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Proposed Amendments to Trapping Regulations

VA. Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries

Proposed Regulatory Amendments Pertaining to Hunting and Trapping, Foxhound Training Preserves, and Other Regulations of the Board

Below you will find the two proposed amendments to VDGIF regulations that pertain to trapping. A couple of people have mentioned concern with the Carcass Amendment. Please read the proposals carefully and go to the VDGIF site to provide comments. Also please contact a director or board member with suggestions and thoughts. We would like to hear from anyone who has concerns.

April 2 - May 31, 2013 Public Comment Period on Proposed Regulation Amendments

On March 20–21, 2013 the Virginia Board of Game and Inland Fisheries, pursuant to §§ 29.1-103, 29.1-501, and 29.1-502, of the Code of Virginia, proposed the below amendments to the Commonwealth's regulations pertaining to hunting and trapping, foxhound training preserves, and other regulations of the board.

A public comment period on the regulatory proposals opened April 2, 2013 and closes at 5:00 PM on May 31, 2013. The Board will consider the proposals for possible adoption as final regulation amendments at its June 13, 2013 meeting. Written comments on the proposed regulation amendments must include the commenter's name, address, and telephone number and be received no later than May 31, 2013. They should be submitted online at www.dgif.virginia.gov, or may be emailed to regcomments@dgif.virginia.gov or postal mailed to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Attn. Policy Analyst and Regulatory Coordinator, 4016 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23230, and received no later than May 31, 2013.

Proposed Regulation Amendment

4VAC15-40-221. Game: In General. Restricted use of traps near exposed carcasses and animal parts.

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Summary:

The proposal is to make it unlawful to intentionally set traps within 50 feet of exposed animal carcasses or parts. Concealment requirements and definitions of animal parts are also provided.

Proposed language of amendment:

4VAC15-40-221. Game: In General. Restricted use of traps near exposed carcasses and animal parts.

It shall be unlawful to intentionally set foothold traps, body-gripping traps, or snares within 50 feet of an animal carcass, or parts thereof, unless the carcass, or parts thereof, are completely covered at the time the trap is set or visited. For the purposes of this section, completely covered shall be defined as not being visible from above. Provided further, a carcass shall be defined as the body, portions of the body, meat, organs, or viscera of any

animal, including fish. Feathers (including those with attached skin or entire bird wings), hair (with or without skin or hide), and bones that include no attached meat, organs, or viscera, are excluded from this definition.

Rationale:

Trapping near exposed animal carcasses and visible bait is known to increase the risk of incidental capture of non-target species, especially avian scavengers. Fur trapping seasons generally coincide with periods when natural prey is limited and avian scavengers are most dependent on carrion. Bald and golden eagles are particularly susceptible to non-target capture in traps set near exposed bait. Recent research suggests that incidences of non-target captures of golden eagles in foothold traps set near exposed bait may be sufficient to have population impacts. This proposed regulation should greatly reduce the probability of incidental captures of avian scavengers while still providing opportunities for trappers to trap within a reasonable distance to animal carcasses and visible bait.

4VAC15-170-20. Game: Otter. Open season for trapping; season bag limit west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.**Summary:**

The proposal is to increase the season bag limit in all counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains from two to four otters per trapper.

Proposed language of amendment:

4VAC15-170-20. Game: Otter. Open season for trapping; season bag limit west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

- A. It shall be lawful to trap otter from December 1 through the last day of February, both dates inclusive.
- B. The season bag limit for trapping otter shall be four per trapper in counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Rationale:

River otter populations continue to increase and expand their distribution in counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Data collected from otter carcasses submitted by trappers during a 5-year period from 2006 through 2011 suggest that otter populations in western Virginia are healthy and very productive. Trappers in western Virginia have requested an increase in the season bag limit. The proposed change is expected to have no significant impacts on otter populations west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.