

Proposed Amendments to the 2015 NJ Game Code

The following proposals have been passed by the NJ Fish & Game Council at their July 8, 2014 meeting.

Housekeeping Items: Correct Division mailing address in 5.1(e), 5.6(a)1iv(2), 5.7(i)2, 5.28(i)3, 5.29(i)3 and 5.30(i)3ii

5.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Proposal: Air gun 5.1(d)24 –Amend the definition in order to clarify the prohibition that noise reduction systems (NRS) are illegal for all firearms.

Justification: Noise reduction systems (NRS) are prohibited by Title 2C. Some air gun manufacturers offer firearms containing NRS which are not legal for use in New Jersey. The Title 2C language, as below, will be cited in the Game Code, and mirrored in the Hunting Digest.

Pursuant to Title 2C:39-1 f., air guns are classified by definition as firearms. Title 2C:39-1 g. classifies a firearm silencer as “any instrument, attachment, weapon or appliance for causing the firing of any gun, revolver, pistol, or other firearm to be silent, or intended to lessen or muffle the noise of the firing of any gun, revolver, pistol or other firearm”. Pursuant to Title 2C:39-3 c. “Any person who knowingly has in his possession any firearm silencer is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree.”

5.3 RABBIT, CHUKAR & QUAIL

Proposal: Add ‘Hungarian partridge’ in 5.3(e) first sentence and delete ‘chukar’ in remainder of section.

Justification: Correction of omission in the existing Game Code. Hungarian partridge was correctly added in 5.3(e)1 but not in 5.3(e) preceding.

Proposal: Correct common name of black-tailed jackrabbit in section header which currently reads “blacktail jackrabbit”.

5.4 RUFFED GROUSE

Proposal: Correct opening date in North Zone from second Saturday in October to third Saturday in October to coincide with American woodcock season.

Justification: Correction of error in the existing Game Code.

5.5 SQUIRREL

Proposal: Move the language for the Muzzleloader season from 5.23(e) to 5.5.

Justification: The language pertaining to zone boundary descriptions and season dates in 5.23(e) Firearms & Missiles is misplaced and is proposed to be moved to 7:25-5.5 for consistency.

5.6 BLACK BEAR, BOBCAT

Proposal: Require trappers to report the incidental capture of bobcat within 24 hours.

Justification: Bobcats are a very elusive species, making them a challenge to study. Data sources are limited to reported road kills, voluntary trapper reporting, personal observations, and survey efforts by NJDFW. Bobcats are listed as endangered and therefore have a closed season. Bobcats are incidentally captured by licensed trappers each year and some are voluntarily reported. Mandatory reporting of bobcat captures will increase the data set enabling the Division to better evaluate and understand the population structure, distribution, and mortality factors. An increased understanding of the population will result in more effective efforts to recover the population.

5.7 TURKEY

Proposal: Add turkey to the Automated Harvest Reporting System (AHRS) for spring and fall seasons.

Justification: This proposal benefits hunters and eases time constraints placed on Division employees for delivery of check station equipment and keypunching of data forms. There would be cost savings of approximately \$2,450 yearly. The average spring harvest per year is 3,000 turkeys and the average fall harvest is 100 turkeys. We currently pay one dollar per bird harvested to check stations and spend about \$4,000 in possession seals, printing, equipment and personnel time each year to deliver and pick up check station materials for a total cost of \$7,100. At an estimated \$1.50 per automated check in transaction, the cost of implementing an automated system would be approximately \$4,650 per year.

Proposal: Open fall turkey hunting in all Turkey Hunting Areas.

Justification: An analysis was completed for all THAs closed to fall hunting to determine the feasibility for opening during the fall season. Currently, if the spring gobbler harvest in a THA open to fall hunting drops to below .75 gobblers/mile sq. for three years in a row, that THA will be removed from the fall hunting season; this proposal will change the threshold to .25; because the fall season is underutilized no significant impact to the turkey population will result.

Proposal: Eliminate the lottery for the fall turkey season

Justification: The fall turkey season remains undersubscribed. For several years now, all Turkey Hunting Areas have been available over the counter after the lottery. Unless major changes in fall turkey season interest occur or significant changes to the season structure are made, it is unlikely this pattern will change. Removing the lottery is a cost savings for the Division.

Proposal: Increase weekly permit quotas in Turkey Hunting Areas (THA) 14 and 22. Increase permit quotas in these same THAs for the fall turkey season.

	Old Quota	New Quota
THA 14 Spring Weekly/ Fall	200	450
THA 22 Spring Weekly/ Fall	165	200

Justification: THA 14, encompassing portions of Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth, and Ocean Counties, is one of the largest THAs in the state and has a large amount of turkey habitat. Years ago, the weekly permit quota that was designated for this THA was set conservatively as in other THAs. For many years, this weekly permit quota (200) was adequate to meet demand for permits in this THA as the turkey population in this area remained low. In recent years, the popularity of this area has increased, likely due to turkey population increases in the western parts of the THA. There is room to increase the weekly quota in this area to help satisfy demand and still keep hunter densities at an appropriate level. The spring harvest in this area has remained stable for the past five years.

THA 22, encompassing portions of Atlantic, Cape May, and Cumberland Counties, has had an increasing spring harvest for the past few years. In the past, the weekly permit quota designated for this THA was set conservatively as in other THAs. For many years, this weekly permit quota (165) was adequate to meet demand for permits in this THA. In recent years, the popularity of this area has increased, likely due to turkey population increases. There is room to increase the weekly quota in this area to help satisfy demand and still keep hunter densities at an appropriate level. In addition, since spring season weekly permit quotas match fall season permit quotas statewide, the fall permit quotas in these THAs should be increased accordingly.

5.8 MINK, MUSKRAT NUTRIA, 5.9 BEAVER, 5.10 OTTER and 5.11 RACCOON, FOX OPOSSUM, SKUNK, WEASEL, COYOTE TRAPPING

Proposal: Increase trapping opportunity for mink, muskrat and nutria in 5.8(b); beaver in 5.9(b); and river otter in 5.10(b) by allowing trapping on all WMAs prior to January 1 (31-46 additional days for mink, muskrat & nutria; 6 additional days for beaver & otter) for areas stocked with pheasants.

Justification: Pheasant and Quail Stamp Designated Areas in 5.33(a) prohibit trapping prior to January 1 to minimize conflicts between user groups (trappers and hunters with dogs). Since mink, muskrat, nutria, beaver and river otter are primarily semi-aquatic furbearing animals; the potential for user group conflict is minimal.

~~**Proposal:** Amend sections to open trapping season on satellite and/or non stocked areas of Pheasant and Quail Stamp Designated Areas.~~

~~**Justification:** Pheasants and quail are currently stocked on relatively small portions of 23 State Wildlife Management Areas, Fort Dix Military Reservation and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Many new parcels have been added to Designated Stamp Areas over time are not contiguous to their assigned WMA. Allowing an earlier trapping season for terrestrial furbearing animals would increase recreational opportunity for trappers without creating a potential for conflicts with pheasant and quail hunters. (deleted by F&G Council in July, 2014)~~

5.9 BEAVER TRAPPING

Proposal: Amend 5.9(d)4 to allow permittee agent(s) to obtain a damage permit provided that they first applied for a special beaver trapping permit. The first sentence reads, “For Beaver Damage Control Permits issued during the dates of the annual beaver trapping season, the permittee must have first applied for a special permit for the current beaver trapping season”. The problem here is that most permittees (i.e., landowners) probably aren’t licensed trappers and would require agent(s) to remove nuisance beaver.

Justification: Correction of omission in the existing Game Code. The majority of landowners making application for a damage beaver permit are not licensed trappers themselves and often employ the services of licensed trappers as their agents; therefore “permittee” is proposed to be amended to “trapper”.

5.11 AND 5.19 COYOTE

Proposal: Add coyote mortality report requirement in 5.11(f), and add coyotes to the Automated Harvest Report System (AHRS).

Justification: Adding the report requirement to 5.11 (f) will ensure that farmers and their agents contribute data on coyote populations throughout the state. Including coyote in the AHRS will make it easier for hunters, trappers and farmers to comply.

Proposal: Clarify that trapping bag limits in 5.11(e) pertain to enumerated species that have an open trapping season.

5.12 GENERAL TRAPPING

Proposal: Legalize foot encapsulating traps as an alternate trapping tool to snares.

Justification: A 23-page report was presented to the Game Committee and reviewed by the Division of Law. The report discussed the attributes of enclosed foothold traps (e.g., Duffer Trap™, Egg Trap™ and Lil’ Grizz Get’rz™) as well as the results of standard tests for humaneness involving these traps. These systems utilize a round-bar extension similar to those of legal mouse and rat traps to live restrain an animal. Trapping systems developed since 1984 that meet Best Management Practice criteria published by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The Duffer Trap™, Egg Trap™ and Lil’ Grizz Get’rz™ have met the minimum BMP thresholds and have been approved as BMP devices for taking raccoon.

Proposed language is as follows:

(g) Enclosed foothold traps may be used to harvest furbearing animals during the prescribed open seasons and shall be subject to the following requirements:

- 1. All triggering and restraining mechanisms shall be enclosed by a housing; and,**

2. **The triggering and restraining mechanism is accessible only by a single opening when the trap is set; and,**
3. **The access opening does not exceed 2 inches in diameter or when measured diagonally; and,**
4. **The triggering mechanism can be activated only by a pulling force; and,**
5. **The trap has a swivel-mounted anchoring system.**

Proposal: Require trappers using cable restraints to use relaxing locks.

Justification: The use of relaxing locks will reduce the potential for mortality in non-target animals.

5.12 GENERAL TRAPPING and 5.23 FIREARMS AND MISSILES

Proposal: Expand use of air guns for trappers in 5.12(h), 5.23(a) and 5.23(d) when dispatching legally trapped furbearing animals other than muskrat.

Justification: Statewide trapping organizations requested they be allowed to possess and use an air gun to dispatch legally trapper furbearing animals (other than muskrat) late in the 2013-14 Game Code process.

Proposal: Amend portions of the General Trapping section by adding weasel to cable restraint regulations established for mink and muskrat trapping.

Justification: Current live capture cable restraint regulations require that devices set for weasels be equipped with a stop six inches from the end to restrict loop closure to no less than six inches in circumference. The loop stop prohibits the use of cable restraints to harvest weasels as both long-tailed and short-tailed weasels are smaller than mink (for which loop stops are not required).

5.13 MIGRATORY BIRDS

Proposal: (h): Remove language from the Game Code which references geographic hunting areas for swans and defer hunting area descriptions to Federal regulations. Also add language that would enable special seasons for any other migratory birds as allowed per Federal regulations.

Justification: Hunting season frameworks for migratory birds, including geographic areas within states open for particular migratory bird seasons, are annually promulgated by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service in the Federal Register under 50 CFR Part 20. Although the Division and Council have no intent of holding a swan or other special migratory bird hunting season at this time, these changes are consistent with other portions of the Code which defer descriptions of migratory bird hunting areas to Federal regulations.

Proposed language:

(h) A special swan permit shall be required to hunt swans, if the appropriate prescribed special season is established by Federal regulations. If a special season for swan is established by Federal regulations, the special swan hunting area shall be [the counties of Burlington, Cumberland and Salem] **that portion of the State**

designated by Federal regulations. The September Canada Goose hunting area shall be that portion of the State designated by Federal regulations. The late season Canada goose hunting areas shall be that portion of the State established by Federal regulations. **Hunting areas for any other migratory bird special season shall be that portion of the State designated by Federal regulations.** Permitting requirements for pursuing snow geese and/or Canada geese will conform to requirements prescribed in the Code of Federal Regulations during the period of any Conservation or Managed Take Option, authorized by Federal Regulations, is in effect.

Proposal: Prohibit hunters from leaving any staked, anchored or floating waterfowl hunting blinds in the field overnight or for extended periods of time.

Justification: During recent years, some hunters have left their anchored, floating hunting blinds in open tidal waters for days or weeks at a time. This practice can monopolize some of the best waterfowl hunting areas by excluding other hunters from these areas or causes conflicts between hunters who leave these blinds and hunters who bring their equipment on individual days for hunting. In addition, unoccupied blinds can cause maritime navigational hazards to other hunters, fishermen, and the general boating public. Prohibiting waterfowl hunters from leaving these blinds overnight or for extended periods of time will result in more equitable access to the waterfowl resource and reduce navigational hazards on New Jersey’s tidal waters. Proposed language below:

Proposed language:

- 1. Any staked, anchored, or floating waterfowl hunting blinds located greater than 100’ from shore at mean high tide shall not be left unattended and must be removed at the end of the hunt and or not later than 2 hours after sunset on any calendar day. Any waterfowl hunting blind as described above which is left unattended or which remains set beyond 2 hours after sunset on any calendar day shall be subject to seizure and disposal at the Division’s discretion. In addition, any waterfowl hunting blind as described above, shall have prominently placed thereon, in some permanent manner, the owner's full name and Conservation Identification Number. All relevant Federal, State or Municipal regulations pertaining to the use of said hunting blinds, including, but not limited to safety equipment, must be adhered to.**

Proposal: Correct common name of American woodcock in 5.13(n) and (n)2. Current terminology reads “woodcock”.

5.16 GENERAL FALCONRY RULES

Proposal: Correct common name of American bald eagle in 5.16(a)1ii. Current terminology reads “bald eagle”.

5.19 FOX AND COYOTE HUNTING

Proposal: Amend 5.19(i) to permit harvest of foxes with center-fire or rim-fire rifles during the special permit season in 5.19(i).

Justification: Correction of omission from prior Game Codes. Foxes are allowed to be taken during this season but were omitted in the sentence clause which describes what weaponry can be used.

Proposal: 20 gauge shotguns are allowed and effective for deer hunting, and coyotes are allowed to be taken during the firearm deer season, and should be allowed for taking coyote.

Justification: The change may encourage young hunters and women to participate. Maximum shot size is proposed to be standardized at #3 buck, and regulations will state that electronic calls are legal for hunting.

5.22 WILD ANIMALS; POSSESSION, KILLING

Proposal: Institute a wanton waste law for mammals- and game birds.

Justification: Hunters sometimes only take portions of an animal for consumption and leave the other parts which could be consumed in the field. Proposed language prohibits this practice for certain species. Diagrams of animal parts which must be removed from the field will be included in the hunting edition of the Digest for clarification to C. edible portion defined.

Proposed language:

(h) Wanton Waste of Game

a) It is unlawful for any person who kills or wounds any white-tailed deer; black bear, wild turkey, rabbit species as defined in 7:25-5.3, squirrel, pheasant as defined in 7:25-5.2, quail, Hungarian or chukar partridge, ruffed grouse, and all waterfowl as defined in 7:25-5.13 while engaged in any hunting activities to refuse or neglect to make a reasonable effort to retrieve, retain or lawfully take into possession such game or wildlife.

b) Except those species enumerated in sections 7:25-5.8, 7:25-5.9, 7:25-5.10, 7:25-5.11, 7:25-5.15, 7:25-5.17, 7:25-5.18, 7:25-5.19 and 7:25-5.21, it is unlawful for any person to take, kill, capture any game mammal or game bird and leave the whole carcass in the field or remove from the carcass the head, hide or antlers and leave the edible portions of the carcass and meat to waste.

c). Edible Portions Defined

1. White-Tailed Deer & Black Bear

i. Front Quarters as far as the distal joint of the radius-ulna (knee)

ii. Hind Quarters as far as the distal joint of the tibia-fibula (hock)

iii. Backstrap / Tenderloin- the meat along the backbone, between the front and hind quarters

2. Rabbit & Squirrel

i. Front Shoulders

ii. Thighs

iii. Backstrap

3. Game Birds

i. For wild turkey: The meat of the breast, leg and thigh

ii. For all other game birds as defined in (a): the meat of the breast

4. Edible portions does not include meat from the head or neck, meat that has been damaged by method of taking, bones, sinew and meat reasonably lost as a result of butchering, boning or close trimming of bones or viscera. Edible portions do not include meat from diseased or scavenged carcasses.

D. It is unlawful for any person to place, leave, dump or abandon a game mammal, game bird or wildlife carcass or parts of it along or upon a public right-of-way or highway or on a public or private property, including a waterway or stream, without the permission of the owner or tenant, or on any Wildlife Management Area or State Park.

5.23 FIREARMS AND MISSILES

Proposal: Reduce allowed grain weight in center-fire rifles from 100 to 80 grains and limit grain weight to maximum of 50 grains for rim-fire rifles when hunting woodchuck in 5.23(a).

Justification: Bullet grain weights were specified when hunting coyotes in the 2013-14 Game Code but differ somewhat from grain weights permitted when hunting woodchuck. Having uniform regulations is desirable.

Proposal: (n) Add bear hunters to the regulation requiring hunter orange on a ground blind by deleting “for deer” from language, and cite exceptions for waterfowl hunting as in 7:25-5.13, add for turkey hunting as in 7:25-5.7.

Justification: Requiring hunters to use orange when hunting in blinds during the firearm deer seasons was instituted for safety reasons. Since the bear season is concurrent with the firearm buck season, hunters only hunting for bear, and not deer, should also be required to utilize hunter orange while in ground blinds.

Proposal: Correct common names of black-tailed jackrabbit, white-tailed jackrabbit in 5.23(a) which currently reads “blacktail jackrabbit” and “whitetailed jackrabbit”.

5.25, 5.26, 5.27, 5.28, 5.29, 5.30 GENERAL DEER

Proposal: For consistency, change references to Automated Deer Checking System (ADCS) where applicable to the Automated Harvest Reporting System (AHRs) nomenclature which is used in most portions of the Game Code.

Proposal: Amend language to provide for the physical tagging of unattended deer.

Justification: The requirement to physically tag a buck or doe was eliminated because of the Automated Harvest Report System (AHRS) and the fact that additional tags were no longer going to be issued from a physical check station. After two deer seasons with no tagging requirement, conservation officers (CO) are encountering untagged deer in the backs of trucks with no hunter present. They must then track or wait for returning hunters in order to determine if the deer has been registered and whether or not the hunter is eligible to still be actively hunting. Without the hunter's CID, a check to see if registration has occurred is impossible. Having the buck physically tagged will help the officer determine legality - it's not tagged, it's illegal and only then does the officer need to investigate further. If it is tagged, the officer need not spend additional time investigating that which may not need to be investigated. This will also ensure that COs do not interrupt a hunt to investigate the untagged deer. Hunters can use homemade tags filled in with CID, date of harvest, zone of harvest, antler points, and confirmation number, if applicable or they can clip tags that are printed in the Digest.

Proposed language:

Proposed Language: Any deer left in the field and unattended by a hunter shall have a tag affixed which contains the following information: CID #, date of harvest, zone of harvest, antler points if applicable, and confirmation number if registered. "In the Field" shall be defined as any non-constitutionally protected area where an individual cannot reasonably expect privacy, and shall EXCLUDE residences, barns, garages, and butcher/processing areas. "Unattended" shall mean where the hunter who has harvested an animal is not immediately available to provide information related to their CID#, date of harvest, zone of harvest, and confirmation number if already registered.

Proposal: Correct existing errors in the phrased wording used to define deer hunting season dates; revert back to listing of actual dates in the Code where needed.

Proposed language:

7:25-5.25 White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) fall bow season

(a) 1. Opening the **fourth** Saturday prior to the last Friday in October through the last Friday in October, in zones in Regulation Sets 0, 1, 2 and 3; and in Zones 37 and 54.

(b) bag limit: 6th sentence: In Regulation Sets 4, 6, 8 and 9 and in Zones 53 and 68, an antlerless deer must be taken before an antlered deer from the second Saturday in September through the [Friday before the fourth Saturday prior to the last] **first** Friday in October except for youth hunters, as defined in N.J.A.C. 7:25-5.1(d)15.

7:25-5.28 White-tailed deer muzzleloader rifle permit season

(c) 6th sentence: In zones in Regulation Set 7 [and 8,] and in Zone 58, only antlerless deer may be taken on applicable muzzleloader season permits during the Wednesday through Friday before the six-day firearm season, and the dates concurrent with the six-day firearm season as specified in N.J.A.C. 7:25-5.27(a).

(d) 2. The Monday and Tuesday the week preceding the six-day firearm season as specified in N.J.A.C. 7:25-5.27(a), the Monday and Tuesday of the week following the six-day firearm season, and the Saturday following

the six-day firearm season through the last Tuesday in December, excluding Christmas Day, **and January 1 - 9** in zones in Regulation Set 1.

(d) 16. The Monday and Tuesday the week preceding the six-day firearm season as specified in N.J.A.C. 7:25-5.27(a), the Monday and Tuesday of the week following the six-day firearm season, and the Saturday following the six-day firearm season through the [second to] last Saturday in December, excluding Christmas Day, in zones in Regulation Set 0.

Proposal: Season dates for Special Area Zones 54 (Picatinny Arsenal) and 67 (High Point SP) for the 2016, 2017 and 2018 seasons are added.

Proposal: Remove Zone 37 (Fort Dix) from APR in all sections.

Proposal: Make language in all deer season sections regarding season expansions consistent by adding “after consultation with the Council”. Current language in some sections reads extra days “may be authorized by the Director”.

Proposed language:

...may be authorized by the Director **after consultation with the Council**.

Proposal: Allow for the taking of two deer at a time with bows in those zones where it is legal to take two deer at a time with firearms.

Justification: Allowing bowhunters to take two deer at a time may increase the harvest in those zones where reduction is the management strategy.

5.25 FALL BOW SEASON

Proposal: Add Zone 39 (Earle Naval Weapons Station) to EAB, at the request of the managing agency.

5.28 PERMIT MUZZLELOADER SEASON

Proposal: remove reference to Zone 40 in (c). Zone 40 was incorporated into Zone 39 in the 2013 Game Code.

5.29 PERMIT SHOTGUN SEASON

Proposal: Reduce buck goal for DMZ 6 from 4.5 to 3 per square mile.

Justification: This was proposed prior to the 2011 Game Code, when the management strategy was changed from stabilize to reduction and unlimited antlerless bag limits were added to the bow seasons, but was inadvertently omitted at the time.

Proposal: Reduce buck goal for DMZ 54 from 5 to 3 bucks per square mile.

Justification: Zone 54 is Picatinny Arsenal which is surrounded by Zone 6. The habitat is the same as Zone 6, and the private hunting access aspect of the zone lends toward mirroring the DMZ 6 buck goal of the surrounding area. Hunting is limited to base personnel and civilian staff hunting in designated areas.

Proposal: Reduce buck goal for DMZ 67 (High Point SP) from 6 to 4 bucks per square mile.

Justification: The harvest and interest for the limited permit muzzleloader hunting has declined over the years since the initial hunting program. At last discussion, they wish to maintain the EAB permit muzzleloader season as is. The addition of winter bow in 2009 has added some recreation to the Park; however the harvest has been minimal (22 deer over 4 years). The surrounding area is DMZ 1 with a buck goal of 4.0 having 2 deer bag limits and limited season dates.

Proposal: Change Zone 37 (Fort Dix) to 2-deer bag limit from unlimited antlerless at the request of the managing agency.

Proposal: Zone 64 (Monmouth Battlefield SP) season dates are added.

Proposal: Move Zones 10, 11 and 15 up one regulation set, from Set 7 to Set 8.

Justification: These DMZs have remained consistently above goal for several years. The addition of 4 antlerless-only days in November for Permit Shotgun and Permit Muzzleloader will allow for more reduction of the deer herd.

Proposal: Change the buck goal for Zone 25 to 3.

Justification: Zone 25 has been consistently over goal but does not warrant a change in regulation because population indexes indicate a stable population.

Proposal: Move Zone 17 from Reg Set 6 to Reg Set 7; change strategy to “decrease”.

Justification: Zone 17 has been over goal for 5 years and indexes show an increasing population. Moving Zone 17 into Regulation Set 7 will give it an additional 16 days of muzzleloader and shotgun and 19 days of winter bow hunting.

Proposal: Change the buck goal for Zone 16 from 3 to 4.

Justification: There are no indicators that the regulations should be made more lenient, and several public tracts may be opening to deer hunting soon, which would increase harvests and reduce deer densities.

5.28 Deer muzzleloader rifle permit season

Proposal: Add two days during Christmas week to Regulation Set 0, and exclude the two days after the six-day.

Justification: Moving two days will offer hunters increased opportunity during a holiday period when schools and businesses are often closed, while having no significant impact on the deer population.

Proposal: Change Zone 2 buck goal from 6 to 5.

Justification: Zone 2 has been below goal for several years but still has 16 farmer depredation issued, so regulations should not be made more restrictive.

5.30 PERMIT BOW SEASON

Proposal: Extend the permit bow season in Regulation Set 4 to close on December 31 instead of the last Sunday in November.

Justification: Currently, Zone 6 is the only zone in Regulation Set 4. Adding 31 days to the permit bow season will bring relief to various municipalities in Zone 6 which may not qualify for CBDMP permits. These townships include Sparta, Denville, Smoke Rise (Kinnelon) and the Lake Mohawk Association.

Proposal: Increase Zone 54's (Picatinny Arsenal) permit quota from 50 to 60 permits, at the request of the managing agency.

Justification: Increased interest in archery and special programs like Wounded Warrior have put them over quota the last several years.

7:25-5.31 White-tailed deer permit shotgun season and permit muzzleloader season, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (Zone 38)

Proposal: season dates are added for the 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 seasons.

5.33 PHEASANT AND QUAIL STAMP DESIGNATED AREAS

Proposal: Amend 5.33(a)2 to allow earlier trapping season on portions of P&Q Designated Areas.

Justification: Pheasants and quail are currently stocked on relatively small portions of 23 State Wildlife Management Areas, Fort Dix Military Reservation and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Many new parcels have been added to Designated Stamp Areas over time are not contiguous to their assigned WMA. Allowing an earlier trapping season for terrestrial furbearing animals would increase recreational opportunity for trappers without creating a potential for conflicts with pheasant and quail hunters.

Proposal: (a)2: Add Rockport to the list of Stocked WMAs for hunting with a Pheasant & Quail Stamp. Keep the Farm proper off limits, but open the surrounding areas, such as SW of Hazen Road, N of Rockport Road and the additional parcels around the area.

Justification: In the course of pheasant production, some birds escape to the areas of the WMA surrounding the Game Farm proper. Hunters take advantage of these "free" birds and can harvest them without acquiring a Pheasant & Quail Stamp. There is a cost the NJDFW for these birds, even though they were an unintended release. This proposed amendment will help to recoup some of the costs for those "free" pheasants. There are a number of huntable fields in the areas around the Farm proper and the Director has already designated

a “No Pheasant Hunting Area” for the Farm proper as a result of the October 2011 snowstorm. Additional signage and enforcement can direct hunters to the huntable areas and keep them off of the Farm proper.

Proposal: Allow the Director, with approval of Council, to designate new WMAs to be stocked with pheasants.

Justification: The Division is acquiring new properties which become WMAs and a group of NJDFW employees is currently revisiting the distribution of pheasants. In the course of this review, it may be determined that additional WMAs may be suitable for pheasant releases, hence a “P&Q” stamp would be required. This language provides the NJDFW the opportunity to add suitable areas without the time lag of adding WMAs through the Code process.

Proposed language:

The Director, with the approval of the Council, may designate additional wildlife management areas where pheasants will be released for hunting and where the special "pheasant and quail" stamp is required. Such designation shall be announced in the Fish and Wildlife Digest, on the Division's website and by press and radio.

Proposal: Mandate the wearing of a hunter orange hat by all those engaged in hunting for small game.

Justification: Conservation officers have observed that on many Wildlife Management Areas stocked with pheasants and quail, the height of the grass or vegetative cover effectively conceals fluorescent orange worn just on a hunter’s body. The mandate of wearing an orange hat will provide an additional degree of protection when in thick cover or high grasses. This problem is exacerbated during early morning hours when hunters may be obscured by a clear, bright sun low on the horizon.

(a)3: Any person subject to this section shall, while engaged in hunting for small game on Wildlife Management Areas enumerated in this section shall wear a cap of fluorescent hunter’s orange meeting the specifications set forth in N.J.S.A. 23:4-13.1.

Proposals rejected by Game Committee:

Remove "traditional Doe day" from the list of days small game is closed.

Open the season on the 3rd Saturday in October, instead of the Saturday following the first Monday in November on pheasant stocked WMAs.

Change the start of the chukar season to correspond with the start of the rabbit & squirrel seasons.

Find a compromise on WMAS for small game hunters and trappers to share the season dates and public lands while not posing a threat to non-target animals from snares.

Close the ruffed grouse season.

Institute a special six day turkey bow hunting season just before Thanksgiving.

Institute a one beaver per permit limit in order to satisfy more of the demand for beaver permits.

Delete harvest reporting requirement for coyotes.

Allow hunters to possess and use an air gun to take raccoon and opossum.

Raise the bag limit for Zone 23 for archery next season.

Add Christmas day as a deer hunting day.

Remove Earn-A-Buck requirements from all zones.

Add APR to Zone 48 and limit the January PS and PM seasons to 4 or 5 days instead of the whole month.

Allow for the taking of one buck and two antlerless deer in Zone 6.

Evaluate the three-day, one deer limit deer shotgun permit season. This format had the potential to provide more recreation days to the shotgun hunter with minimal impact on the harvest.

End the permit Bow season in Zone 23 on the Friday before the Youth Firearm Day so that there is no competition between youth hunters and bow hunters.

Restrict the driving of deer on the opening day of the six-day firearm season on one WMA per region only.

Limit access to the Greenwood and Peaslee WMAs for quail hunting.