

**Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-15.061
Agenda Item 6
December 11, 2019**

DRAFT RULE

RULE NO: 68A-15.061

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

PURPOSE AND EFFECT: The purpose of the proposed rule amendment is to revise specific area regulations on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the Southwest 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 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) in the Southwest Region as follows:

Chassahowitzka WMA – remove reference to Swamp Grade when describing the dog hunt area, this road no longer exists; and allow wild turkey to be hunted in the Annuteliga Hammock (the area east of US Highway 19) during spring turkey season.

Green Swamp West WMA - change allowed vehicle access times on the day preceding special opportunity spring turkey season hunts (scout day) from 1½ hours before sunrise until 1½ hours after sunset to 1½ hours before sunrise until 3:00 p.m.

Everglades Headwaters WMA, Hatchineha Unit – allow 1 additional non-hunting guest on family and youth turkey hunts.

Hilochee WMA – expand small game season by 7 days (from 17 to 24 days) at the beginning of the season; and establish a 3-day general gun hunt opening the Saturday following the close of muzzleloading gun season (10 no-cost quota permits, no exemptions).

Hilochee WMA, Osprey Unit – establish a 3-day general gun hunt opening the Saturday following the close of muzzleloading gun season (10 no-cost quota permits, no exemptions).

Upper Hillsborough WMA - change the quota hunt for wild hog-dog from 20, no cost, quota permits (no exemptions) to 20, no-cost, daily quota permits available first-come, first-served at the check station each day of the season.

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-15.061 Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas – Southwest Region.

(1) Green Swamp Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – December ~~5~~ 7 through ~~January 31~~ February 2.

2. Archery – ~~October 30~~ November 1 through ~~November 29~~ December 1, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only and Thanksgiving Day.

3. No change.

4. Wild hog-dog – October ~~1-4~~ 3-6 and ~~8-11~~ 10-13.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~20~~ 21 through April ~~25~~ 26.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(2) Green Swamp Wildlife Management Area – West Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – October ~~9-11~~ ~~11-13~~.
2. Wild hog-dog – October ~~21-23~~ ~~23-25~~.
3. Special-opportunity archery – December ~~5-8~~ ~~7-10~~ and ~~17-20~~ ~~19-22~~.
4. Special-opportunity general gun – January ~~21-24~~ ~~23-26~~, and February ~~1-4~~ ~~3-6~~ and ~~10-13~~ ~~12-15~~.
5. Special-opportunity turkey – March ~~20-23~~ ~~21-24~~, March ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through April ~~1~~ ~~2~~, April ~~3-6~~ ~~4-7~~, ~~12-15~~ ~~13-16~~ and ~~17-20~~ ~~18-21~~.
6. Small game – February ~~19-21~~ ~~21-23~~ and February ~~26-28~~ ~~28~~ through March ~~1~~.
7. through 8. No change.
- (b) through (c) No change.
- (d) General regulations:
 1. through 4. No change.
5. Individuals in possession of a special-opportunity permit or quota permit shall have vehicle access to the area from sunrise to sunset on the day preceding the hunt, except special-opportunity spring turkey permit holders shall have vehicle access to the area 1 1/2 hours before sunrise until 3 p.m. ~~1 1/2 hours after sunset~~ on the day preceding the hunt.
 6. through 10. No change.
 - (3) Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area.
 - (a) Open season:
 1. Archery – September ~~12-16~~ ~~14-18~~.
 2. Bird dog training – Bird dogs may be trained in the bird dog training area September ~~19~~ ~~21~~ through February ~~14~~ ~~16~~ and bird dogs may be trained in the remainder of the area during the small game season except the field trial and Boy Scout areas.
 3. General gun – November ~~7-15~~ ~~9-17~~.
 4. Small game – November ~~16-29~~ ~~18~~ through December ~~1~~ and on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only December ~~2~~ ~~4~~ through January ~~17~~ ~~19~~.
 5. Field trial quail – January ~~23-24~~ ~~25-26~~.
 6. through 7. No change.
 - (b) through (d) No change.
 - (4) Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area – Yucca Pens Unit.
 - (a) Open season:
 1. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~16-18~~ ~~18-20~~.
 2. General gun – October 31 through November ~~8~~ ~~2-10~~.
 3. Small game – November ~~11~~ ~~13~~ through January ~~10~~ ~~12~~ on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only and the Friday after Thanksgiving Day.
 4. through 5. No Change.
 - (b) through (d) No change.
 - (5) Upper Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.
 - (a) Open season:
 1. Wild hog-dog – November ~~10-12~~ ~~12-14~~.
 2. Archery – December ~~5-6~~ ~~7-8~~, ~~12-13~~ ~~14-15~~, January ~~2-3~~ ~~4-5~~ and ~~9-10~~ ~~11-12~~.
 3. Muzzleloading gun – January ~~16-17~~ ~~18-19~~, ~~23-24~~ ~~25-26~~, ~~30-31~~ and February ~~6-7~~ ~~1-2~~ and ~~8-9~~.
 4. Small game – February ~~13-14~~ ~~15-16~~, ~~20-21~~ ~~22-23~~ and ~~27-28~~ February ~~29~~ through March ~~1~~.
 5. Spring turkey – March ~~24-25~~ ~~25-26~~, March 31 through April 1, April ~~1-2~~ ~~7-8~~ ~~8-9~~, ~~14-15~~ ~~15-16~~ and ~~21-22~~ ~~22-23~~.
 6. No change.
 - (b) through (c) No change.
 - (d) General regulations:
 1. through 12. No change.
 13. During the wild hog-dog season, a wild hog-dog daily quota permit shall allow a hunting group of two

persons and a guest, as authorized by rule 68A-15.005, F.A.C., (3 total) to participate in the hunt.

(6) Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~17-12~~ through November ~~6~~ 4.
2. Muzzleloading gun – December ~~12-20~~ 7-15.
3. Small game – January ~~9-10~~ 4-5 and ~~30-31~~ 25-26.
4. Spring turkey – March ~~23-25~~ 24-26 and April ~~6-8~~ 7-9.
5. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(7) KICCO Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~19~~ 14 through October ~~18~~ 13, Saturdays and Sundays only.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~24-25~~ 19-20 and ~~October 31 through November 1~~ 26-27.
3. Wild hog-still – November ~~14~~ 9 through December ~~13~~ 8, Saturdays and Sundays only.
4. Small game – December ~~19~~ 14 through January ~~24~~ 19.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~20~~ 21 through April ~~18~~ 19, Saturdays and Sundays only.
6. Youth turkey – March ~~13-14~~ 14-15.
7. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(8) Hickory Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – September ~~18-20~~ 13-15, ~~25-27~~ 20-22 and January ~~15-17~~ 10-12.
2. Archery – October ~~16-18~~ 11-13.
3. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~24-26~~ 19-21 and ~~28-30~~ 23-25.
4. General gun – November ~~7-9~~ 2-4.
5. Small game – November ~~16-29~~ 11-24 and January ~~25~~ 20 through March ~~7~~ 4.
6. General gun for mobility-impaired – December ~~12-13~~ 7-8.
7. No change.
8. Spring turkey – March ~~25-27~~ 26-28 and April ~~15-17~~ 16-18.
9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(9) Walk-in-the-Water Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – ~~October 3-4~~ ~~September 28-29~~, ~~5-8~~, ~~September 30 through October 3~~, ~~October 9-11~~ 4-6, ~~12-15~~ 7-10 and ~~16-18~~ 11-13.

2. Muzzleloading gun – ~~October 5~~ ~~November 30~~ through December ~~6~~ 4, December ~~7-10~~ 2-5 and ~~11-13~~ 6-8.

3. Wild hog-still – January ~~16-24~~ 11-19.

4. Small game – February ~~6-14~~ 1-9 and February ~~27~~ 22 through March ~~7~~ 4.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~30~~ 31 through April ~~1~~ 2.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(10) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~13-14~~ 14-15.

2. Spring turkey – March ~~26-28~~ 27-29 and April ~~9-11~~ 10-12.

3. Muzzleloading gun – February ~~19-21~~ 21-23.

4. Wild hog-still – November ~~20-22~~ 22-24, December ~~4-6~~ 6-8, and ~~18-20~~ 20-22.

5. Small game – ~~December 25 through~~ January ~~17~~ 3-19.

6. Archery – February ~~12-14~~ 14-16.

7. General Gun – February 27 through March 1

7. renumbered 8. No change.

9.8. Raccoon – August 6 8 through September 27 29 (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 5. No change.

6. During periods when the area is closed to hunting, public access other than by foot, bicycle, or horse is prohibited, except that motorized vehicles shall be allowed one day prior to the archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, wild hog-still, and spring turkey hunts, and by individuals in possession of a valid fishing permit. Persons participating in the raccoon season may operate motorized vehicles from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunset on Sunday.

7. through 10. No change.

(11) Lake Marion Creek Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 17-19 19-21 and 23-25 25-27.

2. Muzzleloading gun – November 27-29 29 through December 1.

3. General gun – January 22-24 24-26 and February 5-7 7-9.

4. Small game – January 1-3 3-5 and 8-10 10-12.

5. Wild hog-still – December 11-13 13-15 and 25-27 27-29.

6. Youth turkey hunt – March 13-14 14-15.

7. Spring turkey – March 20-21 21-23, April 2-4 3-5 and 16-18 17-19.

8. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(12) Avon Park Air Force Range Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 19 14 through October 18 13 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October 24 19 through November 6 1 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

3. General gun – November 7 2 through January 24 19 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

4. Small game – November 14 9 through March 7 1 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

5. Youth turkey hunt – March 13-14 14-15 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

6. Spring turkey – March 20 21 through April 25 26 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

7. Antlerless deer – November 21-27 23-29 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

8. through 9. No change.

10. Wild hog (still and dog hunts) – In areas and during days specified ~~specified~~ by the Installation Commander or a designee.

(b) through (d) No change.

(13) Croom Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Muzzleloading gun – October 24-26 19-21.

2. General gun – November 7-29 2-24.

3. Small game – November 30 25 through March 7 1.

4. Spring turkey – March ~~23-25~~ ~~24-26~~, April ~~6-8~~ ~~7-9~~ and ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~.

5. Fox, raccoon and bobcat – December ~~17~~ ~~12~~ through March ~~13~~ ~~8~~. Hunting is allowed from 5:00 p.m.

Thursday to sunrise Sunday with dogs only. Taking wildlife with guns is prohibited during this season.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(14) Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~19~~ ~~14~~ through October ~~18~~ ~~13~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~24-26~~ ~~19-21~~.

3. General gun – November ~~7~~ ~~2~~ through ~~January 3~~ ~~December 29~~.

4. Wild hog-dog – January ~~15-17~~ ~~10-12~~ and ~~22-24~~ ~~17-19~~.

5. through 6. No change.

7. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~13-14~~ ~~14-15~~.

8. Spring turkey – March ~~26-28~~ ~~27-29~~, April ~~9-11~~ ~~10-12~~ and ~~23-25~~ ~~24-26~~.

9. Raccoon – ~~January 30 through~~ February ~~4-28~~ ~~23~~ and ~~April 30 through~~ May ~~5-29~~ ~~24~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. No change.

2. Hunting with dogs other than retrievers or bird dogs is prohibited west of the Main grade, on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service portion of the property. Hunting with dogs other than retrievers or bird dogs is prohibited in Zone C east of Swamp Grade, except during the wild hog-dog season. Dogs with a shoulder height greater than 17 inches are prohibited in that portion of the area lying east of the Main grade and Zone C west of the Swamp grade, except during the wild hog-dog and raccoon seasons when dogs are allowed east of Main Grade.

3. through 8. No change.

9. That portion of the area east of US Highway 19 shall be open for small game hunting and spring turkey season only.

10. through 13. No change.

(e) No change.

(15) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area – Osprey Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – November ~~13-15~~ ~~15-17~~.

2. Wild hog-still – November ~~27-29~~ ~~29~~ through ~~December 1~~.

3. Wild hog-dog – December ~~11-13~~ ~~13-15~~ and January ~~8-10~~ ~~10-12~~.

4. Small game – January ~~11-31~~ ~~13~~ through ~~February 2~~.

5. Archery – February ~~12-14~~ ~~14-16~~.

6. Muzzleloading gun – February ~~19-21~~ ~~21-23~~.

7. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~13-14~~ ~~14-15~~.

8. Spring turkey – April ~~16-18~~ ~~17-19~~ and ~~23-25~~ ~~24-26~~.

9. General gun – February 27 through March 1

9. renumbered 10. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(16) Weekiwachee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~17-22~~ ~~12-17~~, November ~~14-19~~ ~~9-14~~, December ~~12-17~~ ~~7-12~~, January ~~16-21~~ ~~11-16~~ and February ~~13-18~~ ~~8-13~~.

2. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(17) Lower Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – December ~~11-13 13-15~~, January ~~15-17 17-19, 29-31~~ ~~January 31 through February 2~~ and February ~~12-14 14-16~~.

2. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~26-28 27-29~~ and April ~~9-11 10-12~~.

3. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(18) No change.

(19) Everglades Headwaters Wildlife Management Area – Hatchineha Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~17-23 19-25~~ and November ~~7-15 9-17~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – November ~~27-29 29 through December 1~~.

3. Family hunt – December ~~25-27 27-29~~.

4. General gun – January ~~22-24 24-26~~ and ~~28-31~~ ~~January 30 through February 2~~.

5. Small game – ~~January 30 through February 25~~ ~~February 1-27~~.

6. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~13-14 14-15~~.

7. Spring turkey – March ~~25-28 26-29~~ and ~~March 31 through April 4~~ ~~April 1-5~~.

8. through 9. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. No change.

2. Public access is allowed year round except during quota hunts when only individuals authorized to participate participating in a hunt may access the area and during the family hunt and youth turkey hunt when one non-hunting guest per quota permit may also access the area.

3. through 8. No change.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2020

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, 11-17-83, 7-5-84, 10-1-84, 7-1-85, 9-19-85, 5-7-86, 5-10-87, 6-8-87, 10-8-87, 5-1-88, 7-1-89, 7-1-90, 7-1-91, 7-2-91, 7-1-92, 8-23-92, 7-1-93, 7-1-94, 7-1-95, 7-1-96, 9-15-96, 6-1-97, 8-7-97, 7-1-98, 10-20-98, 12-28-98, 7-1-99, Formerly 39-15.061, Amended 12-9-99, 3-30-00, 7-1-00, 7-1-01, 5-13-02, 5-25-03, 7-1-04, 7-1-05, 7-1-06, 7-1-07, 7-1-08, 7-1-09, 7-1-10, 7-1-11, 7-1-12, 7-1-13, 7-1-14, 7-1-15, 7-1-16, 7-1-17, 9-14-17, 7-1-18, 8-9-18, 7-1-19, 7-1-20.

BE ADVISED THAT THESE PROPOSED RULES MAY BE FILED FOR ADOPTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOLLOWING THE COMMISSION MEETING AT WHICH THEY ARE CONSIDERED IF THE RULES ARE NOT CHANGED. IF CHANGED, THE RULES MAY BE FILED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER PUBLICATION OF A NOTICE OF CHANGE IN THE F.A.R.

NAME OF PERSON ORIGINATING PROPOSED RULE: Morgan Richardson, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600.

NAME OF AGENCY HEAD WHO APPROVED THE PROPOSED RULE: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

DATE PROPOSED RULE APPROVED BY AGENCY HEAD: December 13, 2018.

DATE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE DEVELOPMENT PUBLISHED IN F.A.R.: December 24, 2018.