

**Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-15.064
Agenda Item 12.C.
December 6, 2017**

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:

Dinner Island Ranch WMA – require that persons must enter and exit the area only at the designated entrance.

Everglades and Francis S. Taylor WMA – allow take of non-native reptiles year round; prohibit guns for taking non-native reptiles, except when guns may be used to hunt game or alligators, and from the day after close of small game season through the second Sunday in April when guns (except centerfire rifles) may be used to take non-native reptiles; establish shooting hours for non-native reptiles from 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1/2 hour after sunset from the day after close of small game season through the second Sunday in April; remove management area permit and hunting license requirements for the take of non-native reptiles; and establish that all boat ramps, parking areas, roads, levees, and adjacent powerline pads are closed to hunting to address rampant unsafe target shooting occurring in this area.

Holey Land WMA – allow take of non-native reptiles year round; prohibit guns for taking non-native reptiles, except when guns may be used to hunt game or alligators, and from the day after close of small game season through the second Sunday in April when guns (except centerfire rifles) may be used to take non-native reptiles; establish shooting hours for non-native reptiles from 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1/2 hour after sunset from the day after close of small game season through the second Sunday in April; remove management area permit and hunting license requirements for the take of non-native reptiles; and establish that all boat ramps, parking areas, roads, levees, and adjacent powerline pads are closed to hunting to address rampant unsafe target shooting occurring in this area.

Okaloacoochee Slough WMA – allow migratory game bird hunting during statewide migratory game bird seasons; and expand small game season from 43 days to 64 days.

Picayune Strand WMA – establish a 2-day youth turkey hunt (30 no cost quota permits, no exemptions); expand small game season from 51 days to 72 days; prohibit camping except as authorized by the Florida Forest Service through FloridaStateForests.ReserveAmerica.com; clarify that licensed and registered vehicles may only be operated on designated roads, parking areas, and other areas as designated by the Florida Forest Service; allow take of non-native reptiles year round; prohibit guns for taking non-native reptiles, except when guns may be used to hunt game or alligators; and remove management area permit and hunting license requirements for take of non-native reptiles.

Rotenberger WMA – allow take of non-native reptiles year round; prohibit guns for taking non-native reptiles, except when guns may be used to hunt game or alligators, and from the day after close of small game season through the second Sunday in April when guns (except centerfire rifles) may be used to take non-native reptiles; establish shooting hours for non-native reptiles from 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1/2 hour after sunset from the day after close of small game season through the second Sunday in April; remove management area permit and hunting license requirements for the take of non-native reptiles; and establish that all boat ramps, parking areas, roads, levees, and adjacent powerline pads are closed to hunting to address rampant unsafe target shooting occurring in this area.

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) No change.

(2) Holey Land Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Walk, September ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through October ~~14~~ ~~15~~.
2. General gun – Vehicle, October ~~20~~ ~~21~~ through November ~~4~~ ~~5~~ (tracked vehicles).
3. Archery – August ~~4-26~~ ~~5-27~~.
4. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~1-9~~ ~~2-10~~.
5. Small game – November ~~5~~ ~~6~~ through March ~~3~~ ~~4~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 12. No change.

13. All boat ramps, parking areas, roads, camping areas, levees, and adjacent powerline pads are closed to hunting ~~The take of wildlife with a gun on or upon the L-5 or Miami Canal Levees is prohibited.~~

14. No change.

15. Non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards as listed in subsection 68A-5.002(4), F.A.C., may be taken year round after the last day of small game season through the second Sunday in April and during established seasons for the taking of game animals or alligators and only by persons properly licensed and permitted to take game animals or alligators.~~

16. Guns are a prohibited method of take for non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards~~, except when the use of guns to take game or alligators is authorized and after the last day of small game season through the second Sunday in April when all legal methods of take for game animals or alligators are allowed, except the use of centerfire rifles is prohibited.

17. Conditional non-native snakes and lizards, as listed in subsection 68 5.002(4), F.A.C., shall not be removed from the area alive.

~~18. Persons that take any Conditional non-native snakes and lizards shall report the take within 36 hours, and shall provide all data requested.~~

~~18.19.~~ The day after small game season ends through the second Sunday in April shooting hours for non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards~~ shall be 1/2 hour before sunrise and until 1/2 hour after sunset.

20. renumbered 19. No change.

(e) No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Walk, September ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through October ~~14~~ ~~15~~, Conservation Areas 3A North and 2A (north of the East/West Airboat Trail) only.

2. General gun – Vehicle (airboats and tracked vehicles only), October ~~20~~ ~~21~~ through November ~~4~~ ~~5~~, in Conservation Areas 3A North, 3A South, 2, and the Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area.

3. Archery – August ~~4-26~~ ~~5-27~~, Conservation Area 3A North only.

4. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~1-9~~ ~~2-10~~, in Conservation Area 3A North only.

5. Small game – November ~~5~~ ~~through 6~~ ~~through~~ March ~~3~~ ~~4~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 17. No change.

18. All boat ramps, parking areas, roads, camping areas, levees, and adjacent powerline pads are closed to hunting ~~The take of wildlife with a gun on or upon the L-4 or L-5 Levees is prohibited.~~

19. through 21. No change

22. Non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards as listed in subsection 68A-5.002(4), F.A.C., may be taken year round after the last day of small game season through the second Sunday in April and during established seasons for the taking of game animals or alligators and only by persons properly licensed and permitted to take game animals or alligators.~~

23. Guns are a prohibited method of take for non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards~~,

except when the use of guns to take game or alligators is authorized and after the last day of small game season through the second Sunday in April when all legal methods of take for game animals or alligators are allowed, except the use of centerfire rifles is prohibited.

24. Conditional non-native snakes and lizards, as listed in subsection 68 5.002(4), F.A.C., shall not be removed from the area alive.

~~25. Persons that take any Conditional non-native snakes and lizards shall report the take within 36 hours, and shall provide all data requested.~~

~~25.26.~~ The day after small game season ends through the second Sunday in April shooting hours for non-native reptiles ~~and Conditional non-native snakes and lizards~~ shall be 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1/2 hour after sunset.

27. renumbered 26. No change.

(e) No change.

(4) Rotenberger Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. General gun – Walk, September ~~29 30~~ through October ~~14 15~~.

2. General gun – Vehicle (tracked vehicles only), October ~~20 24~~ through November ~~4 5~~ (tracked vehicles).

3. Archery – August ~~4-26 5-27~~.

4. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~1-9 2-10~~.

5. Small game – November ~~5 6~~ through March ~~3 4~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 12. No change.

13. All boat ramps, parking areas, roads, camping areas, levees, and adjacent powerline pads are closed to hunting ~~The take of wildlife with a gun on or upon the L-4, Powerline, Manley Ditch or Miami Canal Levees is prohibited.~~

14. No change.

15. Non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards as listed in subsection 68A-5.002(4), F.A.C.,~~ may be taken year round ~~after the last day of small game season through the second Sunday in April and during established seasons for the taking of game animals or alligators and only by persons properly licensed and permitted to take game animals or alligators.~~

16. Guns are a prohibited method of take for non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards~~, except when the use of guns to take game or alligators is authorized and after the last day of small game season through the second Sunday in April when all legal methods of take for game animals or alligators are allowed, except the use of centerfire rifles is prohibited.

17. Conditional non-native snakes and lizards, as listed in subsection 68 5.002(4), F.A.C., shall not be removed from the area alive.

~~18. Persons that take any Conditional non-native snakes and lizards shall report the take within 36 hours, and shall provide all data requested.~~

~~18.19.~~ The day after small game season ends through the second Sunday in April shooting hours for non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards~~ shall be 1/2 hour before sunrise until 1/2 hours after sunset.

20. renumbered 19. No change.

(e) No change.

(5) Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. through 3. No change.

4. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~6-21 7-22~~, except in the Deep Lake Unit.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~2 3~~ through April ~~7 8~~.

6. through 7. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(6) Okaloacoochee Slough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~4-10~~ ~~5-11~~ and ~~11-19~~ ~~12-20~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~1-3~~ ~~2-4~~ and ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~.
3. Family Hunt – September ~~15-16~~ ~~16-17~~.
4. General gun – September ~~22-25~~ ~~23-26~~ and September ~~26-30~~ ~~27~~ through ~~October 1~~.
5. Small game – November ~~10~~ ~~11~~ through ~~January 13~~ ~~December 24~~.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~2-5~~ ~~3-6~~ and ~~6-10~~ ~~7-11~~.
7. Migratory game birds ~~Duck, geese and coot~~ – During the seasons established by Rule 68A-13.003 and 68A-13.008, F.A.C.
8. through 9. No change.
- (b) through (d) No change.
- (7) Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area.
 - (a) Open season:
 1. Archery – August ~~17-19~~ ~~18-20~~ and ~~24-26~~ ~~25-27~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
 2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-9~~ ~~8-10~~ and ~~14-16~~ ~~15-17~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
 3. General gun – September ~~28-30~~ ~~29~~ through ~~October 1~~ and October ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
 4. Youth Turkey Hunt – February ~~23-24~~ ~~24-25~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
 5. Spring turkey – March ~~2-5~~ ~~3-6~~, ~~8-11~~ ~~9-12~~, ~~15-18~~ ~~16-19~~, ~~22-25~~ ~~23-26~~ and March ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through April ~~1~~ ~~2~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
 6. Special-opportunity spring turkey – March ~~2-8~~ ~~3-9~~ and ~~16-22~~ ~~17-23~~ east of US Highway 27 only.
 7. Wild hog-still– November ~~17-18~~ ~~18-19~~ west of US Highway 27 only.
 8. through 10. No change.
 - (b) through (d) No change.
 - (8) Picayune Strand Wildlife Management Area.
 - (a) Open season:
 1. Archery – August ~~4-19~~ ~~5-20~~.
 2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~1-3~~ ~~2-4~~ and ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~.
 3. General gun – October ~~6-9~~ ~~7-10~~, ~~10-14~~ ~~11-15~~ and ~~15-21~~ ~~16-22~~.
 4. Small game – November ~~3~~ ~~4~~ through ~~January 13~~ ~~December 24~~.
 5. Youth turkey hunt – February ~~23-24~~.
 - ~~6-5~~ Spring turkey – March ~~2-5~~ ~~3-6~~ and ~~6-10~~ ~~7-11~~.
 6. through 7. renumbered 7. through 8. No change.
 - (b) No change.
 - (c) Camping: ~~Prohibited, except as authorized~~ ~~Camping is allowed by Special Use Permit~~ issued by the Florida Forest Service. Only tents, trailers, or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping.
 - (d) General regulations:
 1. through 2. No change.
 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 ~~Vehicles may be operated only on named or numbered roads and trails.~~
 4. No change.
 5. Non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards as listed in subsection 68 5.002(4), F.A.C.,~~ may be taken year round ~~during established seasons for the taking of game animals or alligators and only by persons properly licensed and permitted to take game animals or alligators.~~
 6. Guns are a prohibited method of take for non-native reptiles ~~Conditional non-native snakes and lizards,~~ except when the use of guns to take game or alligators is authorized.
 7. Conditional non-native snakes and lizards, as listed in subsection 68 5.002(4), F.A.C., shall not be removed from the area alive.
 8. ~~Persons that take any Conditional non-native snakes and lizards shall report the take within 36 hours, and shall provide all data requested.~~
 - (9) Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~3-6~~ 4-7, ~~10-13~~ 11-14, ~~17-20~~ 18-21 and ~~24-27~~ 25-28.
2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-9~~ 8-10.
3. General gun – September ~~15-17~~ 16-18, ~~21-23~~ 22-24 and ~~28-30~~ September 29 through October 1.
4. No change.
5. Family hunt – October ~~6-7~~ 7-8 and ~~13-14~~ 14-15.
6. Youth Turkey Hunt – February ~~23-24~~ 24-25.
7. Spring turkey – March ~~2-4~~ 3-5, ~~9-11~~ 10-12 and March ~~30~~ 31 through April ~~1~~ 2.
8. through 10. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 10. No change.

11. Persons shall enter and exit the area only at the designated entrance.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – August ~~3-6~~ 4-7, ~~10-13~~ 11-14, ~~17-20~~ 18-21 and ~~24-27~~ August 25-28.
2. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-9~~ 8-10.
3. General gun – September ~~15-17~~ 16-18, ~~21-23~~ 22-24, and ~~28-30~~ September 29 through October 1.
4. No change.
5. Youth Turkey Hunt – February ~~23-24~~ 24-25.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~2-4~~ 3-5, ~~9-11~~ 10-12 and March ~~30~~ 31 through April ~~1~~ 2.
7. through 9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(11) Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~8-11~~ 9-12, ~~15-18~~ 16-19, ~~22-25~~ September 23-26 and September ~~29~~ 30 through October ~~2~~ 3.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~13-15~~ 14-16.
3. Family hunt – October ~~27-30~~ 28-31.
4. General gun – November ~~3-7~~ 4-8.
5. Small game – November ~~10~~ 11 through the second Sunday in January.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~2-5~~ 3-6 and ~~6-10~~ 7-11.
7. through 8. No change.
- (b) through (d) No change.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2018.

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.