – August ~~10 through~~ ~~September 1~~ ~~4-26~~.

4. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-15~~ ~~1-9~~.

5. Small game – November ~~11~~ ~~5~~ through March ~~1~~ ~~3~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (e) No change.

(5) Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Twelve days prior to Thanksgiving day through January 1 except during those years when January 1 falls on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, in which case the season would close on the following Sunday except in the Deep Lake, Stairsteps and Loop units Unit.

2. No change.

3. Archery – Starting the Saturday prior to Labor Day and ending 29 days thereafter in all units and twelve days prior to Thanksgiving day through January 1, except during those years when January 1 falls on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday, in which case the season would close on the following Sunday in the Deep Lake, Stairsteps and Loop units Unit only.

4. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~12-27~~ ~~6-21~~, except in the Deep Lake Unit.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~7~~ ~~2~~ through April ~~12~~ ~~7~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers (except bobcat and otter). Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with two or more points is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age. In the Loop Unit and zones 1 through Zone 3 of the Stairsteps Unit, taking of deer not having at least one antler with ~~four~~ ~~two~~ or more points is prohibited. The take of deer in Zone 4 of the Stairsteps Unit is prohibited. The take of wild hog with a shoulder height of less than 15 inches is prohibited. The take of wild hog is prohibited during small game season. The taking of raccoons with a gun and light is prohibited. The taking of turkey or antlerless deer during the archery season is prohibited. Deer, turkey and wild hog bag limit one per day; two annually, except no more than one deer may be taken annually within the Loop Unit and zones 1 through Zone 3 of the Stairsteps Unit, combined.

(c) through (d) No change.

(6) Okaloacoochee Slough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~10-16~~ ~~4-10~~ and ~~17-25~~ ~~11-19~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-9~~ ~~1-3~~ and ~~14-16~~ ~~8-10~~.
3. Family Hunt – September ~~21-22~~ ~~15-16~~.
4. General gun – September ~~28~~ through ~~October 1~~ ~~22-25~~ and ~~October 2-6~~ ~~September 26-30~~.
5. Small game – November ~~9~~ ~~10~~ through January ~~12~~ ~~13~~.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~7-10~~ ~~2-5~~ and ~~11-15~~ ~~6-10~~.
7. through 9. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, bear (only ~~during~~ ~~during~~ the bear season), fish, frogs and furbearers. During the archery, muzzleloading gun, family and general gun seasons, the bag limit for deer shall be one per quota permit. The taking of antlerless deer is prohibited during archery season. One gobbler or bearded turkey may be taken per spring turkey quota permit. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with three or more points or one antler with a main beam of ten inches or more in length is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age.

(c) through (d) No change.

(7) Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~23-25~~ ~~17-19~~ and ~~August 30~~ through ~~September 1~~ ~~24-26~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~13-15~~ ~~7-9~~ and ~~20-22~~ ~~14-16~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
3. General gun – ~~September 28-30~~ and ~~October 4-6~~ and ~~18-20~~ ~~12-14~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
4. Youth Turkey Hunt – February ~~29~~ through ~~March 1~~ ~~23-24~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~7-10~~ ~~2-5~~, ~~13-16~~ ~~8-11~~, ~~20-23~~ ~~15-18~~, ~~27-30~~ ~~22-25~~ and ~~March 29~~ through ~~April 3-6~~ ~~1~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
6. Special-opportunity spring turkey – March ~~7-13~~ ~~2-8~~ and ~~21-27~~ ~~16-22~~ east of US Highway 27 only.
7. Wild hog-still – November ~~23-24~~ ~~17-18~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
8. through 10. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers except that turkeys may not be taken during the archery season. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with three or more points or one antler with a main beam of ten inches or more in length is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age. The bag limit for deer shall be one per person, two per quota permit. During the spring turkey season, one gobbler (or bearded turkey) may be taken per person, but not more than two per quota permit. One gobbler (or bearded turkey) may be taken per special-opportunity spring turkey permit. ~~East~~ ~~West~~ of US Highway 27, ~~g~~Gobblers or bearded turkeys may only be taken during the special-opportunity spring turkey season from one-half hour before sunrise until 1 p.m. ~~sunset~~. During the wild hog-still season, only wild hog may be taken.

(c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 7. No change.

8. West of US Highway 27 only, turkeys harvested during spring turkey season may be divided in the field provided each portion shall be labeled with the date and time of harvest and the name, address, and hunting license number (if required) of the person that harvested the turkey. Each portion of the divided turkey would be readily traceable to evidence of the birds sex identification.

(8) Picayune Strand Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~10-25~~ ~~4-19~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-9~~ ~~1-3~~ and ~~14-16~~ ~~8-10~~.
3. General gun – October ~~12-15~~ ~~6-9~~, ~~16-20~~ ~~10-14~~ and ~~21-27~~ ~~15-21~~.
4. Small game – November ~~2~~ ~~3~~ through January ~~12~~ ~~13~~.
5. Youth turkey hunt – February ~~29~~ through ~~March 1~~ ~~23-24~~.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~7-10~~ ~~2-5~~ and ~~11-15~~ ~~6-10~~.
7. through 8. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. No change.

2. The use of ~~tracked vehicles or~~ airboats is prohibited. Off-Highway Vehicles (all-terrain vehicles and off-highway motorcycles) are prohibited except by permit from the Florida Forest Service only.

3. Only licensed and registered vehicles may be operated on the area, and only on designated roads, parking areas, and other areas as designated by the Florida Forest Service, except swamp buggies and ROVs may be used during (and 1 week prior to the opening of) the muzzleloading gun, general gun, and spring turkey seasons, but only by individuals having a valid quota permit and only on designated roads in that portion of the area east of and including Miller Blvd and south of and including Berson Blvd.

4. through 7. No change.

(9) Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~9-12 3-6, 16-19 40-43, 23-26 47-20~~ and August 30 through September 5 24-27.

2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~13-15 7-9.~~

3. General gun – September ~~21-23 45-47, 27-29 21-23~~ and October 4-6 28-30.

4. No change.

5. Family hunt – October ~~12-13 6-7~~ and 19-20 43-44.

6. Youth Turkey Hunt – February 29 through March 1 23-24.

7. Spring turkey – March ~~7-9 2-4, 14-16 9-11~~ and March 30 through April 4-6 1.

8. through 10. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers. The bag limit for deer shall be one per quota permit. One gobbler (or bearded turkey) may be taken per spring turkey quota permit. ~~Gobblers or bearded turkeys may be taken during the spring turkey season from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset.~~ The taking of antlerless deer and turkey is prohibited during archery season. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with three or more points or one antler with a main beam of ten inches or more in length is prohibited, except by persons less than 16 years of age. Wild hog: daily bag one; possession limit two.

(c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 8. No change.

9. Dove field permits shall be issued on a first-come, first-served basis at the check station on the day of each phase 1 dove hunt.

10. through 11. No change.

(10) Spirit-of-the-Wild Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~9-12 3-6, 16-19 40-43, 23-26 47-20~~ and August 30 through September 2 24-27.

2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~13-15 7-9.~~

3. General gun – September ~~21-23 45-47, 27-29 21-23~~ and October 4-6 28-30.

4. No change.

5. Youth Turkey Hunt – February 29 through March 1 23-24.

6. Spring turkey – March ~~7-9 2-4, 14-16 9-11~~ and March 30 through April 4-6 1.

7. through 9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(11) Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~14-17 8-11, 21-24, 45-48, 22-25~~ and September 28 29 through October 1, and October 5-8 2.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October 19-21 43-45.

3. Family hunt – November 2-5 October 27-30.

4. General gun – November 9-13 3-7.

5. Small game – November ~~14~~ ~~10~~ through the second Sunday in January.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~7-10~~ ~~2-5~~ and ~~11-15~~ ~~6-10~~.
7. through 8. No change.
- (b) through (d) No change.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019.

Rulemaking Authority Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.2223, 375.313 FS. Law Implemented Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.2223, 375.313 FS. History—New 6-21-82, Amended 7-1-83, 7-27-83, 9-27-83, 7-5-84, 7-1-85, 5-7-86, 8-5-86, 5-10-87, 8-24-87, 5-1-88, 6-7-88, 7-1-89, 7-1-90, 9-1-90, 7-1-91, 7-1-92, 7-1-93, 7-1-94, 7-1-95, 8-15-95, 7-1-96, 9-15-96, 10-20-96, 6-1-97, 8-7-97, 7-1-98, 7-2-98, 7-1-99, Formerly 39-15.064, Amended 11-17-99, 7-1-00, 7-1-01, 6-2-02, 2-27-03, 5-1-03, 7-1-04, 7-1-05, 7-1-06, 7-1-07, 7-1-08, 7-1-09, 7-20-09, 1-19-10, 7-1-10, 8-26-10, 7-1-11, 7-1-12, 7-1-13, 7-1-14, 9-18-14, 7-1-15, 7-29-15, 7-1-16, 7-1-17, 9-14-17, 7-1-18, 7-1-19.