

Note from the Codifier: The OAH website includes notices and the text of proposed temporary rules as required by G.S. 150B-21.1(a1). Prior to the agency adopting the temporary rule, the agency must hold a public hearing no less than five days after the rule and notice have been published and must accept comments for at least 15 business days. For questions, you may contact the Office of Administrative Hearings at 984-236-1850 or email oah.postmaster@oah.nc.gov.

TITLE 15A – DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Notice is hereby given in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.1(a3) that the Wildlife Resources Commission intends to amend the rules cited as 15A NCAC 10B .0203, and .0502.

Codifier of Rules received for publication the following notice and proposed temporary rule(s) on: April 16, 2026.

Public Hearing:

Date: May 7, 2026

Time: 2:00P.M.

Location: Virtual public hearing via Zoom. Pre-registration is required: https://ncwildlife.org.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_TuzvJrWoS3OYOXYZntF9IA, or join by phone toll free: (833) 568-8864, Webinar ID: 160 024 4436

Reason for Proposed Temporary Action: *G.S. 150B-21.1(a)(7) b. The proposed amendments remove Sampson County from the white-tailed deer rule (15A NCAC 10B .0203) and add it to the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Areas rule (15A NCAC 10B .0502). This is part of the agencies' ongoing efforts to manage the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease.*

Note: Italicized text are previous rule changes adopted by the Commission and approved by the RRC with an effective date of 8/1/2026.

Comment Procedures: *Comments from the public shall be directed to: Rulemaking Coordinator, 1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699; email regulations@ncwildlife.gov. The comment period begins April 20, 2026 and ends June 2, 2026.*

CHAPTER 10 - WILDLIFE RESOURCES AND WATER SAFETY

SUBCHAPTER 10B - HUNTING AND TRAPPING

SECTION .0200 - HUNTING

15A NCAC 10B .0203 WHITE-TAILED DEER

(a) Open All Lawful Weapons Seasons for hunting deer:

- (1) Deer With Visible Antlers. Deer with antlers or spikes protruding through the skin, as distinguished from knobs or buttons covered by ~~skin or velvet~~, skin, may be taken during the following seasons, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
 - (A) Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1 in Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, ~~Cumberland~~, Craven, Dare, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, ~~Sampson~~, Scotland, Tyrrell, and Washington counties. It is unlawful to hunt or kill deer in Lake Waccamaw or within 50 yards of its shoreline in Columbus County.
 - (B) Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1 in Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Johnston, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne, and Wilson counties.
 - (C) Saturday before Thanksgiving Day through January 1 in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Catawba, Cleveland, Davie, ~~Forsyth~~, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Polk, Rutherford, ~~Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin~~ and Watauga counties.
 - (D) Saturday after Thanksgiving Day through January 1 in Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey counties.
 - (E) Two Saturdays before Thanksgiving Day through January 1 in Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Durham, Granville, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Person, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties.
 - (F) Saturday on or nearest September 10 through January 1 in the parts of Camden, Gates, and Pasquotank counties known as the Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties known as the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge; in the part of Hyde county known as Lake Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Dare and Hyde counties known as Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Anson and Richmond counties known as the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge; and in the part of Currituck County known as the Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge.
- (2) Antlered or Antlerless Deer. Except on Game Lands, antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during the open seasons and in the counties and portions of counties listed in Parts (A) through ~~(G)~~(E) of this Subparagraph.

- (A) The open antlered or antlerless deer hunting dates established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through January 1 in the parts of Camden, Gates, and Pasquotank counties known as the Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties known as the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge; in the parts of Anson and Richmond counties known as the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge; and in the parts of Currituck County known as the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge and the Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge.
 - (B) The open antlered or antlerless deer hunting dates established by the military commands at the military installations listed in this Paragraph, from Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1 in the part of Brunswick County known as the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal, in the part of Craven County known and marked as Cherry Point Marine Base, in the part of Onslow County known and marked as the Camp Lejeune Marine Base, on Fort ~~Liberty~~ Bragg Military Reservation, and on Camp Mackall Military Reservation.
 - (C) The first open Saturday of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule in Cherokee, Clay, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, and Transylvania counties.
 - (D) The first open day of the Deer With Visible Antlers Season described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the first Saturday thereafter in Buncombe, Henderson, ~~Madison~~, and McDowell counties, except in the areas described in Subparts ~~(a)(2)(G)(i)(a)(2)(E)(i)~~ and (ii) of this Rule.
 - ~~(E)~~ *The first open day of the season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the second Saturday thereafter in Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.*
 - ~~(F)~~ *The first open day of the season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule through the fourth Saturday thereafter in Cleveland, Polk, and Rutherford counties.*
 - ~~(G)~~(E) Open days of the season for Deer With Visible Antlers described in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule in and east of ~~Ashe, Watauga, Wilkes, Alexander, Catawba, Lincoln, and Gaston~~ Avery, Burke, Rutherford, and Polk counties and in Madison, Mitchell, and Yancey counties, and the following parts of counties:
 - (i) The part of Buncombe County east of N.C. 191, south of the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers, west of U.S. 25, and north of N.C. 280; and
 - (ii) The part of Henderson County east of N.C. 191 and north and west of N.C. 280.
- (b) Open Archery Seasons for hunting deer:
- (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (2) of this Paragraph and the bag limits set out in Paragraph (f) of this Rule, deer may be taken with archery equipment from Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the day immediately preceding the first open day of the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in Subparagraph (c)(1) of this Rule, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
 - (2) Restrictions
 - (A) In the areas of the State where the Commission regulates the use of dogs as provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs may not be used for hunting deer during the Archery Season, except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a dead or wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).
 - (B) Only archery equipment of the types authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 for taking deer may be used during the Archery Season.
 - (C) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during Archery Season specified by ~~Part~~ Subparagraph ~~(b)(1)(A)(b)(1)~~ of this Rule.
- (c) Open Blackpowder Firearms Seasons for hunting deer:
- (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (2) of this Paragraph, deer may be taken only with blackpowder firearms and archery equipment from two Saturdays preceding the first day of the open season for Deer with Visible Antlers described in Parts (a)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), (E), and (F) of this Rule through the second Friday thereafter including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
 - (2) Restrictions
 - (A) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during Blackpowder Firearms Season in a county or county part set forth in Part (a)(2)(D), ~~(E), (F), or (G)(E)~~ of this Rule that has one or more open days within the All Lawful Weapons Season to legally harvest antlerless deer.
 - (B) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken during the second open Saturday of the Blackpowder Firearms Season thru the first Friday thereafter in any county or county part set forth in Part (a)(2)(C) of this Rule.
 - (C) Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken on the second open Saturday of the Blackpowder Firearms Season in any county or county part not set forth in Subparagraph (a)(2) of this Rule.
 - (D) In the areas of the State where the Commission regulates the use of dogs as provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs shall not be used for hunting deer during the Blackpowder Firearms Season, except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a dead or wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).
 - (3) As used in this Rule, "blackpowder firearms" means any firearm, including any firearm with a matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type of ignition system, manufactured before 1899, that cannot use fixed ammunition; any replica of this type of firearm if the replica is not designed or redesigned for using rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition; and any muzzle-loading rifle, muzzle-loading shotgun, or muzzle-loading or cylinder-loading handgun that is designed to use blackpowder, blackpowder substitute, or any other propellant loaded through the muzzle, cylinder, or breech and that cannot use fixed ammunition.
- (d) Open Urban Season for hunting deer:

- (1) Authorization. Subject to the restrictions set out in Subparagraph (3) of this Paragraph and the bag limits set out in Paragraph ~~(e)~~(f) of this Rule, antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment in participating cities in the State, as defined in G.S. 160A-1(2), from the second Saturday following January 1 through the sixth Sunday thereafter. Deer shall not be taken on game lands within a city boundary.
 - (2) Participation. Cities that intend to participate in the Urban Season shall send a letter to that effect no later than April 1 of the year prior to the start of the Urban Season to the Executive Director or his designee at 1722 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1700. Cities shall also submit a map of the city's boundaries within which the Urban Season shall apply.
 - (3) Restrictions:
 - (A) In the areas of the State where the Commission regulates the use of dogs as provided in G.S. 113-291.5, dogs shall not be used for hunting deer during the Urban Season except a single dog on a leash may be used to retrieve a dead or wounded deer in accordance with G.S. 113-291.1(k).
 - (B) Only archery equipment of the types authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 for taking deer shall be used during the Urban Season.
- (e) Open Youth Days for hunting deer. Antlered or antlerless deer may be taken with all lawful weapons by individuals under 16 years of age during the following days:
- (1) The fourth Saturday in September and the Sunday immediately thereafter in all counties; and
 - (2) Thanksgiving Day and the Friday immediately thereafter in the counties listed in Part (a)(1)(D) of this Rule.
- (f) Bag limits. The possession and season limit is six deer, two that may be deer with visible antlers and four that may be antlerless deer. Antlerless deer include males with knobs or buttons covered by skin ~~or velvet~~ as distinguished from antlers or spikes protruding through the skin. A hunter may obtain multiple Bonus Antlerless Deer Harvest Report Cards from the Wildlife Resources Commission or any Wildlife Service Agent to allow the harvest of two additional antlerless deer per card for deer harvested during the season described in Paragraph (d) of this Rule within the boundaries of participating municipalities, except on State-owned game lands. Antlerless deer harvested and reported on the bonus antlerless harvest report card shall not count as part of the possession and season limit.
- (g) Deer Management Assistance Program. The bag limits described in Paragraph (f) of this Rule do not apply to deer harvested in areas covered in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) as described in G.S. 113-291.2(e) for those individuals using Commission-issued DMAP tags and reporting harvest as described on the DMAP license. Season bag limits shall be set by the number of DMAP tags issued and in the hunters' possession. All deer harvested under this program, regardless of the date of harvest, shall be tagged with DMAP tags and reported as instructed on the DMAP license. The hunter does not have to validate the Big Game Harvest Report Card provided with the hunting license for deer tagged with the DMAP tags. Any deer harvested on lands enrolled in the DMAP and not tagged with DMAP tags may only be harvested during the regularly established deer seasons subject to the restrictions of those seasons, including bag limits, and reported using the big game harvest report card or the bonus antlerless harvest report card.
- (h) Seasons for counties identified as Chronic Wasting Disease Management Areas shall be as specified in Rule .0502 of this Subchapter.

Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-270.3; 113-276.1; 113-291.1; 113-291.2; 113-291.5.

SECTION .0500 – CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE MANAGEMENT

15A NCAC 10B .0502 CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE SURVEILLANCE AREAS DEFINED MANAGEMENT AREAS

(a) The following counties are Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Areas:

- (1) Cumberland;
- (2) Forsyth;
- (3) Sampson
- ~~(3)~~(4) Stokes;
- ~~(4)~~(5) Surry;
- ~~(5)~~(6) Wilkes; and
- ~~(6)~~(7) Yadkin.

(b) Prohibitions specified in Rule .0503 of this Subchapter apply to the counties identified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule.

(c) Open seasons for hunting deer are as follows:

- (1) Special Early Season. Deer with antlers or spikes protruding through the skin, as distinguished from knobs or buttons covered by skin, may be taken on the fourth Saturday in August and the Sunday immediately following with a lawful weapon, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
- (2) All Lawful Weapons.
 - (A) Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken in Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, and Yadkin counties two Saturdays before Thanksgiving Day through January 1, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
 - (B) Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken in Cumberland and Sampson County the Saturday on or nearest October 15 through January 1, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
- (3) Archery Seasons. Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment as authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116 on the Saturday on or nearest September 10 through the day immediately preceding the first open day of the Blackpowder Firearms Season described in Subparagraph (c)(4) of this Rule.
- (4) Blackpowder Firearms Seasons. Antlered or Antlerless deer may be taken with archery equipment as authorized in 15A NCAC 10B .0116, and blackpowder firearms as defined in 15A NCAC 10B .0203(c)(3), from two Saturdays

preceding the first day of the All Lawful Weapons Season described in Subparagraph (c)(2) of this Rule through the second Friday thereafter, including on game lands unless otherwise specified in the rules of 15A NCAC 10D .0200.
(d) Seasons, bag limits, and programs specified in Paragraphs (d) through (g) of 15A NCAC 10B .0203 shall apply in the counties identified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule.

Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-306.