

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 ~~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~~

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

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

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

21 (b-15) Bona fide landowners ~~or tenants~~ who do not wish to  
22 hunt only on the land they own, tenants who do not wish to hunt  
23 only on the land they rent, or lease, or bona fide equity  
24 shareholders, bona fide equity members, bona fide current  
25 income beneficiaries of a trust, or bona fide equity partners  
26 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.