

AN ACT concerning wildlife.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Wildlife Code is amended by changing Sections 2.25, 2.26, and 2.33 as follows:

(520 ILCS 5/2.25) (from Ch. 61, par. 2.25)

Sec. 2.25. It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except (i) with a shotgun, centerfire handgun, centerfire revolver, ~~single-shot~~ centerfire rifle, or muzzleloading rifle or (ii) as provided by administrative rule, with a bow and arrow, during the open season of not more than 14 days which will be set annually by the Director between the dates of November 1st and December 31st, both inclusive, or a special 3-day, youth-only season between the dates of September 1 and October 31. For the purposes of this Section, legal handguns and rifles are limited to centerfire revolvers, centerfire handguns capable of holding not more than 3 rounds in the magazine and chamber combined, ~~that are either a single-shot or revolver~~ and centerfire rifles that are capable of holding not more than 3 rounds in the magazine and chamber combined ~~single-shot~~. If a centerfire handgun or centerfire rifle is capable of holding more than 3 rounds, it shall be fitted with a one-piece plug that is irremovable without dismantling the

handgun or rifle or it shall be otherwise altered to render it incapable of holding more than 3 rounds in the magazine and chamber combined without dismantling the handgun or rifle. The only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or rifle is a bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths inches, or a straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger, both of which must be available as a factory load with the published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches. Full metal jacket bullets may not be used to harvest deer. Any other standards and specifications for use of guns, ammunition, and bow and arrow for deer hunting shall be established by administrative rule.

No person may have in his or her possession any firearm not authorized by administrative rule for a specific hunting season when taking deer unless in accordance with the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

The Department shall make administrative rules concerning management restrictions applicable to the firearm and bow and arrow season.

It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except with a bow and arrow during the open season for bow and arrow set annually by the Director between the dates of September 1st and January 31st, both inclusive.

It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except with (i) a muzzleloading rifle or (ii) bow and arrow during the open season for muzzleloading rifles set annually by the Director.

The Director shall cause an administrative rule setting forth the prescribed rules and regulations, including bag and possession limits and those counties of the State where open seasons are established, to be published in accordance with Sections 1.3 and 1.13 of this Act.

The Department may establish separate harvest periods for the purpose of managing or eradicating disease that has been found in the deer herd. This season shall be restricted to gun or bow and arrow hunting only. The Department shall publicly announce, via statewide news release, the season dates and shooting hours, the counties and sites open to hunting.

The Department is authorized to establish a separate harvest period at specific sites within the State for the purpose of harvesting surplus deer that cannot be taken during the regular season provided for the taking of deer. This season shall be restricted to gun or bow and arrow hunting only and shall be established during the period of September 1st to February 15th, both inclusive. The Department shall publicly announce, via statewide news release, the season dates and shooting hours, and the counties and sites open to hunting. The Department shall publish suitable prescribed rules and regulations established by administrative rule pertaining to

management restrictions applicable to this special harvest program. The Department shall allow unused gun deer permits that are left over from a regular season for the taking of deer to be rolled over and used during any separate harvest period held within 6 months of the season for which those tags were issued at no additional cost to the permit holder subject to the management restrictions applicable to the special harvest program.

If the Department is using its sharpshooting program to manage chronic wasting disease in a deer herd that is found in a county in the State and if no cases of that disease have been identified in that herd in the preceding 3 calendar years, then the Department shall end the use of that program to manage chronic wasting disease in that county. However, the program may be reinstituted within the county if chronic wasting disease is again identified in that herd.

Beginning July 1, 2019, and on an annual basis thereafter, the Department shall provide a report to the General Assembly providing information regarding deer management programs established by the Code or by administrative rule that includes: (1) the number of surplus deer taken during each separate harvest season; (2) the number of deer found to have a communicable disease or other abnormality; and (3) what happens to the deer taken during each separate harvest season. (Source: P.A. 104-58, eff. 1-1-26.)

(520 ILCS 5/2.26) (from Ch. 61, par. 2.26)

Sec. 2.26. Deer hunting permits. Any person attempting to take deer shall first obtain a "Deer Hunting Permit" issued by the Department in accordance with its administrative rules. Those rules must provide for the issuance of the following types of resident deer archery permits: (i) a combination permit, consisting of one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only permit, (ii) a single antlerless-only permit, and (iii) a single either-sex permit. The fee for a Deer Hunting Permit to take deer with either bow and arrow or gun shall not exceed \$25 for residents of the State. The Department may by administrative rule provide for non-resident deer hunting permits for which the fee will not exceed \$300 in 2005, \$350 in 2006, and \$400 in 2007 and thereafter except as provided below for non-resident landowners and non-resident archery hunters. The Department may by administrative rule provide for a non-resident archery deer permit consisting of not more than 2 harvest tags at a total cost not to exceed \$325 in 2005, \$375 in 2006, and \$425 in 2007 and thereafter. The fees for a youth resident and non-resident archery deer permit shall be the same.

The Department shall create a pilot program during the special 3-day, youth-only deer hunting season to allow for youth deer hunting permits that are valid statewide, excluding those counties or portions of counties closed to firearm deer hunting. The Department shall adopt rules to implement the

pilot program. Hunters qualifying to participate in a youth-only deer season shall be eligible for one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only permit. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prohibit the Department from issuing Special Hunt Area Permits for the youth-only deer hunting season or establishing, through administrative rule, additional requirements pertaining to the youth-only deer hunting season on Department-owned or Department-managed sites, including site-specific quotas or drawings. The provisions of this paragraph are inoperative on and after January 1, 2023.

~~The standards and specifications for use of guns and bow and arrow for deer hunting shall be established by administrative rule.~~

~~No person may have in his or her possession any firearm not authorized by administrative rule for a specific hunting season when taking deer unless in accordance with the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.~~

Persons having a firearm deer hunting permit shall be permitted to take deer only during the period from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset, and only during those days for which an open season is established for the taking of deer by use of shotgun, handgun, rifle, or muzzle loading rifle.

Persons having an archery deer hunting permit shall be permitted to take deer only during the period from 1/2 hour

before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset, and only during those days for which an open season is established for the taking of deer by use of bow and arrow.

It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer by use of dogs, horses, automobiles, aircraft, or other vehicles, or by the use or aid of bait or baiting of any kind. For the purposes of this Section, "bait" means any material, whether liquid or solid, including food, salt, minerals, and other products, except pure water, that can be ingested, placed, or scattered in such a manner as to attract or lure white-tailed deer. "Baiting" means the placement or scattering of bait to attract deer. An area is considered as baited during the presence of and for 10 consecutive days following the removal of bait. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit the use of a dog to track wounded deer. Any person using a dog for tracking wounded deer must maintain physical control of the dog at all times by means of a maximum 50-foot lead attached to the dog's collar or harness. Tracking wounded deer is permissible at night, but at no time outside of legal deer hunting hours or seasons shall any person handling or accompanying a dog being used for tracking wounded deer be in possession of any firearm or archery device. Persons tracking wounded deer with a dog during the firearm deer seasons shall wear blaze orange or solid blaze pink color as required. Dog handlers tracking wounded deer with a dog are exempt from hunting license and deer permit requirements so long as they are accompanied by

the licensed deer hunter who wounded the deer.

It shall be unlawful to possess or transport any wild deer which has been injured or killed in any manner upon a public highway or public right-of-way of this State unless exempted by administrative rule.

Persons hunting deer must have the gun unloaded and no bow and arrow device shall be carried with the arrow in the nocked position during hours when deer hunting is unlawful.

It shall be unlawful for any person, having taken the legal limit of deer by gun, to further participate with a gun in any deer hunting party.

It shall be unlawful for any person, having taken the legal limit of deer by bow and arrow, to further participate with bow and arrow in any deer hunting party.

The Department may prohibit upland game hunting during the gun deer season by administrative rule.

The Department shall not limit the number of non-resident, either-sex archery deer hunting permits to less than 20,000.

Any person who violates any of the provisions of this Section, including administrative rules, shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

For the purposes of calculating acreage under this Section, the Department shall, after determining the total acreage of the applicable tract or tracts of land, round remaining fractional portions of an acre greater than or equal to half of an acre up to the next whole acre.

For the purposes of taking white-tailed deer, nothing in this Section shall be construed to prevent the manipulation, including mowing or cutting, of standing crops as a normal agricultural or soil stabilization practice, food plots, or normal agricultural practices, including planting, harvesting, and maintenance such as cultivating or the use of products designed for scent only and not capable of ingestion, solid or liquid, placed or scattered, in such a manner as to attract or lure deer. Such manipulation for the purpose of taking white-tailed deer may be further modified by administrative rule.

(Source: P.A. 104-361, eff. 1-1-26; 104-417, eff. 8-15-25.)

(520 ILCS 5/2.33)

Sec. 2.33. Prohibitions.

(a) It is unlawful to carry or possess any gun in any State refuge unless otherwise permitted by administrative rule.

(b) It is unlawful to use or possess any snare or snare-like device, deadfall, net, or pit trap to take any species, except that snares not powered by springs or other mechanical devices may be used to trap fur-bearing mammals, in water sets only, if at least one-half of the snare noose is located underwater at all times.

(c) It is unlawful for any person at any time to take a wild mammal protected by this Act from its den by means of any mechanical device, spade, or digging device or to use smoke or

other gases to dislodge or remove such mammal except as provided in Section 2.37.

(d) It is unlawful to use a ferret or any other small mammal which is used in the same or similar manner for which ferrets are used for the purpose of frightening or driving any mammals from their dens or hiding places.

(e) (Blank).

(f) It is unlawful to use spears, gigs, hooks, or any like device to take any species protected by this Act.

(g) It is unlawful to use poisons, chemicals, or explosives for the purpose of taking any species protected by this Act.

(h) It is unlawful to hunt adjacent to or near any peat, grass, brush, or other inflammable substance when it is burning.

(i) It is unlawful to take, pursue or intentionally harass or disturb in any manner any wild birds or mammals by use or aid of any vehicle, conveyance, or unmanned aircraft as defined by the Illinois Aeronautics Act, except as permitted by the Code of Federal Regulations for the taking of waterfowl; except that nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the use of unmanned aircraft in the inspection of a public utility facility, tower, or structure or a mobile service facility, tower, or structure by a public utility, as defined in Section 3-105 of the Public Utilities Act, or a provider of mobile services as defined in Section 153 of Title

47 of the United States Code. It is also unlawful to use the lights of any vehicle or conveyance, any light connected to any vehicle or conveyance, or any other lighting device or mechanism from inside or on a vehicle or conveyance in any area where wildlife may be found except in accordance with Section 2.37 of this Act; however, nothing in this Section shall prohibit the normal use of headlamps for the purpose of driving upon a roadway. For purposes of this Section, any other lighting device or mechanism shall include, but not be limited to, any device that uses infrared or other light not visible to the naked eye, electronic image intensification, active illumination, thermal imaging, or night vision. Striped skunk, opossum, red fox, gray fox, raccoon, bobcat, and coyote may be taken during the open season by use of a small light which is worn on the body or hand-held by a person on foot and not in any vehicle.

(j) It is unlawful to use any shotgun larger than 10 gauge while taking or attempting to take any of the species protected by this Act.

(k) It is unlawful to use or possess in the field any shotgun shell loaded with a shot size larger than lead BB or steel T (.20 diameter) when taking or attempting to take any species of wild game mammals (excluding white-tailed deer), wild game birds, migratory waterfowl or migratory game birds protected by this Act, except white-tailed deer as provided for in Section 2.26 and other species as provided for by

subsection (l) or administrative rule.

(l) It is unlawful to take any species of wild game, except white-tailed deer and fur-bearing mammals, with a shotgun loaded with slugs unless otherwise provided for by administrative rule.

(m) It is unlawful to use any shotgun capable of holding more than 3 shells in the magazine or chamber combined, except on game breeding and hunting preserve areas licensed under Section 3.27 and except as permitted by the Code of Federal Regulations for the taking of waterfowl. If the shotgun is capable of holding more than 3 shells, it shall, while being used on an area other than a game breeding and shooting preserve area licensed pursuant to Section 3.27, be fitted with a one-piece plug that is irremovable without dismantling the shotgun or otherwise altered to render it incapable of holding more than 3 shells in the magazine and chamber, combined.

(n) It is unlawful for any person, except persons who possess a permit to hunt from a vehicle as provided in this Section and persons otherwise permitted by law, to have or carry any gun in or on any vehicle, conveyance, or aircraft, unless such gun is unloaded and enclosed in a case, except that at field trials authorized by Section 2.34 of this Act, unloaded guns or guns loaded with blank cartridges only may be carried on horseback while not contained in a case, or to have or carry any bow or arrow device in or on any vehicle unless

such bow or arrow device is unstrung or enclosed in a case, or otherwise made inoperable unless in accordance with the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

(o) (Blank).

(p) It is unlawful to take game birds, migratory game birds or migratory waterfowl with a rifle, pistol, revolver, or air rifle.

(q) It is unlawful to fire a rifle, pistol, revolver, or air rifle on, over, or into any waters of this State, including frozen waters.

(r) It is unlawful to discharge any gun or bow and arrow device along, upon, across, or from any public right-of-way or highway in this State.

(s) It is unlawful to use a silencer or other device to muffle or mute the sound of the explosion or report resulting from the firing of any gun.

(t) It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take any species of wildlife or parts thereof, or allow a dog to hunt, within or upon the land of another, or upon waters flowing over or standing on the land of another, or to knowingly shoot a gun or bow and arrow device at any wildlife physically on or flying over the property of another without first obtaining permission from the owner or the owner's designee. For the purposes of this Section, the owner's designee means anyone who the owner designates in a written authorization and the authorization must contain (i) the legal

or common description of property for which such authority is given, (ii) the extent that the owner's designee is authorized to make decisions regarding who is allowed to take or attempt to take any species of wildlife or parts thereof, and (iii) the owner's notarized signature. Before enforcing this Section, the law enforcement officer must have received notice from the owner or the owner's designee of a violation of this Section. Statements made to the law enforcement officer regarding this notice shall not be rendered inadmissible by the hearsay rule when offered for the purpose of showing the required notice.

(u) It is unlawful for any person to discharge any firearm for the purpose of taking any of the species protected by this Act, or hunt with gun or dog, or allow a dog to hunt, within 300 yards of an inhabited dwelling without first obtaining permission from the owner or tenant, except that while trapping, hunting with bow and arrow, hunting with dog and shotgun using shot shells only, or hunting with shotgun using shot shells only, or providing outfitting services under a waterfowl outfitter permit, or on licensed game breeding and hunting preserve areas, as defined in Section 3.27, on federally owned and managed lands and on Department owned, managed, leased, or controlled lands, a 100 yard restriction shall apply.

(v) It is unlawful for any person to remove fur-bearing mammals from, or to move or disturb in any manner, the traps owned by another person without written authorization of the

owner to do so.

(w) It is unlawful for any owner of a dog to allow his or her dog to pursue, harass, or kill deer, except that nothing in this Section shall prohibit the tracking of wounded deer with a dog in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.26 of this Code.

(x) It is unlawful for any person to wantonly or carelessly injure or destroy, in any manner whatsoever, any real or personal property on the land of another while engaged in hunting or trapping thereon.

(y) It is unlawful to hunt wild game protected by this Act between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise, except that hunting hours between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise may be established by administrative rule for fur-bearing mammals.

(z) It is unlawful to take any game bird (excluding wild turkeys and crippled pheasants not capable of normal flight and otherwise irretrievable) protected by this Act when not flying. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit a person from carrying an uncased, unloaded shotgun in a boat, while in pursuit of a crippled migratory waterfowl that is incapable of normal flight, for the purpose of attempting to reduce the migratory waterfowl to possession, provided that the attempt is made immediately upon downing the migratory waterfowl and is done within 400 yards of the blind from which the migratory waterfowl was downed. This exception shall apply only to

migratory game birds that are not capable of normal flight. Migratory waterfowl that are crippled may be taken only with a shotgun as regulated by subsection (j) of this Section using shotgun shells as regulated in subsection (k) of this Section.

(aa) It is unlawful to use or possess any device that may be used for tree climbing or cutting while hunting fur-bearing mammals, excluding coyotes. However, coyotes may not be hunted utilizing these devices during open season for deer except by properly licensed deer hunters.

(bb) It is unlawful for any person, except licensed game breeders, pursuant to Section 2.29 to import, carry into, or possess alive in this State any species of wildlife taken outside of this State, without obtaining permission to do so from the Director.

(cc) It is unlawful for any person to have in his or her possession any freshly killed species protected by this Act during the season closed for taking.

(dd) It is unlawful to take any species protected by this Act and retain it alive except as provided by administrative rule.

(ee) It is unlawful to possess any rifle while in the field during gun deer season except as provided in Sections 2.25 and 2.26 and administrative rules.

(ff) It is unlawful for any person to take any species protected by this Act, except migratory waterfowl, during the gun deer hunting season in those counties open to gun deer

hunting, unless he or she wears, when in the field, a cap and upper outer garment of a solid blaze orange color or solid blaze pink color, with such articles of clothing displaying a minimum of 400 square inches of blaze orange or solid blaze pink color material.

(gg) It is unlawful during the upland game season for any person to take upland game with a firearm unless he or she wears, while in the field, a cap of solid blaze orange color or solid blaze pink color. For purposes of this Act, upland game is defined as Bobwhite Quail, Hungarian Partridge, Ring-necked Pheasant, Eastern Cottontail, and Swamp Rabbit.

(hh) It shall be unlawful to kill or cripple any species protected by this Act for which there is a bag limit without making a reasonable effort to retrieve such species and include such in the bag limit. It shall be unlawful for any person having control over harvested game mammals, game birds, or migratory game birds for which there is a bag limit to wantonly waste or destroy the usable meat of the game, except this shall not apply to wildlife taken under Sections 2.37 or 3.22 of this Code. For purposes of this subsection, "usable meat" means the breast meat of a game bird or migratory game bird and the hind ham and front shoulders of a game mammal. It shall be unlawful for any person to place, leave, dump, or abandon a wildlife carcass or parts of it along or upon a public right-of-way or highway or on public or private property, including a waterway or stream, without the

permission of the owner or tenant. It shall not be unlawful to discard game meat that is determined to be unfit for human consumption.

(ii) This Section shall apply only to those species protected by this Act taken within the State. Any species or any parts thereof, legally taken in and transported from other states or countries, may be possessed within the State, except as provided in this Section and Sections 2.35, 2.36, and 3.21.

(jj) (Blank).

(kk) Nothing contained in this Section shall prohibit the Director from issuing permits to paraplegics or to other persons with disabilities who meet the requirements set forth in administrative rule to shoot or hunt from a vehicle as provided by that rule, provided that such is otherwise in accord with this Act.

(ll) Nothing contained in this Act shall prohibit the taking of aquatic life protected by the Fish and Aquatic Life Code or birds and mammals protected by this Act, except deer and fur-bearing mammals, from a boat not camouflaged or disguised to alter its identity or to further provide a place of concealment and not propelled by sail or mechanical power. However, only shotguns not larger than 10 gauge nor smaller than .410 bore loaded with not more than 3 shells of a shot size no larger than lead BB or steel T (.20 diameter) may be used to take species protected by this Act.

(mm) Nothing contained in this Act shall prohibit the use

of a shotgun, not larger than 10 gauge nor smaller than a 20 gauge, with a rifled barrel.

(nn) It shall be unlawful to possess any species of wildlife or wildlife parts taken unlawfully in Illinois, any other state, or any other country, whether or not the wildlife or wildlife parts are indigenous to Illinois. For the purposes of this subsection, the statute of limitations for unlawful possession of wildlife or wildlife parts shall not cease until 2 years after the possession has permanently ended.

(oo) It is unlawful while deer hunting: ~~(1) to possess, or be in close proximity to a rifle that is not centerfire; or (2) be in close proximity to, or to be in possession of or in close proximity to a magazine that is capable of making a rifle not a single shot.~~ use a rifle, handgun, revolver, or muzzleloading rifle or a magazine that is not in compliance with Section 2.25 or administrative rules adopted pursuant to this Act.

(Source: P.A. 102-237, eff. 1-1-22; 102-837, eff. 5-13-22; 102-932, eff. 1-1-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23.)

(520 ILCS 5/1.2bb rep.)

Section 10. The Wildlife Code is amended by repealing Section 1.2bb.