

**Background Report  
Draft Rule 68A-17.005  
Agenda Item 12.C.  
December 6, 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 on Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs) 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 WEAs.

**SUMMARY:** The proposed rule amendment would adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and revise specific area regulations on Wildlife and Environmental Areas (WEAs) as follows:

North Central Region

Watermelon Pond WEA – expand the quota for youth spring turkey season from 5 to 10 permits.

Northwest Region

Apalachicola River WEA – on that portion of the area located within Tate's Hell State Forest (east of East Bay and Cash Bayou), allow the hunting of wild hog during the existing summer wild hog-dog season and prohibit camping.

South Region

John C. and Mariana Jones/Hungryland WEA – expand small game season from 30 to 58 days.

John G. and Susan H. DuPuis Jr. WEA – establish a 2-day youth turkey hunt (25 no-cost quota permits, no exemptions); allow frogging year round; allow camping year round but only at designated campsites, except that camping at the Group Campground, Family Use Campground, and Equestrian Campground is prohibited except with a no-cost Special Use License from the South Florida Water Management District; allow horses year round, but only on designated equestrian trails and named or numbered roads; require that hunters must check in, check out, and check all game taken at the designated check station during periods when the check station is staffed; require that hunters must enter and exit the area only via the designated gate where the check station is located.

Southern Glades WEA – prohibit use of airboats in Unit 1; allow airboat access in Unit 3 from the day following the close of general gun season until March 1; clarify that the operation of airboats in canals is prohibited; 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; and remove management area permit and hunting license requirements for take of non-native reptiles.

Northeast Region

Split Oak WEA – remove the permit requirement for horseback riding on this area.

**THE FULL TEXT OF THE PROPOSED RULE IS AS FOLLOWS:**

**68A-17.005 Specific Regulations for Wildlife and Environmental Areas.**

- (1) Southwest Region.
  - (a) through (e) No change.

(f) Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area – Royce Unit – Highlands County.

1. Open season:

a. Archery – September ~~21-23~~ 22-24 and October ~~12-14~~ 13-15.

b. General gun – November ~~16-18~~ 17-19.

c. Small game – December ~~7-9~~ 8-10, ~~21-23~~ 22-24, opening 3 days prior to the third Monday in January and closing 3 days thereafter and February ~~1-3~~ 2-4.

d. Wild hog-still – May ~~4-5~~ 5-6 and ~~11-12~~ 12-13.

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

f. Spring turkey – March ~~16-18~~ 17-19 and March ~~29-31~~ 30 through April 1.

g. No change.

2. through 3. No change.

(g) through (k) No change.

(2) North Central Region.

(a) Santa Fe Swamp – Bradford County.

1. Open season:

a. Archery – September ~~21~~ 22 through October ~~19~~ 20.

b. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~20-22~~ 21-23.

c. Archery and muzzleloading gun – November ~~3-4~~ through December ~~30~~ 31.

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

e. through f. No change.

2. through 3. No change.

(b) Fort White Mitigation Park – Gilchrist County.

1. Open season:

a. Archery season – October ~~20-24~~ 21-25, ~~27-31~~ October 28 through November 1 and November ~~10-14~~ 11-15.

b. Small game – November ~~15~~ 16 through March ~~3~~ 4.

c. Youth spring turkey – March ~~9-10~~ 10-11.

d. Spring turkey – March ~~16-20~~ 17-21 and ~~23-27~~ 24-28.

e. through g. No change.

2. through 4. No change.

(c) Suwannee Ridge – Hamilton County.

1. Open season:

a. Mobility-impaired general gun – October ~~12-14~~ 13-15, ~~26-28~~ 27-29, November ~~2-4~~ 3-5 and December ~~14-16~~ 15-17.

b. Mobility-impaired spring turkey – March ~~22-24~~ 23-25 and April ~~12-14~~ 13-15.

2. through 3. No change.

(d) ~~Branan~~ Branan Field Mitigation Park – Duval and Clay counties.

1. through 3. No change.

(e) No change.

(f) Lafayette Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area.

1. Open seasons:

a. Archery season – September ~~22-26~~ 23-27 and September ~~28~~ 29 through October ~~2-3~~ and ~~October 5-9~~ 6-10.

b. Muzzleloading gun season – October ~~20-22~~ 21-23.

c. Family hunt – November ~~3-4~~ 4-5 and ~~10-11~~ 11-12.

d. Wild hog-still – January ~~19-23~~ 20-24 and ~~26-30~~ 27-31.

e. Small game – November ~~12~~ 13 through January ~~18~~ 19 and ~~January 31~~ February 1 through March ~~3~~ 4.

f. Youth spring turkey – March ~~9-10~~ 10-11.

g. Spring turkey – March ~~16-18~~ 17-19 and ~~22-24~~ 23-25.

h. through j. No change.

2. through 3. No change.

(g) Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area.

1. Open seasons:

a. Archery season – October ~~13-21~~ 14-22.

b. Small game – November ~~17-18~~ through December ~~2-3~~ and December ~~15-16~~ through January ~~6-7~~.

c. Youth spring turkey – March ~~9-10~~ 10-11.

d. through g. No change.

2. through 3. No change.

(3) Northwest Region.

(a) No change.

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

1. Open seasons:

a. through f. No change.

g. Wild hog-dog – Opening the third Friday and closing 2 days thereafter in the months of July, August, September, May and June, except in that portion of the area east west of the Apalachicola River, east west of the East River and north south of Sam's Creek Cut-off.

h. through k. No change.

1. through 2. No change.

3. Camping: Throughout the year. A permit as provided by paragraph 68A-17.004(8)(a), F.A.C., is required if camping within any designated campground. In the remainder of the area, camping is limited to 14 consecutive days and prohibited where posted as no camping; except that camping is prohibited in the Tate's Hell State Forest portion of the area. Camping is limited to tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles. Unless contained in mobile campers, kitchen stoves, refrigerators and freezers are prohibited. Lumber, sheet metal or other building materials are prohibited.

4. No change.

(c) L. Kirk Edwards – Leon County.

1. No change.

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

a. Archery – September ~~27-30~~ ~~28~~ through October ~~1~~, October ~~11-14~~ ~~12-15~~ and ~~25-28~~ ~~26-29~~.

b. Family hunt – November ~~1-4~~ ~~2-5~~.

c. Archery and muzzleloading gun – November ~~22-25~~ ~~23-26~~, November ~~29-30~~ through December ~~2-3~~ and December ~~13-16~~ ~~14-17~~.

d. Small game – November ~~10-21~~ ~~11-22~~, ~~26-28~~ ~~27-29~~, December ~~3-12~~ ~~4-13~~, and December ~~17-18~~ through March ~~3-4~~.

e. through h. No change.

3. through 4. No change.

(4) South Region.

(a) Southern Glades – Dade County.

1. Open season:

a. Archery – July ~~28-29~~ through August ~~26-27~~.

b. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~7-9~~ ~~8-10~~.

c. General gun – September ~~15-16~~ through October ~~14-15~~ and November ~~19-25~~ ~~20-26~~.

d. Small game – November ~~26-27~~ through February ~~24-25~~.

e. through g. No change.

2. No change.

3. General regulations:

a. through c. No change.

d. The use of tracked vehicles, buggies, airboats, motorcycles, and all-terrain vehicles is prohibited in the area except that airboats may be used in Units ~~3-4~~ and 4 from the day following the close of the general gun season through March 1, only ~~and~~ outboard motor boats may be used within canals, and vehicles may be operated on named or numbered roads.

e. No change.

f. 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 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.~~

g. 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.

h. 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.

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

~~i.j.~~ 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 hour after sunset.

(b) John G. and Susan H. Dupuis Jr. – Palm Beach and Martin counties.

1. Open season:

a. Archery – September ~~7-9~~ 8-10, 14-16 15-17 and ~~21-23~~ 22-24.

b. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~5-7~~ 6-8, ~~12-14~~ 13-15 and ~~19-21~~ 20-22.

c. General gun for mobility-impaired – October ~~27-28~~ 28-29.

d. General gun – November ~~2-4~~ 3-5 and ~~9-11~~ 10-12.

e. Wild hog-still – November ~~13-15~~ 14-16, November ~~27-29~~ 28-30, and opening the second Saturday in April and closing 8 days thereafter, and opening the second Saturday in May and closing 8 days thereafter.

f. Youth turkey hunt – February 23-24.

~~g.f.~~ Spring turkey – March ~~5-7~~ 6-8, ~~15-17~~ 16-18 and ~~22-24~~ 23-25.

~~h.g.~~ Small game – December ~~1~~ 2 through January ~~20~~ 21.

h. renumbered i. No change.

~~j.i.~~ Fishing is allowed year round ~~when public access is allowed.~~

~~j.~~ ~~Frogging is prohibited.~~

2. No change.

3. Camping – Prohibited, except at designated campsites and except that a special use license issued by the South Florida Water Management District shall be required for camping at the Group Campground, Family Use Campground, and Equestrian Campground ~~During the archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, general gun for mobility impaired, and spring turkey seasons, only those persons participating in the hunt shall camp on the area and camping is permitted only on the campsite adjacent to Gate 3. Authorized camping equipment may be taken on the area after 8:00 a.m. one day before each hunt, and shall be removed from the area before 5:00 p.m., one day following each hunt of the archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, general gun for mobility impaired, and spring turkey seasons. During the remainder of the year, camping is allowed at designated primitive campsites on hiking trails, the Family Use campground on Jim Lake Grade, and at the designated equestrian staging area at Gate 3.~~

4. General regulations:

a. through e. No change.

f. ~~Horses are prohibited during the archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, general gun for mobility impaired and spring turkey seasons. During the remainder of the year horses may be used only on designated equestrian trails and named or numbered roads. Persons horseback riding on the area shall enter and exit only at Gate 3.~~

g. ~~During the archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, general gun for mobility impaired, spring turkey and wild hog still seasons, hunters shall check in and out at the check station at Gate 3 and check all game taken. During periods when the check station is staffed, hunters shall check in and out at the check station and check all game taken, and no deer, wild hog, or turkey may be dismembered until checked at the check station. Hunters must~~ During the small game season, hunters shall enter and exit the area through the designated entrance where the check station

is located through Gate 1.

h. During the small game season and periods when the area is closed to hunting, vehicle access is through Gate 1 and hiking access is through Gate 2 by foot only. People through-hiking on the Florida Trail may enter or exit the area through the Florida Trail.

i. During the archery, muzzleloading gun, general gun, general gun for mobility impaired and spring turkey seasons, no person shall enter or exit the area except through Gate 3 and all such persons shall possess a valid quota hunt permit for the area or be a guest of a valid quota permit holder as provided in Rule 68A-15.005, F.A.C. During the wild hog still season, no person shall enter or exit the area except through Gate 3.

j. through l. renumbered h. through j. No change.

(c) CREW – Collier and Lee Counties.

1. Open season:

a. Archery – August ~~4-12~~ ~~5-13~~.

b. Muzzleloading gun – September ~~1-3~~ ~~2-4~~.

c. General gun – November ~~17-25~~ ~~18-26~~.

d. Small game – December ~~1-30~~ ~~2-31~~.

e. Spring turkey – March ~~2-5~~ ~~3-6~~ and ~~6-10~~ ~~7-11~~.

f. through h. No change.

2. through 4. No change.

(d) No change.

(e) John C. and Mariana Jones/Hungryland – Palm Beach and Martin Counties.

1. Open season:

a. Archery – September ~~8-11~~ ~~9-12~~, ~~15-18~~ ~~16-19~~, September ~~22-25~~ ~~23-26~~ and September ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through October ~~2~~ ~~3~~.

b. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~.

c. General gun – October ~~27-29~~ ~~28-30~~, November ~~3-5~~ ~~4-6~~ and ~~10-12~~ ~~11-13~~.

d. Small game – November ~~17~~ ~~18~~ through the second Sunday in January ~~December 17~~.

e. Spring turkey – March ~~16-31~~ ~~17~~ through ~~April 1~~ (Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays only).

f. through h. No change.

2. through 4. No change.

(5) Northeast Region. Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park – Orange and Osceola counties.

(a) Possession of any animal is prohibited except horses are allowed ~~by permit~~.

(b) through (d) No change.

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

*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, 9-14-17, 7-1-18.*