

**Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-15.061
Agenda Item 13.
February 9, 2017**

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: Everglades Headwaters WMA, Gulfstream Tract. – (new) – establish a new wildlife management area (395 acres) as the first tract of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Everglades Headwaters WMA; establish rules consistent with the Arbuckle WMA (regulations for Arbuckle WMA, including hunting seasons and quotas, will apply to the Gulfstream Tract) with the following open seasons: a 16-day archery season consisting of three 2-day weekend hunts (quota of 150, no exemptions) and ten days of weekday hunts (quota of 75 daily permits, no exemptions), a muzzleloading gun season consisting of two 2-day weekend muzzleloading gun hunts (quota of 150, no exemptions) and five days of weekday muzzleloading gun hunts (quota of 75 daily permits, no exemptions), 4-day small game season, and two 3-day spring turkey season hunts (quota of 15, no exemptions); and public access will be provided at a parking area on Old Avon Park Road.

Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb WMA, Yucca Pens Unit – add coyote as legal to hunt during daylight hours of the raccoon and opossum season; and prohibit coyote hunting with dogs and at night.

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 ~~2~~ 3 through January ~~28~~ 29.

2. Archery – October ~~27~~ 28 through November ~~26~~ 27, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only and Thanksgiving Day.

3. No change.

4. Wild hog-dog – September ~~28~~ 29 through October ~~1~~ 2 and October ~~5-8~~ 6-9.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~17~~ 18 through April ~~22~~ 23.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – October ~~6-8~~ 7-9.

2. Wild hog-dog – October ~~18-20~~ 19-21.

3. Special-opportunity archery – December ~~2-5~~ 3-6 and ~~14-17~~ 15-18.

4. Special-opportunity general gun – January ~~18-21~~ 19-22; January ~~29~~ 30 through February ~~1~~ 2 and February ~~7-10~~ 8-11.

5. Special-opportunity turkey – March ~~17-20~~ 18-21, ~~26-29~~ 27-30, March 31 through April 3 1-4, April 9-12 10-13 and 14-17 15-18.

6. Small game – February ~~23-25~~ 24-26 and March ~~2-4~~ 3-5.

7. through 8. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(3) Fred C. Babcock/Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~9-13~~ ~~10-14~~.

2. Bird dog training – Bird dogs may be trained in the bird dog training area September ~~16~~ ~~17~~ through February ~~11~~ ~~12~~ 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 ~~4-12~~ ~~5-13~~.

4. Small game – November ~~13-26~~ ~~14-27~~ and on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only November ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through January ~~14~~ ~~15~~.

5. Field trial quail – January ~~20-21~~ ~~21-22~~.

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 ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~.

2. General gun – October ~~28~~ ~~29~~ through November ~~5~~ ~~6~~.

3. Small game – November ~~15~~ ~~16~~ through January ~~14~~ ~~15~~ on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only and the Friday after Thanksgiving Day.

4. through 5. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers. 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. Quail may be taken only during the small game season. The bag limit for quail shall be six per day. During small game season the take of wild hog is prohibited. During the raccoon and opossum season, only raccoon, ~~and~~ opossum and coyote are legal to take.

(c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 2. No change.

3. Public access is allowed only from 1.5 hours before sunrise until 1.5 hours after sunset, except during the raccoon and opossum season when public access is allowed at any time ~~anytime~~.

4. No change.

5. Hunting with dogs during the muzzleloading gun and general gun season is prohibited. The take of wildlife with dogs is prohibited, except when taking small game during the small game season or raccoon and opossum during the raccoon ~~raccoon~~ and opossum season when any dog may be used. The take of wild hogs with dogs is prohibited. The take of coyotes with dogs is prohibited.

6. Motorized vehicular access is allowed only from 1.5 hours before sunrise until 1.5 hours after sunset, except during the raccoon and opossum season when vehicle access is allowed at any time ~~anytime~~.

7. through 10. No change.

11. During the raccoon and opossum season, coyotes may be taken only with guns and only from one-half hour before sunrise and one-half hour after sunset.

(5) Upper Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-dog – November ~~7-9~~ ~~8-10~~.

2. Archery – December ~~2-3~~ ~~3-4~~, ~~9-10~~ ~~10-11~~, December ~~30-31~~ ~~31~~ through January ~~1~~ and January ~~6-7~~ ~~7-8~~.

3. Muzzleloading gun – January ~~13-14~~ ~~14-15~~, ~~20-21~~ ~~21-22~~, ~~27-28~~ ~~28-29~~ and February ~~3-4~~ ~~4-5~~.

4. Small game – February ~~17-18~~ ~~18-19~~, ~~24-25~~ ~~25-26~~ and March ~~3-4~~ ~~4-5~~.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~21-22~~ ~~22-23~~, ~~28-29~~ ~~29-30~~, April ~~4-5~~ ~~5-6~~, ~~11-12~~ ~~12-13~~ and ~~18-19~~ ~~19-20~~.

6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(6) Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~14~~ ~~15~~ through November ~~3~~ ~~4~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – December ~~9-17~~ ~~10-18~~.

3. Small game – January ~~6-7~~ ~~7-8~~ and ~~27-28~~ ~~28-29~~.
4. Spring turkey – March ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~ and April ~~3-5~~ ~~4-6~~.
5. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(7) KICCO Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~16~~ ~~17~~ through October ~~15~~ ~~16~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~21-22~~ ~~22-23~~ and ~~28-29~~ ~~29-30~~.
3. Wild hog-still – November ~~11~~ ~~12~~ through December ~~10~~ ~~11~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
4. Small game – December ~~16~~ ~~17~~ through January ~~21~~ ~~22~~.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~17~~ ~~18~~ through April ~~15~~ ~~16~~, 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 ~~15-17~~ ~~16-18~~, ~~22-24~~ ~~23-25~~ and January ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~.
2. Archery – October ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~.
3. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~21-23~~ ~~22-24~~ and ~~25-27~~ ~~26-28~~.
4. General gun – November ~~4-6~~ ~~5-7~~.
5. Small game – November ~~13-26~~ ~~14-27~~ and January ~~22~~ ~~23~~ through March ~~4~~ ~~5~~.
6. General gun for mobility-impaired – December ~~9-10~~ ~~10-11~~.
7. No change.
8. Spring turkey – March ~~22-24~~ ~~23-25~~ and April ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~.
9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – ~~September 30 through~~ October ~~1~~ ~~1-2~~, ~~October 2-5~~ ~~3-6~~, ~~6-8~~ ~~7-9~~, ~~9-12~~ ~~10-13~~ and ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – December ~~2-3~~ ~~3-4~~, ~~4-7~~ ~~5-8~~ and ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~.
3. Wild hog-still – January ~~13-16~~ ~~14-17~~ and ~~17-21~~ ~~18-22~~.
4. Small game – February ~~3-11~~ ~~4-12~~ and February ~~24~~ ~~25~~ through March ~~4~~ ~~5~~.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~27-29~~ ~~28-30~~.
6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(10) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

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

8. Raccoon – August ~~3~~ ~~4~~ through September ~~24~~ ~~25~~ (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 ~~14-16~~ ~~15-17~~ and ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – November ~~24-26~~ ~~25-27~~.
3. General gun – January ~~19-21~~ ~~20-22~~ and February ~~2-4~~ ~~3-5~~.
4. Small game – January ~~5-7~~ ~~6-8~~ and ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~.
5. Wild hog-still – December ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~ and ~~22-24~~ ~~23-25~~.

6. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~10-11~~ ~~11-12~~.
7. Spring turkey – March ~~17-19~~ ~~18-20~~, March ~~30~~ ~~31~~ through April ~~1~~ ~~2~~ and April ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~.
8. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~16~~ ~~17~~ through October ~~15~~ ~~16~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~21~~ ~~22~~ through November ~~3~~ ~~4~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
3. General gun – November ~~4~~ ~~5~~ through January ~~21~~ ~~22~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
4. Small game – November ~~11~~ ~~12~~ through March 4 ~~5~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
5. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~10-11~~ ~~11-12~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~17~~ ~~18~~ through April ~~22~~ ~~23~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
7. Antlerless deer – November ~~18-24~~ ~~19-25~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.

8. through 10. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(13) Croom Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~21-23~~ ~~22-24~~.
2. General gun – November ~~4-26~~ ~~5-27~~.
3. Small game – December ~~4~~ ~~5~~ through March ~~4~~ ~~5~~.
4. Spring turkey – March ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~, April ~~3-5~~ ~~4-6~~ and ~~17-19~~ ~~18-20~~.
5. Fox, raccoon and bobcat – December ~~14~~ ~~15~~ through March ~~11~~ ~~12~~. 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 ~~16~~ ~~17~~ through October ~~15~~ ~~16~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~21-23~~ ~~22-24~~.
3. General gun – November ~~4~~ ~~5~~ through December 31 ~~January 1~~.
4. Wild hog-dog – January ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~ and ~~19-21~~ ~~20-22~~.
5. through 6. No change.
7. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~10-11~~ ~~11-12~~.
8. Spring turkey – March ~~23-25~~ ~~24-26~~, April ~~6-8~~ ~~7-9~~ and ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~.
9. Raccoon – February ~~1-25~~ ~~2-26~~ and May ~~3-27~~ ~~4-28~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) through (d) No change.

(15) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area – Osprey Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – November ~~10-12~~ ~~11-13~~.
2. Wild hog-still – November ~~24-26~~ ~~25-27~~.
3. Wild hog-dog – December ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~ and January ~~5-7~~ ~~6-8~~.
4. Small game – January ~~25~~ ~~26~~ through February ~~5~~ ~~6~~.
5. Archery – February ~~9-11~~ ~~10-12~~.
6. Muzzleloading gun – February ~~16-18~~ ~~17-19~~.
7. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~10-11~~ ~~11-12~~.

8. Spring turkey – April ~~13-15~~ ~~14-16~~ and ~~20-22~~ ~~21-23~~.

9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(16) Weekiwachee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~14-19~~ ~~15-20~~, November ~~11-16~~ ~~12-17~~, December ~~9-14~~ ~~10-15~~, January ~~13-18~~ ~~14-19~~ and February ~~10-15~~ ~~11-16~~.

2. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(17) Lower Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – December ~~8-10~~ ~~9-11~~, January ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~, January ~~26-28~~ ~~27-29~~ and February ~~9-11~~ ~~10-12~~.

2. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~23-25~~ ~~24-26~~ and April ~~6-8~~ ~~7-9~~.

3. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(18) Everglades Headwaters Wildlife Management Area – Gulfstream Tract.

(a) The regulations contained in Rules 68A-15.061(6), F.A.C., not in conflict with specific area regulations, shall apply to this area.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2017

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~~.