

**Background Report
Draft Rule 68A-15.061
Agenda Item 4.C.1
November 20, 2013**

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:

Avon Park Air Force Range WMA – allow wild hog hunts to be established by the Installation Commander.

Chassahowitzka WMA – prohibit the harvest of antlerless deer during archery season, except by antlerless deer permit.

Green Swamp WMA – open the check station and campground at the Rock Ridge Road entrance during wild hog-dog season (the Highway 471 entrance, check station and campground will remain open).

Green Swamp WMA, West Unit – prohibit the use of generators powered by internal combustion engines in the campground from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m.; move wild hog-still season from December to October and wild hog-dog season from January to October; move special-opportunity archery hunts from November to December to better coincide with the rut; and allow the harvest of bobcat and otter during special-opportunity archery, special-opportunity general gun and small game seasons.

Hickory Hammock – allow persons with authorization from the South Florida Water Management District vehicle access; and limit vehicle use to named roads and parking areas.

Upper Hillsborough WMA – allow the use of air guns for hunting gray squirrel and rabbit during small game season; allow the use of crossbows for hunting turkey during spring turkey season; and allow vehicle access for scouting from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. one day prior to each archery, muzzleloading gun and spring turkey hunt.

Walk-in-the-Water WMA – remove the quota permit requirement for wild hog-still season.

Weekiwachee WMA – prohibit the harvest of any wildlife with shotguns during the archery season.

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 – November ~~22~~ ~~23~~ through January ~~18~~ ~~19~~.

2. Archery – October ~~18~~ ~~19~~ through November ~~16~~ ~~17~~, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only.

3. Small game – January ~~24~~ ~~25~~ through February ~~22~~ ~~23~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.

4. Wild hog-dog – February ~~26~~ ~~27~~ through March ~~1~~ ~~2~~ and March ~~5-8~~ ~~6~~ through ~~9~~.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~21~~ ~~15~~ through April ~~26~~ ~~20~~.

6. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Allowed by permit only and only within the designated campsites at the Rock Ridge Road and 471 campgrounds. Camping is allowed at both campgrounds during archery, general gun, wild hog and spring turkey seasons. Camping is allowed only at the Rock Ridge Road campground during the fishing and frogging season and only at the 471 campground during the small game season and wild hog-dog seasons. Camping permits are non-

transferable. Camping along the Green Swamp Hiking Trail (Florida Trail) is prohibited except by written permission from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Kitchen stoves, refrigerators and freezers, unless contained in mobile campers are prohibited. Lumber, sheet metal or other building materials is prohibited. The alteration, defacing, moving or tampering in any way with official markings of campsites is prohibited. The use or operation of electrical generators powered by an internal combustion engine is prohibited within the campgrounds from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. A legible copy of the camping permit or the permittee's name and permit number must be visibly affixed to camping shelters. Camping equipment must be removed by 8 p.m. on the last date listed on the camping permit. Only tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping.

(d) No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still - October 10-12.

~~1. Special-opportunity turkey – March 15-18, 24-27, March 29 through April 1, April 7-10 and 12-15.~~

2. Wild hog-dog - October 22-24.

~~3. Special-opportunity archery – December 6-9 and 18-21 November 9-12 and 21-24.~~

~~4. Special-opportunity general gun – January 22-25 23-26, February 2-5 3-6 and 11-14 12-15.~~

~~4. Wild hog still – December 20-22.~~

5. Special-opportunity turkey - March 21-24, March 30 through April 2, April 4-7, 13-16 and 18-21.

~~5. Wild hog-dog – January 8-10.~~

6. Small game – February 20-22 21-23 and February 27 28 through March 1 2.

7. through 8. No change.

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers (~~except bobcat and otter~~). Turkey may be taken only during the special-opportunity turkey hunts. The bag limit for turkey shall be one gobbler (or bearded turkey) per special-opportunity turkey permit. One antlered deer may be taken per special-opportunity deer permit. Antlerless deer may be taken by antlerless deer permit only. Taking of antlered deer not having at least one antler with four or more points is prohibited. Only wild hog may be taken during the wild hog seasons.

(c) Camping: Camping is allowed at designated campsites during hunting season and at other times by permit from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Kitchen stoves, refrigerators, and freezers, unless contained in mobile campers are prohibited. Lumber, sheet metal or other building materials is prohibited. Each camper shall assure that their campsite is clean at all times. The alteration, defacing, moving or tampering in any way with official markings of campsites is prohibited. The use or operation of electrical generators powered by an internal combustion engine is prohibited within the campgrounds from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m.

(d) No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September 13-17 14-18.

2. Bird dog training – Bird dogs may be trained in the bird dog training area September 20 21 through February 15 16 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 8-16 9-17.

4. Small game – November 17-30 18 through December 1 and Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only December 3 4 through January 18 19.

5. Field trial quail – January 24-25 25-26.

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 17-19 18-20.

2. General gun – November 8-16 9-17.

3. Small game – November ~~19-20~~ through January ~~18-19~~ 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 ~~11-13~~ ~~12-14~~.

2. Archery – December ~~6-7~~ ~~7-8~~, ~~13-14~~ ~~14-15~~, January ~~3-4~~ ~~4-5~~ and ~~10-11~~ ~~11-12~~.

3. Muzzleloading gun – January ~~17-18~~ ~~18-19~~, ~~24-25~~ ~~25-26~~, January 31 through February ~~1~~ ~~1-2~~ and February ~~7-8~~ ~~8-9~~.

4. Small game – February ~~14-15~~ ~~15-16~~, ~~21-22~~ ~~22-23~~ and February 28 through March ~~1~~ ~~1-2~~.

5. Spring turkey – March ~~25-26~~ ~~19-20~~, ~~April 1-2~~ ~~26-27~~, ~~8-9~~ ~~April 2-3~~, ~~15-16~~ ~~9-10~~ and ~~22-23~~ ~~16-17~~.

6. No change.

(b) No change.

(c) Camping: Prohibited except at the designated campsite from 8 a.m. one day prior to each archery and muzzleloading gun hunt until 8 p.m. on the last day of each hunt; from 3 p.m. one day prior to each wild hog-dog and small game hunt until 8 p.m. on the last day of each hunt; from 8 a.m. one day prior to each spring turkey hunt until 5 p.m. on the last day of each hunt; during periods when hunting is allowed or by written permission from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Only tents, trailers or self-propelled camping vehicles may be used for camping. Camping equipment is prohibited on the area except during periods when camping is allowed.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 4. No change.

5. Motor vehicles may be operated between the designated entrance and the designated campsite anytime camping is allowed. Motor vehicles may be operated beyond the designated camp sites from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. one day prior to each archery, muzzleloading gun and spring turkey hunt. During hunts, motor vehicles may be operated beyond the designated camp sites only during hours that the check station is in operation.

5. through 6. renumbered 6. through 7. No change.

~~8.7.~~ During periods not open for hunting or camping, public access other than on foot (pedestrian) or by bicycle is prohibited.

8. renumbered 9. No change.

~~10.9.~~ Hunting equipment is prohibited on the area except during periods when camping is allowed. and camping equipment may be taken into the area beginning 3 p.m. the day before each hunting period and shall be removed by 8 p.m. the last day of each hunting period except during spring turkey season when hunting equipment and camping equipment shall be removed by 5 p.m. the last day of each hunt.

~~11.40.~~ During the small game season, wildlife may be taken only with shotguns, except gray squirrel and rabbit may be taken with air guns. During the spring turkey season only shotguns and bows and arrows are allowed for taking turkeys. During the wild hog-dog season wildlife may be taken only with shotguns and centerfire handguns.

11. renumbered 12. No change.

(6) Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October ~~11-31~~ ~~12~~ through November ~~1~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – December ~~6-14~~ ~~7-15~~.

3. Small game – January ~~3-4~~ ~~4-5~~ and ~~24-25~~ ~~25-26~~.

4. Spring turkey – March ~~24-26~~ ~~18-20~~ and April ~~7-9~~ ~~1-3~~.

5. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(7) KICCO Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~13~~ ~~14~~ through October ~~12~~ ~~13~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~18-19~~ ~~19-20~~ and ~~25-26~~ ~~26-27~~.
3. Wild hog-still – November ~~8~~ ~~9~~ through December ~~7~~ ~~8~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
4. Small game – December ~~13~~ ~~14~~ through January ~~18~~ ~~19~~.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~21~~ ~~15~~ through April ~~19~~ ~~13~~, Saturdays and Sundays only.
6. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. Vehicle access is prohibited except by persons that have obtained ~~an a-vehicle access~~ authorization from the South Florida Water Management District. Vehicles shall be operated only on named or numbered roads and must be parked in designated parking areas or within 25 feet of a named or numbered road. The use of tracked vehicles, airboats, all-terrain vehicles or unlicensed and unregistered motorcycles is prohibited. Horses are prohibited except by written permission from the South Florida Water Management District.

2. through 5. No change.

~~6. Vehicular access to the area is prohibited during the period from 1.5 hours after sunset to 1.5 hours before sunrise, except as authorized by the South Florida Water Management District.~~

7. renumbered 6. No change.

(8) Hickory Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Wild hog-still – September ~~12-14~~ ~~13-15~~, ~~19-21~~ ~~20-22~~ and January ~~9-11~~ ~~10-12~~.
2. Archery – October ~~10-12~~ ~~11-13~~.
3. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~18-20~~ ~~19-21~~ and ~~22-24~~ ~~23-25~~.
4. General gun – November ~~1-3~~ ~~2-4~~.
5. Small game – November ~~10-23~~ ~~11-24~~ and January ~~19~~ ~~20~~ through March ~~1~~ ~~2~~.
6. General gun for mobility-impaired – November ~~29-30~~ ~~30~~ through December ~~1~~.
7. No change.
8. Spring turkey – March ~~26-28~~ ~~20-22~~ and April ~~16-18~~ ~~10-12~~.
9. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 2. No change.

3. Vehicle access is prohibited except by persons that have obtained an authorization from the South Florida Water Management District. Vehicles shall be operated only on named or numbered roads and must be parked in designated parking areas or within 25 feet of a named or numbered road. ~~Vehicles are prohibited except in designated parking areas.~~

4. through 5. No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~27-28~~ ~~28-29~~, September ~~29~~ ~~30~~ through October ~~2~~ ~~3~~, October ~~3-5~~ ~~4-6~~, ~~6-9~~ ~~7-10~~ and ~~10-12~~ ~~11-13~~.
2. Muzzleloading gun – November ~~29-30~~ ~~30~~ through December ~~1~~, December ~~1-4~~ ~~2-5~~ and ~~5-7~~ ~~6-8~~.
3. Wild hog-still – January ~~10-13~~ ~~11-14~~ and ~~14-18~~ ~~15-19~~.
4. Small game – January 31 through February ~~8~~ ~~1-9~~ and February ~~21~~ ~~22~~ through March ~~1~~ ~~2~~.
5. Spring turkey – March ~~31~~ through April ~~2~~ ~~25-27~~.
6. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(10) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~14-15~~ ~~8-9~~.
2. Spring turkey – March ~~27-29~~ ~~21-23~~ and April ~~10-12~~ ~~4-6~~.

3. Muzzleloading gun – February ~~20-22~~ 21-23.
4. Wild hog-still – December ~~5-7~~ 6-8, January ~~16-18~~ 17-19 and ~~23-25~~ 24-26.
5. Small game – January ~~30~~ 31 through February ~~8~~ 9.
6. Archery – February ~~13-15~~ 14-16.
7. No change.
8. Raccoon – August ~~7~~ 8 through September ~~28~~ 29 (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 ~~18-20~~ 19-21 and ~~24-26~~ 25-27.
2. Muzzleloading gun – November ~~28-30~~ 29 through ~~December 1~~.
3. General gun – January ~~23-25~~ 24-26 and February ~~6-8~~ 7-9.
4. Small game – January ~~2-4~~ 3-5 and ~~9-11~~ 10-12.
5. Wild hog-still – December ~~12-14~~ 13-15 and ~~26-28~~ 27-29.
6. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~14-15~~ 8-9.
7. Spring turkey – March ~~21-23~~ 15-17, ~~April 3-5~~ 28-30 and ~~17-19~~ April 11-13.
8. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. No change.

2. Public access other than by foot or bicycle is prohibited, except by persons that have obtained an a-vehicle access authorization from the South Florida Water Management District. ~~Vehicles may only be operated from 1.5 hours before sunrise until 1.5 hours after sunset, except as authorized by the South Florida Water Management District.~~ Vehicles shall be operated only on named or numbered roads and shall be parked in designated parking areas or within 25 feet of a named or numbered road.

3. through 4. No change.

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

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – September ~~13~~ 14 through October ~~12~~ 13 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
2. Muzzleloading gun – October ~~18-31~~ 19 through ~~November 1~~ in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
3. General gun – November ~~1~~ 2 through January ~~18~~ 19 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
4. Small game – November ~~8~~ 9 through March ~~1~~ 2 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
5. Youth turkey hunt – March ~~14-15~~ 8-9 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
6. Spring turkey – March ~~21~~ 15 through April ~~26~~ 20 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
7. Antlerless deer – November ~~22-28~~ 23-29 in areas and during days specified by the Installation Commander or a designee.
8. through 9. No change.
10. Wild hog (still and dog hunts) – In areas and during days specied by the Installation Commander or a designee.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. Hunters and individuals accompanying hunters must wear a minimum of 500 square inches of daylight

fluorescent orange material above the waist as an outer garment when in any hunt area during muzzleloading gun, general gun, wild hog or small game seasons, except those hunting waterfowl in Morgan Hole Creek, Kissimmee Marsh or Arbuckle Marsh. Persons within the passenger compartment of a vehicle are not required to wear the fluorescent orange material.

2. through 5. No change.

6. Running of dogs after sunset and before sunrise is prohibited, unless authorized by the Installation Commander or a designee.

7. through 14. No change.

15. During wild hog-dog hunts, legal hunting hours shall be during times specified by the Installation Commander or a designee. When authorized by the Installation Commander or a designee, wild hog may be taken during wild hog-dog hunts at night by the aid of a light with a firearm provided that no wild hog shall be shot until bayed by dogs. The hunting of wild hogs under this provision by display or use of a light from a moving vehicle, boat or animal is prohibited.

(13) Croom Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Muzzleloading gun – October 18-20 ~~19-21~~.

2. General gun – November 1-23 ~~2-24~~.

3. Small game – December 1 ~~2~~ through March 1 ~~2~~.

4. Spring turkey – March 24-26 ~~18-20~~, April 7-9 ~~1-3~~ and 21-23 ~~15-17~~.

5. Fox, raccoon and bobcat – December 11 ~~12~~ through March 8 ~~9~~. 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 13 ~~14~~ through October 12 ~~13~~.

2. Muzzleloading gun – October 18-20 ~~19-21~~.

3. General gun – November 1 ~~2~~ through December 28 ~~29~~.

4. Wild hog-dog – January 9-11 ~~10-12~~ and 16-18 ~~17-19~~.

5. through 6. No change.

7. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~8-9~~.

8. Spring turkey – March 27-29 ~~21-23~~, April 10-12 ~~4-6~~ and 24-26 ~~18-20~~.

9. Raccoon – January 29 ~~30~~ through February 22 ~~23~~ and April 30 through May 24 ~~1-25~~ (from 1.5 hours before sunset on Thursday until 1.5 hours after sunrise on Sunday).

(b) Legal to take: All legal game, fish, frogs and furbearers (except bobcat and otter). During the archery season, the take of antlerless deer shall be by antlerless deer permit only. During the spring turkey season the bag limit for turkeys shall be one gobbler (or bearded turkey) per person, but not more than two per quota permit. Only wild hog may be taken during the wild hog-dog season. Waterfowl and coot may be taken on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays only. During the raccoon season, only raccoon and opossum may be taken.

(c) through (d) No change.

(15) Hilochee Wildlife Management Area – Osprey Unit.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – November 14-16 ~~15-17~~.

2. Wild hog-still – November 28-30 ~~29~~ through December 1.

3. Wild hog-dog – December 12-14 ~~13-15~~ and January 9-11 ~~10-12~~.

4. Small game – January 22 ~~23~~ through February 2 ~~3~~.

5. Archery – February 13-15 ~~14-16~~.

6. Muzzleloading gun – February 20-22 ~~21-23~~.

7. Youth turkey hunt – March 14-15 ~~8-9~~.

8. Spring turkey – April 17-19 ~~11-13~~ and 24-26 ~~18-20~~.

9. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

(16) Weekiwachee Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Archery – October 18-23 ~~19-24~~, November 15-20 ~~16-21~~, December 13-18 ~~14-19~~, January 17-22 ~~18-23~~ and February 14-19 ~~15-20~~.

2. No change.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) General regulations:

1. through 7. No change.

8. Taking wildlife with a shotgun is prohibited during archery season.

(17) Lower Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area.

(a) Open season:

1. Family hunt – December 12-14 ~~13-15~~, January 16-18 ~~17-19~~, January 30 ~~31~~ through February 1 ~~2~~ and February 13-15 ~~14-16~~.

2. Youth turkey hunt – March 27-29 ~~21-23~~ and April 10-12 ~~4-6~~.

3. No change.

(b) through (d) No change.

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

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.