
TITLE 312 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Interim Final Rule
LSA Document #24-268

DIGEST

SCHEDULED HUNTS FOR POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Temporarily adds rules concerning scheduled deer hunting in designated areas for population management. Effective September 26, 2024. Expires September 26, 2025.

HISTORY

Notice of Public Comment Period for Interim Rule published August 14, 2024: [20240814-IR-312240268INA](#)

Regulatory Analysis submitted with Notice of Public Comment Period for Interim Rule:

[20240814-IR-312240268RAA](#)

Governor's Approval submitted with Notice of Public Comment Period for Interim Rule:

[20240814-IR-312240268GAA](#)

SUMMARY/RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

The Natural Resources Commission (commission) requested public comment on the proposed interim rule from August 14, 2024, through September 13, 2024. The comments received and the commission's responses to the comments are summarized as follows:

The agency received comments that were supportive of all the proposed rule amendments.

Comments: Three (3) comments were received in support of the interim rule allowing scheduled deer hunting for population management at designated properties under [312 IAC 9-2-18](#).

Comments: One (1) comment was received which provided information regarding a hunting program in an Ohio county park system.

Response: The structure of the interim rule allowing scheduled hunts for population management is based on the success of the scheduled hunts beginning in 1993 through 2023. There are four (4) total days of hunting, divided into two (2) scheduled hunts. Properties are not hunted in years following hunts with harvest per effort levels falling below 0.22 for properties where firearms use is permitted, or below 0.10 for properties where a bow and arrows or crossbow are permitted. Hunting resumes at a property for the hunting season following the hunting season in which the scheduled hunt was paused for the property. This harvest per effort model is based on observations of harvest per effort levels at other types of public lands that lacked deer overbrowse issues. Subsequent vegetation surveys after the implementation of scheduled hunts for population management confirmed that vegetation recovers at the proposed level of harvest intensity. This structure has served the department of natural resources (department) well and the department intends to continue using the model due to the success of the model during the previous thirty (30) years.

INTERIM RULE

SECTION 1. (a) The definition in this SECTION applies throughout this document.

(b) "Harvest per effort" means the ratio of the total number of deer harvested divided by the hunter effort recorded, as calculated under SECTION 2(l) of this document.

SECTION 2. (a) An individual may apply to the department of natural resources (department) for a license to take deer during a scheduled hunt for population management under this SECTION if the individual:

(1) is at least eighteen (18) years of age not later than the first day of the first scheduled hunt under subsection (j)(1); and

(2) possesses at least one (1) of the following:

(A) A valid resident license to take a deer issued under [IC 14-22-12-1](#).

(B) A lifetime comprehensive hunting license issued under [IC 14-22-12-7\(a\)\(4\)](#) (before its repeal).

(C) A lifetime comprehensive hunting and fishing license issued under [IC 14-22-12-7\(a\)\(5\)](#) (before its repeal).

(b) Notwithstanding another provision of the Indiana Code or Indiana Administrative Code governing taking a wild animal in a designated area, the department shall issue a license to take deer during a scheduled hunt under this SECTION to an individual or unit selected by a random drawing under subsection (e).

(c) The department shall determine the form and manner of the license to take deer issued under subsection (b). An individual participating in a scheduled hunt shall possess a license to hunt deer issued under subsection (b) during the scheduled hunt for which the individual or unit is chosen by a random drawing under subsection (e).

(d) An individual who wishes to participate in a scheduled hunt shall apply to obtain a license to hunt deer under subsection (b) in a form and manner prescribed by the department.

(e) An individual who applies to participate in a scheduled hunt under this SECTION will be entered into a random drawing conducted by the department to participate in a scheduled hunt under subsection (i). The department shall post the results of the random drawing on the department's website.

(f) An individual, or not more than three (3) individuals as a unit, may submit one (1) application to participate in a scheduled hunt under subsection (i)(1) or (i)(2), or both. An individual or an individual on behalf of a unit, who submits more than one (1) application, disqualifies the individual or unit from participating in a scheduled hunt under this SECTION.

(g) The department shall draw one (1) hunter for:

(1) at least six (6) acres; and

(2) not more than twenty (20) acres;

of huntable land at a property owned or managed by the department under subsection (k)(1).

(h) The department shall draw one (1) hunter for:

(1) at least fifteen (15) acres; and

(2) not more than thirty-five (35) acres;

of huntable land at a property owned or managed by the department under subsection (k)(2).

(i) Except as provided in subsection (j), an individual issued a license to take deer under this SECTION may participate in a scheduled hunt on the following dates:

(1) The first scheduled hunt occurs on the first Monday and Tuesday after the opening day of the firearms season under [312 IAC 9-3-4](#).

(2) The second scheduled hunt occurs on the third Monday and Tuesday after the opening day of the firearms season under [312 IAC 9-3-4](#).

(j) If the first Monday and Tuesday after the opening day of the firearms season under [312 IAC 9-3-4](#) falls during the week of Thanksgiving:

(1) the first scheduled hunt occurs on the first Monday and Tuesday before the opening day of the firearms season under [312 IAC 9-3-4](#); and

(2) the second scheduled hunt occurs on the second Monday and Tuesday after the opening day of the firearms season under [312 IAC 9-3-4](#).

(k) An individual issued a license to take deer under subsection (b) may take deer in the following designated areas with the permitted equipment:

(1) If a property owned or managed by the department has a harvest per effort greater than one-tenth (0.1) for the previous calendar year, an individual may hunt deer using only a bow and arrows or crossbow under [312 IAC 9-3-3](#) on the following properties:

(A) Clifty Falls State Park.

(B) Fort Harrison State Park.

(C) Mounds State Park.

(D) Trine State Recreation Area.

(2) If a property owned or managed by the department has a harvest per effort greater than twenty-two hundredths (0.22) for the previous calendar year, an individual may hunt deer using only a firearm under [312 IAC 9-3-3](#) on the following properties:

(A) Brown County State Park.

(B) Cave River Valley Natural Area.

- (C) Chain O'Lakes State Park.
- (D) Charlestown State Park.
- (E) Harmonie State Park.
- (F) Indiana Dunes State Park.
- (G) Lincoln State Park.
- (H) McCormick's Creek State Park.
- (I) O'Bannon Woods State Park.
- (J) Ouabache State Park.
- (K) Pokagon State Park.
- (L) Potato Creek State Park.
- (M) Prophetstown State Park.
- (N) Raccoon State Recreation Area.
- (O) Shades State Park.
- (P) Shakamak State Park.
- (Q) Spring Mill State Park.
- (R) Summit Lake State Park.
- (S) Tippecanoe River State Park.
- (T) Turkey Run State Park.
- (U) Versailles State Park.
- (V) Whitewater Memorial State Park.

(l) Harvest per effort is calculated based on the following:

STEP ONE: Determine the total number of deer harvested during both scheduled hunts.

STEP TWO: Determine the total hunter effort by the sum of the total number of individuals who participated in each day of the scheduled hunts under subsection (i)(1) and (i)(2). An individual who is present for one (1) day equals one (1) hunter effort. An individual who is present for two (2) days equals two (2) hunter effort.

STEP THREE: Determine the quotient of:

- (A) the STEP ONE result; divided by
- (B) the STEP TWO result.

(m) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt may begin hunting not earlier than thirty (30) minutes before sunrise until 4:00 p.m. each day of a scheduled hunt.

(n) The following individuals may enter a property owned or managed by the department during a scheduled hunt:

(1) An individual issued a license to take deer under this SECTION for the scheduled hunt.

(2) A representative of the media.

(3) An employee of the department.

(4) An individual who is at least eighteen (18) years of age not later than the first day of the first scheduled hunt, who:

(A) is assisting an individual issued a license to hunt deer under this SECTION who possesses a person with disabilities hunting permit under [312 IAC 9-10-10](#); and

(B) does not intend to participate in the scheduled hunt.

(5) Any other individual with a department issued credential and permitted by the department to enter the property owned or managed by the department during the scheduled hunt.

(o) Except as otherwise provided in this SECTION, an individual may not enter a property owned or managed by the department when there is a scheduled hunt:

(1) beginning at 8:00 p.m. the day before the first day of the first scheduled hunt, and ending at 8:00 a.m. the day after the last day of the first scheduled hunt; and

(2) beginning at 8:00 p.m. the day before the first day of the second scheduled hunt, and ending not later than 8:00 a.m. the day after the last day of the second scheduled hunt.

(p) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt shall enter a property owned or managed by the department only in a location designated by the department.

(q) An individual issued a license to take deer under this SECTION may be randomly assigned:

(1) a designated area of the property to hunt; or

(2) a designated parking space;

or both. The individual shall comply with requirements regarding a randomly assigned designated area of

the property to hunt or designated parking space set by the department.

(r) An individual issued a license to take deer under this SECTION shall check in and check out of a designated area on each arrival to and departure from the property owned or managed by the department where a scheduled hunt occurs.

(s) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt shall wear two (2) articles of hunter orange clothing meeting the requirements under [IC 14-22-38-7](#), including:

- (1) a hat or cap; and
- (2) a vest, a coat, a jacket, or coveralls.

(t) An individual who participates in a scheduled hunt may not use a penetrating tree stand in a designated area.

(u) Except for property owned or managed by the department under subsection (k)(1), an individual may not use ground blinds, as defined by [312 IAC 9-1-7.6](#), in a designated area.

(v) An individual participating in a scheduled hunt under this SECTION may not possess or consume an alcoholic beverage in a designated area during the scheduled hunt.

(w) An individual may take not more than three (3) deer during a scheduled hunt for population management under this SECTION. An individual may take not more than one (1) antlered deer under this subsection.

(x) A deer taken under this SECTION does not apply to the seasonal bag limit for taking deer under [312 IAC 9](#).

(y) An individual who takes a deer under this SECTION shall deliver the deer to a designated check station, at the property owned or managed by the department where the scheduled hunt for population management occurs, before leaving the property with the deer.

(z) If the harvest per effort is below the required thresholds under subsection (j), the department may take a year off from allowing scheduled hunts for population management on properties owned or managed by the department.

SECTION 3. This document takes effect on the date and time the interim final rule is accepted for filing with the publisher.

SECTION 4. This document expires three hundred sixty-five (365) days after the interim final rule is accepted for filing with the publisher.

LSA Document #24-268

Approved by Governor: July 23, 2024

Filed with Publisher: September 26, 2024, 12:27 p.m.

Documents Incorporated by Reference: None Received by Publisher

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An [html](#) version of this document.