

1 AN ACT concerning regulation.

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

4 Section 5. The Wildlife Code is amended by changing
5 Sections 2.26, 2.37, and 3.1-6 as follows:

6 (520 ILCS 5/2.26) (from Ch. 61, par. 2.26)

7 Sec. 2.26. Deer hunting permits. Any person attempting to
8 take deer shall first obtain a "Deer Hunting Permit" issued by
9 the Department in accordance with its administrative rules.
10 Those rules must provide for the issuance of the following
11 types of resident deer archery permits: (i) a combination
12 permit, consisting of one either-sex permit and one
13 antlerless-only permit, (ii) a single antlerless-only permit,
14 and (iii) a single either-sex permit. The fee for a Deer
15 Hunting Permit to take deer with either bow and arrow or gun
16 shall not exceed \$25 for residents of the State. The
17 Department may by administrative rule provide for non-resident
18 deer hunting permits for which the fee will not exceed \$300 in
19 2005, \$350 in 2006, and \$400 in 2007 and thereafter except as
20 provided below for non-resident landowners and non-resident
21 archery hunters. The Department may by administrative rule
22 provide for a non-resident archery deer permit consisting of
23 not more than 2 harvest tags at a total cost not to exceed \$325

1 in 2005, \$375 in 2006, and \$425 in 2007 and thereafter. The
2 fees for a youth resident and non-resident archery deer permit
3 shall be the same.

4 The Department shall create a pilot program during the
5 special 3-day, youth-only deer hunting season to allow for
6 youth deer hunting permits that are valid statewide, excluding
7 those counties or portions of counties closed to firearm deer
8 hunting. The Department shall adopt rules to implement the
9 pilot program. Hunters qualifying to participate in a
10 youth-only deer season shall be eligible for one either-sex
11 permit and one antlerless-only permit. Nothing in this
12 paragraph shall be construed to prohibit the Department from
13 issuing Special Hunt Area Permits for the youth-only deer
14 hunting season or establishing, through administrative rule,
15 additional requirements pertaining to the youth-only deer
16 hunting season on Department-owned or Department-managed
17 sites, including site-specific quotas or drawings. The
18 provisions of this paragraph are inoperative on and after
19 January 1, 2023.

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

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

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

7 Persons having an archery deer hunting permit shall be
8 permitted to take deer only during the period from 1/2 hour
9 before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset, and only during those
10 days for which an open season is established for the taking of
11 deer by use of bow and arrow.

12 It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer by use of
13 dogs, horses, automobiles, aircraft, or other vehicles, or by
14 the use or aid of bait or baiting of any kind. For the purposes
15 of this Section, "bait" means any material, whether liquid or
16 solid, including food, salt, minerals, and other products,
17 except pure water, that can be ingested, placed, or scattered
18 in such a manner as to attract or lure white-tailed deer.
19 "Baiting" means the placement or scattering of bait to attract
20 deer. An area is considered as baited during the presence of
21 and for 10 consecutive days following the removal of bait.
22 Nothing in this Section shall prohibit the use of a dog to
23 track wounded deer. Any person using a dog for tracking
24 wounded deer must maintain physical control of the dog at all
25 times by means of a maximum 50-foot ~~50-foot~~ lead attached to
26 the dog's collar or harness. Tracking wounded deer is

1 permissible at night, but at no time outside of legal deer
2 hunting hours or seasons shall any person handling or
3 accompanying a dog being used for tracking wounded deer be in
4 possession of any firearm or archery device. Persons tracking
5 wounded deer with a dog during the firearm deer seasons shall
6 wear blaze orange or solid blaze pink color as required. Dog
7 handlers tracking wounded deer with a dog are exempt from
8 hunting license and deer permit requirements so long as they
9 are accompanied by the licensed deer hunter who wounded the
10 deer.

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

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

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

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

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

26 The Department shall not limit the number of non-resident,

1 either-sex archery deer hunting permits to less than 20,000.

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

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

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

21 (Source: P.A. 101-81, eff. 7-12-19; 101-444, eff. 6-1-20;
22 102-237, eff. 1-1-22; 102-932, eff. 1-1-23; revised 10-23-24.)

23 (520 ILCS 5/2.37) (from Ch. 61, par. 2.37)

24 Sec. 2.37. Authority to kill wildlife responsible for
25 damage.

1 (a) Subject to federal regulations and Section 3 of the
2 Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act, the Department may
3 authorize owners and tenants of lands or their agents, who are
4 performing the service without fee or compensation, to remove
5 or destroy any wild bird or wild mammal when the wild bird or
6 wild mammal is known to be destroying property or causing a
7 risk to human health or safety upon his or her land.

8 Upon receipt by the Department of information from the
9 owner, tenant, or sharecropper that any one or more species of
10 wildlife is damaging dams, levees, ditches, cattle pastures,
11 or other property on the land on which he resides or controls,
12 together with a statement regarding location of the property
13 damages, the nature and extent of the damage, and the
14 particular species of wildlife committing the damage, the
15 Department shall make an investigation.

16 If, after investigation, the Department finds that damage
17 or risk to human safety does exist and can be abated only by
18 removing or destroying that wildlife, a permit shall be issued
19 by the Department to remove or destroy the species responsible
20 for causing the damage.

21 A permit to control the damage shall be for a period set by
22 administrative rule ~~of up to 90 days~~, shall specify the means
23 and methods by which and the person or persons by whom the
24 wildlife may be removed or destroyed, without fee or
25 compensation for the initial permits issued to a landowner or
26 tenant, and shall set forth the disposition procedure to be

1 made of all wildlife taken and other restrictions the Director
2 considers necessary and appropriate in the circumstances of
3 the particular case. Whenever possible, the specimens
4 destroyed shall be given to a bona fide public or State
5 scientific, educational, or zoological institution.

6 The permittee shall advise the Department in writing, as
7 set by administrative rule ~~within 10 days after the expiration~~
8 ~~date of the permit~~, of the number of individual species of
9 wildlife taken, disposition made of them, and any other
10 information which the Department may consider necessary.

11 The Department shall adopt rules establishing: (i)
12 procedures and criteria for issuance; (ii) timeline for
13 issuance of permits; (iii) method of take; (iv) disposition of
14 remains; (v) reporting; (vi) evaluation of damage; (vii) cost;
15 (viii) suspension or revocation of permits; (ix) denial of
16 permits; and (x) renewal of permits issued under this Section.
17 The Department shall adopt rules that allow landowners to have
18 other individuals, that meet all requirements set forth in
19 this Act, destroy deer authorized under permits issued to that
20 landowner under this Section. The Department shall adopt rules
21 allowing the automatic issuance of additional antlerless-only
22 permits during the regular firearm or archery season of that
23 year if a landowner demonstrates proof of successfully
24 harvesting 50% of the permits issued from a permit issued
25 under this Section to destroy deer in that same calendar year.
26 The Department shall adopt rules allowing the automatic

1 eligibility for additional permits to be issued in the
2 following calendar year for use between June 1 through
3 September 15 if a landowner demonstrates proof of harvesting
4 80% of the permits that were issued under this Section that
5 were issued to the landowner for the previous year's regular
6 firearm and archery deer hunting seasons.

7 (b) Subject to federal regulations and Section 3 of the
8 Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act, the Department may
9 grant the authority to control species protected by this Code
10 pursuant to the issuance of a Nuisance Wildlife Control Permit
11 to:

12 (1) any person who is providing such service or
13 solicits customers for themselves or on behalf of a
14 nuisance wildlife control permit holder for a fee or
15 compensation;

16 (2) a governmental body; or

17 (3) a nonprofit or other charitable organization.

18 The Department shall set forth applicable regulations in
19 an Administrative rule ~~Order~~ and may require periodic reports
20 listing species taken, numbers of each species taken, dates
21 when taken, and other pertinent information.

22 Any person operating under a Nuisance Wildlife Control
23 Permit who subcontracts the operation of nuisance wildlife
24 control to another shall ensure that such subcontractor
25 possesses a valid Nuisance Wildlife Control Permit issued by
26 the Department. The person must maintain a record of the

1 subcontractor including the subcontractor's name, address, and
2 phone number, and type of work to be performed, for a period of
3 not less than 2 years from the date the subcontractor is no
4 longer performing services on behalf of the person. The
5 records shall be presented to an authorized employee of the
6 Department or law enforcement officer upon request for
7 inspection.

8 Any person operating without the required permit as
9 outlined under this subsection (b) or in violation of this
10 subsection (b) is deemed to be taking, attempting to take,
11 disturbing, or harassing wildlife contrary to the provisions
12 of this Code, including the taking or attempting to take such
13 species for commercial purposes as outlined in Sections 2.36
14 and 2.36a of this Code. Any devices and equipment, including
15 vehicles, used in violation of this subsection (b) may be
16 subject to the provisions of Section 1.25 of this Code.

17 Any person properly permitted and operating under the
18 provisions of this subsection is exempt from the provisions of
19 this Act except as limited by administrative rule adopted by
20 the Department.

21 (c) The location of traps or snares authorized under this
22 Section, either by the Department or any other governmental
23 body with the authority to control species protected by this
24 Code, shall be exempt from the provisions of the Freedom of
25 Information Act.

26 (d) A drainage district or road district or the designee

1 of a drainage district or road district shall be exempt from
2 the requirement to obtain a permit to control nuisance
3 muskrats or beavers if all applicable provisions for licenses
4 are complied with and any trap types and sizes used are in
5 compliance with this Code, including marking or
6 identification. The designee of a drainage district or road
7 district must have a signed and dated written authorization
8 from the drainage district or road district in possession at
9 all times when conducting activities under this Section. This
10 exemption from obtaining a permit shall be valid only upon
11 property owned, leased, or controlled by the drainage district
12 or road district. For the purposes of this Section, "road
13 district" includes a township road district.

14 (e) The Department shall make available on its website the
15 current and relevant information, criteria, and directions to
16 the public for permits issued under this Section.

17 (Source: P.A. 102-524, eff. 8-20-21; 103-37, eff. 6-9-23;
18 103-225, eff. 6-30-23; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24; 103-611, eff.
19 1-1-25.)

20 (520 ILCS 5/3.1-6)

21 Sec. 3.1-6. Landowner or tenant ~~Special~~ deer and ~~turkey~~
22 ~~and combination~~ hunting permits ~~licenses~~.

23 (a) For the purpose of this Section:

24 "Bona fide current income beneficiary" means an individual
25 who, at the time of application for a permit, is:

1 (1) entitled to income, whether income exists or not,
2 from the trust that owns Illinois land on which the
3 applicant wishes to hunt with no condition precedent, such
4 as surviving another person or reaching a certain age,
5 other than the trustee distributing the income; and

6 (2) listed by name in the trust documents as an income
7 beneficiary.

8 "Bona fide equity member" means an individual who:

9 (1) (i) became a member upon the formation of the
10 limited liability company or (ii) has purchased a
11 distributional interest in a limited liability company for
12 a value equal to the percentage of the appraised value of
13 the LLC assets represented by the distributional interest
14 in the LLC and subsequently becomes a member of the
15 company under Article 30 of the Limited Liability Company
16 Act; and

17 (2) intends to retain the membership for at least 5
18 years.

19 "Bona fide equity partner" means an individual who:

20 (1) (i) became a partner, either general or limited,
21 upon the formation of a partnership or limited
22 partnership, or (ii) has purchased, acquired, or been
23 gifted a partnership interest accurately representing his
24 or her percentage distributional interest in the profits,
25 losses, and assets of a partnership or limited
26 partnership;

1 (2) intends to retain ownership of the partnership
2 interest for at least 5 years; and

3 (3) is a resident of this State.

4 "Bona fide equity shareholder" means an individual who:

5 (1) purchased, for market price, publicly sold stock
6 shares in a corporation, purchased shares of a
7 privately-held corporation for a value equal to the
8 percentage of the appraised value of the corporate assets
9 represented by the ownership in the corporation, or is a
10 member of a closely-held family-owned corporation and has
11 purchased or been gifted with shares of stock in the
12 corporation accurately reflecting his or her percentage of
13 ownership; and

14 (2) intends to retain the ownership of the shares of
15 stock for at least 5 years.

16 "Current owners" means one or more bona fide landowners,
17 one or more bona fide current income beneficiaries, one or
18 more bona fide equity shareholders of a corporation, one or
19 more bona fide equity members of a limited liability company,
20 or one or more bona fide equity partners of a partnership that
21 all own the same 240 acres of Illinois land.

22 "Immediate family of a bona fide landowner, tenant, or a
23 bona fide current income beneficiary" means the spouse,
24 children, brothers, sisters, grandchildren, grandparents, and
25 parents permanently residing on the same property as the bona
26 fide landowner, tenant, or bona fide current income

1 beneficiary.

2 "Tenant" means a person who rents 40 acres or more of
3 Illinois land for commercial agricultural purposes under a
4 written notarized agreement with the landowner.

5 (b) Landowner deer and turkey ~~Deer, Turkey, and~~
6 ~~combination~~ permits shall be issued without charge to an
7 Illinois resident that owns at least 40 acres of Illinois land
8 and that wishes to hunt only on the land that Illinois resident
9 owns. Deer permits issued under this Section shall consist of
10 one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only permit for the
11 deer firearm season and one either-sex permit and one
12 antlerless-only permit for the archery deer season. Land
13 ownership shall only be accepted by the Department for:

14 (1) bona fide Illinois landowners ~~residing in this~~
15 ~~State who own at least 40 acres of Illinois land and wish~~
16 ~~to hunt upon their land only;~~

17 (2) bona fide current income beneficiaries of a trust
18 in which the trust owns Illinois land ~~resident tenants of~~
19 ~~at least 40 acres of commercial agricultural land where~~
20 ~~they will hunt; and~~

21 (3) bona fide equity shareholders of a corporation,
22 bona fide equity members of a limited liability company,
23 or bona fide equity partners of a general or limited
24 partnership which owns ~~at least 40 acres of~~ land in ~~a~~
25 ~~county in~~ this State ~~who wish to hunt on the~~
26 ~~corporation's, company's, or partnership's land only. One~~

~~permit shall be issued without charge to one bona fide equity shareholder, one bona fide equity member, or one bona fide equity partner for each 40 acres of land owned by the corporation, company, or partnership in a county; however, the number of permits issued without charge to bona fide equity shareholders of any corporation or bona fide equity members of a limited liability company in any county shall not exceed 15, and shall not exceed 3 in the case of bona fide equity partners of a partnership.~~

(b-5) Tenant deer and turkey permits shall be issued without charge to Illinois resident tenants of at least 40 acres of commercial agricultural land that wish to hunt only on the land of which they are resident tenants. Deer permits issued under this Section shall consist of (i) one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only permit for the deer firearm season and (ii) one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only permit for the archery deer season.

(b-10) The total number of deer or turkey permits that may be issued to a person under this Section shall be established by administrative rule.

(b-15) Bona fide landowners ~~or tenants~~ who do not wish to hunt only on the land they own, tenants who do not wish to hunt only on the land they rent, or lease, or bona fide equity shareholders, bona fide equity members, bona fide current income beneficiaries of a trust, or bona fide equity partners who do not wish to hunt only on the land owned by the

1 corporation, limited liability company, trust, or partnership
2 shall be charged the same fee as the applicant who is not a
3 bona fide landowner, Illinois resident tenant, bona fide
4 equity shareholder, bona fide equity member, bona fide current
5 income beneficiary of a trust, or bona fide equity partner.
6 Nonresidents of this State who own at least 40 acres of land as
7 a bona fide landowner, a bona fide current income beneficiary
8 of a trust, a bona fide equity shareholder, or a bona fide
9 equity member and wish to hunt on their land only shall be
10 charged a fee set by administrative rule. The method for
11 obtaining these permits shall be prescribed by administrative
12 rule.

13 (c) A deer or turkey ~~The deer, turkey, or combination~~
14 hunting permit issued without fee shall be valid on all
15 Illinois farm lands which the person to whom it is issued owns,
16 including land owned by the individual as a bona fide
17 landowner, land owned as a bona fide equity shareholder of a
18 corporation, land owned by the individual as a bona fide
19 equity member of a limited liability company, and land owned
20 by the individual as a bona fide equity partner of a
21 partnership.

22 (d) Except for a person hunting under a permit issued
23 under subsection (e) or (f), while hunting under a permit
24 issued under this Section, a person must carry the permit and
25 documentation showing proof of that the person is a bona fide
26 landowner, a bona fide equity shareholder of a corporation, a

1 bona fide equity member of a limited liability company, a bona
2 fide current income beneficiary, a bona fide equity partners
3 of a general or limited partnership, or a tenant. While
4 hunting under a permit issued under subsection (e) or (f), a
5 person must carry the permit and documentation showing that
6 the person is actively hunting on land covered by the permit.

7 (e) The Department may, by administrative rule, issue
8 permits under this Section to the immediate family of a bona
9 fide landowner, a bona fide current income beneficiary, or
10 tenant.

11 (f) For every 240 acres of Illinois land owned by the
12 current owners, the Department may issue one guest either-sex
13 deer permit and one guest antlerless-only deer permit. The
14 guest permits shall be for the same deer hunting season and for
15 the same method of take as issued to the current owner. A guest
16 permit shall be issued to an individual who is not a current
17 owner and is listed on the application for the issuance of
18 guest deer hunting permits by a current owner. An individual
19 designated by a current owner must meet all the eligibility
20 requirements to hunt under this Code and shall pay all fees
21 required under Section 2.26 for the permits issued, including
22 non-resident fees if that individual is a non-resident.
23 Permits issued under this subsection may not be offered for
24 resale by the landowner receiving the permit and are
25 nontransferable. No more than 5 individuals, regardless of
26 total number of 240 acres of Illinois land owned by the current

1 owners, may be issued guest permits under this subsection.

2 (g) The Department may adopt rules to administer and
3 enforce this Section, including, but not limited to,
4 application requirements, proof of ownership requirements,
5 proof of residency requirements, eligibility requirements,
6 restrictions, and suspension and revocation of permits.

7 (h) No person shall be issued more than (i) one either-sex
8 permit and one antlerless-only permit for the deer firearm
9 season and (ii) one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only
10 permit for the deer archery season under this Section ~~leases~~
11 ~~or rents, except that in the case of a permit issued to a bona~~
12 ~~fide equity shareholder, bona fide equity member, or bona fide~~
13 ~~equity partner, the permit shall be valid on all lands owned by~~
14 ~~the corporation, limited liability company, or partnership in~~
15 ~~the county.~~

16 (Source: P.A. 99-869, eff. 1-1-17.)

17 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect on
18 January 1, 2026, except that the changes to Section 3.1-6 of
19 the Wildlife Code take effect on January 1, 2027.