

**Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-17.005
Agenda Item 4
April 19, 2017**

DRAFT RULE

RULE NO: 68A-17.005 **RULE TITLE:** Specific Regulations for Wildlife and Environmental Areas.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT: The purpose of the proposed rule amendment is to revise specific area regulations to expand small game hunting opportunities on Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs). The effect of the proposed rule amendment will be to enable the agency to better manage fish and wildlife resources and public use on WEAs.

SUMMARY: The proposed rule amendment would revise specific area regulations to expand small game hunting opportunities on Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs) as follows:

Northwest Region

Apalachicola River WEA – allow northern bobwhite to be released and taken by shotgun during the small game season. A daily no-cost permit and proof that northern bobwhite were purchased from a licensed game farm would be required for each individual or group participating. Allow release of northern bobwhite only in the designated area east of the Apalachicola River.

L. Kirk Edwards WEA – expand small game season by 87 days on that portion of the area east of Chaires Cross Road; allow the take of rabbit, quail, furbearers, armadillo, and wild hog during the small game season on that portion of the area west of Chaires Cross Road; and, allow northern bobwhite to be released and taken by shotgun during the small game season. A daily no-cost permit and proof that northern bobwhite were purchased from a licensed game farm would be required for each individual or group participating.

North Central Region

Fort White WEA – expand small game season by 79 days.

Lafayette Forest WEA – expand small game season by 84 days.

Watermelon Pond WEA – allow northern bobwhite to be released and taken by shotgun during the small game season. A daily no-cost permit and proof that northern bobwhite were purchased from a licensed game farm would be required for each individual or group participating. Persons releasing northern bobwhite must enter and exit the area at the designated quail release entrance (parking area at the NE corner of the WEA, accessible by SW 250 Street).

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-17.005 Specific Regulations for Wildlife and Environmental Areas.

(1) No Change.

(2) North Central Region.

(a) No change.

(b) Fort White Mitigation Park – Gilchrist County.

1. Open season:

a. No change.

b. Small game – November ~~16~~ ~~18~~ through ~~March 4~~ ~~December 1~~ and ~~February 3~~ ~~18~~.

c. through g. No change.

2. through 4. No change.

(c) through (e) No change.

(f) Lafayette Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area.

1. Open seasons:

- a. through d. No change.
- e. Small game – November 13 through January 19 and February 1 through March 4 ~~February 3-18.~~
- f. through j. No change.

2. through 3. No change.

(g) Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area.

1. through 2. No change.

3. General regulations:

a. through e. No change.

f. Northern bobwhite may be released and taken by shotgun during the small game season provided each individual or group participating possesses a daily permit and proof (including the name and address of the vendor and date of purchase) that the northern bobwhite were purchased from a licensed game farm within the past 90 days. Participants must enter and exit the area only at a designated quail release entrance.

(3) Northwest Region.

(a) No change.

(b) Apalachicola River – Gulf, Franklin, and Liberty counties.

1. through 3. No change.

4. General regulations:

a. through h. No change.

i. Northern bobwhite may be released and taken by shotgun during the small game season provided each individual or group participating possesses a daily permit and proof (including the name and address of the vendor and date of purchase) that the northern bobwhite were purchased from a licensed game farm within the past 90 days. The release of northern bobwhite is allowed only in that portion of the area east of the Apalachicola River, east of the East River, north of Sam's Creek Cutoff, and west of East Bay.

(c) L. Kirk Edwards – Leon County.

1. Open seasons for that portion of the area west of Chaires Cross Road:

a. Small game Gray squirrel – Opening the second Saturday in November through the close of the gray squirrel season established in Rule 68A-13.004, F.A.C.

b. through e. No change.

2. Open seasons for that portion of the area east of Chaires Cross Road:

a. through c. No change.

d. Small game – November 11-22, 27-29, December 4-13, and December 18 through March 4 ~~December 29-31, January 12-14, 26-28, February 9-11 and 23-25.~~

e. through h. No change.

3. No change.

4. General regulations:

a. through e. No change.

f. Northern bobwhite may be released and taken by shotgun during the small game season provided each individual or group participating possesses a daily permit and proof (including the name and address of the vendor and date of purchase) that the northern bobwhite were purchased from a licensed game farm within the past 90 days.

(4) through (5) No change.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2017.

Rulemaking Authority Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const. Law Implemented Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.2223, 375.313 FS. History—New 7-1-83, Amended 11-30-83, 7-1-84, 8-21-85, Formerly 39-17.05, Amended 6-1-86, 8-13-87, 8-18-88, 8-17-89, 4-11-90, 7-1-91, 10-31-91, 4-14-92, 4-20-93, 7-1-94, 9-15-94, 3-30-95, 8-15-95, 7-1-96, 4-3-97, 10-28-97, 7-1-98, 8-11-98, 7-1-99, Formerly 39-17.005, Amended 7-1-00, 5-1-01, 6-2-02, 5-25-03, 7-1-04, 7-1-05, 7-1-06, 7-1-07, 7-1-08, 1-6-09, 7-1-09, 10-29-09, 7-1-10, 7-1-11, 11-14-11, 7-1-12, 7-26-12, 7-1-13, 7-1-14, 7-2-14, 7-1-15, 7-29-15, 7-1-16, 7-1-17, 9-1-17.