

**Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Fish and Wildlife**

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

Possible Amendment to and Repeal of Rules Governing Animal Species, Wildlife Management Areas, State Game Refuges, Small Game Hunting, and Big Game Hunting; *Minnesota Rules*, chapters 6134, 6230, 6232, 6234, 6236, 6237 and 6240; Revisor's ID Number R-04320

Subject of Rules. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources requests comments on its proposed amendments to and repeal of rules governing wildlife management areas, state game refuges, small game hunting and big game hunting. The Department is considering rule amendments and repeals that:

- Streamline regulations on wildlife management areas and state game refuges to provide more flexibility for hunters or improve harvest distribution
- Require non-toxic shot on wildlife management areas in the farmland zone, which includes the far western and southern portions of the state, beginning in 2018
- Make minimum draw weight requirements for hunting big game and wild turkey consistent with statute
- Allow additional opportunity during youth deer season
- Clarify requirements for registering and identifying bear bait stations.
- Make the possession limit for small game species consistent with federal regulations for migratory game bird species
- Provide standard dates for the opening and closing of the falconry season for migratory birds
- Modify the prairie chicken season to improve hunting opportunity
- Modify early-season shooting hours for waterfowl hunting
- Make the possession limit for migratory game birds consistent with federal regulations
- Allow open water hunting for migratory waterfowl, coots, gallinules, rails and snipe in limited areas in the state
- Require non-toxic shot when hunting snipe or rails
- Standardize provisions for spring light goose population reduction
- Increase the dove season by 10 days for consistency with federal regulations.
- Standardize common crow hunting dates
- Correct Minnesota's List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species by eliminating a listing that inadvertently appears in two places.

Persons Affected. The amendment to and repeal of the rules would likely affect those who hunt and recreate on state wildlife management areas and game refuges, youth who hunt deer and their parents or mentors, deer hunters, falconry hunters, fall wild turkey hunters, prairie chicken hunters, mourning dove hunters, those who participate in the annual light goose conservation action, crow hunters.

Statutory Authority. *Minnesota Statutes*, sections 84.0895, 97A.045, 97A.091, 97A.137, 97B.035, 97B.105, 97B.605 and 97B.731 authorize the Department to adopt rules for modifying species lists, regulations for wildlife management areas and state game refuges and hunting deer, small game and migratory birds.

Public Comment. Interested persons or groups may submit comments or information on these possible rules in writing until further notice is published in the *State Register* that the Department intends to adopt or to withdraw the rules. The Department will not publish a notice of intent to adopt the rules until more than 60 days have elapsed from the date of this request for comments. The Department does not plan to appoint an advisory committee to comment on the possible rules.

Rules Drafts. The Department has drafted the possible rule amendments and repeals and a draft will be available before the publication of the proposed rules.

Agency Contact Person. Written comments, questions or requests to receive a draft of the rules, and requests for more information on these possible rules should be directed to: Jason Abraham at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155 or by telephone at (651) 259-5197 jason.abraham@state.mn.us

Alternative Format. Upon request, this information can be made available in an alternative format, such as large print, braille, or audio. To make such a request, please contact the agency contact person at the address or telephone number listed above.

September 17, 2015

Tom Landwehr, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources