



MARK WILLIAMS
COMMISSIONER

TED WILL
DIRECTOR

April 29, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

FROM: Ted Will

SUBJECT: **NOTICE AND SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING**

Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to authority contained in the Game and Fish Code (Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Secs. 27-1-4, 27-3-8, 27-3-15, and 27-3-62), the Board of Natural Resources proposes to amend Department of Natural Resources rules governing the hunting of game animals and game birds. The proposed amendment (copy attached hereto), when adopted, amends Rule 391-4-2-.12 (pertaining to trapping) and Rule 391-4-2-.31 (pertaining to hunting) for opossum and raccoon.

SYNOPSIS AND MAIN FEATURES

The purpose of hunting regulations is to manage Georgia's game birds and game animals according to sound principles of wildlife management and to meet public objectives for use of these renewable natural resources. Changes to the existing rule are responsive to statutory changes by the General Assembly that expand the opportunity to hunt and trap raccoon and opossum.

This notice and synopsis of the proposed rule revisions, together with an exact copy of proposed rule revisions, is being mailed to all persons who have requested in writing that they be placed on the mailing list and have tendered the actual cost of such mailing. Copies of all these documents are also available by electronic mail and are available for review on the Division web page (www.gohuntgeorgia.com). Please call Dr. Tina Johannsen at (706) 557-3350 to request a copy.

Memorandum – Notice and Synopsis of Proposed Rulemaking

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Members of the public will have an opportunity to participate in a virtual public hearing on May 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM. Instructions for the virtual public meeting will be publicly noticed through the website (<https://georgiawildlife.com/regulations/meetings>) and by direct electronic mail to those persons who have indicated an interest in hunting regulations. Members of the public will have the opportunity to comment on these proposed amendments electronically by email through the Division website, by telephone (706-557-3350), or by submitting written statements by close of business on June 3, 2022. Written statements should be mailed to the attention of Dr. Tina Johannsen at:

Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Division
Game Management Section
2067 U.S. Highway 278, S.E.
Social Circle, Georgia 30025

The Board of Natural Resources will consider the proposed rule and any comments received during the public comment process at its June 16, 2022 meeting at Idlewilde Event Center, Indian Springs State Park, 678 Lake Clark Road, Flowilla, GA 30216. Please bring this notice to the attention of interested acquaintances.

TW/jwb

Attachment: Proposed Rule

SUBJECT	PROPOSED CHANGE	CURRENT REGULATION	CHANGE	JUSTIFICATION
391-4-2-.12 Trapping				
Closed Seasons	Adds raccoon and opossum to the list of species with no closed trapping season and adds language to clarify this only applies to private lands	Trapping season for raccoon and opossum is December 1 through last day in February.	Allows year-round trapping of raccoons and opossum on private lands	Since the early 1980s, fur trapping has declined, reducing harvest pressure on raccoons and opossums. These species are well documented nest predators and common nuisance species in urban and suburban areas. The proposed change expands flexibility for private landowners to manage raccoon and opossum densities on their lands. We do not anticipate this change will negatively affect statewide raccoon and opossum populations.
391-4-2-.31 Fox, Grouse, Opossum, Quail, Rabbit, Raccoon, Squirrel, Bobcat				
Seasons and Bag Limits	<p>Raccoon & Opossum season:</p> <p>Department managed lands: August 15 through the last day of February</p>	<p>Raccoon & Opossum season: Oct. 15 through last day in February.</p> <p>No bag limit on opossum and a bag limit of 3 on raccoons</p>	Modifies the season for raccoon and opossum to allow year-round hunting on private lands and expands the season 60 days on lands managed by the department.	Since the 1980s, harvest pressure from regulated hunting of raccoon and opossum has declined. These species are well documented nest predators. The proposed change expands

SUBJECT	PROPOSED CHANGE	CURRENT REGULATION	CHANGE	JUSTIFICATION
	<p>All other lands: Jan. 1 – Dec. 31</p> <p>No bag limit</p>		Removes the bag limit for raccoons.	<p>flexibility for private landowners to use hunting to manage raccoon and opossum densities on their lands. We do not anticipate this change will negatively affect statewide raccoon and opossum populations.</p>

**CERTIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
FILED WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE
BRAD RAFFENSPERGER**

(Pursuant to O.C.G.A. Secs. 50-13-3, 50-13-4, and 50-13-6)

I do hereby certify that the attached amendments are correct copies, as promulgated and adopted on the ____ day of June 2022.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FILING DATE_____

Rule 391-4-2-.12 "Trapping" is hereby repealed in its entirety and new Rule 391-4-2-.12 is adopted in lieu thereof and reads as attached hereto.

Rule 391-4-2-.31 "Fox, Grouse, Opossum, Quail, Rabbit, Raccoon, Squirrel, Bobcat" is hereby repealed in its entirety and new Rule 391-4-2-.31 is adopted in lieu thereof and reads as attached hereto

Authority O.C.G.A. Secs. 27-1-4, 37-3-8, 27-3-15, and 27-3-62.

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources

Sworn to and subscribed before
me this ____ day of June 2022.

Notary Public

Kyle Pearson, Executive Counsel

Sworn to and subscribed before
me this ____ day of June 2022.

Notary Public

**RULES
OF
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION
CHAPTER 391-4-2
HUNTING REGULATIONS**

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391-4-2-.12	Trapping
391-4-2-.31	Fox, Grouse, Opossum, Quail, Rabbit, Raccoon, Squirrel, Bobcat

391-4-2-.12 Trapping.

(1) The trapping season for raccoon, mink, otter, fox, opossum, muskrat, skunk, bobcat and weasel is December 1 through the last day of February except that on private lands not managed by the department there is no closed season on trapping of beaver, coyotes, opossum, and raccoon.

(2) Within thirty (30) days after the close of trapping season, all trappers must report to the department in writing the number of furs, hides or pelts which have been taken during the open season. Completion of the annual trapping survey distributed by the department satisfies the reporting requirements herein.

(3) All bobcats and otters trapped in Georgia and exported out of Georgia shall be tagged with a department-provided Federal Export Tag. The tag must be attached to the hide or carcass no later than thirty (30) days after closure of trapping season.

(4) Snares may be used for trapping beaver provided that snares are set in water or on land within ten (10) feet of water, including swamps, marshes, and tidal areas. All snares must be marked with the trapper's name or identification number.

Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 27-1-4, 27-3-8, and 27-3-62.

391-4-2-.31 Fox, Grouse, Opossum, Quail, Rabbit, Raccoon, Squirrel, Bobcat.

(1) The following species may be hunted in accordance with the areas, seasons, and daily bag limits set forth below, except as otherwise specifically provided herein:

Species	Area	Season	Bag Limit
(a) Bobcat	Statewide	Dec. 1 through last day in February	No Limit
(b) Fox	Statewide	Dec. 1 through last day in February	No Limit
(c) Grouse	Statewide	Oct. 15 through last day in February	Daily: 3

(d) Opossum	Department managed lands:	August 15 through the last day of February	No Limit
	All other lands:	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	No Limit
(e) Quail	Statewide	First Saturday after Nov. 11 through last day in February	Daily: 12
(f) Rabbit	Statewide	First Saturday after Nov. 11 through last day in February	Daily: 12
(g) Raccoon	Department managed lands:	August 15 through the last day of February	No Limit
	All other lands:	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31	No Limit
(h) Squirrel	Statewide	August 15 through last day in February	Daily: 12

(2) Hunting with dogs is allowed. Electronic calls may not be used for hunting fox and bobcats.

Authority: O.C.G.A. Secs. 27-1-4 and 27-3-15.