



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB2756

Introduced 1/13/2026, by Sen. Patrick J. Joyce

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

520 ILCS 5/1.2t-1 new

520 ILCS 5/2.25

520 ILCS 5/2.33

from Ch. 61, par. 2.25

Amends the Wildlife Code. Defines "wildlife rifle" as a rifle that can hold up to 3 rounds in the magazine and chamber combined. Provides that it shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except (i) with a shotgun, handgun, centerfire wildlife rifle (rather than single shot centerfire rifle), or muzzleloading rifle, or (ii) as provided by administrative rule, with a bow and arrow, during the open season, with certain requirements. Limits legal rifles to centerfire wildlife rifles (rather than centerfire rifles that are single shot). Prohibits deer hunting while being in possession of or in close proximity to a magazine that is capable of making a rifle hold more than 3 rounds in the magazine and chamber combined (rather than making a rifle not a single shot).

LRB104 16438 BDA 29830 b

1 AN ACT concerning wildlife.

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 2.25 and 2.33 and by adding Section 1.2t-1 as
6 follows:

7 (520 ILCS 5/1.2t-1 new)

8 Sec. 1.2t-1. Wildlife rifle. "Wildlife rifle" means a
9 rifle that can hold up to 3 rounds in the magazine and chamber
10 combined.

11 (520 ILCS 5/2.25) (from Ch. 61, par. 2.25)

12 (Text of Section before amendment by P.A. 104-58)

13 Sec. 2.25. It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer
14 except (i) with a shotgun, handgun, single shot centerfire
15 rifle, or muzzleloading rifle or (ii) as provided by
16 administrative rule, with a bow and arrow, during the open
17 season of not more than 14 days which will be set annually by
18 the Director between the dates of November 1st and December
19 31st, both inclusive, or a special 3-day, youth-only season
20 between the dates of September 1 and October 31. For the
21 purposes of this Section, legal handguns and rifles are
22 limited to centerfire handguns that are either a single shot

1 or revolver and centerfire rifles that are single shot. The
2 only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or rifle is a
3 bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with
4 a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths inches, or a
5 straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger,
6 both of which must be available as a factory load with the
7 published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a
8 capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle.
9 The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches. Full metal
10 jacket bullets may not be used to harvest deer.

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

14 It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except
15 with a bow and arrow during the open season for bow and arrow
16 set annually by the Director between the dates of September
17 1st and January 31st, both inclusive.

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

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

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

7 The Department is authorized to establish a separate
8 harvest period at specific sites within the State for the
9 purpose of harvesting surplus deer that cannot be taken during
10 the regular season provided for the taking of deer. This
11 season shall be restricted to gun or bow and arrow hunting only
12 and shall be established during the period of September 1st to
13 February 15th, both inclusive. The Department shall publicly
14 announce, via statewide news release, the season dates and
15 shooting hours, and the counties and sites open to hunting.
16 The Department shall publish suitable prescribed rules and
17 regulations established by administrative rule pertaining to
18 management restrictions applicable to this special harvest
19 program. The Department shall allow unused gun deer permits
20 that are left over from a regular season for the taking of deer
21 to be rolled over and used during any separate harvest period
22 held within 6 months of the season for which those tags were
23 issued at no additional cost to the permit holder subject to
24 the management restrictions applicable to the special harvest
25 program.

26 Beginning July 1, 2019, and on an annual basis thereafter,

1 the Department shall provide a report to the General Assembly
2 providing information regarding deer management programs
3 established by the Code or by administrative rule that
4 includes: (1) the number of surplus deer taken during each
5 separate harvest season; (2) the number of deer found to have a
6 communicable disease or other abnormality; and (3) what
7 happens to the deer taken during each separate harvest season.
8 (Source: P.A. 101-66, eff. 7-12-19; 102-314, eff. 1-1-22;
9 102-932, eff. 1-1-23.)

10 (Text of Section after amendment by P.A. 104-58)

11 Sec. 2.25. It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer
12 except (i) with a shotgun, handgun, ~~single-shot~~ centerfire
13 wildlife rifle, or muzzleloading rifle or (ii) as provided by
14 administrative rule, with a bow and arrow, during the open
15 season of not more than 14 days which will be set annually by
16 the Director between the dates of November 1st and December
17 31st, both inclusive, or a special 3-day, youth-only season
18 between the dates of September 1 and October 31. For the
19 purposes of this Section, legal handguns and rifles are
20 limited to centerfire handguns that are either a single shot
21 or revolver and centerfire wildlife rifles ~~that are single~~
22 ~~shot~~. The only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or
23 rifle is a bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or
24 larger with a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths
25 inches, or a straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30

1 caliber or larger, both of which must be available as a factory
2 load with the published ballistic tables of the manufacturer
3 showing a capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at
4 the muzzle. The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches.
5 Full metal jacket bullets may not be used to harvest deer.

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

9 It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except
10 with a bow and arrow during the open season for bow and arrow
11 set annually by the Director between the dates of September
12 1st and January 31st, both inclusive.

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

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

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

1 shooting hours, the counties and sites open to hunting.

2 The Department is authorized to establish a separate
3 harvest period at specific sites within the State for the
4 purpose of harvesting surplus deer that cannot be taken during
5 the regular season provided for the taking of deer. This
6 season shall be restricted to gun or bow and arrow hunting only
7 and shall be established during the period of September 1st to
8 February 15th, both inclusive. The Department shall publicly
9 announce, via statewide news release, the season dates and
10 shooting hours, and the counties and sites open to hunting.
11 The Department shall publish suitable prescribed rules and
12 regulations established by administrative rule pertaining to
13 management restrictions applicable to this special harvest
14 program. The Department shall allow unused gun deer permits
15 that are left over from a regular season for the taking of deer
16 to be rolled over and used during any separate harvest period
17 held within 6 months of the season for which those tags were
18 issued at no additional cost to the permit holder subject to
19 the management restrictions applicable to the special harvest
20 program.

21 If the Department is using its sharpshooting program to
22 manage chronic wasting disease in a deer herd that is found in
23 a county in the State and if no cases of that disease have been
24 identified in that herd in the preceding 3 calendar years,
25 then the Department shall end the use of that program to manage
26 chronic wasting disease in that county. However, the program

1 may be reinstated within the county if chronic wasting
2 disease is again identified in that herd.

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

12 (520 ILCS 5/2.33)

13 Sec. 2.33. Prohibitions.

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

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

22 (c) It is unlawful for any person at any time to take a
23 wild mammal protected by this Act from its den by means of any
24 mechanical device, spade, or digging device or to use smoke or
25 other gases to dislodge or remove such mammal except as

1 provided in Section 2.37.

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

6 (e) (Blank).

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

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

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

15 (i) It is unlawful to take, pursue or intentionally harass
16 or disturb in any manner any wild birds or mammals by use or
17 aid of any vehicle, conveyance, or unmanned aircraft as
18 defined by the Illinois Aeronautics Act, except as permitted
19 by the Code of Federal Regulations for the taking of
20 waterfowl; except that nothing in this subsection shall
21 prohibit the use of unmanned aircraft in the inspection of a
22 public utility facility, tower, or structure or a mobile
23 service facility, tower, or structure by a public utility, as
24 defined in Section 3-105 of the Public Utilities Act, or a
25 provider of mobile services as defined in Section 153 of Title
26 47 of the United States Code. It is also unlawful to use the

1 lights of any vehicle or conveyance, any light connected to
2 any vehicle or conveyance, or any other lighting device or
3 mechanism from inside or on a vehicle or conveyance in any area
4 where wildlife may be found except in accordance with Section
5 2.37 of this Act; however, nothing in this Section shall
6 prohibit the normal use of headlamps for the purpose of
7 driving upon a roadway. For purposes of this Section, any
8 other lighting device or mechanism shall include, but not be
9 limited to, any device that uses infrared or other light not
10 visible to the naked eye, electronic image intensification,
11 active illumination, thermal imaging, or night vision. Striped
12 skunk, opossum, red fox, gray fox, raccoon, bobcat, and coyote
13 may be taken during the open season by use of a small light
14 which is worn on the body or hand-held by a person on foot and
15 not in any vehicle.

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

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

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

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

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

1 otherwise made inoperable unless in accordance with the
2 Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

3 (o) (Blank).

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 (u) It is unlawful for any person to discharge any firearm
11 for the purpose of taking any of the species protected by this
12 Act, or hunt with gun or dog, or allow a dog to hunt, within
13 300 yards of an inhabited dwelling without first obtaining
14 permission from the owner or tenant, except that while
15 trapping, hunting with bow and arrow, hunting with dog and
16 shotgun using shot shells only, or hunting with shotgun using
17 shot shells only, or providing outfitting services under a
18 waterfowl outfitter permit, or on licensed game breeding and
19 hunting preserve areas, as defined in Section 3.27, on
20 federally owned and managed lands and on Department owned,
21 managed, leased, or controlled lands, a 100 yard restriction
22 shall apply.

23 (v) It is unlawful for any person to remove fur-bearing
24 mammals from, or to move or disturb in any manner, the traps
25 owned by another person without written authorization of the
26 owner to do so.

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

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

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

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

1 Migratory waterfowl that are crippled may be taken only with a
2 shotgun as regulated by subsection (j) of this Section using
3 shotgun shells as regulated in subsection (k) of this Section.

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

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

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

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

20 (ee) It is unlawful to possess any rifle while in the field
21 during gun deer season except as provided in Sections 2.25 and
22 2.26 and administrative rules.

23 (ff) It is unlawful for any person to take any species
24 protected by this Act, except migratory waterfowl, during the
25 gun deer hunting season in those counties open to gun deer
26 hunting, unless he or she wears, when in the field, a cap and

1 upper outer garment of a solid blaze orange color or solid
2 blaze pink color, with such articles of clothing displaying a
3 minimum of 400 square inches of blaze orange or solid blaze
4 pink color material.

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

11 (hh) It shall be unlawful to kill or cripple any species
12 protected by this Act for which there is a bag limit without
13 making a reasonable effort to retrieve such species and
14 include such in the bag limit. It shall be unlawful for any
15 person having control over harvested game mammals, game birds,
16 or migratory game birds for which there is a bag limit to
17 wantonly waste or destroy the usable meat of the game, except
18 this shall not apply to wildlife taken under Sections 2.37 or
19 3.22 of this Code. For purposes of this subsection, "usable
20 meat" means the breast meat of a game bird or migratory game
21 bird and the hind ham and front shoulders of a game mammal. It
22 shall be unlawful for any person to place, leave, dump, or
23 abandon a wildlife carcass or parts of it along or upon a
24 public right-of-way or highway or on public or private
25 property, including a waterway or stream, without the
26 permission of the owner or tenant. It shall not be unlawful to

1 discard game meat that is determined to be unfit for human
2 consumption.

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

8 (jj) (Blank).

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

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

25 (mm) Nothing contained in this Act shall prohibit the use
26 of a shotgun, not larger than 10 gauge nor smaller than a 20

1 gauge, with a rifled barrel.

2 (nn) It shall be unlawful to possess any species of
3 wildlife or wildlife parts taken unlawfully in Illinois, any
4 other state, or any other country, whether or not the wildlife
5 or wildlife parts are indigenous to Illinois. For the purposes
6 of this subsection, the statute of limitations for unlawful
7 possession of wildlife or wildlife parts shall not cease until
8 2 years after the possession has permanently ended.

9 (oo) It is unlawful while deer hunting:

10 (1) to possess or be in close proximity to a rifle that
11 is not centerfire; or

12 (2) to be in possession of or in close proximity to a
13 magazine that is capable of making a rifle hold more than 3
14 rounds in the magazine and chamber combined ~~not a single~~
15 ~~shot.~~

16 (Source: P.A. 102-237, eff. 1-1-22; 102-837, eff. 5-13-22;
17 102-932, eff. 1-1-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23.)

18 Section 95. No acceleration or delay. Where this Act makes
19 changes in a statute that is represented in this Act by text
20 that is not yet or no longer in effect (for example, a Section
21 represented by multiple versions), the use of that text does
22 not accelerate or delay the taking effect of (i) the changes
23 made by this Act or (ii) provisions derived from any other
24 Public Act.