

**Background Report  
Draft Rule 68A-15.061  
Agenda Item 12.C.  
December 6, 2017**

**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:

Arbuckle WMA – prohibit camping except as authorized by Florida Forest Service through FloridaStateForests.ReserveAmerica.com.

Everglades Headwaters WMA, Hatchineha Unit (new) – establish a new WMA (approx. 1,400 acres) in Polk County as a tract of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Everglades Headwaters WMA, establish the following seasons and regulations: 2 archery hunts (7 and 9 days; quota of 6, no exemptions); 1 muzzleloading gun hunt (3 days; quota of 6, no exemptions); 1 family hunt (3 days; quota of 3, no exemptions); 2 general gun hunts (3 and 4 days; quota of 6, no exemptions); 1 youth turkey hunt (2 days; quota of 3, no exemptions); 2 spring turkey hunts (4 and 5 days; quota of 3, no exemptions); a 26 day small game season; fishing and frogging year-round; allow the take of all legal game, wild hog, furbearers (except bobcat and otter), fish and frogs; prohibit the harvest of antlered deer not having at least 1 antler with three or more points or one antler with a main beam of 10 inches or more in length, except by persons less than 16 years of age; all persons must enter and exit the area only at a designated entrance; public access is allowed year round except during periods open to hunting, only permitted hunters and their guests are allowed access during hunting seasons; vehicular access is prohibited except participants in a hunt are allowed vehicle access during hunting seasons and 3 days before and after each season; vehicles only allowed on named or numbered roads; prohibit the use of airboats, tracked vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and unlicensed and unregistered motorcycles; shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset (except during spring turkey season when shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.); hunting wildlife with dogs is prohibited except bird dogs and retrievers may be used for hunting small game and any dog may be used to take small game during the small game season; prohibit fires.

Green Swamp West WMA – extend scouting hours during the day before each special-opportunity spring turkey season hunt to 1 ½ hours before sunrise until 1 ½ hours after sunset.

Walk-in-the-Water WMA – prohibit camping except as authorized by Florida Forest Service through FloridaStateForests.ReserveAmerica.com.

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 ~~1~~ 2 through January ~~27~~ 28.

2. Archery – October ~~26~~ 27 through November ~~25~~ 26, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only and Thanksgiving Day.

3. Small game – Beginning after the close of general gun and continuing until the close of the zonal squirrel season as established by Chapter 68A-13, F.A.C., Saturdays and Sundays only.

4. Wild hog-dog – September ~~27-30~~ 28 through ~~October 1~~ and October ~~4-7~~ 5-8.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~16~~ 17 through April ~~21~~ 22.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change

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

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – October ~~5-7~~ ~~6-8~~.

2. Wild hog-dog – October ~~17-19~~ ~~18-20~~.

3. Special-opportunity archery – December ~~1-4~~ ~~2-5~~ and ~~13-16~~ ~~14-17~~.

4. Special-opportunity general gun – January ~~17-20~~ ~~18-21~~, ~~28-31~~ ~~January 29 through February 1~~ and February ~~6-9~~ ~~7-10~~.

5. Special-opportunity turkey – March ~~16-19~~ ~~17-20~~, ~~25-28~~ ~~26-29~~, March ~~30~~ ~~31~~ through April ~~2~~ ~~3~~, April ~~8-11~~ ~~9-12~~ and ~~13-16~~ ~~14-17~~.

6. Small game – February ~~22-24~~ ~~23-25~~ and March ~~1-3~~ ~~2-4~~.

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 ½ hours before sunrise until 1 ½ 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 ~~8-12~~ ~~9-13~~.

2. Bird dog training – Bird dogs may be trained in the bird dog training area September ~~15~~ ~~16~~ through February ~~10~~ ~~11~~ 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 ~~3-11~~ ~~4-12~~.

4. Small game – November ~~12-25~~ ~~13-26~~ and on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only November ~~28~~ ~~29~~ through January ~~13~~ ~~14~~.

5. Field trial quail – January ~~19-20~~ ~~20-21~~.

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 ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~.

2. General gun – October ~~27~~ ~~28~~ through November ~~4~~ ~~5~~.

3. Small game – November ~~14~~ ~~15~~ through January ~~13~~ ~~14~~ 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 ~~6-8~~ ~~7-9~~.

2. Archery – December ~~1-2~~ ~~2-3~~, ~~8-9~~ ~~9-10~~, ~~December and 29-30~~ ~~30-31~~ and January ~~5-6~~ ~~6-7~~.

3. Muzzleloading gun – January ~~12-13~~ ~~13-14~~, ~~19-20~~ ~~20-21~~, ~~26-27~~ ~~27-28~~ and February ~~2-3~~ ~~3-4~~.

4. Small game – February ~~16-17~~ ~~17-18~~, ~~23-24~~ ~~24-25~~ and March ~~2-3~~ ~~3-4~~.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~20-21~~ ~~21-22~~, ~~27-28~~ ~~28-29~~, April ~~3-4~~ ~~4-5~~, ~~10-11~~ ~~11-12~~ and ~~17-18~~ ~~18-19~~.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(6) Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~13 14~~ through November ~~2 3~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – December ~~8-16 9-17~~.
3. Small game – January ~~5-6 6-7~~ and ~~26-27 27-28~~.
4. Spring turkey – March ~~19-21 20-22~~ and April ~~2-4 3-5~~.
5. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Prohibited, except as authorized ~~Camping is permitted at the designated campground located off Rucks Dairy Road; at designated campsites along the Florida Trail; and at other sites by Special Use Permit issued~~ by the Florida Forest Service. Only tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping.

(d) No change.

(7) KICCO Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~15 16~~ through October ~~14 15~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~20-21 21-22~~ and ~~27-28 28-29~~.
3. Wild hog-still – November ~~10 11~~ through December ~~9 10~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
4. Small game – December ~~15 16~~ through January ~~20 21~~.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~16 17~~ through April ~~14 15~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(8) Hickory Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – September ~~14-16 15-17, 21-23 22-24~~ and January ~~11-13 12-14~~.
2. Archery – October ~~12-14 13-15~~.
3. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~20-22 21-23~~ and ~~24-26 25-27~~.
4. General gun – November ~~3-5 4-6~~.
5. Small game – November ~~12-25 13-26~~ and January ~~21 22~~ through March ~~3 4~~.
6. General gun for mobility-impaired – December ~~8-9 9-10~~.
7. No change.
8. Spring turkey – March ~~21-23 22-24~~ and April ~~11-13 12-14~~.
9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~29-30 30~~ through ~~October 1~~, October ~~1-4 2-5, 5-7 6-8, 8-11 9-12~~ and ~~12-14 13-15~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – December ~~1-2 2-3, 3-6 4-7~~ and ~~7-9 8-10~~.
3. Wild hog-still – January ~~12-15 13-16~~ and ~~16-20 17-21~~.
4. Small game – February ~~2-10 3-11~~ and February ~~23 24~~ through March ~~3 4~~.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~26-28 27-29~~.
6. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Prohibited, except as authorized by ~~Permitted at designated campgrounds. Permitted at other sites by special use permit from~~ the Florida Forest Service. Only tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping.

(d) No change.

(10) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~9-10 10-11~~.

2. Spring turkey – March ~~22-24~~ ~~23-25~~ and April ~~5-7~~ ~~6-8~~.
3. Muzzleloading gun – February ~~15-17~~ ~~16-18~~.
4. Wild hog-still – November ~~16-18~~ ~~17-19~~, November 30 through December ~~2~~ ~~1-3~~, and December 14-16 ~~15-17~~.
5. Small game – January ~~4-20~~ ~~5-21~~.
6. Archery – February ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~.
7. No change.
8. Raccoon – August ~~2~~ ~~3~~ through September ~~23~~ ~~24~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).
  - (b) through (d) No change.
  - (11) Lake Marion Creek Wildlife Management Area.
    - (a) Open season:
      1. Archery – October ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~ and ~~19-21~~ ~~20-22~~.
      2. Muzzleloading gun – November ~~23-25~~ ~~24-26~~.
      3. General gun – January ~~18-20~~ ~~19-21~~ and February ~~1-3~~ ~~2-4~~.
      4. Small game – January ~~4-6~~ ~~5-7~~ and ~~11-13~~ ~~12-14~~.
      5. Wild hog-still – December ~~7-9~~ ~~8-10~~ and ~~21-23~~ ~~22-24~~.
      6. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~9-10~~ ~~10-11~~.
      7. Spring turkey – March ~~16-18~~ ~~17-19~~, March ~~29-31~~ ~~30 through~~ ~~April 1~~ and April ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~.
      8. No change.
      - (b) through (d) No change.
    - (12) Avon Park Air Force Range Wildlife Management Area.
      - (a) Open season:
        1. Archery – September ~~15~~ ~~16~~ through October ~~14~~ ~~15~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~20~~ ~~21~~ through November ~~2~~ ~~3~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        3. General gun – November ~~3~~ ~~4~~ through January ~~20~~ ~~21~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        4. Small game – November ~~10~~ ~~11~~ through March ~~3~~ ~~4~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        5. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~9-10~~ ~~10-11~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        6. Spring turkey – March ~~16~~ ~~17~~ through April ~~21~~ ~~22~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        7. Antlerless deer – November ~~17-23~~ ~~18-24~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
        8. through 9. No change.
        - (b) through (d) No change.
      - (13) Croom Wildlife Management Area.
        - (a) Open season:
          1. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~.
          2. General gun – November ~~3-25~~ ~~4-26~~.
          3. Small game – ~~November 26~~ ~~December 4~~ through March ~~3~~ ~~4~~.
          4. Spring turkey – March ~~19-21~~ ~~20-22~~, April ~~2-4~~ ~~3-5~~ and ~~16-18~~ ~~17-19~~.
          5. Fox, raccoon and bobcat – December ~~13~~ ~~14~~ through March ~~10~~ ~~11~~. Hunting is allowed from 5 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 15 ~~16~~ through October 14 ~~15~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October 20-22 ~~21-23~~.
3. General gun – November 3 ~~4~~ through December 30 ~~31~~.
4. Wild hog-dog – January 11-13 ~~12-14~~ and 18-20 ~~19-21~~.
5. through 6. No change.
7. Youth turkey hunt – March 9-10 ~~10-11~~.
8. Spring turkey – March 22-24 ~~23-25~~, April 5-7 ~~6-8~~ and 19-21 ~~20-22~~.
9. Raccoon – January 31 through February 24 ~~1-25~~ and May 2-26 ~~3-27~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) through (d) No change.

(d) General regulations:

(15) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area – Osprey Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – November 9-11 ~~10-12~~.
2. Wild hog-still – November 23-25 ~~24-26~~.
3. Wild hog-dog – December 7-9 ~~8-10~~ and January 4-6 ~~5-7~~.
4. Small game – January 24 ~~25~~ through February 4 ~~5~~.
5. Archery – February 8-10 ~~9-11~~.
6. Muzzleloading gun – February 15-17 ~~16-18~~.
7. Youth turkey hunt – March 9-10 ~~10-11~~.
8. Spring turkey – April 12-14 ~~13-15~~ and 19-21 ~~20-22~~.
9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(16) Weekiwachee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 13-18 ~~14-19~~, November 10-15 ~~11-16~~, December 8-13 ~~9-14~~, January 12-17 ~~13-18~~ and February 9-14 ~~10-15~~.
2. No change

(b) through (d) No change.

(17) Lower Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – December 7-9 ~~8-10~~, January 11-13 ~~12-14~~, January 25-27 ~~26-28~~ and February 8-10 ~~9-11~~.
2. Youth turkey hunt – March 22-24 ~~23-25~~ and April 5-7 ~~6-8~~.
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 13-19 and November 3-11.
2. Muzzleloading gun – November 23-25.
3. Family hunt – December 21-23.
4. General gun – January 18-20 and 24-27.
5. Small game – February 2-28.
6. Youth turkey hunt – March 9-10.
7. Spring turkey – March 21-24 and 27-31.
8. Trapping – Prohibited.
9. Fishing and frogging – Allowed year round.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, wild hog, wild turkey (bearded turkey or gobblers only), fish, frogs and

furbearers (except bobcat and otter). 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. During the archery season, the bag limit for deer shall be two deer, only one of which can be antlerless per quota permit. During the muzzleloading gun, general gun and family hunt seasons, the bag limit for deer shall be two antlered deer per quota permit. During the spring turkey seasons, one gobbler (or bearded turkey) may be taken per person, but not more than two per quota permit.

(c) Camping: Allowed only by permit from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(d) General regulations:

1. All persons shall enter and exit the area only at a designated entrance.

2. Public access is allowed year round except during quota hunts when only individuals participating in a hunt may access the area.

3. Vehicular access is prohibited, except vehicles may only be operated on named or numbered roads and only by persons participating in a hunt during archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, family hunt, small game and spring turkey seasons and three days prior to and three days after each of these seasons. At all other times, public access other than by foot, horseback or bicycle is prohibited.

5. The use of airboats, swamp buggies, tracked vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and unlicensed and unregistered motorcycles is prohibited.

6. Shooting hours shall be from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset (except during spring turkey season when shooting hours shall be from one-half hour before sunrise to 1p.m.).

7. Dogs are prohibited, except bird dogs and retrievers may be used for hunting small game and any dog may be used to take small game during the small game season.

8. Fires are prohibited.

**PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2018.

*Rulemaking Authority Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., ~~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.*