

CHAPTER 17

Game and Fish and Outdoor Recreation

ARTICLE 1

State Game Commission

17-1-1. [Declaration of policy.] (Repealed effective July 1, 2026.)

It is the purpose of this act and the policy of the state of New Mexico to provide an adequate and flexible system for the protection of the game and fish of New Mexico and for their use and development for public recreation and food supply, and to provide for their propagation, planting, protection, regulation and conservation to the extent necessary to provide and maintain an adequate supply of game and fish within the state of New Mexico.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 57-101; Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-101; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-1.

ANNOTATIONS

Delayed repeals. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 13 repealed 17-1-1 NMSA 1978, effective July 1, 2026.

Compiler's notes. — The words "this act" were substituted by the 1931 amendment to this section for the words "this bill", which appeared in the 1921 act. If referring to the 1921 act, they would refer to 17-1-1 to 17-1-4, 17-1-14, 17-1-27 and 17-2-6 NMSA 1978. If referring to the 1931 act, they would refer to 17-1-1, 17-1-5, 17-1-15, 17-1-26, 17-2-1, 17-2-5, 17-2-7, 17-2-9 and 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For transfer of radio communication property of remote sites from department of game and fish to communications division of department of general services, see 15-2-4 NMSA 1978.

For public lands generally, see Chapter 19 NMSA 1978.

For the Off-Highway Motorcycle Act, see 66-3-1001 NMSA 1978.

For water law generally, see Chapter 72 NMSA 1978.

For animals generally, see Chapter 77 NMSA 1978.

Wild game elk. — The game and fish laws in Chapter 17 are expressly intended to cover free-roaming, wild game elk; the animal statutes in Article 18 of Chapter 30 of the

Criminal Code do not apply. *State v. Parson*, 2005-NMCA-083, 137 N.M. 773, 115 P.3d 236.

Allocation of licenses based on residency, impermissible discrimination. — The allocation of licenses for bighorn, oryx and ibex by the state game commission on the basis of residency discriminates impermissibly against nonresidents under the federal constitution. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

Fee structure, although discriminatory, not offensive. — The present fee structure in 17-3-13 NMSA 1978, which discriminates against nonresidents, is not offensive to either the privileges and immunities clause, U.S. Const., art. IV, § 2, or the U.S. Const., amend. XIV. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

The state's power over public waters is plenary. *State ex rel. State Game Comm'n v. Red River Valley Co.*, 1945-NMSC-034, 51 N.M. 207, 182 P.2d 421.

State's powers are dedicated to fishing and recreation. — Since public waters of the state by legislative enactment are dedicated to public uses of fishing and recreation, Conchas Lake is covered by these provisions. *State ex rel. State Game Comm'n v. Red River Valley Co.*, 1945-NMSC-034, 51 N.M. 207, 182 P.2d 421.

Enclosing public waters cannot prevent fishing or hunting. — Fact that an adjoining landowner encloses waters which belong to the public does not make thereof a privately owned enclosure, and its treatment as such by the state would involve granting of a special "right" or "privilege" which is prohibited by the constitution, so that a license holder could not be prevented from fishing or hunting on the enclosure. *State ex rel. State Game Comm'n v. Red River Valley Co.*, 1945-NMSC-034, 51 N.M. 207, 182 P.2d 421.

Carrying firearms before hunting season opens may be prohibited. — Powers granted to state game commission include authority to prohibit the carrying of firearms in hunting areas for specified periods of time before opening of the big game season. 1948 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 48-5135.

Law reviews. — For student article, "Preventing the Extinction of Candidate Species: The Lesser Prairie-Chicken in New Mexico", see 49 Nat. Resources J. 525 (2009).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Waste of fish, constitutionality and construction of statutes for prevention of, 38 A.L.R. 1198.

Applicability of state fishing license laws or other public regulations as to fishing in private lake or pond, 15 A.L.R.2d 754.

Validity of regulation or prohibition of fishing to protect public water supply, 56 A.L.R.2d 790.

17-1-1.1. Definitions. (Effective July 1, 2026.)

For the purposes of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978:

- A. "commission" or "state game commission" means the state wildlife commission;*
- B. "department" or "department of game and fish" means the department of wildlife;*
- C. "director", "warden", "state warden", "state game warden" or "state game and fish warden" means the director of the department of wildlife;*
- D. "hunt code" means a description used to identify and define the species, weapon type and time frame authorized for a specific hunt;*
- E. "outfitter" or "guide" means a person who advertises or holds themselves out to the public for hire or is employed or accepts compensation for providing, within the unit where a hunt occurs, facilities, equipment or services for hunting activities; provided, however, that "outfitter" or "guide" does not include a person who only cooks, cuts wood or performs other comparable or incidental duties not directly related to hunting activities; and*
- F. "unit" means a geographically bound area in the state that is used to manage game species.*

History: Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 3; 1978 Comp., § 17-2A-1, recompiled and amended as § 17-1-1.1 by Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Recompilations. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 1 recompiled and amended former 17-2A-1 NMSA 1978 as 17-1-1.1 NMSA 1978, effective July 1, 2026.

The 2025 amendment, effective July 1, 2026, defined "commission", "department", and "director", as used in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978; and added new Subsections A through C and redesignated the succeeding subsections accordingly.

17-1-2. State game commission; appointment; term.

To carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts for like purpose, there is created a "state game commission" of seven members, not more than four of whom shall be of the same political party at the time of their appointment. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The term of office for each member of the commission shall be

four years. At the time of making the first appointments, the governor shall designate the commissioners' terms as being one, two, three or four years so that the term of no more than two commissioners shall expire each year.

In making appointments to the state game commission, one member shall be appointed from each of the following districts:

A. district one: Curry, De Baca, Roosevelt, Chaves, Lincoln, Otero, Eddy and Lea counties;

B. district two: Catron, Socorro, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra and Dona Ana counties;

C. district three: San Juan, McKinley, Cibola, Valencia, Sandoval, Los Alamos and Rio Arriba counties;

D. district four: Santa Fe, Taos, Colfax, Union, Mora, Harding, Quay, San Miguel, Guadalupe and Torrance counties; and

E. district five: Bernalillo county.

The remaining two members shall be appointed at-large. At least one member of the commission shall manage and operate a farm or ranch that contains at least two species of wildlife on that part which is deeded land requiring licensing prior to legal pursuit under the provisions of Section 17-3-2 NMSA 1978. At least one member shall have a demonstrated history of involvement in wildlife and habitat protection issues and whose activities or occupation are not in conflict with wildlife and habitat advocacy. The state game commission as provided in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 shall have the same authority, powers and duties as now vested in the state game commission by law, and each member of the state game commission shall serve until his successor has been appointed and qualified.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 57-102; 1941 Comp., § 43-102; Laws 1945, ch. 26, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-2; Laws 1985, ch. 107, § 1; 1991, ch. 103, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1991 amendment, effective April 2, 1991, substituted "seven members" for "five members" and "four of whom" for "three of whom" in the first sentence; substituted "four years" for "five years" at the end of the third sentence; deleted "and five" preceding "years" and substituted "no more than two commissioners" for "one commissioner" and made a related stylistic change in the fourth sentence; and, following Subsection E, substituted the next three sentences for "provided that each existing member of the commission on the effective date of this 1985 act shall complete the term for which he was appointed, and, upon completion of such term, appointment shall be made in such manner so as to comply with the provisions of this section."

Appropriations. — Laws 2009, ch. 125, § 42, effective June 19, 2009, appropriated \$200,000 from the game protection fund to the department of game and fish for expenditure in fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to purchase aircraft for aerial surveys.

Laws 2009, ch. 125, § 42, effective June 19, 2009, appropriated \$500,000 from the game and fish bond retirement fund to the department of game and fish for expenditure in fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to purchase aircraft for aerial surveys.

Laws 2009, ch. 125, § 43, effective June 19, 2009, appropriated \$250,000 from the habitat management fund to the department of game and fish for expenditure in fiscal year 2009 for construction and renovations to the Lake Roberts dam and spillway in Grant County.

A district judge may serve as a member of the state game commission. 1945 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 45-4735.

17-1-2. State wildlife commission; appointment; term. (Effective January 1, 2027.)

A. There is created a "state wildlife commission" of seven voting members, all of whom shall possess knowledge of wildlife, hunting and fishing and be New Mexico residents. The governor shall appoint the members of the commission with the advice and consent of the senate from a list of qualified nominees submitted to the governor by the state wildlife commission nominating committee. The commission shall select one commissioner to be chair and one commissioner to be vice chair. The department shall provide administrative support to the commission.

B. Three at-large members of the commission shall hold positions one, two and three, with no more than one member residing in any one county and with no more than two members affiliated with the same political party; provided that at least one member shall be a member of a federally recognized Indian nation, tribe or pueblo in New Mexico.

C. Four members of the commission shall hold positions four, five, six and seven, with no more than one member residing in any one county and with no more than two members affiliated with the same political party, as follows:

(1) position four, a rancher or farmer who actively works at growing and selling livestock or crops from a ranch or farm where at least two big game species, as defined by and for which hunting is licensed by the department, are frequently present;

(2) position five, a conservationist who for the previous four years has been an employee, a member of the board or a member of an established advisory committee of a nonprofit wildlife or habitat conservation organization, the primary focus of which is not game species;

(3) position six, an individual who is both a hunter and an angler having held both a New Mexico hunting license and fishing license each of the previous four years; and

(4) position seven, a scientist who holds at least a master's degree in wildlife biology, conservation biology, fisheries science or management, wildlife science or management or a comparable wildlife field.

D. Except for the initial appointments as provided in Section 12 of this 2025 act, the term of office for each member of the commission shall be six years.

E. A commissioner shall serve for no more than two terms after January 1, 2027. A partial term shall be counted as one full term, unless the partial term is less than one full year.

F. When a commissioner dies, resigns or no longer meets the qualifications required for the commissioner's original appointment, or misses three consecutive meetings, that position on the commission becomes vacant. The governor shall appoint a successor for the remainder of the term from a list of qualified nominees submitted to the governor by the state wildlife commission nominating committee.

G. Except when the position of commissioner becomes vacant pursuant to Subsection F of this section, a commissioner shall not be removed except for incompetence, neglect of duty or malfeasance in office.

H. A person shall not be eligible to be appointed as a commissioner if the person changed party affiliation during the previous four years; provided that a person who changed party affiliation for the purpose of voting in a primary election pursuant to Section 1-4-5.7 NMSA 1978 and then changed party affiliation back to the status of that person's party affiliation immediately prior to the change within ninety days shall not be considered to have changed party affiliation for the purposes of this subsection.

I. The following persons shall serve as advisory, nonvoting members of the commission:

(1) the director of the New Mexico outdoor recreation division of the economic development department or the director's designee;

(2) the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture or the director's designee;

(3) the commissioner of public lands or the commissioner's designee; and

(4) the secretary of Indian affairs or the secretary's designee.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 57-102; 1941 Comp., § 43-102; Laws 1945, ch. 26, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-2; Laws 1985, ch. 107, § 1; 1991, ch. 103, § 1; 2025, ch. 9, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — Section 12 of this 2025 act, effective January 1, 2027, was a temporary provision that provided that the initial appointments made to the state wildlife commission by the governor pursuant to the provisions of 17-1-2 NMSA 1978 and 17-1-2.1 NMSA 1978 of this act shall replace the members of the state wildlife commission, whose terms shall end on January 1, 2027.

The 2025 amendment, effective January 1, 2027, renamed the "state game commission" to the "state wildlife commission", renamed the "department of game and fish" to the "department of wildlife", revised the state wildlife commission appointment process, revised the length of terms of commission members, added requirements for appointment and removal of commissioners, and provided for advisory, nonvoting members of the commission; in the section heading, after "State" deleted "game" and added "wildlife"; in the introductory clause, after the section heading, deleted "To carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts for like purpose"; added new subsection designation "A"; in Subsection A, after "state" deleted "game" and added "wildlife", after "seven" added "voting" and after "members", deleted "not more than four of whom shall be of the same political party at the time of their appointment. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The term of office for each member of the commission shall be four years. At the time of making the first appointments, the governor shall designate the commissioners' terms as being one, two, three or four years so that the term of no more than two commissioners shall expire each year. In making appointments to the state game commission, one member shall be appointed from each of the following districts" and added the remainder of the paragraph; and deleted former Subsections A through E and added new Subsections B through I.

Temporary provisions. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 11, effective July 1, 2026, provided that:

- A. The department of game and fish is renamed as the "department of wildlife".
- B. The state game commission is renamed as the "state wildlife commission".
- C. On July 1, 2026, all:
 - (1) functions, personnel, money, appropriations, records, furniture, equipment, supplies and other personal and real property of the department of game and fish are transferred to the department of wildlife;
 - (2) agreements and contractual obligations of the department of game and fish are binding on the department of wildlife;

(3) *references in law to the department of game and fish shall be deemed to be references to the department of wildlife;*

(4) *functions, personnel, money, appropriations, records, furniture, equipment, supplies and other personal and real property of the state game commission are transferred to the state wildlife commission;*

(5) *agreements and contractual obligations of the state game commission are binding on the state wildlife commission; and*

(6) *references in law to the state game commission shall be deemed to be references to the state wildlife commission.*

D. *On July 1, 2026, statutory references in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 to:*

(1) *the "department of game and fish" or "department" shall be construed to be references to the department of wildlife;*

(2) *the "state game commission" or "commission" shall be construed to be references to the state wildlife commission; and*

(3) *the "director", "warden", "state warden", "state game warden" or "state game and fish warden" shall be construed to be references to the director of the department of wildlife.*

E. *Rules of the department of game and fish shall be rules of the department of wildlife until amended or repealed.*

F. *Rules of the state game commission shall be rules of the state wildlife commission until amended or repealed.*

G. *On July 1, 2026, or as soon thereafter as practicably possible, the department of wildlife shall update the department's name and logo; provided that existing supplies, forms, insignias, signs and logos may continue to be used until exhausted or unserviceable.*

Temporary provisions. — *Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 12, effective January 1, 2027, provided that the initial appointments made to the state wildlife commission by the governor pursuant to the provisions of 17-1-2 NMSA 1978 and 17-1-2.1 NMSA 1978 of this act shall replace the members of the state wildlife commission, whose terms shall end on January 1, 2027. Terms for the initial appointments to the commission beginning January 1, 2027 shall be as follows:*

A. *for position one, a one-year term;*

B. *for position two, a three-year term;*

- C. for position three, a five-year term;
- D. for position four, a one-year term;
- E. for position five, a three-year term;
- F. for position six, a five-year term; and
- G. for position seven, a five-year term.

**17-1-2.1. State wildlife commission nominating committee.
(Effective January 1, 2027.)**

A. The "state wildlife commission nominating committee" is created and consists of nine members, all of whom shall be New Mexico residents, as follows:

(1) four members appointed as follows: one by the speaker of the house of representatives, one by the minority floor leader of the house of representatives, one by the president pro tempore of the senate and one by the minority floor leader of the senate;

(2) two members as follows: the chair of the university of New Mexico's department of biology or the chair's designee and the chair of New Mexico state university's department of fish, wildlife and conservation ecology or the chair's designee;

(3) two members appointed by the governor who shall not be registered as members of the same political party; and

(4) one member appointed by the governor who shall represent an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo.

B. A committee member shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in pursuit of the member's duties on the committee pursuant to the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 through 10-8-8 NMSA 1978].

C. The committee and individual members shall be subject to the Governmental Conduct Act [Chapter 10, Article 16 NMSA 1978], the Gift Act [Chapter 10, Article 16B NMSA 1978], the Inspection of Public Records Act [Chapter 14, Article 2 NMSA 1978], the Financial Disclosure Act [Chapter 10, Article 16A NMSA 1978] and the Open Meetings Act [Chapter 10, Article 15 NMSA 1978].

D. The committee shall select one member to be chair and one member to be secretary. Administrative support shall be provided to the committee by the staff of the department.

E. An appointed committee member may be removed by the person who holds the office that appointed that committee member. A committee member shall serve until the committee member's resignation or removal by the appointing authority.

F. The committee shall meet at least ninety days prior to the date on which the term of a state wildlife commissioner ends and as often as necessary thereafter in order to submit a list to the governor, at least thirty days prior to the beginning of the new term, of a minimum of three qualified nominees for each position of the commission. The list shall be developed to provide geographical and political party diversity as appropriate to conform the makeup of the commission to the geographical and political party requirements of Section 17-1-2 NMSA 1978.

G. Upon the occurrence of a vacancy in a state wildlife commissioner position, the committee shall meet within thirty days of the date of the beginning of the vacancy and as often as necessary thereafter in order to submit a list to the governor, within sixty days of the first meeting after the vacancy occurs, of no fewer than three qualified nominees for appointment to the commission to fill the remainder of the term of each commissioner position that is vacant. The list shall be developed to provide geographical and political party diversity as appropriate to conform the makeup of the commission to the geographical and political party requirements pursuant to Section 17-1-2 NMSA 1978.

H. The committee shall actively solicit, accept and evaluate applications from qualified individuals for a position on the commission and may require an applicant to submit any information that the committee deems relevant to the consideration of the individual's application.

I. The committee shall select nominees for submission to the governor who, in the committee's judgment, are best qualified to serve as a member of the commission. A person shall not be eligible for nomination to the commission while serving on the committee.

J. A majority vote of committee members at a meeting at which a quorum is present in favor of a person is required for that person to be included on the list of qualified nominees submitted to the governor.

K. The committee shall allow for public comment at a committee meeting during which the committee is considering a list of qualified nominees for appointment to the commission before the committee votes on the nominees.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-2.1, enacted by Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 14 made Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 3 effective January 1, 2027.

Temporary provisions. — *Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 12, effective January 1, 2027, provided that the initial appointments made to the state wildlife commission by the governor pursuant to the provisions of 17-1-2 NMSA 1978 and 17-1-2.1 NMSA 1978 of this act shall replace the members of the state wildlife commission, whose terms shall end on January 1, 2027. Terms for the initial appointments to the commission beginning January 1, 2027 shall be as follows:*

- A. *for position one, a one-year term;*
- B. *for position two, a three-year term;*
- C. *for position three, a five-year term;*
- D. *for position four, a one-year term;*
- E. *for position five, a three-year term;*
- F. *for position six, a five-year term; and*
- G. *for position seven, a five-year term.*

17-1-3. Members to serve without compensation; per diem and mileage.

The members of the state game commission shall receive no pay for their services as members of the commission, but shall be allowed per diem and mileage pursuant to the provisions of the Per Diem and Mileage Act [10-8-1 to 10-8-8 NMSA 1978]. All salaries, per diem and contingent expenses incurred by the department of game and fish or the state game commission shall be paid upon warrants of the secretary of finance and administration, supported by vouchers of the director of the department of game and fish.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 3; C.S. 1929, § 57-103; 1941 Comp., § 43-103; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-3; Laws 1977, ch. 247, § 160; 1979, ch. 273, § 6.

17-1-4. [Organization; annual and called meetings; secretary.]

Within sixty days after this act [17-1-1 to 17-1-4, 17-1-14, 17-1-27 and 17-2-6 NMSA 1978] shall take effect, the state game commission shall meet at the capitol and organize by electing from its membership a chairman, and thereafter one meeting shall be held annually, and others at the call of the governor, or a majority of the commission. The state game warden [director of the department of game and fish] shall be secretary of the commission.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 4; C.S. 1929, § 57-104; 1941 Comp., § 43-104; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-4.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-1-5. Employment and discharge of director and other employees; department of game and fish created.

A. The state game commission shall employ a director who shall, under such authorization that the game commission shall approve, employ such conservation officers, clerks and other employees as he shall deem proper and necessary to enforce and administer the laws and regulations relating to game and fish, and who shall prescribe their duties respectively, and who with the advice and consent of the state game commission shall fix the compensation of all the employees of the "department of game and fish," which is hereby created.

B. The state game commission may at any time discharge the director for reasons that the state game commission shall deem sufficient. The director may dismiss employees in accordance with the provisions of the Personnel Act [Chapter 10, Article 9 NMSA 1978].

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 43-105; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5; Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 1; 1973, ch. 186, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Officers of the state game commission are state officers. *Allen v. McClellan*, 1967-NMSC-114, 77 N.M. 801, 427 P.2d 677, *overruled on other grounds*, *N.M. Livestock Bd. v. Dose*, 1980-NMSC-022, 94 N.M. 68, 607 P.2d 606.

Department of game and fish is not a constitutional agency. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-268.

Citizenship requirement for wildlife law enforcement officers. — By operation of state law, wildlife law enforcement officers can be required to hold New Mexico and United States citizenship. 1979 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 79-30.

17-1-5.1. Conservation services division; duties.

A. The "conservation services division" is created within the department of game and fish.

B. The conservation services division is responsible for:

- (1) management, enhancement, research and conservation of public wildlife habitat;
- (2) the lease, purchase, enhancement and management of state wildlife habitat;
- (3) assisting landowners in improving wildlife habitats;
- (4) development of educational programs related to conservation of wildlife and the environment, including the expanded dissemination of wildlife publications; and
- (5) communication and consultation with federal and other state agencies, local governments and communities, private organizations and affected interests responsible for habitat, wilderness, recreation, water quality and environmental protection to ensure comprehensive conservation services for hunters, anglers and nonconsumptive wildlife users.

History: Laws 1994, ch. 129, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For Wildlife Conservation Act, see 17-2-37 NMSA 1978 et seq.

17-1-5.2. Youth programs; donations.

A. As used in this section, "youth" means a person under the age of eighteen who resides in New Mexico.

B. The director of the department of game and fish shall provide for youth programs in each of the five state game commission districts pursuant to Section 17-1-2 NMSA 1978. The programs shall be open to all youth and provide both educational and entertaining experiences. The director shall coordinate the program locations to provide the greatest breadth of access to New Mexico's youth.

C. The director of the department of game and fish shall provide the opportunity for a person who makes a purchase from the department of game and fish to donate money to the youth programs by rounding up the dollar amount or donating a custom amount. All such donations shall be deposited in the game protection fund to be used for the provision of these youth programs.

History: Laws 2023, ch. 168, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2023, ch. 168, § 2 made Laws 2023, ch. 168, § 1 effective July 1, 2023.

17-1-6. [Transfer of duties and obligations.]

The director shall fulfill all the duties and obligations heretofore imposed upon the state game warden, and shall exercise all the powers heretofore granted to the state game warden. The conservation officers appointed by the director shall assume those duties and powers heretofore imposed upon or granted to deputy game wardens.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5.1, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For designation of state game commission employees to enforce antilittering statute, see 30-8-5 NMSA 1978.

17-1-7. [Position of reserve conservation officer created.]

There is hereby created within the department of game and fish the position of reserve conservation officer, which shall be a nonsalaried position.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5.2, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 181, § 1.

17-1-8. [Qualifications of reserve conservation officers.]

Reserve conservation officer commissions shall be issued only to the following:

A. persons who have successfully completed a school of at least twenty-five hours, conducted by the department of game and fish, covering procedures and techniques of wildlife management, law enforcement, public relations and such other subjects as may be deemed desirable by the department of game and fish.

B. the director may substitute a minimum of six months experience as an employee of a state or federal conservation agency or a state livestock law enforcement board in lieu of the aforementioned schooling. Any substitution made under the provisions of this paragraph shall be limited to personnel currently employed by one of the aforementioned conservation agencies. Any appointments the director may make under the provisions of this paragraph will terminate automatically with the termination of employment by said agency of the individual so appointed or the individual's transfer from the state.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5.3, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 181, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Instruction but not classroom school is required. — The statute does not require the "school" to be of the classroom type; the "school" of experience can ensure qualified reserve conservation officers as well as a classroom. If the persons in question have

actual instruction as employees of the department in the subject areas of procedures and techniques of wildlife management, law enforcement, public relations and other subjects deemed desirable by the department, those persons have attended "school" in those subjects, an on-the-job training school conducted by the department. Mere employment by the department without instruction in each of those areas will not satisfy the statutory requirements. 1960 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 60-214.

17-1-9. Powers and duties of reserve conservation officers.

A. Under the supervision of the department of game and fish and subject to such restrictions as may be provided by the state game commission, reserve conservation officers shall have authority to enforce laws and valid regulations of the state game commission relating to game and fish and perform such duties with respect to wildlife management and conservation education as may be assigned to them from time to time by the department of game and fish. When on duty, reserve conservation officers shall be covered by the Workmen's [Workers'] Compensation Act [Chapter 52, Article 1 NMSA 1978]. Reserve conservation officers shall have only the rights of private citizens in the enforcement of laws other than those relating to game and fish.

B. For the purpose of calculating the amount of reserve conservation officer's disability or death benefits pursuant to the Workmen's [Workers'] Compensation Act, the officer's average weekly wages shall be deemed to be the base wage of a wildlife management officer II as classified by the personnel board.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5.4, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 181, § 3; 1985, ch. 33, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

17-1-10. [Issuance of reserve conservation officer commissions; revocation.]

Reserve conservation officer commissions shall be issued annually to such persons meeting the qualifications prescribed in Section 2 [17-1-8 NMSA 1978], as may be deemed necessary or desirable by the director of the department of game and fish. Such commissions may be revoked at any time by said director at his discretion {discretion}.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5.5, enacted by Laws 1955, ch. 181, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

17-1-11. Conservation officers; official duties; insurance.

Conservation officers shall, in emergency situations, be considered on duty and within the scope of their employment for purposes of employee benefits, when they follow specific instructions from a duly qualified full-time peace officer and in aid of such peace officer in the carrying out of his duties. The state game commission shall expand current insurance coverage to provide protection in such situations.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-1-5.6, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 290, § 5.

17-1-12. Repealed.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 1978, ch. 132, § 6, repealed 53-1-6 1953 Comp. (17-1-12 NMSA 1978), relating to bond of game and fish director, effective March 6, 1978.

17-1-13. [Seal of director.]

The state warden [director of the department of game and fish] shall keep a seal of office which shall be used to authenticate all papers and documents issued and executed by him as such officer.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 46; Code 1915, § 2469; C.S. 1929, § 57-254; 1941 Comp., § 43-107; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-7.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-1-14. General powers and duties of state game commission; game protection fund; liability suspense account.

A. The state game commission shall have general control over the collection and disbursement of all money collected or received under the state laws for the protection and propagation of game and fish, which money shall be paid over to the state treasurer to the credit of the game protection fund, unless otherwise provided by law, and the fund, including all earned income, shall not be transferred to another fund. Prior to depositing money into the game protection fund, the department of game and fish shall ensure that an amount adequate to cover the cost of refunds allowed by the provisions

of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 is held in a liability suspense account. All refunds shall be made from the liability suspense account. Money not needed to cover the cost of refunds shall be deposited in the game protection fund at the end of each month. Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 shall be guaranty to the person who pays for hunting and fishing licenses and permits that the money in that fund shall not be used for any purpose other than as provided in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.

B. The state game commission shall have authority to:

(1) establish and, through the director of the department of game and fish, to operate fish hatcheries for the purpose of stocking public waters of the state and to furnish fish fry and fingerlings to stock private waters, receipts from such sources to go into the game protection fund;

(2) declare closed seasons in any specified locality and on any species of game or fish threatened with undue depletion from any cause;

(3) establish game refuges for the purpose of providing safe sanctuaries in which game may breed and replenish adjacent hunting ranges, it being the purpose of this provision to establish small refuges rather than large preserves or to close large areas to hunting;

(4) purchase lands for game refuges where suitable public lands do not exist, to purchase lands for fish hatcheries and to purchase lands to be maintained perpetually as public hunting grounds, particularly lands suitable for waterfowl hunting, all such lands to be paid for from the game protection fund;

(5) receive by gift or bequest, in the name and on behalf of the state, lands suitable for game refuges, hunting grounds, fish hatcheries or for any other purpose necessary to carry out the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978;

(6) apply for and accept any state, federal or private funds, grants or donations from any source for game and fish programs and projects;

(7) designate certain areas as rest grounds for migratory birds, in which hunting shall be forbidden at all times or at such times as the state game commission shall provide, it being the purpose of this provision not to interfere unduly with the hunting of waterfowl but to provide havens in which they can rest and feed without molestation;

(8) close any public stream or lake or portion thereof to fishing when such action is necessary to protect a recently stocked water, to protect spawning waters or to prevent undue depletion of the fish;

(9) propagate, capture, purchase, transport or sell any species of game or fish needed for restocking any lands or streams of the state;

(10) after reasonable notice and hearing, suspend or revoke any license or permit issued pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and withhold license privileges from any person procuring a license through misrepresentation, violating any provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 or hunting without a proper license;

(11) adopt rules establishing procedures that provide reasonable notice and a hearing before the state game commission for the suspension, revocation or withholding of license privileges for a definite period of time for a person charged with violating the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, subject to such judicial review as may be provided by law;

(12) conduct studies of programs for the management of endangered and nongame species of wildlife;

(13) establish licenses, permits and certificates not otherwise provided for in Section 17-3-13 NMSA 1978 and charge and collect just and reasonable fees for them; provided the fees shall not exceed the costs of administration associated with the licenses, permits or certificates;

(14) permit, regulate or prohibit the commercial taking or capturing of native, free-ranging amphibians or reptiles not specifically protected by law, except for rattlesnake roundups, collection of fish bait and lizard races;

(15) adopt rules to control, eradicate or prevent the spread of a contagious disease, pest or parasite, including chronic wasting disease, to or among game animals. The rules shall include provisions for:

(a) notification to the department of game and fish of the diagnosis or suspected presence of a contagious disease;

(b) examination by the state veterinarian or the state veterinarian's designee of suspected infected game animals;

(c) quarantine, treatment or destruction of an infected game animal;

(d) disinfection and isolation of a licensed private park where an infected game animal has been; and

(e) indemnification and destruction of a protected game animal;

(16) as necessary, designate areas of the state in which bear-proof garbage containers are required on public and private lands to reduce potential human-bear interactions;

(17) pursuant to appropriation by the legislature, expend money from the game protection fund and the habitat management fund for the improvement, maintenance, development and operation of property for fish and wildlife habitat management; and

(18) adopt rules to recruit, train and accept the services of volunteers for education and outreach activities, hunter and angler services and wildlife conservation activities administered by the department of game and fish; provided that a volunteer:

(a) shall comply with all policies and procedures of the director of the department of game and fish; and

(b) shall not be deemed to be a state employee and shall not be subject to the provisions of law relating to state employment, including those relating to hours of work, rates of compensation, leave, unemployment compensation and state employee benefits.

C. The director of the department of game and fish shall exercise all the powers and duties conferred upon the state game and fish warden by all previous statutes now in force not in conflict with Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.

D. The state game commission shall have authority to prohibit all hunting in periods of extreme forest fire danger, at such times and places as may be necessary to reduce the danger of destructive forest fires.

E. The hunting, pursuing, capturing, killing or wounding of any game animals, birds or fish in or upon any game refuge, rest ground or closed water or closed area or during any closed season established or proclaimed by the state game commission in accordance with the authority conferred in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 constitutes a misdemeanor and shall be punishable as prescribed in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 7; C.S. 1929, § 57-107; 1941 Comp., § 43-108; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-8; Laws 1973, ch. 278, § 1; 1977, ch. 290, § 1; 1983, ch. 155, § 1; 1992, ch. 29, § 1; 1993, ch. 331, § 1; 2001, ch. 66, § 1; 2002, ch. 70, § 1; 2003, ch. 124, § 1; 2005, ch. 38, § 1; 2005, ch. 177, § 1; 2013, ch. 135, § 1; 2015, ch. 35, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For transfer of duties of state game warden to director, see 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

For lieutenant governor's deer enhancement permit, see 17-3-16.3 NMSA 1978.

For artificial wildlife being used and defined as game animals or birds for the purpose of prosecution, see 17-2-2.1 NMSA 1978.

For disposition of proceeds from sale of seized game or fish, see 17-2-21 to 17-2-23 NMSA 1978.

For conducting hunter training program, see 17-2-34 NMSA 1978.

For depositing license fees in game protection fund, see 17-3-7, 17-3-20 and 17-5-7 NMSA 1978.

For depositing federal funds in game protection fund, see 17-4-31 NMSA 1978.

For destroying commission's boundary markers, see 17-4-32 NMSA 1978.

For duty to administer laws regulating trappers and fur traders, see 17-5-4 NMSA 1978.

For revocation of trappers' and fur dealers' licenses, see 17-5-9 NMSA 1978.

For expenditure of funds to carry out Habitat Protection Act, see 17-6-7 NMSA 1978.

For shooting range fund and administration thereof, see 17-7-1 to 17-7-3 NMSA 1978.

For present penalty for violation of this chapter or regulations of the commission, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

The 2015 amendment, effective June 19, 2015, provided the authority for the state game commission to adopt rules regarding the services of recreation and wildlife volunteers; and added Paragraph (18) of Subsection B.

The 2013 amendment, effective June 14, 2013, provided for a definite period of revocation of license privileges; in the title, added "liability suspense account"; in Subsection A, added the second and third sentences; in Paragraph (10) of Subsection B, after "withhold license privileges", deleted "for a definite period not to exceed three years"; and in Paragraph (11) of Subsection B, after "withholding of license privileges", deleted "of" and added "for a definite period of time for".

The 2005 amendment, effective June 17, 2005, provided in Subsection A that money collected by the commission shall be paid to the state treasurer to the credit of the game protection fund unless otherwise provided by law; and added Subsection B(17) to provide that the commission, pursuant to appropriation by the legislature, shall have authority to expend money from the game protection fund and the habitat management fund for fish and wildlife habitat management.

The 2003 amendment, effective June 20, 2003, redesignated the former last sentence of Subsection A and former Paragraphs A(1) through A(15) as present Subsections B and Paragraphs B(1) through B(15); added Paragraph B(16); and redesignated former Subsections B, C and D as present Subsections C, D and E.

The 2002 amendment, effective May 15, 2002, added Paragraph A(15).

The 2001 amendment, effective June 15, 2001, substituted "rules" for "regulations" in Paragraph A(11) and added Paragraph A(14).

Allocation of licenses based on residency, impermissible discrimination. — The allocation of licenses for bighorn, oryx and ibex by the state game commission on the basis of residency discriminates impermissibly against nonresidents under the federal constitution. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

Fee structure, although discriminatory, is not offensive. — The present fee structure in 17-3-13 NMSA 1978, which discriminates against nonresidents, is not offensive to either the privileges and immunities clause, U.S. Const., art. IV, § 2, or the U.S. Const., amend. XIV. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

Money in the game protection fund may be used only for the purposes provided in the game and fish laws. 1975 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 75-38.

Game and fish department funds may not be legally spent for out-of-state travel by state game and fish department personnel for purposes of advertising New Mexico's game and fish resources. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-216.

There are no provisions for reimbursement of license fees in any circumstances; therefore, persons who have purchased a second license illegally are not entitled to reimbursement for the second license. 1975 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 75-38.

Interest credited to game protection fund, not general fund. — Any interest earned on the investment of money in the game protection fund must be credited to that fund, not the state general fund. 1982 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 82-01.

Use of fire suppression fund appropriated to game and fish department. — A fire suppression fund appropriated to the department of game and fish was not to actually be transferred to the forest conservation commission (now abolished). The department of game and fish was simply authorized to contract with the forest conservation commission to perform fire suppression activities reasonably necessary for the protection of game and fish. The formula to be utilized in providing and paying for such services was a contractual matter between these two agencies. 1961 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 61-54.

"Public waters" are all unappropriated waters from natural streams. — The term "public waters" as used in this section is synonymous with the definition of public waters given by the New Mexico supreme court in the case of *State ex rel. State Game Comm'n v. Red River Valley Co.*, 1945-NMSC-034, 51 N.M. 207, 182 P.2d 421 where the court stated: "All of our unappropriated waters from 'every natural stream, perennial

or torrential, within the state of New Mexico,' Article 16, Section 2, New Mexico Constitution, are public waters. These waters belong to the public until beneficially appropriated. And since the right to fish in public waters, by the test of any rule, is universally recognized, it cannot be said that the right to fish and to use the unappropriated public waters in question is less secure in the public because we determine their character as public by immemorial custom, and Spanish or Mexican law which we have adopted and follow in this respect. . . ." 1959 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 59-57.

Public waters may be stocked. — The waters of our streams, whether perennial or torrential in nature, are public waters such as may be stocked by the fish and game commission. 1961 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 61-38.

Municipal reservoirs and waters on Indian and military reservations where fishing fee is charged may not be stocked. — It is not legally proper for the department of game and fish to consider as public waters within the meaning of this section municipal reservoirs and waters on Indian and military reservations where public fishing is permitted, but only on condition of payment of a fee(s) in addition to possession of a valid fishing license. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-319.

Indian and military reservations are not instrumentalities of the state of New Mexico, and the lands adjacent thereto are not subject to state control as are the lands of the municipalities. This is true even though the waters running through such property are "public waters" as declared in *State ex rel. State Game Comm'n v. Red River Valley Co.*, 1945-NMSC-034, 51 N.M. 207, 182 P.2d 421. In such instance, the general public would be trespassing upon land not open to the free access of the public. 1959 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 59-57.

Small municipal charge for use of lake does not prevent stocking. — A small charge by a municipality sufficient to cover sanitation and maintenance expense for recreational purposes does not change the character of a lake from that of "public waters," and it may be stocked by the state game commission at state expense. 1959 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 59-57.

Private waters may be stocked. — If stocking in private, lawfully posted water would not be to such an extent as to deprive the citizenry of a source of public recreation, it may be done. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-246.

Private waters may be stocked only with fry and fingerlings and for consideration. — By use of the terms "fry" and "fingerlings," the legislature thereby excluded the stocking of any fish larger than fry or fingerlings in private waters. Hence, the authorization to stock fish in private waters is limited to fry or fingerlings, and then for a consideration. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-246.

Section lists purposes for which waters may be closed to fishing. — The three purposes for which a public stream or lake or portion thereof may be closed to fishing are set forth in Subsection G (now Subsection B(8)) of this section. These purposes are

when it is necessary to protect recently stocked water, to protect spawning waters or to prevent undue depletion of fish. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-119.

Purpose for which waters may be closed are exclusive. — The state game commission is not authorized under this section to close any public stream or lake or portion thereof to fishing, when such action is not for the purpose of protecting a recently stocked water or to protect spawning waters, or to prevent undue depletion of the fish in such waters. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-119.

Dictates of experience and local regulations govern handling of explosives. — The department of game and fish in transporting and storing explosives about the state and through cities and towns must adopt precautionary measures following the dictates of good judgment, based on experience in handling explosives, and local regulations. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-42.

Law reviews. — For student article, "Preventing the Extinction of Candidate Species: The Lesser Prairie-Chicken in New Mexico", see 49 Nat. Resources J. 525 (2009).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 29, 31.

Power of game or fish commission to open or close season, 34 A.L.R. 832.

36A C.J.S. Fish §§ 26, 37; 38 C.J.S. Game § 50.

17-1-15. Disbursement of money; limitation on expenditures.

All disbursements of moneys, including salaries, by the state game commission shall be by warrant of the secretary of finance and administration, supported by itemized voucher, certified to be correct by the state game director, and shall be paid out of moneys in the game protection fund.

Expenditures by the state game commission shall be limited to funds available in the game protection fund, and neither the state game commission nor any employee thereof shall incur or authorize any obligation for the payment of which sufficient funds are not then available in the game protection fund.

The state shall not be liable for any obligation created by the state game commission or any employee thereof, except to the extent of such game protection fund.

Neither the state game commission nor any employee thereof shall issue any voucher, nor shall the secretary of finance and administration approve any such voucher, for the payment of which moneys are not then available in the game protection fund.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 43-109; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-9; Laws 1977, ch. 247, § 162.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For public purchases, see 13-1-28 to 13-1-199 NMSA 1978.

17-1-16. Short title.

This act [17-1-16 to 17-1-25 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Game and Fish Bond Act".

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-16, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, compiled as 17-1-16 to 17-1-25 NMSA 1978, was not compiled in the 1953 Comp. but was set out as 15.1 in the appendix of bond issue laws following Chapter 11, 1953 Comp.

17-1-17. Purpose of act.

The purpose of the Game and Fish Bond Act is to provide for use of revenues derived from fees for hunting and fishing licenses to issue bonds to provide for fish hatcheries and rearing facilities, game and fish habitat acquisition, development and improvement projects and other similar capital outlay projects.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-17, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 2.

17-1-18. Bonding authority.

Whenever the state game commission, by vote of a majority of its full membership entered in its minutes, determines by resolution that it is necessary to raise funds to provide for fish hatcheries and rearing facilities, game and fish habitat acquisition, development and improvement projects or other similar capital outlay projects, the commission may issue and sell bonds of the state of New Mexico as provided in the Game and Fish Bond Act, provided that, the total amount of such bonds issued under the authority of this act shall not exceed two million dollars (\$2,000,000). The purposes stated by the commission and the amount of each bond issue shall be approved by the state board of finance before issuance of the bonds. The commission shall report annually to the legislature any bonds issued pursuant to this act and the purpose for which issued.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-18, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 3; 1968, ch. 47, § 1; 1976 (S.S.), ch. 52, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Authorized amount. — The 1976 amendments to the Game and Fish Bond Act authorized the state game commission to issue and sell up to \$2,000,000 worth of bonds. 1976 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 76-17.

17-1-19. Bonds; form; terms.

Bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act shall be payable in consecutive order over a period of not more than twenty years from the date of issue. They shall be issued in denominations determined by the state game commission and shall be sold at a net effective interest rate not exceeding the maximum net effective interest rate permitted by the Public Securities Act [6-14-1 through 6-14-3 NMSA 1978], as hereafter amended and supplemented. The form of the bonds shall be determined by the state game commission, and, except with respect to bonds issued in book entry or similar form without the delivery of physical securities, signatures of the governor, the state treasurer and the chairman of the state game commission shall be affixed in compliance with the Uniform Facsimile Signature of Public Officials Act [6-9-1 through 6-9-6 NMSA 1978]. The form and terms of the bonds shall be approved by the state board of finance before issuance of the bonds.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-19, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 4; 1968, ch. 47, § 2; 1976 (S.S.), ch. 52, § 2; 1983, ch. 265, § 35.

17-1-20. Sale of bonds.

Bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act shall be sold at public or private sale as determined by the state game commission. If sold at public sale, the chairman of the commission shall give notice of the time, place and terms of the sale by publication in a newspaper of general circulation published in Santa Fe, New Mexico, not less than twenty days nor more than sixty days prior to the sale date.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-20, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 5; 1968, ch. 47, § 3; 1976 (S.S.), ch. 52, § 3.

17-1-21. Proceeds from sale of bonds.

Proceeds from the sale of bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act shall be deposited in a special fund in the state treasury and used solely for the purposes for which the bonds were authorized. The cost of preparing, advertising and selling the bonds, including any necessary expense for financial and legal services, shall be paid out of the proceeds. Purchasers of the bonds are not responsible in any way for the application of the proceeds.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-21, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 6.

17-1-22. Security; retirement of bonds.

A. There is created in the state treasury the "game and fish bond retirement fund". The state game commission shall place into the game and fish bond retirement fund the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) from each license enumerated in this subsection that is sold after April 1, 1976:

- (1) resident, fishing;
- (2) resident, game hunting;
- (3) resident, deer;
- (4) resident, game hunting and fishing;
- (5) resident, trapper;
- (6) nonresident, fishing;
- (7) nonresident, game hunting;
- (8) temporary fishing, five days; and
- (9) nonresident, deer.

Such payments to the game and fish bond retirement fund shall be effective for all bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act up to the maximum limitation on the amount of bonds provided in that act.

B. Money in the game and fish bond retirement fund is first pledged for the payment of principal and interest on all state game commission bonds which have been issued and are outstanding prior to June 17, 1983. Money in the game and fish bond retirement fund is further pledged for the payment of principal and interest on all state game commission bonds issued as of June 17, 1983. The issuance and sale of bonds under the Game and Fish Bond Act constitutes an irrevocable contract between the state game commission and the owner of any bond, and so long as any bond remains outstanding the fees pledged for payment shall not be reduced.

C. Bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act are payable solely from the game and fish bond retirement fund, and they are not general obligations of the state.

D. The state game commission shall continue to place in the game and fish bond retirement fund the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) from each of the licenses enumerated in Subsection A of this section, even after the fund is sufficient to pay the principal and interest of the outstanding bonds and after all bonds issued have been retired.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-22, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 7; 1968, ch. 47, § 4; 1976 (S.S.), ch. 52, § 4; 1983, ch. 143, § 1; 2011, ch. 186, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2011 amendment, effective April 1, 2012, eliminated the distinction between small game hunting and general hunting licenses.

17-1-22.1. Game and fish capital outlay fund; created; transfer of money; state board of finance approval.

A. There is created in the state treasury the "game and fish capital outlay fund".

B. Upon request of the state game commission, approved by the state board of finance, the state treasurer shall transfer to the game and fish capital outlay fund all money in the game and fish bond retirement fund except the amount necessary to meet all principal and interest payments on state game commission bonds due in the ensuing twelve months.

C. Money in the game and fish capital outlay fund may be expended by the department of game and fish to provide for fish hatcheries and rearing facilities, game and fish habitat acquisition, development and improvements and other similar capital projects.

D. Projects to be funded pursuant to Subsection C of this section shall be approved by the state game commission and the state board of finance prior to any money being encumbered for the project.

E. At any time that the game and fish bond retirement fund is insufficient to pay the principal and interest on all bonds which have been issued and are outstanding, the unencumbered balance in the game and fish capital outlay fund shall be transferred to the game and fish bond retirement fund.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-22.1, enacted by Laws 1983, ch. 143, § 2.

17-1-23. Construction.

The Game and Fish Bond Act is full authority for authorization and issuance by the state game commission of bonds authorized by the state board of finance, and the commission may do anything necessary to carry out the powers granted by the Game and Fish Bond Act.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-23, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 8.

17-1-24. Tax exemptions.

The principal and income of bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act are exempt from all taxation by the state or any of its political subdivisions except for inheritance and succession taxes.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-24, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 9.

17-1-25. Refunding.

Any bonds issued under the Game and Fish Bond Act may be refunded under the terms of resolutions adopted by the state game commission, subject to any contractual limitations involved with any outstanding bonds, claims or other obligations. The proceeds of refunding bonds shall be applied to retirement of the bonds to be retired or refunded, or placed in escrow to be applied to payment of the bonds upon presentation for payment by the holders. Refunding bonds shall be issued under all applicable conditions prescribed in the Game and Fish Bond Act for issuance of the original bonds.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-1-25, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 18, § 10.

17-1-26. [Commission's power to establish rules and regulations; predatory animals; eradication.]

The state game commission is hereby authorized and directed to make such rules and regulations and establish such service as it may deem necessary to carry out all the provisions and purposes of this act, and all other acts relating to game and fish, and in making such rules and regulations and in providing when, to what extent, if at all, and by what means game animals, birds and fish may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased and shipped, the state game and fish commission [state game commission] shall give due regard to the zones of temperatures, and to the distribution, abundance, economic value and breeding habits of such game animals, birds and fish.

The state game commission is hereby authorized to spend such reasonable amounts as in its judgment is desirable and necessary annually from their funds not otherwise needed for the eradication of predatory animals.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 43-111; Laws 1947, ch. 53, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-11.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The words "this act" refer to Laws 1931, ch. 117, compiled as 17-1-1, 17-1-5, 17-1-15, 17-1-26, 17-2-1, 17-2-5, 17-2-7, 17-2-9 and 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. The reference to the "state game and fish commission" should have been to the "state game commission". See 17-1-2 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For penalty for violating game and fish regulations, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

For promulgation of hunter training program rules and regulations, see 17-2-34 NMSA 1978.

For regulations concerning endangered species, see 17-2-41 to 17-2-43 NMSA 1978.

For shooting preserve regulations, see 17-3-36 NMSA 1978.

For regulations concerning nonpredatory fur-bearing animals, see 17-5-3 and 17-5-4 NMSA 1978.

For regulations under Habitat Protection Act, see 17-6-3 NMSA 1978.

For regulations as to shooting ranges, see 17-7-3 NMSA 1978.

Constitutionality. — Laws 1931, ch. 117, is a proper exercise of police power of state and is not an unconstitutional delegation of legislative power, except as to § 3(a), compiled as 17-2-1A NMSA 1978, authorizing the commission to define game birds, animals and fish. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240.

Commission may prohibit carrying of firearms before open hunting season. — Powers granted to state game commission include authority to prohibit the carrying of firearms in hunting areas for specified period of time before opening of the big game season. 1948 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 48-5135.

Commission may make it unlawful to apply for elk licenses in succeeding years. — A state game commission regulation providing in part that it shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a public elk license for a "P" area, or a general bull elk license, if he held a similar elk license the previous year, is within the commission's broad power to ". . . make such rules and regulations . . . as it may deem necessary to carry out all the provisions and purposes of this act," and there is no constitutional objection to the imposition of the burden of ascertaining whether an application had been made the previous year on the public. 1975 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 75-38.

Deputy game wardens may enter on private lands without warrants in the interest of game protection. 1947 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 47-4974.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 31.

36A C.J.S. Fish §§ 26, 37; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 45, 46, 50.

17-1-26. Rulemaking power. (Effective July 1, 2026.)

A. *The commission is authorized and directed to make rules as it may deem necessary to carry out the provisions and purposes of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.*

B. *The rules may include, as applicable, when, where, by what means and to what extent, if at all, wildlife may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, released, bartered, sold, purchased, shipped and imported into or exported from the state.*

C. *In making rules, the commission may consider a species' population size and trends, migration patterns, availability of suitable habitat, response to changes in climate conditions, conservation actions necessary to sustain healthy populations and ecosystems, sustainable food supply and any other factors, natural or human-driven, that are judged to affect the health of a species or a species' ecosystem.*

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 43-111; Laws 1947, ch. 53, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-11; 1978 Comp., § 17-1-26, 2025, ch. 9, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2025 amendment, effective July 1, 2026, removed references to the state game commission, made certain changes in the language to reflect the renaming of the state game commission to the state wildlife commission, and revised the scope of the wildlife commission's rulemaking power; added new subsection designations "A" through "C"; in Subsection A, deleted "state game" preceding "commission" and after "purposes of" deleted "this act, and all other acts relating to game and fish, and in making such rules and regulations and in providing when" and added "Chapter 17 NMSA 1978"; in Subsection B, after the subsection designation, added "The rules may include, as applicable, when, where, by what means and", after "if at all" deleted "and by what means game animals, birds and fish" and added "wildlife", after "possessed" added "released, bartered", after "shipped" added "and imported into or exported from"; in Subsection C, after "commission" deleted the remainder of the paragraph and added "may consider a species' population size and trends, migration patterns, availability of suitable habitat, response to changes in climate conditions, conservation actions necessary to sustain healthy populations and ecosystems, sustainable food supply and any other factors, natural or human-driven, that are judged to affect the health of a species or a species' ecosystem".

Temporary provisions. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 11, effective July 1, 2026, provided that:

A. *The department of game and fish is renamed as the "department of wildlife".*

B. *The state game commission is renamed as the "state wildlife commission".*

C. *On July 1, 2026, all:*

- (1) functions, personnel, money, appropriations, records, furniture, equipment, supplies and other personal and real property of the department of game and fish are transferred to the department of wildlife;*
- (2) agreements and contractual obligations of the department of game and fish are binding on the department of wildlife;*
- (3) references in law to the department of game and fish shall be deemed to be references to the department of wildlife;*
- (4) functions, personnel, money, appropriations, records, furniture, equipment, supplies and other personal and real property of the state game commission are transferred to the state wildlife commission;*
- (5) agreements and contractual obligations of the state game commission are binding on the state wildlife commission; and*
- (6) references in law to the state game commission shall be deemed to be references to the state wildlife commission.*

D. On July 1, 2026, statutory references in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 to:

- (1) the "department of game and fish" or "department" shall be construed to be references to the department of wildlife;*
- (2) the "state game commission" or "commission" shall be construed to be references to the state wildlife commission; and*
- (3) the "director", "warden", "state warden", "state game warden" or "state game and fish warden" shall be construed to be references to the director of the department of wildlife.*

E. Rules of the department of game and fish shall be rules of the department of wildlife until amended or repealed.

F. Rules of the state game commission shall be rules of the state wildlife commission until amended or repealed.

G. On July 1, 2026, or as soon thereafter as practicably possible, the department of wildlife shall update the department's name and logo; provided that existing supplies, forms, insignias, signs and logos may continue to be used until exhausted or unserviceable.

17-1-27. [Hearings on rules and regulations; petition; publication of notice of hearing.]

Whenever three percent of the duly qualified electors of any county affected by a rule or regulation promulgated by the commission, concerning hunting or fishing within said county, shall petition the commission in writing, requesting a hearing, the commission shall grant a public hearing, the time, place and purpose of which shall be set forth by advertising in one or more newspapers of general circulation within the state not less than ten (10) days before the date of such hearing; and shall, on the date of hearing, give full opportunity for all persons to be heard on the point in controversy. But nothing in this section shall be construed as suspending or invalidating any such rule or regulation, unless it is suspended or revoked by the commission.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 10; C.S. 1929, § 57-110; 1941 Comp., § 43-113; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-13.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For adoption of regulations and their effective date, see 17-2-5 NMSA 1978.

17-1-28. [Assent to act of congress concerning wildlife restoration projects.]

The state of New Mexico hereby assents to the provisions of the act of congress of the United States of America entitled "An act to provide that the United States shall aid the states in wildlife restoration projects, and for other purposes," approved September 7 [2], 1937 (Public Number 415, 75th Congress), and the state game commission is hereby authorized and directed to perform all such acts as may be necessary to the conduct and establishment of cooperative wildlife restoration projects, as defined by said act of congress, and in compliance with said act, and rules and regulations promulgated by the secretary of agriculture [secretary of the interior] thereunder.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 19, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-114; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-14.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

Compiler's notes. — The federal act referred to in this section is compiled in 16 U.S.C. § 669 et seq.

In 1939 the functions of the secretary of agriculture relating to the conservation of wildlife, game and migratory birds were transferred to the secretary of the interior by 1939 Reorg. Plan No. II.

17-1-29. [Distribution of moneys received from United States government.]

The state game commission is authorized to receive any moneys to which the state of New Mexico may become entitled under the aforesaid act of congress, such moneys, when received, to be deposited with the treasurer of the state of New Mexico to the credit of the state game protection fund, expended for the purpose designated and withdrawn and as other moneys are withdrawn from the state game protection fund.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 19, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 43-115; 1953 Comp., § 53-1-15.

ARTICLE 2

Hunting and Fishing Regulations

PART 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

17-2-1. Commission powers.

The state game commission, in addition to the powers now vested in it and not as a limitation of those powers, is expressly authorized and empowered by regulation adopted and promulgated in the manner provided in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 to:

- A. define game birds, game animals and game fish;
- B. establish open and closed seasons for the killing or taking of all kinds of game animals, game birds and game fish and to change such open seasons from year to year and to fix different seasons for different parts of the state;
- C. establish bag limits covering all kinds of game animals, game birds and game fish and the numbers thereof which may be killed or taken by any one person during any one day or during any one open season;
- D. authorize or prohibit the killing or taking of any game animals, game birds or game fish of any kind or sex;
- E. prescribe the manner, methods and devices that may be used in hunting, taking or killing game animals, game birds and game fish;
- F. prescribe rules to prohibit any vehicle or vehicles used in transporting persons engaged in hunting, taking or killing game animals, game birds and game fish from leaving established roadways;

G. prescribe rules that embody the principles of fair chase, which rules may include prohibitions on the use of certain technologies for hunting or fishing and specific wildlife location data that is collected by the department of game and fish or its contractors; and

H. appoint one or more advisory committees to furnish advice, evaluations and recommendations for wildlife management projects utilizing revenue derived from the sale of public land management stamps. The advisory committees shall be created pursuant to the procedures of Section 9-1-9 NMSA 1978, provided that the restrictions on the life of advisory committees contained in Subsection F of that section shall not apply.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 43-201; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-1; Laws 1983, ch. 224, § 1; 2005, ch. 332, § 1; 2019, ch. 99, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For establishing open season for fur-bearing animals, see 17-5-3 NMSA 1978.

The 2019 amendment, effective June 14, 2019, authorized the state game commission to prescribe rules that embody the principles of fair chase; and added a new Subsection G and redesignated former Subsection G as Subsection H.

The 2005 amendment, effective June 17, 2005, adds Subsection G to provide that the commission is authorized to appoint advisory committees for wildlife management projects using revenue derived from the sale of public land management stamps, that the advisory committees shall be created pursuant to Section 9-1-9 NMSA 1978, and that the restrictions on the life of committees in Section 9-1-9F NMSA 1978 shall not be applicable.

Indian reservations. — Where an Indian tribe working with the federal government exercises its authority to develop and manage the reservation's resources for the benefit of its members and the exercise of concurrent jurisdiction by the state would nullify the tribe's authority to regulate the use of its resources by tribal members and non-members, and would interfere with the comprehensive tribal regulatory scheme and threaten congress' commitment to tribal self-sufficiency and economic development, and in the absence of state interests which would justify assertion of concurrent authority, the application of the state's hunting and fishing laws to the reservation are preempted. *Mescalero Apache Tribe v. State of New Mexico*, 677 Fed.2d 55 (10th Cir. 1982), *aff'd*, 462 U.S. 324, 103 S.Ct. 2378, 76 L. Ed. 2d 611 (1983).

Return of game or proceeds after wrongful confiscation. — Where the department of game and fish confiscated an elk from a person charged with a hunting misdemeanor, and the magistrate court dismissed the case because the game officer failed to identify the defendant at the hearing as the person charged, the department

was not required to return the elk, or the proceeds from the sale of the elk, to that person. 1988 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 88-43.

Commission's authority to fix open season on game animals is constitutional. — Authority given to the state game commission to promulgate rules and regulations is not an unconstitutional delegation of legislative power; the rule fixing an open season on hunting bear is validated by the statute defining bears as game animals. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240.

Power to define game animals is unconstitutional. — Laws 1931, ch. 117, is a proper exercise of the police power of the state. It is not an unconstitutional delegation of legislative power, except as to Subdivision A of this section. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240.

Authority over wild horses. — Although the Wildlife Conservation Act defines the term "wildlife" as any nondomestic animal, wild horses on the White Sands Missile Range do not fall within the classification. Because the authority of the State Game Commission is limited by statute, the Game Commission lacks jurisdiction over these wild horses. 1994 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 94-06.

Law reviews. — For student article, "Preventing the Extinction of Candidate Species: The Lesser Prairie-Chicken in New Mexico", see 49 Nat. Resources J. 525 (2009).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 31.

Power of game or fish commission to open or close season, 34 A.L.R. 832.

Applicability, to domesticated or captive game, of game laws relating to closed season and the like, 74 A.L.R.2d 974.

36A C.J.S. Fish §§ 26, 37; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 45, 46, 50.

17-2-2. Game to be protected. (Repealed effective July 1, 2026.)

The game animals and quadrupeds, game birds and fowl, and game fish as herein defined shall be protected and hunting, taking, capturing, killing or possession, or attempt to hunt, take, capture or kill of any or all species named herein shall be regulated by the state game commission under the authority of Chapter 117 of the 1931 Session Laws of the state of New Mexico.

History: Laws 1937, ch. 23, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-202; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-2.

ANNOTATIONS

Delayed repeals. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 13 repealed 17-2-2 NMSA 1978, effective July 1, 2026.

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1931, ch. 117, referred to in this section, is compiled as 17-1-1, 17-1-5, 17-1-15, 17-1-26, 17-2-1, 17-2-5, 17-2-7, 17-2-9 and 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For Wildlife Conservation Act, see 17-2-37 NMSA 1978.

For protection of fur-bearing animals, see 17-5-1 and 17-5-2 NMSA 1978.

Carrying firearms before hunting season opens may be prohibited. — Powers granted to state game commission include authority to prohibit the carrying of firearms in hunting areas for specified period of time before opening of the big game season. 1948 Op. Att'y Gen. 48-5135.

17-2-2.1. Artificial wildlife.

A. Artificial wildlife may be used, and defined as game animals or birds, for the purpose of prosecution pursuant to Section 17-2-31 or 17-3-1 NMSA 1978, or for prosecution for shooting at, from or across a roadway.

B. Violations of shooting artificial wildlife shall be punished pursuant to the applicable penalty provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 2003, ch. 301, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For violation of game and fish laws or regulations; penalties, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

For general powers and duties of state game commission; game protection fund, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

17-2-3. Protected wildlife species and game fish defined.

A. The following mammals are game mammals:

(1) all of the family Tayassuidae (javelina);

(2) within the family Bovidae:

(a) all of the genus *Bison* (American bison) except where raised in captivity for domestic or commercial meat production;

(b) all of the genus *Capra* (ibex) except for the domestic species of goats;

(c) all of the genus *Ovis* (bighorn sheep) except for the domestic species of sheep;

- (d) all of the genus *Ammotragus* (aoudad);
- (e) all of the genus *Tragelaphus* (kudu); and
- (f) all of the genus *Oryx* (oryx);
- (3) all of the family Antilocapridae (American pronghorn);
- (4) all of the family Cervidae (elk and deer);
- (5) all of the family Ochotonidae (pikas);
- (6) all of the genus *Sciurus* (squirrels);
- (7) all of the genus *Tamiasciurus* (red squirrels);
- (8) all of the genus *Marmota* (marmots) of the family Sciuridae;
- (9) all of the family Ursidae (bear); and
- (10) all of the species concolor (cougar) of the genus *Felis* and family Felidae.

B. The following birds are game birds:

- (1) all of the family Anatidae (waterfowl);
- (2) all of the family Tetraonidae (grouse and ptarmigans);
- (3) all of the family Phasianidae (quail, partridges and pheasants);
- (4) all of the family Meleagridae (wild turkeys) except for the domestic strains of turkeys;
- (5) all of the family Perdidae (francolins);
- (6) all of the family Gruidae (cranes);
- (7) all of the family Rallidae (rails, coots and gallinules);
- (8) all of the family Charadriidae (plovers, turnstones and surfbirds);
- (9) all of the family Scolopacidae (shorebirds, snipe, sandpipers and curlews);
- (10) all of the family Recurvirostridae (avocets and stilts);
- (11) all of the family Phalaropodidae (phalaropes); and

(12) all of the family Columbidae (wild pigeons and doves) except for the domestic strains of pigeons.

C. The following fish are game fish:

- (1) all of the family Salmonidae (trout);
- (2) all of the family Esocidae (pike);
- (3) all of the family Ictaluridae (catfish);
- (4) all introduced species of the family Serranidae (sea bass and white bass);
- (5) all of the family Centrarchidae (sunfish, crappie and bass);
- (6) all of the family Percidae (walleye pike and perch);
- (7) all introduced species of the family Pomadasyidae (sargo);
- (8) all introduced species of the family Sciaenidae (corvina, bairdiella and redfish);
- (9) all of the genus Oreochromis (tilapia); and
- (10) all of the family Moronidae (striped bass, hybrid striped bass, white bass and others).

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-3, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 8, § 1; 1971, ch. 75, § 1; 2015, ch. 26, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals and reenactments. — Laws 1967, ch. 8, § 1, repealed former 53-2-3, 1953 Comp., defining game animals, game birds and game fish and enacted a new 53-2-3 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For protection of fur-bearing animals, see 17-5-1 and 17-5-2 NMSA 1978.

The 2015 amendment, effective June 19, 2015, added tilapia and bass to the definition of "game fish"; in Subsection C, Paragraph (7), after the semicolon, deleted "and", and added new Paragraphs (9) and (10).

Wild elk. — Defendant could be convicted only under the game and fish laws, and not under Section 30-18-6 NMSA 1978, for transporting heads of free-roaming, wild elk,

since wild elk were among protected species of family Cervidae. *State v Parson*, 2005-NMCA-083, 137 N.M. 773, 115 P.3d 236.

Authority over wild horses. — Although the Wildlife Conservation Act defines the term "wildlife" as any nondomestic animal, wild horses on the White Sands Missile Range do not fall within the classification. Because the authority of the State Game Commission is limited by statute, the Game Commission lacks jurisdiction over these wild horses. 1994 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 94-06.

17-2-4. Repealed.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 2001, ch. 66, § 3 repealed 17-2-4 NMSA 1978, as enacted by Laws 1937, ch. 217, § 1, regarding the classification of bullfrogs as a protected species, effective June 15, 2001. For provisions of former section, see the 2000 NMSA 1978 on *NMOneSource.com*. For present comparable provisions, see 17-2-4.2 NMSA 1978.

17-2-4.1. Jaguar to be protected.

In the event the jaguar is de-listed as a federal endangered species, the department of game and fish shall prohibit the taking, possession and sale of jaguars or parts thereof.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-2-4.1, enacted by Laws 1999, ch. 31, § 1.

17-2-4.2. Amphibians and reptiles; protected; permits; unlawful taking; misdemeanor; penalties.

A. All species, except for those collected in rattlesnake roundups, for fish bait or for lizard races, of native, free-ranging amphibians and reptiles are hereby classified as protected nongame animals for commercial taking purposes. The commercial taking or capturing of native, free-ranging amphibians and reptiles is prohibited except by a permit issued by the state game commission.

B. The state game commission shall adopt rules necessary to administer Paragraph (14) of Subsection A of Section 17-1-14 NMSA 1978 and this section to assure that viable populations of native, free-ranging amphibians and reptiles are maintained in the state.

C. If the state game commission determines that it will offer permits to take or capture native, free-ranging amphibians or reptiles, the commission shall adopt a rule listing protected native, free-ranging amphibians and reptiles that may be taken or captured after taking into consideration any criteria that can be shown to have an effect from commercial takings on the viability of the species population in the state.

D. Unlawful taking of a native, free-ranging amphibian or reptile consists of intentionally taking or capturing, for commercial purposes, a regulated native, free-ranging amphibian or reptile without a valid permit from the state game commission.

E. Amphibians and reptiles may be removed, captured or destroyed without a permit, by any person, in emergency situations involving an immediate threat to human life or private property.

F. Whoever commits unlawful taking of a native, free-ranging amphibian or reptile is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) per occurrence and not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per occurrence or be imprisoned for not more than one year or both.

G. As referred to in this section, "taking" means the act of seizing amphibians or reptiles for a commercial purpose.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-2-4.1, enacted by Laws 2001, ch. 66, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — This section was originally enacted as 17-2-4.1 NMSA 1978, but was redesignated as 17-2-4.2 because Laws 1999, ch. 31, § 1, previously enacted a 17-2-4.1.

17-2-5. Adoption of regulations; effective date.

Any written regulation of the state game commission adopted by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the state game commission, signed by the chairman and attested by the secretary of the commission, filed in the office of the director of the department of game and fish, and filed in accordance with Section 4-10-13 New Mexico Statutes Annotated, 1953 Compilation, is duly adopted and promulgated and effective immediately. A copy of any regulation certified by the director of the department of game and fish to be a true copy of an adopted regulation is prima facie evidence in any court in this state of the adoption and promulgation of the regulation.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 43-205; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-5; Laws 1961, ch. 106, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For hearings on objections to rules and regulations, see 17-1-27 NMSA 1978.

Compiler's notes. — Section 4-10-13, 1953 Comp., cited in this section was repealed by Laws 1967, ch. 275, § 13. See Chapter 14, Article 4 NMSA 1978.

Authority to promulgate orders is constitutional. — Authority given to the game commission to promulgate orders is not an unconstitutional delegation of legislative power. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240.

Proper promulgation of rules presumed. — In habeas corpus proceeding to discharge one convicted of violating regulations of state game commission, the court assumes that the regulations have been properly promulgated. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240.

17-2-6. Game and fish management areas; closed lakes or streams; notice.

All game and fish management areas, rest grounds and closed lakes or streams or closed portions of lakes or streams shall be conspicuously posted with posters setting forth their purpose and the penalties for violating the rules and regulations applicable to them. This posting is legal notice against the violation of applicable laws, rules or regulations.

History: Laws 1921, ch. 35, § 8; C.S. 1929, § 57-108; 1941 Comp., § 43-206; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-6; Laws 1961, ch. 106, § 2.

17-2-7. Unlawful hunting or fishing.

A. Except as permitted by regulations adopted by the state game commission or as otherwise allowed by law, it is unlawful to:

(1) hunt, take, capture, kill or attempt to take, capture or kill, at any time or in any manner, any game animal, game bird or game fish in the state; or

(2) possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase or purchase in the state all or any part of any game animal, game bird or game fish.

B. Notwithstanding any other law, the owner of domestic livestock in this state or his regular employee may hunt, take, capture or kill any cougar or bear which has killed domestic livestock. The owner of livestock or his regular employee who takes action under this provision will report this action to the department of game and fish, who will verify the necessity of the action taken.

C. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor and shall be punished as provided in Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

D. The provisions of this section shall not be deemed to prohibit the possession of game animals, birds or fish taken legally in any other jurisdiction.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 8; 1941 Comp., § 43-207; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-7; Laws 1971, ch. 75, § 2; 1979, ch. 340, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For penalty for taking fish or killing animals in state park, see 16-2-32 NMSA 1978.

Plain view exception to search warrant requirement. — Plain view exception did not apply to warrantless search of defendant's home for violation of game and fish laws under Section 17-2-7 NMSA 1978, because incriminating nature of hunting trophies would not have been immediately apparent to any lawfully positioned officer. *State v. Moran*, 2008-NMCA-160, 145 N.M. 297, 197 P.3d 1079.

Indian reservations. — Where an Indian tribe working with the federal government exercises its authority to develop and manage the reservation's resources for the benefit of its members and the exercise of concurrent jurisdiction by the state would nullify the tribe's authority to regulate the use of its resources by tribal members and non-members, and would interfere with the comprehensive tribal regulatory scheme and threaten congress' commitment to tribal self-sufficiency and economic development, and in the absence of state interests which would justify assertion of concurrent authority, the application of the state's hunting and fishing laws to the reservation are preempted. *Mescalero Apache Tribe v. State of New Mexico*, 677 Fed. 55 (10th Cir. 1982), *aff'd*, 462 U.S. 324, 103 S.Ct. 2378, 76 L. Ed. 2d 611 (1983).

Evidence of unlawful possession held sufficient. — Where evidence showed defendant had no permit to possess elk meat, refrigerator in the home of defendant contained three packages of elk meat and defendants had discussed the tracking and killing of the elk before witnesses, evidence supported conviction for unlawful possession of elk meat. *State v. Booher*, 1967-NMCA-004, 78 N.M. 76, 428 P.2d 478.

Cruelty to animals provisions inapplicable to wild animals. — Section 30-18-1 NMSA 1978 applies only to cruelty to domesticated animals and wild animals previously reduced to captivity, and under the "general-specific" rule of statutory construction, treatment of wild animals is presumed to be governed by the comprehensive hunting and fishing laws contained in this chapter. *State v. Cleve*, 1999-NMSC-017, 127 N.M. 240, 980 P.2d 23.

Possession of game obtained with tribal license on Indian reservation. — Absent justification, the state may not discriminatorily prohibit possession of game lawfully obtained from an Indian reservation while permitting possession of game elsewhere and the state may not prohibit the possession of game legally obtained from an Indian reservation with a proper tribal license. *Mescalero Apache Tribe v. State of N.M.*, 630 F.2d 724 (1980).

Return of game or proceeds after wrongful confiscation. — Where the department of game and fish confiscated an elk from a person charged with a hunting misdemeanor, and the magistrate court dismissed the case because the game officer failed to identify the defendant at the hearing as the person charged, the department

was not required to return the elk, or the proceeds from the sale of the elk, to that person. 1988 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 88-43.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 38.

Entrapment with respect to violation of fishing or game laws, 75 A.L.R.2d 709.

Possession of game or of specified hunting equipment as prima facie evidence of violation, 81 A.L.R.2d 1093.

Right to kill game in defense of person or property, 93 A.L.R.2d 1366.

Validity, construction and application of state wildlife possession laws, 50 A.L.R.5th 703.

36A C.J.S. Fish § 28; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 8, 22-28, 30, 51, 76.

17-2-7.1. Interference prohibited; criminal penalties; civil penalties; revocation of license, certificate or permit.

A. It is unlawful for a person to commit interference with another person who is lawfully hunting, trapping or fishing in an area where hunting, trapping or fishing is permitted by a custodian of public property or an owner or lessee of private property.

B. A person who commits a:

(1) first offense of interference is guilty of a petty misdemeanor and shall be sentenced pursuant to the provisions of Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978; and

(2) second or subsequent offense of interference is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be sentenced pursuant to the provisions of Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

C. When a person who commits interference possesses a license, certificate or permit issued to him by the state game commission, the license, certificate or permit shall be subject to revocation by the commission pursuant to the provisions of Sections 17-1-14 and 17-3-34 NMSA 1978.

D. As used in this section, "interference" means:

(1) intentionally placing oneself in a location where a human presence may affect the behavior of a game animal, bird or fish or the feasibility of killing or taking a game animal, bird or fish with the intent of interfering with or harassing another person who is lawfully hunting, trapping or fishing;

(2) intentionally creating a visual, aural, olfactory or physical stimulus for the purpose of affecting the behavior of a game animal, bird or fish with the intent of

interfering with or harassing another person who is lawfully hunting, trapping or fishing;
or

(3) intentionally affecting the condition or altering the placement of personal property used for the purpose of killing or taking a game animal, bird or fish.

E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to include a farmer or rancher in pursuit of his normal farm or ranch operation or law enforcement officer in pursuit of his official duties.

History: Laws 1993, ch. 94, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Validity and construction of statutes prohibiting harassment of hunters, fishermen, or trappers, 17 A.L.R.5th 837.

17-2-7.2. Landowner taking; conditions; department responsibilities.

A. A landowner or lessee, or employee of either, may take or kill an animal on private land, in which they have an ownership or leasehold interest, including game animals and other quadrupeds, game birds and fowl, that presents an immediate threat to human life or an immediate threat of damage to property, including crops; provided, however, that the taking or killing is reported to the department of game and fish within twenty-four hours and before the removal of the carcass of the animal killed, in accordance with regulations adopted by the commission.

B. A landowner or lessee, or employee of either, may take or kill animals on private land, in which they have an ownership or leasehold interest, including game animals and other quadrupeds, game birds and fowl, that present a threat to human life or damage to property, including crops, according to regulations adopted by the commission. The regulations shall:

(1) provide a method for filing a complaint to the department by the landowner or lessee, or employee of either of them, of the existence of a depredation problem;

(2) provide for various departmental interventions, depending upon the type of animal and depredation;

(3) require the department to offer at least three different interventions, if practical;

(4) require the department to respond to the initial and any subsequent complaints within ten days with an intervention response to the complaint, and to carry

out the intervention, if agreed upon between the department and the landowner, within five days of that agreement;

(5) permit the landowner or lessee to reject for good cause the interventions offered by the department;

(6) require a landowner or lessee to demonstrate that the property depredation is greater in value than the value of any wildlife-related income or fee collected by the landowner or lessee for permission to take or kill an animal of the same species, on the private property or portion of the private property identified in the complaint as the location where the depredation occurred; and

(7) permit the landowner, lessee or employee, when interventions by the department have not been successful and after one year from the date of the filing of the initial complaint, to kill or take an animal believed responsible for property depredation.

C. For purposes of this section:

(1) "commission" means the state game commission;

(2) "department" means the department of game and fish; and

(3) "intervention" means a solution proposed by the department to eliminate the depredation.

History: Laws 1997, ch. 224, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Relation to cruelty to animal prohibitions. — Even if the legislature had intended to protect wild animals in Section 30-18-1 NMSA 1978, the legislature, having dealt with the subject of the hunting of game animals more particularly in the game and fish laws, intended to create an exception from the cruelty-to-animals statute for hunting and fishing activity contemplated by game and fish laws. *State v. Cleve*, 1999-NMSC-017, 127 N.M. 240, 980 P.2d 23.

17-2-8. Unlawful taking of big game and waste of game.

A. It is unlawful for any person:

(1) who hunts or fishes and takes any game mammal designated in Paragraphs (2), (3) or (4) of Subsection A of Section 17-2-3 NMSA 1978, any game bird or any game fish to fail to transport the edible portions of the meat obtained to the person's home for human consumption or to provide for the human consumption thereof

under any commission regulations pertaining to exportation, transportation and donation of game;

(2) who wounds or may have wounded any game mammal designated in Paragraphs (2), (3) or (4) of Subsection A of Section 17-2-3 NMSA 1978 to fail to go to the place where the mammal sustained or may have sustained the wound and make a reasonable attempt to track the mammal and reduce it to possession; or

(3) to take or kill a bighorn sheep, ibex, oryx, Barbary sheep, elk, deer or pronghorn antelope outside of the legal season or without a valid license, which taking or killing results in waste of the animal. Waste of the animal consists of removing from the animal only the head, antlers or horns or abandoning any of the four quarters, backstraps or tenderloins of the carcass. A violation of the provisions of this paragraph is intended to be separate from and cumulative to any other violation of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.

B. Violation of Paragraph (3) of Subsection A of this section is a fourth degree felony pursuant to Section 31-18-15 NMSA 1978, and violation of Paragraph (1) or (2) of Subsection A of this section is a misdemeanor pursuant to Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-7.1, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 70, § 1; 2017, ch. 38, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2017 amendment, effective June 16, 2017, made it a fourth degree felony to wastefully take or kill certain big game, defined "waste of the animal", and made it a misdemeanor to hunt or fish certain game animals and fail to provide for its consumption or to wound a game mammal and fail to make a reasonable attempt to track the mammal; in the catchline, added "Unlawful taking of big game"; designated the previously undesignated introductory clause as Subsection A and redesignated former Subsections A and B as Paragraphs A(1) and A(2), respectively; and added a new Subsection B.

17-2-9. Jurisdiction of magistrate court.

The magistrate court has jurisdiction in all cases arising under Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and regulations promulgated by the state game commission. In addition to other jurisdiction, a magistrate has jurisdiction over such cases arising in any magistrate district adjoining at any point that in which he serves with the consent of the accused.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 43-208; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-8; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 1; 1971, ch. 184, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Jurisdiction extends to game law violations. — It is within the jurisdiction of justices of the peace (now magistrates) to try game law violation cases. 1953 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 53-5860.

Jurisdiction does not extend to revocation of licenses. — The revocation of a hunting or fishing license is not within the jurisdiction of a justice of the peace (now magistrate) but such power rests exclusively with the director of the department of game and fish of this state, as an administrative matter. 1965 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 65-79.

17-2-10. Violation of game and fish laws or rules; penalties.

A. A person violating any of the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978, or any rules adopted by the state game commission that relate to the time, extent, means or manner that game animals, birds or fish may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased or shipped is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be sentenced pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978. In addition, the person shall be sentenced to the payment of a fine in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each deer, antelope, javelina, bear or cougar during a closed season, a fine of four hundred dollars (\$400);

(2) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each elk, bighorn sheep, oryx, ibex or Barbary sheep, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

(3) for hunting big game without a proper and valid license, lawfully procured, a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100);

(4) for exceeding the bag limit of any big game species, a fine of four hundred dollars (\$400);

(5) for attempting to exceed the bag limit of any big game species by the hunting of any big game animal after having tagged a similar big game species, a fine of two hundred dollars (\$200);

(6) for signing a false statement to procure a resident hunting or fishing license when the applicant is residing in another state at the time of application for a license, a fine of four hundred dollars (\$400);

(7) for using a hunting or fishing license issued to another person, a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100);

(8) for a violation of Section 17-2-31 NMSA 1978, a fine of three hundred dollars (\$300);

(9) for selling, offering for sale, offering to purchase or purchasing any big game animal, unless otherwise provided by Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

(10) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each jaguar, a fine of two thousand dollars (\$2,000); and

(11) for a violation of the provisions of Subsection A of Section 17-2A-3 NMSA 1978, a fine of five hundred dollars (\$500).

B. A person convicted a second time for violating any of the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978, or any rules adopted by the state game commission that relate to the time, extent, means or manner that game animals, birds or fish may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased or shipped is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be sentenced pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978. In addition, the person shall be sentenced to the payment of a fine in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each deer, antelope, javelina, bear or cougar during a closed season, a fine of six hundred dollars (\$600);

(2) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each elk, bighorn sheep, oryx, ibex or Barbary sheep, a fine of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500);

(3) for hunting big game without a proper and valid license, lawfully procured, a fine of four hundred dollars (\$400);

(4) for exceeding the bag limit of any big game species, a fine of six hundred dollars (\$600);

(5) for attempting to exceed the bag limit of any big game species by the hunting of any big game animal after having tagged a similar big game species, a fine of six hundred dollars (\$600);

(6) for signing a false statement to procure a resident hunting or fishing license when the applicant is residing in another state at the time of application for a license, a fine of six hundred dollars (\$600);

(7) for using a hunting or fishing license issued to another person, a fine of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250);

(8) for a violation of Section 17-2-31 NMSA 1978, a fine of five hundred dollars (\$500);

(9) for selling, offering for sale, offering to purchase or purchasing any big game animal, unless otherwise provided by Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, a fine of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500);

(10) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each jaguar, a fine of four thousand dollars (\$4,000); and

(11) for a violation of the provisions of Subsection A of Section 17-2A-3 NMSA 1978, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

C. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 31-18-13 NMSA 1978, a person convicted a third or subsequent time for violating any of the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978, or any rules adopted by the state game commission that relate to the time, extent, means or manner that game animals, birds or fish may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased or shipped is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be sentenced to imprisonment in the county jail for a term of not less than ninety days, which shall not be suspended or deferred. In addition, the person shall be sentenced to the payment of a fine in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each deer, antelope, javelina, bear or cougar during a closed season, a fine of one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200);

(2) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each elk, bighorn sheep, oryx, ibex or Barbary sheep, a fine of three thousand dollars (\$3,000);

(3) for hunting big game without a proper and valid license, lawfully procured, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

(4) for exceeding the bag limit of any big game species, a fine of one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200);

(5) for attempting to exceed the bag limit of any big game species by the hunting of any big game animal after having tagged a similar big game species, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

(6) for signing a false statement to procure a resident hunting or fishing license when the applicant is residing in another state at the time of application for a license, a fine of one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200);

(7) for using a hunting or fishing license issued to another person, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

(8) for a violation of Section 17-2-31 NMSA 1978, a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000);

(9) for selling, offering for sale, offering to purchase or purchasing any big game animal, unless otherwise provided by Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, a fine of three thousand dollars (\$3,000);

(10) for illegally taking, attempting to take, killing, capturing or possessing of each jaguar, a fine of six thousand dollars (\$6,000); and

(11) for a violation of the provisions of Subsection A of Section 17-2A-3 NMSA 1978, a fine of two thousand dollars (\$2,000).

D. A person who is convicted of a violation of any rules adopted by the state game commission or of a violation of any of the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978, for which a punishment is not set forth under this section, is a misdemeanor and shall be fined or imprisoned pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

E. The provisions of this section shall not be interpreted to prevent, constrain or penalize a Native American for engaging in activities for religious purposes, as provided in Section 17-2-14 or 17-2-41 NMSA 1978.

F. The provisions of this section shall not apply to a landowner or lessee, or employee of either of them, who kills an animal on private land, in which they have an ownership or leasehold interest, that is threatening human life or damaging or destroying property, including crops; provided, however, that the killing is reported to the department of game and fish within twenty-four hours and before the removal of the carcass of the animal killed; and provided further that all actions authorized in this subsection are carried out according to rules of the department.

History: Laws 1931, ch. 117, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 43-209; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-9; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 2; 1977, ch. 290, § 2; 1979, ch. 340, § 2; 1997, ch. 119, § 1; 1997, ch. 224, § 1; 1999, ch. 31, § 2; 2017, ch. 38, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For artificial wildlife being used and defined as game animals or birds for the purpose of presecution, see 17-2-2.1 NMSA 1978.

For revocation of license for violation of law, see 17-2-30, 17-3-34 and 17-5-9 NMSA 1978.

For penalties for violations as to endangered species, see 17-2-45 NMSA 1978.

For fines constituting current school fund, see N.M. Const., art. XII, § 4.

The 2017 amendment, effective June 16, 2017, provided for stricter penalties for violation of the Game and Fish provisions; in the catchline, deleted "regulations" and added "rules"; in Subsection A, in the introductory paragraph, deleted "Any" and added "A", after "Chapter 17 NMSA 1978", added "except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978", after "or any", deleted "regulations" and added "rules", after "upon conviction", deleted "may" and added "shall", and after "be sentenced", deleted "to imprisonment in the county jail for a term not to exceed six months" and added "pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978"; in Subsection B, in the introductory paragraph, after "Chapter 17 NMSA 1978", added "except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978", after "or any", deleted "regulations" and added "rules", after "upon conviction", deleted "may" and added "shall", and after "be sentenced", deleted "to imprisonment in the county jail for a term of not more than three hundred sixty-four days" and added "pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978"; in Subsection C, in the introductory paragraph, after "Chapter 17 NMSA 1978", added "except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978", after "or any", deleted "regulations" and added "rules", after "upon conviction", deleted "may" and added "shall", and after "suspended or deferred", deleted "and not more than three hundred sixty four days"; in Subsection D, deleted "Any" and added "A", after "violation of any", deleted "regulations" and added "rules", after "state game commission", deleted "that relate to the time, extent, means or manner that game animals, birds or fish may be hunted, taken, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased or shipped", after "Chapter 17 NMSA 1978", added "except for the felony provision of Section 17-2-8 NMSA 1978", after "under this section", added "is a misdemeanor and", after "shall be fined", deleted "not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) or more than five hundred dollars (\$500)", and after "imprisoned", deleted "not more than six months or both" and added "pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978"; and in Subsection F, after "according to", deleted "regulations" and added "rules".

The 1999 amendment, effective June 18, 1999, added Paragraphs A(10), A(11), B(10), B(11), C(10), and C(11), inserted "or Barbary sheep" following "ibex" in Paragraph B(2), and made minor stylistic changes.

The 1997 amendment, effective July 1, 1997, added "In addition, the person" at the beginning of the last sentence of the introductory language in Subsection A; added Subsections B and C and redesignated the following subsection accordingly; and added Subsections E and F.

Wild elk. — Defendant could be convicted only under the game and fish laws, and not under Section 30-18-6 NMSA 1978, for transporting heads of free-roaming, wild elk, since wild elk were among protected species of family Cervidae. *State v Parson*, 2005-NMCA-083, 173 N.M. 773, 115 P.3d 236.

Erroneous habeas corpus judgment held res judicata. — A judgment in habeas corpus proceeding, not appealed from, discharging a defendant prosecuted for killing a bear out of season, on the ground that a bear was not a game animal defined by statute, was res judicata on that issue, although erroneous, barring a further prosecution

for having in possession a bear skin, from the same animal. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240.

Money collected as informer's fee should be paid over to person instituting prosecution, who may recover it by legal action if not so paid. 1931 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 31-100.

Law reviews. — For article, "Possibilities for Expansion of the Migrating Bird Treaty Act for the Protection of Migrating Birds", see 40 Nat. Resources J. 47 (2000).

17-2-10.1. Game and fish penalty assessment misdemeanors; definition; schedule of assessments.

A. As used in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, "penalty assessment misdemeanor" means a violation of any of the following listed sections of the NMSA 1978 for which the listed penalty assessment is established:

COMMON NAME OF OFFENSE	SECTION VIOLATED	PENALTY ASSESSMENT
Fishing, hunting or trapping without the proper stamp or validation as required by law or adopted by state game commission rule	17-2-7	\$ 50.00
Fishing without a license	17-3-17	\$ 75.00
Hunting small game without a license	17-3-1	\$100.00
Manner and method rule infraction contrary to adoption by state game commission rule	17-2-7	\$125.00.

B. When an alleged violator of a penalty assessment misdemeanor elects to accept a notice to appear in lieu of a notice of penalty assessment, no fine imposed upon later conviction shall exceed the penalty assessment established for the particular penalty assessment misdemeanor.

C. With the penalty assessment collected for each penalty assessment misdemeanor pursuant to this section, there shall be assessed and collected the cost of the appropriate license and validation that the violator failed to produce. Upon presentation of proof of payment of the penalty assessment, the director of the department of game and fish shall issue the appropriate license and validation.

History: Laws 1995, ch. 177, § 1; 2015, ch. 27, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2015 amendment, effective June 19, 2015, provided for additional penalty assessments for violations of hunting and fishing infractions; in Subsection A, added a penalty assessment of \$50.00 for "fishing, hunting or trapping without the proper stamp or validation as required by law or adopted by state game commission rule" and a penalty assessment of \$125.00 for "manner and method rule infraction contrary to adoption by state game commission rule"; in Subsection C, after "With the", added "penalty", and after the first and second occurrences of "license", added "and validation".

17-2-10.2. Game and fish penalty assessment; payment.

A. Unless a warning notice is given to an alleged violator, at the time the alleged violator is charged with a penalty assessment misdemeanor, the conservation officer shall offer the alleged violator the option of accepting a penalty assessment. The signature of the alleged violator on the penalty assessment notice constitutes an acknowledgment of guilt of the offense stated in the notice. The acknowledgment shall be included in accrual of points toward revocation of licenses as provided for in Section 17-3-34 NMSA 1978 or in regulations adopted to implement that section.

B. Payment of any penalty assessment, including cost of the appropriate license, shall be mailed to the state game commission within thirty days from the date of charge. Payment of penalty assessments are timely if postmarked within thirty days from the date of the charge. The commission may issue a receipt when a penalty assessment is paid by currency, but checks tendered by the violator upon which payment is received are sufficient receipt.

C. No record of any penalty assessment payment is admissible as evidence in court in any civil action.

History: Laws 1995, ch. 177, § 2.

17-2-10.3. Game and fish penalty assessment; license revocation.

A. The state game commission is authorized to revoke the hunting or fishing license, or both, of a person who fails to pay a penalty assessment or who fails to appear, after proper notice, for hearings as required by law or regulation.

B. The state game commission may revoke the hunting or fishing license, or both, of any person, resident or nonresident, who is convicted in another state of any single offense that, if committed in New Mexico, would be grounds for revocation of license.

History: Laws 1995, ch. 177, § 3.

17-2-10.4. Game and fish penalty assessment revenue; disposition.

The department of game and fish shall remit all penalty assessment receipts to the state treasurer to be credited to the game protection fund in accordance with the provisions of Section 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1995, ch. 177, § 4.

17-2-11. [Witness testifying for state; evidence not to be used against him.]

In any prosecution under this chapter, any participant in a violation thereof, when so requested by the district attorney, state warden [director of the department of game and fish] or other officer instituting the prosecution, may testify as a witness against any other person charged with violating the same, and his evidence so given shall not be used against him in any prosecution for such violation.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 40; Code 1915, § 2463; C.S. 1929, § 57-248; 1941 Comp., § 43-212; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-12.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this chapter" for the words "this act." Chapter 47, 1915 Code, comprised the whole of Laws 1912, ch. 85, the presently effective provisions of which are compiled as 17-1-12, 17-1-13, 17-2-11, 17-2-13, 17-2-17 to 17-2-20, 17-2-21, 17-2-23 to 17-2-28, 17-3-7, 17-3-29, 17-3-30, 17-3-33, 17-3-34, 17-4-6, 17-4-8 to 17-4-29 NMSA 1978.

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Immunity statutes have only been passed as to particular crimes. — The legislature has gone no further than to pass immunity statutes applicable only in prosecutions for particular crimes, such as this section. *Apodaca v. Viramontes*, 1949-NMSC-064, 53 N.M. 514, 212 P.2d 425.

17-2-12. Refuges; firearms on; prohibited; exceptions.

It is unlawful for any person to carry, transport or have in his possession, bows, arrows, crossbows or firearms of any kind or description within or upon any game refuge or to discharge any firearm or arrow into or within any state game refuge in New Mexico; provided this section shall not apply to any county, state or federal officer in the discharge of his official duties, nor to persons crossing refuges over public roads and trails with firearms unloaded or taken down; provided further that permits may be issued by the director to stockmen, trappers, ranchers and property owners, or their employees, to carry firearms while engaged in the discharge of their legitimate affairs on or within game refuges.

History: Laws 1937, ch. 23, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 43-213; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-13; Laws 1979, ch. 340, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Section is limited to state game refuges. — It was the intent of the legislature to limit the application of this section to state game refuges. 1955 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 55-6155.

State may not have power as to federal game refuges. — Any attempt on the part of the state to control the disposition of game on a federal game refuge contrary to the wishes of the federal government might be beyond the power of the state. 1955 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 55-6155.

17-2-13. Songbirds; trapping, killing or injuring prohibited.

It shall be unlawful for any person to shoot, ensnare or trap for the purpose of killing or in any other manner to injure or destroy any songbird, or birds whose principal food consists of insects, comprising all the species and varieties of birds represented by the several families of bluebirds, including the western and mountain bluebirds; also bobolinks, catbirds, chickadees, cuckoos, which includes the chaparral bird or roadrunner (*Geococcyx novo mexicanus*), flickers, flycatchers, grosbeaks, humming birds, kinglets, martins, meadowlarks, nighthawks or bull bats, nuthatches, orioles, robins, shrikes, swallows, swifts, tanagers, titmice, thrushes, vireos, warblers, waxwings, whippoorwills [whippoorwills], woodpeckers, wrens, and all other perching birds which feed entirely or chiefly on insects. This section does not prohibit the killing of such birds for scientific purposes under permits from the department of game and fish.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 55; Code 1915, § 2478; Laws 1915, ch. 101, § 16; C.S. 1929, § 57-263; 1941 Comp., § 43-215; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-15; Laws 1967, ch. 119, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Protection of migratory birds as within scope of treaty-making power, 4 A.L.R. 1388, 134 A.L.R. 882.

Power of Congress to protect migratory birds, 11 A.L.R. 991.

38 C.J.S. Game §§ 8, 22-28, 30, 51, 76.

17-2-14. Hawks, vultures and owls; taking, possessing, trapping, destroying, maiming or selling prohibited; exception by permit; penalty.

A. It is unlawful for any person to take, attempt to take, possess, trap or ensnare or in any manner to injure, maim or destroy birds of the order Falconiformes, comprising all of the species and varieties of birds represented by the several families of vultures and hawks, and all of the order Stringiformes, comprising all of the species and varieties of owls. It is also unlawful to purchase, sell or trade, or to possess for the purpose of selling or trading, any parts of these birds.

B. The director of the department of game and fish may issue permits to allow any person to take, possess, trap, ensnare or destroy any bird protected by this section or to possess, give, purchase, sell or trade, or to possess for the purpose of selling or trading, any parts of any birds protected by this section. Permits shall be granted for the following purposes:

- (1) Indian religious purposes;
- (2) scientific purposes in accordance with law and the regulations of the department of game and fish; or
- (3) falconry purposes in accordance with law and the regulations of the department.

C. Notwithstanding any other law, any person engaged in the commercial raising of poultry or game birds may take, capture or kill any hawk, owl or vulture that has killed such poultry or game birds. The owner of such game or poultry farm who takes action under this provision shall report this action to the department of game and fish, which shall verify the necessity of the action taken.

D. Any person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-15.1, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 104, § 1; 1979, ch. 340, § 4; 1992, ch. 29, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals and reenactments. — Laws 1973, ch. 104, § 1, repealed former 53-2-15.1 relating to protection of hawks, vultures and owls, and enacted a new 17-2-14 NMSA 1978.

The 1992 amendment, effective April 1, 1992, in Subsection A, deleted the former last sentence, which read "The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the genera of Aquila and Haliaeetus of the family Accipitridae"; in Subsection B, deleted "upon

application and without charge to any person" preceding "for the following purposes" in the second sentence and "of game and fish" from the end of Paragraph (3); and made stylistic changes.

17-2-15. [Horned toads; killing, selling or shipping from state unlawful.]

It shall be unlawful for any person to wilfully [willfully] kill or to sell horned toads within the state of New Mexico, or to ship them from the state.

History: Laws 1941, ch. 32, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-216; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-16.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

17-2-16. Repealed.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 2001, ch. 66, § 3, repealed 17-2-16 NMSA 1978, as amended by Laws 1979, ch. 340, § 5, regarding the prohibition of the capturing or killing of bullfrogs, effective June 15, 2001. For provisions of former section, see the 2000 NMSA 1978 on *NMOneSource.com*. For present comparable provisions, see 17-2-4.2 NMSA 1978.

17-2-17. [Storage of game or fish.]

No game or fish shall be received or held in storage except as follows, namely:

A. during the open season therefor and for five days thereafter when the same is stored for the person lawfully in possession of the same;

B. at any time of the year when there is attached thereto a proper and valid officer's invoice as provided in this chapter relating to the seizure of game and fish for not more than thirty days after the date of such invoice;

C. when there is attached thereto a proper and valid certificate or permit signed by the state warden [director of the department of game and fish] or deputy [conservation officer] and on its face authorizing storage of the article named therein and during the period therein stated.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 26; Code 1915, § 2449; C.S. 1929, § 57-235; 1941 Comp., § 43-222; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-20.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this chapter" for the words "this act" in Subsection B. For disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-2-18. [Menu as evidence of possession of game or fish.]

The naming of game and fish upon any menu or bill of fare as food for patrons shall be prima facie evidence of the possession of the same by the proprietor of such hotel, restaurant, cafe or boardinghouse.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 28; Code 1915, § 2451; C.S. 1929, § 57-237; 1941 Comp., § 43-223; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-21.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For possession of game or fish without invoice, see 17-4-20 NMSA 1978.

17-2-19. Enforcement of game laws; powers of conservation officers.

A. The director of the department of game and fish, each conservation officer, each sheriff in his respective county and each member of the New Mexico state police shall enforce Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and shall:

- (1) seize any game or fish held in violation of that chapter;
- (2) with or without warrant, arrest any person whom he knows to be guilty of a violation of that chapter; and
- (3) open, enter and examine all camps, wagons, cars, tents, packs, boxes, barrels and packages where he has reason to believe any game or fish taken or held in violation of that chapter is to be found, and seize it.

B. Any warrant for the arrest of a person shall be issued upon sworn complaint, the same as in other criminal cases, and any search warrant shall issue upon a written showing of probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, describing the places to be searched or the persons or things to be seized.

C. Conservation officers may, under the direction of the state game commission and the director of the department of game and fish:

(1) establish from time to time, as needed for the proper functioning of the game and fish research and management division, checking stations at points along established roads, or roadblocks, for the purpose of detecting and apprehending persons violating the game and fish laws and the regulations referred to in Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978;

(2) under emergency circumstances and while on official duty only enforce the provisions of the Criminal Code [Chapter 30, Article 1 NMSA 1978] and the Motor Vehicle Code [66-1-1 NMSA 1978]; and

(3) while on official duty only, enforce the provisions of:

(a) Sections 30-14-1 and 30-14-1.1 NMSA 1978 pertaining to criminal trespass;

(b) Section 30-7-4 NMSA 1978 pertaining to negligent use of a deadly weapon;

(c) Section 30-15-1 NMSA 1978 pertaining to criminal damage to property;

(d) Section 30-22-1 NMSA 1978 pertaining to resisting, evading or obstructing an officer; and

(e) Section 72-1-8 NMSA 1978 pertaining to camping next to a manmade water hole.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 57; Code 1915, § 2480; Laws 1915, ch. 101, § 17; C.S. 1929, § 57-265; 1941 Comp., § 43-224; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-22; Laws 1955, ch. 54, § 1; 1967, ch. 36, § 1; 1975, ch. 86, § 1; 1977, ch. 265, § 1; 1977, ch. 290, § 3; 1981, ch. 99, § 1; 1983, ch. 27, § 1; 2001, ch. 74, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For enforcement powers with respect to endangered species, see 17-2-46 NMSA 1978.

The 2001 amendment, effective July 1, 2001, in Subsection C, deleted "and except as otherwise provided in Paragraph (3) of this subsection," in Paragraph (2), added the paragraph designation (3)(a), and added Paragraphs (3)(b) to (e).

"Emergency" defined. — There are three elements to an "emergency" as that term is used in subsection C(2): (1) the gravity of the threatened harm; (2) the likelihood of the harm occurring; and (3) the lack of time in which action can be taken to avert the harm,

especially whether it was feasible to summon a regular law enforcement officer. These factors must be considered from the conservation officer's point of view. *State v. Creech*, 1991-NMCA-012, 111 N.M. 490, 806 P.2d 1080.

"Reason to believe" defined. — The legislature intended subsection A(3) as a limit on the authority of conservation officers and in using the phrase "reason to believe" should be understood to have required individualized suspicion. *State v. Creech*, 1991-NMCA-012, 111 N.M. 490, 806 P.2d 1080.

Officers of state game commission are state officers. *Allen v. McClellan*, 1967-NMSC-114, 77 N.M. 801, 427 P.2d 677, *overruled on other grounds*, *New Mexico Livestock Bd. v. Dose*, 1980-NMSC-022, 94 N.M. 68, 607 P.2d 606.

Probable cause to stop. — Where game and fish officers were patrolling a thinly populated ranch and recreation area for illegal night-time hunting and the officers observed defendants' vehicles traveling for an extended period in a deserted area, moving and changing directions together and sweeping their headlights to illuminate the side of the road, the officers had probable cause to detain defendants to investigate whether defendants were engaged in illegal hunting. *U.S. v. Stricklin*, 534 F.2d 1386 (10th Cir. N.M. 1976).

Conservation officers may enter private lands without warrants. — Deputy game wardens (now conservation officers) may enter on private lands without warrants in the interest of game protection. 1947 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 47-4974.

County sheriffs and their deputies must enforce game laws. — County sheriffs and their deputies are required to enforce game laws in their counties and need not be appointed deputy game wardens (now conservation officers). 1931 Op. Att'y Gen. 31-132.

Conservation officer may carry sidearms. — A state game department (now game commission) conservation officer may carry sidearms while in the lawful discharge of his duties. 1963 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 63-107.

Role of conservation officers in enforcing other state laws. — In respect to the enforcement of other state laws, state conservation officers stand in the same position as private citizens. 1963 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 63-107.

Authority to make arrests. — Express statutory authority is not spelled out by legislative enactment authorizing conservation officers to enforce other state laws, and in the absence of such express authority their power to act as official peace officers and to make arrests is generally restricted in nature. 1963 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 63-107.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 52 to 54.

Validity of roadblocks by state or local officials for purpose of enforcing fish or game laws, 87 A.L.R.4th 981.

Who may conduct border search pursuant to 19 USCS §§ 482, 1401(i), 1581(a), (b), and 1582, 61 A.L.R. Fed. 290.

36A C.J.S. Fish §§ 37, 42; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 50, 61, 63, 64, 67.

17-2-20. [Seizure of devices used for violating law; nuisance; destruction; firearms excepted.]

Every net, trap, explosive, poisonous or stupefying substance, or device used or intended for use in taking or killing game or fish in violation of this chapter, and set, kept or found in or upon any of the streams or waters in this state or upon the shores thereof, and every trap, device, blind or deadfall found baited in violation of this chapter, is declared to be a public nuisance and may be abated and summarily destroyed by any person and it shall be the duty of every officer authorized to enforce this chapter to seize and summarily destroy the same and no prosecution or suit shall be maintained for such destruction; provided, that nothing in this chapter shall be construed as affecting the right of the state warden [director of the department of game and fish] to use such means as may be proper for the promotion of game and fish propagation and culture, nor as authorizing the seizure or destruction of firearms.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 31; Code 1915, § 2454; C.S. 1929, § 57-240; 1941 Comp., § 43-225; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-23.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this chapter" for the words "this act." For disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Jury trial in case of seizure or destruction of appliances, 17 A.L.R. 574, 50 A.L.R. 97.

36A C.J.S. Fish § 42; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 61, 63, 64, 67.

17-2-20.1. Seizure and forfeiture; property subject.

A. All firearms and bows and arrows may be subject to seizure and forfeiture when used as instrumentalities in the commission of the following crimes:

- (1) illegal possession or transportation of big game during closed season;
- (2) taking big game during closed season;
- (3) attempting to take big game by the use of spotlight or artificial light; and
- (4) exceeding the bag limit on any big game species during open season.

B. Any motor vehicle shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture when operated in violation of the provisions of Section 17-2-31 NMSA 1978, regarding hunting by spotlight.

C. The provisions of the Forfeiture Act [Chapter 31, Article 27 NMSA 1978] apply to the seizure, forfeiture and disposal of property subject to forfeiture pursuant to Subsections A and B of this section.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-2-20.1, enacted by Laws 1979, ch. 321, § 1; 1991, ch. 53, § 1; 2002, ch. 4, § 9.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2002 amendment, effective July 1, 2002, deleted former Subsection B, which read: "Provided that no firearms or bows and arrows shall be subject to forfeiture if the violation was without the knowledge or consent of the owner"; redesignated former Subsection C as present Subsection B and deleted the last sentence of that section, which directed that seized and forfeited motor vehicles were to be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of Section 17-2-20.2 NMSA 1978; deleted former Subsection D, which read: "No conveyance is subject to forfeiture under this section by reason of any act or omission established for the owner to have been committed or omitted without his knowledge or consent. A forfeiture of a conveyance encumbered by a bona fide security interest shall be subject to the interest of a secured party if the secured party neither had knowledge of nor consented to the act or omission"; and added present Subsection C.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 52 to 54.

Right to jury trial in case of seizure of property alleged to be illegally used, 17 A.L.R. 568, 50 A.L.R. 97.

Forfeiture of property for unlawful use before trial of individual offender, 3 A.L.R.2d 738.

Validity, construction, and effect of statutes or regulations making possession of fish and game, or of specified hunting or fishing equipment, prima facie evidence of violation, 81 A.L.R.2d 1093.

Lawfulness of seizure of property used in violation of law as prerequisite to forfeiture action or proceeding, 8 A.L.R.3d 473.

Seizure and forfeiture of firearms or ammunition under 18 USCS § 924(d), 57 A.L.R. Fed. 234.

37 C.J.S. Forfeitures § 3; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 61, 63, 64, 67.

17-2-20.2. Repealed.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 2002, ch. 4, § 22 repealed 17-2-20.2 NMSA 1978, as enacted by Laws 1979, ch. 321, § 2, relating to standards and procedures for the forfeiture of property subject to forfeiture and disposal under 17-2-20.1 NMSA 1978, effective July 1, 2002. For provisions of former section, see the 2001 NMSA 1978 on *NMOneSource.com*. For present comparable provisions, see 31-27-1 NMSA 1978 et seq.

17-2-20.3. Penalties.

The following violations shall constitute a misdemeanor:

- A. illegal possession or transportation of big game during closed season;
- B. taking or attempting to take big game during closed season;
- C. taking or attempting to take big game by the use of spotlight or artificial light;
- D. selling or attempting to sell big game or parts thereof, except as permitted by regulation of the state game commission; and
- E. exceeding the bag limit on any big game species during open season.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-2-20.3, enacted by Laws 1979, ch. 321, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For general penalties, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

For civil liability, see 17-2-26 NMSA 1978.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 46 to 52.

Applicability, to domesticated or captive game, of game laws relating to closed season and the like, 74 A.L.R.2d 974.

Validity, construction, and effect of statutes or regulations making possession of fish and game, or of specified hunting or fishing equipment, prima facie evidence of violation, 81 A.L.R.2d 1093.

38 C.J.S. Game §§ 8, 22-28, 30, 41, 51, 58, 76.

17-2-21. [Sale or disposition of game or fish after seizure; invoice furnished purchaser or donee; disposition of proceeds of sale.]

All game and fish seized under the game laws shall without unnecessary delay be sold by the officer making such seizure, or by the state warden [director of the department of game and fish], except when such sale is impracticable or likely to incur expenses exceeding the proceeds, in which case the same shall be donated to some charitable institution or needy person not concerned in the unlawful killing, or possession thereof. The officer making such seizure shall sign and give to each purchaser or donee an invoice stating the time and place of disposition, the kind and weight as near as may be of the game or fish disposed of and the name of the purchaser or donee. Such invoice shall authorize possession, transportation and use within the state, and storage for thirty days from date. The proceeds from such sale, after deducting the cost of seizure and sale shall, if made by the state warden [director] or any deputy [conservation officer] under salary, be paid into the game protection fund, but if made by a deputy warden [conservation officer] not under salary, or any other officer, shall be paid one-half to the officer making such seizure.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 23; Code 1915, § 2446; C.S. 1929, § 57-232; 1941 Comp., § 43-226; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-24.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For sale of skins, pelts or furs involved in violation, see 17-5-9 NMSA 1978.

Return of game or proceeds after wrongful confiscation. — Where the department of game and fish confiscated an elk from a person charged with a hunting misdemeanor, and the magistrate court dismissed the case because the game officer failed to identify the defendant at the hearing as the person charged, the department was not required to return the elk, or the proceeds from the sale of the elk, to that person. 1988 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 88-43.

17-2-22. Sale of evidence in cases of appeal.

A. For the purpose of avoiding waste, game or fish confiscated and held as evidence in any prosecution for violation of the game laws, if fit for human consumption, shall be sold by the conservation officer or other officer having jurisdiction in the prosecution as soon as possible after the filing of any appeal from the decision of the court to any higher court.

B. The evidence shall be sold for the highest cash price offered and the proceeds of the sale forwarded to the main office of the department of game and fish at Santa Fe to be deposited in the game protection fund. A copy of the receipt of sale shall be delivered to the court and shall be attached to the papers forwarded to the higher court on appeal.

C. If the higher court finds the defendant to be not guilty of the charge he shall be reimbursed within ten days after such decision by the department of game and fish for the full amount of the proceeds from the sale of evidence.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-24.1, enacted by Laws 1963, ch. 216, § 1.

17-2-23. [Reports of seizures and sales.]

In all cases the officer making a seizure or sale shall, within ten days thereafter, report all the particulars thereof and an itemized statement of the proceeds, expenses and fees and the disposition thereof, and pay the remainder of the proceeds, if any, to the state treasurer to be by him paid into the game protection fund.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 24; Code 1915, § 2447; C.S. 1929, § 57-233; 1941 Comp., § 43-227; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-25.

17-2-24. [Officer's right to use animal or vehicle transporting seized game or fish; public conveyances excepted.]

Where game or fish while being transported is seized under this chapter, the officer making such seizure shall have authority upon payment of reasonable compensation therefor, to also take possession of and use any animals and vehicles used in such transportation for the purpose of conveying the game or fish seized to a convenient railroad station or place of safekeeping or sale, and also for conveying any person arrested for the unlawful possession of such game or fish to a place of hearing or trial, and no liability shall attach to such officer by reason thereof, but this section shall not apply to any animal or vehicle while being used as a public conveyance for passengers or mails, or any railroad car.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 25; Code 1915, § 2448; C.S. 1929, § 57-234; 1941 Comp., § 43-228; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-26.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this chapter" for the words "this act." For disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

17-2-25. [Game or fish in possession of passenger; carrier exempt from liability; seizure.]

Nothing in this chapter shall make a common carrier liable for transportation of game and fish when same is in the possession of a passenger, but such fact shall not exempt the same from seizure if unlawfully taken, killed, held in possession or transported.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 37; Code 1915, § 2460; C.S. 1929, § 57-245; 1941 Comp., § 43-229; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-27.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "in this chapter" for the word "herein." For disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

17-2-26. Civil liability.

A. The director of the department of game and fish, or any other officer charged with enforcement of the laws relating to game and fish if so directed by the director, may bring a civil action in the name of the state against any person unlawfully wounding or killing, or unlawfully in possession of, any game quadruped, bird or fish, or part thereof and recover judgment for the following minimum sums as damages for the taking, killing or injuring:

for each elk	\$ 500.00
for each deer	250.00
for each antelope	250.00
for each mountain sheep	1,000.00
for each Barbary sheep	250.00
for each black bear	500.00
for each cougar	500.00
for each bison	600.00
for each ibex	1,000.00
for each oryx	1,000.00
for each javelina	100.00
for each beaver	65.00

for each bird	20.00
for each fish	5.00
for each endangered species	500.00
for each raptor	200.00
for each turkey	150.00
for each jaguar	2,000.00.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A of this section, the state game commission shall establish damages recoverable by civil judgment on a game animal, bird or fish designated to be a trophy animal by commission rule.

C. Damages recovered pursuant to this section are intended to compensate the state for the loss of unique public resources and shall not be limited or reduced by the extent of fines assessed pursuant to any criminal statute. The department of game and fish shall not award or issue a license, permit or certificate to a debtor owing damages pursuant to this section until the judgment has been paid in full to the department.

D. No verdict or judgment recovered by the state in an action shall be for less than the sum fixed in this section. The action for damages may be joined with an action for possession, and recovery may be had for the possession as well as the damages.

E. The pendency or determination of an action for damages or payment of a judgment, or the pendency or determination of a criminal prosecution for the same taking, wounding, killing or possession, is not a bar to the other, nor does either affect the right of seizure under any other provision of the laws relating to game and fish.

F. The provisions of this section shall not be interpreted to prevent, constrain or penalize a Native American for engaging in activities for religious purposes, as provided in Section 17-2-14 or 17-2-41 NMSA 1978.

G. The provisions of this section shall not apply to a landowner or lessee, or employee of either, who kills an animal, on private land in which the person has an ownership or leasehold interest, that is threatening human life or damaging or destroying property, including crops; provided, however, that the killing is reported to the department of game and fish within twenty-four hours and before the removal of the carcass of the animal killed; and provided further that all actions authorized in this subsection are carried out according to rules of the department.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 45; Code 1915, § 2468; C.S. 1929, § 57-253; 1941 Comp., § 43-230; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-28; Laws 1963, ch. 276, § 1; 1969, ch. 28, § 1; 1971, ch. 75, § 3; 1997, ch. 224, § 2; 1999, ch. 31, § 3; 2006, ch. 22, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2006 amendment, effective May 17, 2006, adds Subsection B to provide that the commission shall establish damages recoverable by civil judgment on a game animal, bird or fish designated as trophy animal and adds Subsection C to provide that damages are intended to compensate the state for loss of unique public resources and shall not be modified by the extent fines are assessed and that the department shall not issue licenses or permits to a debtor owing damages pursuant to this section until the judgment for damages has been paid.

The 1999 amendment, effective June 18, 1999, added the judgment amount with regard to jaguars at the end of Subsection A and inserted "of game and fish" in Subsection E.

The 1997 amendment, effective July 1, 1997, revised the schedule of fees in Subsection A, added Subsections D and E and made minor stylistic changes.

Civil and criminal prosecution. — A district attorney has the authority and duty to prosecute civil as well as criminal cases in which the state is a party and which arise in his or her district under the game and fish laws. Double jeopardy prohibitions do not inhibit the district attorney from bringing a civil action for damages pursuant to Section 17-2-26 NMSA 1978 against a person previously convicted and sentenced for a criminal offense arising out of the same conduct in violation of the game and fish laws, because the damages authorized by Section 17-2-26 NMSA 1978 are remedial rather than punitive and serve to compensate the state for the loss of unique public resources. 2008 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 08-04.

Sums of money listed constitute minimum amount of money in a civil liability suit. 1968 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 68-07.

Officer bringing action has discretion in requesting amount. — This section vests discretion in the director or other officer bringing the action to set the request for the defendant's liability at any level consonant with the statutory minimum. 1968 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 68-07.

Officer bringing action may ask for sum within jurisdiction of magistrate. — If, in the exercise of his discretion, the officer bringing the suit on behalf of the state should determine that the suit should ask for no more than the statutory jurisdictional maximum amount, then the suit may be heard by a justice of the peace (now magistrate). 1968 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 68-07.

17-2-27. [District attorneys to prosecute and defend actions under fish and game laws.]

It shall be the duty of each of the district attorneys in this state to prosecute and defend for the state in all courts of the county or counties in their respective districts, all causes, criminal and civil, arising under the provisions of this chapter, in which the state may be a party or interested or concerned.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 81; Code 1915, § 2504; C.S. 1929, § 57-323; 1941 Comp., § 43-231; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-29.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this chapter" for the words "this act." For disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

17-2-28. [Indians hunting off reservations; hunting on reservations; application of laws.]

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all Indians off the reservation within this state, or coming into this state from adjoining states, and to all persons hunting on any Indian reservation within this state; provided, however, that no Indian shall be required to have a license to hunt or fish within the limits of the reservation where said Indian resides.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 7; Code 1915, § 2430; Laws 1919, ch. 133, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 57-212; 1941 Comp., § 43-233; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-31.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The words "this chapter" refer to Chapter 47, 1915 Code. For disposition of Chapter 47 in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

Preemption. — The application on the Mescalero Apache tribe reservation, of New Mexico's hunting and fishing laws to nonmembers of the tribe is preempted by the operation of federal law. *New Mexico v. Mescalero Apache Tribe*, 462 U.S. 324, 103 S. Ct. 2378, 76 L. Ed. 2d 611 (1983).

In absence of treaty Indian outside Indian country is subject to state laws. — As a general rule, if there is no treaty or agreement between the United States and the Indian tribe recognizing or granting rights to Indians to hunt and fish outside the Indian country, an Indian hunting or fishing in New Mexico outside the Indian country is subject to the laws of the state of New Mexico the same as any other person. 1953-54 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 6041.

An Indian may be assessed a license fee and regulated off the reservation for hunting and fishing the same as any other person of the state, except the Navajos must be permitted to hunt free of charge off the reservation. 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6041.

Indian is exempt in Indian country even if off his reservation. — An Indian hunting or fishing on a reservation not his own is still an Indian in Indian country and is exempt from the game laws of the state. 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6041.

Non-Indian may be prosecuted for violation in Indian country. — The state of New Mexico has jurisdiction to prosecute non-Indians violating the hunting and fishing laws of this state even though such violation occurs on an Indian reservation. 1973 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 73-18; 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6041.

Jurisdiction in Indian country. — Section 2 of N.M. Const., art. XXI, provides that until the title of Indians shall have been extinguished, the lands shall be under the absolute jurisdiction and control of the congress of the United States, but this clearly does not deprive the state of jurisdiction over offenses committed by a non-Indian against a non-Indian in Indian country, nor does it prevent the enforcement of the game laws against non-Indians in the Indian country. 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6041.

State has jurisdiction of hides, etc., taken on Indian reservation only if taken by non-Indian. — So far as possession of hides, skins, pelts, heads and game animals, birds or fish, or parts thereof, taken by a non-Indian on an Indian reservation, the state would have jurisdiction the same as though taken anywhere else in the state; but in the case of such items taken by an Indian on an Indian reservation and transported elsewhere, the state would have absolutely no jurisdiction whatsoever. 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6041.

Law reviews. — For article, "New Mexico v. Mescalero Apache Tribe: When Can a State Concurrently Regulate Hunting and Fishing by Nonmembers on Reservation Land?," see 14 N.M.L. Rev. 349 (1984).

For article, "The Native American's Right to Hunt and Fish: An Overview of the Aboriginal, Spiritual and Mystical Belief System, the Effect of European Contact and the Continuing Fight to Observe a Way of Life," see 19 N.M.L. Rev. 377 (1989).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 41 Am. Jur. 2d Indians §§ 64 et seq., 155 et seq..

42 C.J.S. Indians §§ 122 to 129.

17-2-29. [Hunting and boating while intoxicated or under the influence of narcotic drugs prohibited.]

In order to prevent hunting and boating accidents and to promote the public safety, it shall hereafter be unlawful for any person, while clearly intoxicated as a result of drinking alcoholic liquors or under the influence of any narcotic drug, to hunt, kill or attempt to take in any manner any game or nongame mammal or bird, or to carry firearms of any kind or bow and arrows in any hunting area; or to go or to be upon the waters of any lake in a boat or on a raft.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-240; Laws 1953, ch. 98, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-32.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For prohibited operation of motorboats, vessels, etc., see 66-12-11 NMSA 1978.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Criminal liability for injury or death caused by operation of pleasure boat, 8 A.L.R.4th 886.

17-2-30. [Person convicted of hunting or boating while intoxicated or under influence of narcotic drugs; revocation and withholding of hunting and fishing license privileges.]

In the event any person shall be convicted of a violation of this act [17-2-29, 17-2-30 NMSA 1978], his hunting and fishing license shall be revoked and all hunting and fishing license privileges withheld for a period of twelve months.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-244; Laws 1953, ch. 98, § 5; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-36.

ANNOTATIONS

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Criminal liability for injury or death caused by operation of pleasure boat, 8 A.L.R.4th 886.

17-2-31. Use of artificial light while hunting prohibited.

It is unlawful for a person or a group of persons together in possession or control of a firearm or other implement to throw or cast the rays of a spotlight or other artificial light into any field, pasture, woodland, forest or prairie where big game or domestic livestock may be, or are reasonably expected to be, whereby any big game animal or domestic animal could be killed by aid of an artificial light. However, the following shall be exempt from the provisions of this section:

- A. an officer authorized to enforce the game and livestock laws of the state;
- B. a government employee acting in an official capacity;
- C. a landowner or lessee or employee of such landowner or lessee, while on the land owned or leased in connection with legitimate activities; or
- D. a person who has received a permit or authorization from the department of game and fish to conduct such activities.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-235; Laws 1951, ch. 171, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-2-37; 2007, ch. 155, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For penalty for violation of this section, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

The 2007 amendment, effective June 15, 2007, added the exemptions in Subsections B and D.

Section is not void for uncertainty. *State v. Barber*, 91 N.M. 764, 581 P.2d 27 (Ct. App. 1978).

Absence of criminal intent element does not violate due process. — Given the public interest concerned and the difficulties involved in the protection of big game animals and livestock, together with the apparent general public attitude, it appears that the legislature intended to eliminate the element of criminal intent in hunting by means of artificial light so that it is the doing on the act alone which is prohibited, and this does not violate due process. *State v. Barber*, 1978-NMCA-059, 91 N.M. 764, 581 P.2d 27.

17-2-32. Diseased rabbits; hunting and trapping.

The department of game and fish may restrict hunting and trapping of rabbits in any area when notified by the department of public health [department of health] that rabbits in the area are infected with bubonic plague. Any restriction under this section shall be terminated when the department of public health [department of health] notifies the department of game and fish that danger, of public health significance, no longer exists in the area with respect to these diseased rabbits.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-45, enacted by Laws 1963, ch. 150, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1968, ch. 37, § 3, transferred the functions of the department of public health to the department of health and social services.

Section is not void for uncertainty. *State v. Barber*, 1978-NMCA-059, 91 N.M. 764, 581 P.2d 27.

Absence of criminal intent element does not violate due process. — Given the public interest concerned and the difficulties involved in the protection of big game animals and livestock, together with the apparent general public attitude, it appears that the legislature intended to eliminate the element of criminal intent so that it is the doing of the act alone which is prohibited, and this does not violate due process. *State v. Barber*, 1978-NMCA-059, 91 N.M. 764, 581 P.2d 27.

PART 2

HUNTER TRAINING ACT

17-2-33. Use of firearms by minors.

A. It is unlawful after April 1, 1972, for any person born after January 1, 1958, to hunt with or shoot a firearm, unless:

(1) he is supervised by a parent, legal guardian or a responsible adult designated by the parent or guardian; or

(2) he carries a certificate indicating that he has successfully completed the New Mexico hunter training course or the hunter training course of another state which is approved by the New Mexico department of game and fish; or

(3) he is eighteen years of age or older.

B. It is unlawful after April 1, 1976, for any person under the age of eighteen years to hunt with or shoot a firearm unless he is carrying a certificate indicating that he has successfully completed the New Mexico hunter training course or a hunter training course of another state which is approved by the New Mexico department of game and fish.

C. Any person violating the provisions [provisions] of this section is guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-46, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 61, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

17-2-34. Hunter training program; instructor certification; certificate of competency.

A. The department of game and fish shall provide a course instruction in the safe handling of firearms for individuals interested in obtaining a certificate of competency in the safe handling of firearms. The department may cooperate with the superintendent of public instruction or any reputable association or organization as determined by the department and having as one of its objectives the promotion of safety in firearm handling.

B. The department of game and fish shall prescribe the type of instruction and the qualifications of instructors and shall designate annually those persons qualified to give instruction in the safe handling of firearms. Persons designated by the department of game and fish to be instructors are authorized to give the course of instruction in the safe handling of firearms to all interested persons. Upon the completion of the course and certification to the department by the instructor, the department shall cause to be

issued, to the person instructed, a certificate of competency in the safe handling of firearms, which shall be valid unless revoked by the department of game and fish for such cause as determined by regulation of the department to be unsafe handling of a firearm.

C. The department of game and fish shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of the Hunter Training Act [17-2-33 NMSA 1978].

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-47, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 61, § 3.

17-2-35. Exemption.

Nothing in the Hunter Training Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978] shall prohibit any person from carrying or shooting a firearm while participating in an organized and supervised shooting program, or while under the immediate and direct supervision of a parent, guardian or responsible adult, or while participating in a course of instruction in the safe handling of firearms offered by the department of game and fish. However, no exemption shall permit hunting without possession of a valid hunter training certificate.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-48, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 61, § 4; 1981, ch. 306, § 1.

17-2-36. Short title.

This act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Hunter Training Act".

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-49, enacted by Laws 1971, ch. 61, § 1.

PART 3 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACT

17-2-37. Short title.

Sections 17-2-37 through 17-2-46 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Wildlife Conservation Act".

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-50, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 1; 1995, ch. 145, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For the powers and the duties of the conservation services division, see 17-1-5.1 NMSA 1978.

The 1995 amendment, substituted "Sections 17-2-37 through 17-2-46 NMSA 1978" for "Sections 53-2-50 through 53-2-59 NMSA 1953".

Contingent effective date. — Laws 1995, ch. 145, § 9 provided that the 1995 amendments to the Wildlife Conservation Act shall become effective only upon the appropriation of sufficient funds from the general fund to the conservation services division of the department of game and fish in an amount not less than \$350,000 to fulfill the responsibilities established in Laws 1994, ch. 129 and the appropriation of sufficient funds from the general fund of not less than \$100,000 to implement the 1995 amendments. Laws 1995, ch. 223, § 10, effective June 16, 1995, appropriated \$450,000 from the general fund to the conservation services division of the department of game and fish for expenditure in fiscal year 1996 for the purpose of operation the division, provided that the division may expend not more than \$100,000 for implementation of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

Mining fees for fish and wildlife habitat. — Surcharge on fees charged to mining industry to contribute to cost of providing for fish and wildlife habitat are valid exercise of mining commission's authority and their transfer to department of game and wildlife, which administers the Wildlife Conservation Act, is valid. *New Mexico Mining Ass'n v. New Mexico Mining Comm'n*, 1996-NMCA-098, 122 N.M. 332, 924 P.2d 741.

Allocation of licenses based on residency impermissible discrimination. — The allocation of licenses for bighorn, oryx and ibex by the state game commission on the basis of residency discriminates impermissibly against nonresidents under the federal constitution. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

Fee structure, although discriminatory, not offensive. — The present fee structure in 17-3-13 NMSA 1978, which discriminates against nonresidents, is not offensive to either the privileges and immunities clause, U.S. Const., art. IV, § 2, or the U.S. Const., amend. XIV. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

County ordinances conflicting with Wildlife Conservation Act are invalid. — County land use ordinances attempting to restrict traditional federal and state regulatory authority conflict with, and thus are preempted by, the state Wildlife Conservation Act. These ordinances cannot lawfully grant to the counties the option of taking over the state's designated role in planning for the recovery and management of threatened or endangered species. 1994 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 94-01.

Law reviews. — For student article, "Preventing the Extinction of Candidate Species: The Lesser Prairie-Chicken in New Mexico", see 49 Nat. Resources J. 525 (2009).

For note, "Leaving Wildlife Out of National Wildlife Refuges: The Irony of Wyoming v. United States", see 34 N.M.L. Rev. 217 (2004).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Criminal prosecution under Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 USCS §§ 1531-1543), 128 A.L.R. Fed. 271.

17-2-38. Definitions.

As used in the Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978]:

A. "commission" means the state game commission;

B. "director" means the director of the department of game and fish;

C. "ecosystem" means a system of living organisms and their environment;

D. "endangered species" means any species of fish or wildlife whose prospects of survival or recruitment within the state are in jeopardy due to any of the following factors:

(1) the present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of its habitat;

(2) overutilization for scientific, commercial or sporting purposes;

(3) the effect of disease or predation;

(4) other natural or man-made factors affecting its prospects of survival or recruitment within the state; or

(5) any combination of the foregoing factors.

The term may also include any species of fish or wildlife appearing on the United States list of endangered native and foreign fish and wildlife as set forth in Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as endangered species, provided that the commission adopts those lists in whole or in part. The term shall not include any species covered by the provisions of 16 U.S.C. 1331 through 1340 (1971) and shall not include any species of the class insecta determined by the director to constitute a pest whose protection under the Wildlife Conservation Act would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to man;

E. "investigation" means a process pursuant to Subsections B through L of Section 17-2-40 NMSA 1978 undertaken whenever the director suspects that a species may be threatened or endangered and which consists of a formal review of existing data and studies and may include additional field research to determine whether a species is threatened or endangered;

F. "land or aquatic habitat interests" means interests in real property or water rights consisting of fee simple title, easements in perpetuity, time certain easements, long-term leases and short-term leases;

G. "management" means the collection and application of biological information for the purposes of establishing and maintaining a congruous relationship between individuals within species and populations of wildlife and the carrying capacity of their habitat. The term includes the entire range of activities that constitutes a full scientific resource program of, including but not limited to, research, census, law enforcement, propagation, acquisition or maintenance of land or aquatic habitat interests appropriate for recovery of the species, improvement and maintenance, education and related activities or protection and regulated taking;

H. "recovery plan" means a designated program or methodology reasonably expected to lead to restoration and maintenance of a species and its habitat;

I. "peer review panel" means an advisory panel of scientists, each of whom possesses expertise relevant to the proposed investigation and at least one of whom is a wildlife biologist, convened to review the scientific methodology for collection and analysis of data by a researcher based on commonly accepted scientific peer review;

J. "species" means any species or subspecies;

K. "substantial public interest" means a nonfrivolous claim indicated by a broad-based expression of public concern;

L. "take" or "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture or kill any wildlife or attempt to do so;

M. "threatened species" means any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range in New Mexico; the term may also include any species of fish or wildlife appearing on the United States list of endangered native and foreign fish and wildlife as set forth in Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as threatened species, provided that the commission adopts the list in whole or in part; and

N. "wildlife" means any nondomestic mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish, mollusk or crustacean or any part, egg or offspring, or the dead body or parts thereof.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-51, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 2; 1995, ch. 145, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1995 amendment, in Subsection D, deleted "or are likely within the foreseeable future to become so" following "jeopardy" in the introductory language, deleted "or subspecies" following "species" and "or threatened" following "endangered" in the next to last sentence and added the language beginning "and shall not include" at the end of the last sentence; added Subsections E and F; redesignated former Subsection E as Subsection G and substituted "acquisition or maintenance of land or aquatic habitat interests appropriate for recovery of the species" for "acquisition" therein; added

Subsections H through K and M; redesignated former Subsections F and G as Subsections L and N; inserted "or 'taking'" in Subsection L; and made minor stylistic changes.

Compiler's notes. — Section 4 of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 is compiled as 16 U.S.C. § 1533.

Authority over wild horses. — The definition of wildlife in this section does not encompass the wild horses on the White Sands Missile Range. Therefore, because the authority of the State Game Commission is limited by statute, and a state agency has no powers not delegated to it by statute, the Game Commission lacks jurisdiction over these wild horses. 1994 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 94-06.

17-2-38. Definitions. (Effective July 1, 2026.)

As used in the Wildlife Conservation Act:

A. *"commission" means the state wildlife commission;*

B. *"director" means the director of the department of wildlife;*

C. *"ecosystem" means a system of living organisms and their environment;*

D. *"endangered species" means any species of fish or wildlife whose prospects of survival or recruitment within the state are in jeopardy due to any of the following factors:*

(1) *the present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of its habitat;*

(2) *overutilization for scientific, commercial or sporting purposes;*

(3) *the effect of disease or predation;*

(4) *other natural or man-made factors affecting its prospects of survival or recruitment within the state; or*

(5) *any combination of the foregoing factors. The term may also include any species of fish or wildlife appearing on the United States list of endangered native and foreign fish and wildlife as set forth in Section 4 of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 as endangered species; provided that the commission adopts those lists in whole or in part. The term does not include any species covered by the provisions of 16 U.S.C. 1331 through 1340 (1971) or any species of the class insecta determined by the director to constitute a pest whose protection under the Wildlife Conservation Act would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to humans;*

E. "investigation" means a process pursuant to Subsections B through L of Section 17-2-40 NMSA 1978 undertaken whenever the director believes that a species may be threatened or endangered and that consists of a formal review of existing data and studies and may include additional field research to determine whether a species is threatened or endangered;

F. "land or aquatic habitat interests" means interests in real property or water rights consisting of fee simple title, easements in perpetuity, time certain easements, long-term leases and short-term leases;

G. "management" means the collection and application of biological information for the purposes of establishing and maintaining a congruous relationship between individuals within species and populations of wildlife and the carrying capacity of their habitat. The term includes the entire range of activities that constitutes a full scientific resource program, including research, census, law enforcement, propagation, acquisition or maintenance of land or aquatic habitat interests appropriate for recovery of the species; improvement and maintenance, education and related activities; and protection and regulated taking;

H. "recovery plan" means a designated program or methodology reasonably expected to lead to restoration and maintenance of a species and its habitat;

I. "peer review panel" means an advisory panel of scientists, each of whom possesses expertise relevant to the proposed investigation and at least one of whom is a wildlife biologist, convened to review the scientific methodology for collection and analysis of data by a researcher based on commonly accepted scientific peer review;

J. "species" means any species or subspecies;

K. "substantial public interest" means a nonfrivolous claim indicated by a broad-based expression of public concern;

L. "take" or "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture or kill any wildlife or attempt to do so;

M. "threatened species" means any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range in New Mexico; the term may also include any species of fish or wildlife appearing on the United States list of endangered native and foreign fish and wildlife as set forth in Section 4 of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 as threatened species; provided that the commission adopts the list in whole or in part; and

N. "wildlife" means a nondomestic mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish or invertebrate species, including a living animal, or any part, egg, spawn, offspring or the dead body or parts thereof.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-51, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 2; 1995, ch. 145, § 2; 2025, ch. 9, § 7.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2025 amendment, effective July 1, 2026, changed the definition of "commission" from the "state game commission" to the "state wildlife commission", changed the definition of "director" from the "director of the department of game and fish" to the "director of the department of wildlife", and revised the definition of "wildlife" as used in the Wildlife Conservation Act; in Subsection A, after "state" deleted "game" and added "wildlife"; in Subsection B, after "department of" deleted "game and fish" and added "wildlife"; and in Subsection N, after "fish" deleted "mollusk or crustacean" and added "or invertebrate species, including a living animal" and after "egg" added "spawn".

17-2-39. Findings and declarations.

The legislature finds and declares that:

A. species of wildlife indigenous to the state that may be found to be threatened or endangered should be managed to maintain and, to the extent possible, enhance their numbers within the carrying capacity of the habitat;

B. the state should assist in the management of species of wildlife that are deemed to be endangered elsewhere by prohibiting the taking, possession, transportation, exportation, processing, sale or offering for sale or shipment within this state of species of wildlife listed on the United States lists of endangered fish and wildlife, unless such actions will assist in preserving or propagating the species;

C. adequate funding should be made available to the department of game and fish by annual appropriations from the general fund or from other sources separate and apart from the game protection fund for management of threatened or endangered species; and

D. because the management and recovery of threatened or endangered species are the responsibility of and a benefit to all of society, the costs of management and recovery should be the responsibility of all sectors of society, and those costs should be minimized and should be borne by federal, state and local governments with contributions from the private sector.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-52, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 3; 1995, ch. 145, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For the game protection fund, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

The 1995 amendment, in Subsection A, deleted "and subspecies" following "species" and inserted "threatened or" preceding "endangered"; deleted "or subspecies" following "species" in three places in Subsection B; in Subsection C, inserted "should" following "funding", deleted "and fish" preceding "protection fund" and inserted "threatened or"; and added Subsection D.

Law reviews. — For article, "Hip Deep: A Survey of State Instream Flow Law From the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean", see 43 Nat. Resources J. 1151 (2003).

17-2-40. Biennial review; investigations; recommendations of the director; procedures.

A. The director shall conduct a biennial review of all species of wildlife named on the list required by Section 17-2-41 NMSA 1978. The director may conduct investigations at any time of those other species of wildlife indigenous to the state that are suspected of being threatened or endangered in order to develop information relating to population, distribution, habitat needs, limiting factors and other biological and ecological data to determine his recommendations for listing or not listing a species and management measures and requirements necessary for their survival. The director shall also conduct, within a reasonable time, an investigation to support listing or delisting of a species based upon new evidence or, with the advice and consent of the commission, based upon substantial public interest. Upon completion of an investigation or investigations, he shall make written recommendations to the commission to list or not list any unlisted species or to delist any listed species investigated. In conducting any investigation for new listing or delisting required or undertaken pursuant to this subsection, the director shall comply with the procedures established in Subsections B through L of this section. Species listed as threatened or endangered on the state list through adoption of the United States list pursuant to Subsections D and M of Section 17-2-38 NMSA 1978 shall not be subject at the time of adoption to the listing procedures established in Subsections B through K of this section.

B. The director shall select a researcher to conduct an investigation pursuant to Subsection A of this section and request the appointment of a peer review panel composed of one qualified individual from each of the four-year state universities to be appointed by the presidents of the respective universities. The peer review panel shall be requested to submit comments according to a schedule determined by the director. The researcher shall submit his research design to the peer review panel.

C. When additional field research is undertaken as part of an investigation, the peer review panel shall examine the proposed research design for methodology for collection and analysis of data. Upon receipt of the peer review panel's submitted comments, the researcher shall initiate the field research regarding the designated species.

D. To the extent practicable, as part of his investigation the researcher shall meet and consult with private landowners, lessees and land and resource managers who are or may be affected by or have information pertinent to the investigation.

E. When the researcher initiates his investigation, the director shall:

- (1) create a public repository file in which copies of all documents filed with the director pertaining to the investigation or a potential recovery plan, to be developed pursuant to Section 17-2-40.1 NMSA 1978, including all peer review comments, shall be maintained;
- (2) mail a notice of the initiation of the investigation to federal and state agencies, local and tribal governments that are or may be affected by the results of the investigation and individuals and organizations that have requested notification of department actions regarding threatened or endangered species;
- (3) notify the general public of the initiation of the investigation by information releases to the media in the area of the state affected;
- (4) indicate, in all notices and information releases, where and until what date information may be submitted for inclusion in the public repository file;
- (5) accept data, views or information about the biological or ecological status of the species for use in both the investigation and the development of the potential recovery plan; and
- (6) accept data, views and information on the potential economic or social impacts or opportunities of a change in the legal status of the species for inclusion in the recovery plan.

F. The director shall file all written comments, data, views and information furnished pursuant to Subsection D of this section in the public repository file and shall preserve that file for use in connection with the listing process and development of any recovery plan developed pursuant to the provisions of Section 17-2-40.1 NMSA 1978. The director shall file in the public repository file all records indicating contact by the director, the researcher, employees or contractors with land owners or public or private resource managers affected by the potential action.

G. Information from the public repository file relating to social and economic impacts shall not be considered by the director in making his recommendation or the commission in making its decision to list, delist, not list, continue to list, upgrade or downgrade a species, but shall be considered only in the development of any recovery plan for the species.

H. The commission shall adopt, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 14-2-1 NMSA 1978, regulations by January 1, 1996 governing the confidentiality of data from an investigation.

I. The researcher shall prepare and submit draft reports to the peer review panel and to the public repository file. The peer review panel will be requested to examine and comment on the draft report in a timely manner.

J. After consideration of the peer review panel's submitted comments on the draft reports, the researcher shall prepare final reports and file them and all peer review panel comments with the director and in the public repository file. The peer review panel shall not be compelled to attend any hearing before the commission.

K. Upon receipt of the researcher's final reports, the director shall make recommendations to the commission to list, not list or delist the species based upon criteria listed in Subsection L of this section. The commission shall establish dates and locations for public hearings on the recommended actions and give notice of the public hearings in the same manner and to the same persons as notice was given of the initiation of the investigation and, in addition, publish legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected at least ninety days before the date set for the hearing. Public hearings shall be held at a place within any quadrant of the state affected by the recommended actions when the director determines that there is substantial public interest indicated in holding a hearing in that quadrant. All hearings on the recommended actions shall be held within six months of the date the director makes his recommendations. The notice shall:

- (1) include the date, time and location of all hearings on the matter;
- (2) include a statement of the recommended action;
- (3) include an indication of the location and availability of the public repository file;
- (4) indicate where and by what date written comments and testimony to be included in the hearing record may be filed;
- (5) indicate that views, data and comments pertaining to the final report may be presented orally at or in writing to the hearing;
- (6) specify that notice of intent to present technical and scientific testimony and a written copy of the testimony to be presented shall be submitted to the commission not less than thirty days prior to the initial hearing; and
- (7) specify that the public record shall remain open for comments for thirty days after the date of the final hearing.

L. The commission shall make its decisions and take action based upon relevant and reliable evidence to list, not list or delist a species at its next regularly scheduled meeting within no more than thirty days after the close of the hearing record. The commission shall:

(1) list or maintain a species as endangered and shall not delist a species if it finds that the species' prospects for survival or recruitment within the state are in jeopardy based upon the biological and ecological evidence in the public repository file and based upon biological and ecological evidence received in the public hearings; and

(2) list or maintain a species as threatened and shall not delist a species if it finds that the species' prospects for survival or recruitment within the state are likely within the foreseeable future to be in jeopardy based upon the biological and ecological evidence in the public repository file and biological and ecological evidence received in public hearings.

M. Whenever the director finds that there is an emergency posing a significant risk to the well-being of any species and that risk is likely to jeopardize the continued survival or recruitment of the species within the state, the director shall recommend to the commission that the species should be listed as endangered. The commission shall act upon the director's recommendation immediately and shall either list or not list the species by regulation based upon the evidence supporting the recommendation if it finds that the continued survival of the species is in jeopardy. If the commission lists the species as endangered, it shall waive the requirements of Subsections A through L of this section. Whenever the commission adopts a regulation listing a species as endangered pursuant to this subsection, it shall give notice of the listing in the same manner and to the same persons as notice is given in the initiation of investigations and in addition shall publish legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected. The emergency listing shall cease to have force and effect at the close of a three-year period following the date of the finding unless, during the three year period, the procedures for listing pursuant to Subsections B through L of this section or continuing to list pursuant to commission regulations for the biennial review are completed.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-53, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 4; 1995, ch. 145, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1995 amendment rewrote the section heading which read "Investigation"; designated the existing provisions as Subsection A and rewrote the subsection and added Subsections B through M.

17-2-40.1. Recovery plans; procedures.

A. To the extent practicable, a recovery plan shall be developed pursuant to Subsections B through G of this section for any species listed as threatened or endangered. If indicated, the director shall conduct a social and economic analysis and, if adverse impacts are found, develop a social or economic mitigation plan.

B. To the extent practicable, the director shall develop recovery plans that include several threatened or endangered species that utilize similar habitats or share a

common threat or both. A multiple-species recovery plan shall be designed to accomplish recovery of the shared habitat or reduce a common threat or both.

C. As the initial action in the development of a recovery plan, the director shall, within one year of listing, schedule a public information meeting in each of the quadrants of the state determined by the director to be affected by the development of a recovery plan. These meetings shall be held in a manner calculated to provide a reasonable opportunity for individuals and private and public entities to participate and express their views about the development of a recovery plan for one or more species and the attendant adverse social or economic impacts, if any, that may result from implementation of a recovery plan. At these meetings the director shall present background information about the basis of the listing, an explanation of the process to develop a recovery plan and the probable content in general terms, if known, of the recovery plan and if needed, the process to develop a social and economic mitigation plan.

D. Upon completion of the public information meeting or meetings on a recovery plan, the director shall consult and cooperate with other states or countries when appropriate and shall solicit interest from representatives of affected local governments, tribal governments, landowners, state and federal agencies and other interested individuals and organizations to serve on an advisory committee. He shall appoint to the advisory committee all of those who are willing to participate in the development of the recovery plan. When necessary, he may appoint from the membership of the advisory committee a working group reflecting the diversity of the advisory committee.

E. With the assistance of the advisory committee, the director shall develop a draft recovery plan to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) restoration and maintenance of a viable population of the threatened or endangered species and its habitat reasonably expected to lead to the delisting of the species;
- (2) avoidance or mitigation of adverse social or economic impacts;
- (3) identification of social or economic benefits and opportunities; and
- (4) use of volunteer resources and existing economic recovery and assistance programs and funding available from public and private sources to implement the plan.

F. The director shall mail the draft recovery plan to federal and state agencies, local and tribal governments that are or may be affected by the recovery plan and individuals and organizations that have requested notification of department actions regarding threatened or endangered species.

G. The final recovery plan shall be presented to the commission for its consideration not later than two years from the date the species was listed. If the commission determines that the proposed plan has achieved the objectives set forth in Subsection E of this section, it shall approve the recovery plan or approve with conditions. After approval of the plan, the director shall seek cooperation with other states and countries, when appropriate, and landowners, state and federal agencies and local and tribal governments for implementation of the recovery plan and when appropriate submit the recovery plan to the secretary of the interior for approval pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-2-40.1, enacted by Laws 1995, ch. 145, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, see 16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.

17-2-41. Endangered species.

A. On the basis of investigations concerning wildlife, other available scientific and commercial data and after consultation with wildlife agencies in other states, appropriate federal agencies, local and tribal governments and other interested persons and organizations, the commission shall by regulation develop a list of those species of wildlife indigenous to the state that are determined to be threatened or endangered within the state, giving their common and scientific names by species and subspecies.

B. The director shall conduct a review of the state list of threatened or endangered species and shall present biennially to the commission his recommendations for appropriate action. The commission shall act on the director's biennial recommendations at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The commission shall adopt, no later than January 1, 1996, regulations providing procedures for commission actions on the director's recommendations to continue to list or to upgrade or downgrade a species.

C. Except as otherwise provided in the Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978], it is unlawful for any person to take, possess, transport, export, process, sell or offer for sale or ship any species of wildlife appearing on any of the following lists:

(1) the list of wildlife indigenous to the state determined to be endangered within the state as set forth by regulations of the commission; and

(2) the United States lists of endangered native and foreign fish and wildlife as set forth in Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as endangered or threatened species, but only to the extent that those lists are adopted for this purpose by regulations of the commission; provided that any species of wildlife appearing on any

of the lists set forth in this subsection, transported into the state from another state or from a point outside the territorial limits of the United States and which is destined for a point beyond the state, may be transported across the state without restriction in accordance with the terms of any federal permit or permit issued under the laws or regulations of another state or otherwise in accordance with the laws of another state.

D. The provisions of Subsection C of this section shall not apply to a taking of wildlife by a Native American for religious purposes, unless it materially and negatively affects an endangered species or threatened species.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-54, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 5; 1995, ch. 145, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For Section 4 of the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, see 16 U.S.C. § 1533.

The 1995 amendment, in Subsection A, inserted "local and tribal governments", deleted "not later than one year after the effective date of the Wildlife Conservation Act" preceding "the commission shall", deleted "and subspecies" following "species" and inserted "threatened or" preceding "endangered"; in Subsection B, inserted the language beginning "of threatened or" for "of endangered species biennially commencing within two years of the effective date of the Wildlife Conservation Act and may present to the commission recommendations for appropriate additions to or deletions from the list" in the first sentence and added the second and third sentences; deleted "or subspecies" following "species" in two places in Subsection C; added Subsection D; and made minor stylistic changes.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 50.5.

16D C.J.S. Constitutional Law § 1416.

17-2-41.1. Wildlife to be protected; management. (Effective July 1, 2026.)

A. In addition to species defined as protected in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, the commission is authorized to extend management and protection by rule to any species of wildlife.

B. When determining whether and how to protect a species of wildlife, the commission shall consider:

- (1) whether the species qualifies as a species of greatest conservation need;*
- (2) the science-based reasons for protection of a species; and*

(3) *the rules and management programs that would potentially accompany protected status.*

C. The department is not required to respond to wildlife nuisance incidents as prescribed by Section 17-2-7.2 NMSA 1978 unless:

(1) *the department was required to do so for species listed as protected in statute prior to July 1, 2026; or*

(2) *in its own discretion, the commission adopts a rule directing the department to do so.*

D. As used in this section, "wildlife" means a nondomestic mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish or invertebrate species, including a living animal, or any part, egg, spawn, offspring or the dead body or parts thereof.

History: Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 14 made Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 5 effective July 1, 2026.

17-2-41.2. Species of greatest conservation need; definition; data collection. (Effective July 1, 2026.)

A. For the purposes of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, "species of greatest conservation need" means species as identified and updated by the department in an assessment of the state's wildlife and habitat.

B. The department shall annually publish on the department's website data collected on species of greatest conservation need and the use of state and federal funds for the support and recovery of species of greatest conservation need.

History: Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 14 made Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 6 effective July 1, 2026.

17-2-42. Management programs.

A. The director shall establish such programs, including programs for research and the acquisition of land or aquatic habitat, as authorized and deemed necessary by the commission for the management of endangered species.

B. In carrying out programs authorized by the Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978], the director may enter into agreements with federal agencies, political subdivisions of the state or with private persons for administration and management of any program established under this section or utilized for management of endangered species.

C. The director may authorize by permit the taking, possession, transportation, exportation or shipment of species or subspecies which have been deemed by the commission to be in need of management as provided in the Wildlife Conservation Act, so long as such use is for scientific, zoological or educational purposes, for propagation in captivity of such wildlife or to protect private property.

D. Endangered species may be removed, captured or destroyed where necessary to alleviate or prevent damage to property or to protect human health. Such removal, capture or destruction may be carried out only by prior authorization by permit from the director, unless otherwise provided by law; provided, that endangered species may be removed, captured or destroyed without permit by any person in emergency situations involving an immediate threat to human life or private property. Regulations governing the removal, capture or destruction of endangered species shall be adopted by the commission within one year after the effective date of the Wildlife Conservation Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-55, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

"Effective date of the Wildlife Conservation Act". — The phrase "effective date of the Wildlife Conservation Act" means February 26, 1974, the effective date of Laws 1974, Chapter 83.

County ordinances conflicting with Wildlife Conservation Act are invalid. — County land use ordinances attempting to restrict traditional federal and state regulatory authority conflict with, and thus are preempted by, the state Wildlife Conservation Act. These ordinances cannot lawfully grant to the counties the option of taking over the state's designated role in planning for the recovery and management of threatened or endangered species. 1994 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 94-01.

17-2-43. Commission; power to regulate.

The commission is authorized and directed to establish such regulations as it may deem necessary to carry out all the provisions and purposes of the Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978].

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-56, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 7.

17-2-43.1. Judicial review; administrative actions.

A. Any person adversely affected by an order of the commission may appeal to the district court pursuant to the provisions of Section 39-3-1.1 NMSA 1978.

B. Any person adversely affected by a regulation adopted by the commission may appeal to the court of appeals. All appeals shall be upon the record made at the hearing or contained in the public repository file and shall be taken to the court of appeals within thirty days following the date of the filing of the regulation by the commission pursuant to the provisions of the State Rules Act [Chapter 14, Article 4 NMSA 1978].

C. Upon appeal, the court of appeals shall set aside the regulation only if it is found to be:

- (1) arbitrary, capricious or an abuse of discretion;
- (2) not supported by substantial evidence in the record; or
- (3) otherwise not in accordance with law.

D. After a hearing and a showing of good cause by the appellant, a stay of the regulation being appealed may be granted:

- (1) by the commission; or
- (2) by the court of appeals if the commission denies a stay or fails to act upon an application for a stay within sixty days after receipt of the application.

E. The appellant shall pay all costs for any appeal found to be frivolous by the court of appeals.

History: Laws 1995, ch. 145, § 8; 1999, ch. 265, § 26.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1999 amendment, effective July 1, 1999, added Subsection A; redesignated former Subsection A as Subsection B, and in that subsection, substituted "a regulation adopted by the commission" for "an administrative action taken by the commission" in the first sentence, and substituted the language beginning "filing of the regulation" for "action" in the second sentence; and deleted former Subsection B, which read "For appeals of regulations, the date of the action shall be the date of the filing of the regulation by the commission pursuant to the provisions of the State Rules Act".

17-2-44. Director; land or aquatic habitat interest acquisition.

In addition to other powers and duties, the director:

A. may acquire land or aquatic habitat interests for the conservation, management, restoration, propagation and protection of threatened or endangered species; and

B. shall conduct studies to determine the status and requirements for survival of threatened or endangered species.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-57, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 8; 1995, ch. 145, § 7.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1995 amendment rewrote the section heading which read "Commission; land acquisition; state plan studies"; in Subsection A, substituted "land or aquatic habitat interests" for "lands, waters or interests therein" and inserted "threatened or"; deleted former Subsection B, relating to public hearings on a state plan for endangered species; and redesignated former Subsection C as Subsection B and inserted "threatened or" therein.

17-2-45. Penalty.

A. Any person who fails to procure any permit required by Subsection C or D of Section 17-2-42 NMSA 1978 or who fails to abide by the terms of such permit, is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than three hundred dollars (\$300) or be imprisoned for not more than ninety days, or both.

B. Any person who violates the provisions of Subsection C of Section 17-2-41 NMSA 1978, or any regulations issued pursuant to that section is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be fined one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisoned for a term of not less than thirty days nor more than one year, or both.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-58, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 9.

17-2-46. Enforcement; powers of conservation officers.

A. The director, each conservation officer, each sheriff in his respective county and each member of the New Mexico state police shall enforce the Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978] and with probable cause shall:

(1) seize any wildlife, including any wild mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile, fish, mollusk or crustacean held in violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act;

(2) arrest any person whom he knows to be guilty of a violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act; and

(3) open, enter and examine all camps, cars, vehicles, tents, packs, boxes, barrels and packages where he has reason to believe any game or fish taken or held in violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act is to be found, and seize it.

B. Any warrant for the arrest of a person shall be issued upon sworn complaint, the same as in other criminal cases, and any search warrant shall issue upon a written showing of probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, describing the places to be searched or the persons or things to be seized.

C. Conservation officers under the direction of the director may establish checking stations at points along established roads as needed.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-2-59, enacted by Laws 1974, ch. 83, § 10.

ANNOTATIONS

Citizenship requirement for wildlife law enforcement officers. — By operation of state law, wildlife law enforcement officers can be required to hold New Mexico and United States citizenship. 1979 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 79-30.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 52 to 54.

36A C.J.S. Fish §§ 37, 42; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 50, 61, 63, 64, 67.

ARTICLE 2A

Statewide System for Hunting Activities

17-2A-1. Definitions.

For the purposes of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978:

A. "hunt code" means a description used to identify and define the species, weapon type and time frame authorized for a specific hunt;

B. "outfitter" or "guide" means a person who advertises or holds himself out to the public for hire or is employed or accepts compensation for providing, within the unit where a hunt occurs, facilities, equipment or services for hunting activities; provided, however, that "outfitter" or "guide" does not include a person who only cooks, cuts wood or performs other comparable or incidental duties not directly related to hunting activities; and

C. "unit" means a geographically bound area in the state that is used to manage game species.

History: Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Recompilations. — Laws 2025, ch. 9, § 1 recompiled and amended former 17-2A-1 NMSA 1978 as 17-1-1.1 NMSA 1978, effective July 1, 2026.

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1997, ch. 119, § 4B repealed Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 6, which provided for the repeal of this section on June 30, 1999.

Application of "hunt code" to rule regulating the hunt of bighorn sheep. — Where the current population levels of rocky mountain and desert bighorn sheep made it impossible for the New Mexico state game commission (commission) and the department of game and fish to assign a single hunt code to each hunt area during each hunt window for the bighorn sheep hunting season without running afoul of the statutory allocation requirements for resident and nonresident hunters dictated by NMSA 1978, § 17-3-16(B), the commission's application of the term "hunt code" that combines the rocky mountain bighorn sheep by sex and weapon type in several hunt areas and over several hunt windows under one hunt code, and, similarly, that groups the hunting season for desert bighorn rams in several hunt areas and over several hunt windows under one hunt code does not violate this section. The commission's application of the term "hunt code" to its rules regulating the bighorn sheep hunting season is lawful, in that it incorporates the elements [species, weapon type, time frame, specific hunt] that make up the definition of "hunt code," while also giving effect to the requirements of § 17-3-16(B). *New Mexico State Game Comm'n's Application of the term "Hunt Code"* (4/5/22), [Att'y Gen. Adv. Ltr. 2022-01](#).

17-2A-2. Statewide system for hunting activities.

The state game commission shall develop a statewide system for hunting activities that increases participation by New Mexico residents and considers hunter safety, quality hunts, high demand areas, guides and outfitters, quotas and local and financial interests.

History: Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1997, ch. 119, § 4B repealed Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 6, which provided for the repeal of this section on June 30, 1999.

17-2A-3. Hunting guides and outfitters.

A. Effective April 1, 1997, it is unlawful to be a hunting guide or outfitter in New Mexico without being registered, except for a private landowner or his authorized agent who outfits or guides pursuant to a landowner permit issued by the department of game

and fish for the landowner's property or for the landowner's shared private and public unit.

B. The state game commission shall adopt regulations by September 1, 1997 to govern the granting of non-interim registration, permits and certificates to hunting guides and outfitters and to regulate the operations and professional conduct of registered hunting guides and outfitters. Regulations shall be adopted in accordance with the following procedures and standards:

(1) the commission shall establish dates and locations for a public hearing and provide reasonable prior public notice of a hearing. A public hearing shall be held at a place within any quadrant of the state affected by the proposed regulation when the commission determines there is substantial public interest in holding a hearing in that quadrant;

(2) a hearing shall be held within six months of the date a proposed regulation is issued;

(3) notice of a hearing shall:

(a) include the date, time and location of the hearing;

(b) include a statement of the recommended action;

(c) include an indication of the location and availability of the public file on the regulation;

(d) indicate where and by what date written and oral comments and testimony may be received; and

(e) specify that the public record shall remain open for comments for thirty days after the date of the final hearing; and

(4) the commission shall make its decision and take action based upon relevant and reliable evidence.

C. No person shall be allowed to work as a registered hunting guide or outfitter in New Mexico:

(1) without being registered by the state game commission;

(2) if the person has had a guide or outfitter license, registration, permit or certificate revoked in another state;

(3) if the person has had a guide or outfitter license, registration, permit or certificate suspended in another state and it has not been reinstated; or

- (4) if the person has been convicted of a felony.

D. The state game commission shall develop a point system for the suspension or revocation of a guide or outfitter registration. The point system shall be similar to the point system that governs individual hunting and fishing license privileges.

E. To be granted a registration to be a guide, an applicant shall, in addition to any other reasonable criteria adopted by the state game commission, and except as provided for persons granted an interim registration:

- (1) be at least eighteen years of age; and
- (2) pass a written or oral examination approved by the department of game and fish at a date and time approved by the department.

F. A registered or interim registered guide shall work only under the supervision of a New Mexico registered or interim registered outfitter and in an area designated by the registered or interim registered outfitter.

G. The department of game and fish may provide a registration for a temporary emergency guide, provided the registration is limited to a maximum seven-day period and is granted only in emergency circumstances as determined by the department. The fee for a temporary emergency guide registration is ten dollars (\$10.00).

H. To be granted a registration to be an outfitter, an applicant shall, in addition to any other reasonable criteria adopted by the state game commission, and except as provided for persons granted an interim registration:

- (1) be at least twenty-one years of age;
- (2) have operated as a New Mexico registered guide for at least three years or have been granted an interim outfitter's registration;
- (3) not be a convicted felon or have a history of violation of federal or state game and fish laws or regulations or federal or state guide or outfitter licensing or registration laws or regulations; and
- (4) pass a written or oral examination approved by the department of game and fish at a date and time determined by the department.

I. A registered outfitter shall:

- (1) provide proof of commercial liability insurance of at least five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000);
- (2) responsibly supervise each registered guide working under his direction;

(3) provide a written contract for outfitting services, signed by the registered outfitter and identifying the outfitter's registration number, to each resident and nonresident who seeks to use the services of a registered outfitter;

(4) register with the taxation and revenue department and provide proof of that registration to the department of game and fish; and

(5) provide at least one registered guide or outfitter for every four or fewer resident or nonresident hunters who have contracted for an outfitter's guided services.

J. The department of game and fish shall provide to the taxation and revenue department a copy of each outfitter registration that is granted.

K. Except as provided in this subsection, no person shall be allowed to charge a processing or other fee to obtain for a resident or nonresident a license that is granted from a special drawing for a hunt on public lands pursuant to the provisions of Section 17-3-16 NMSA 1978, except that nothing in this subsection shall prohibit the department of game and fish from collecting an application fee. Persons involved in licensing services, booking agencies or license brokering that do not provide direct guide and outfitter services shall not be required to register with the department of game and fish and may charge a fee, other than the application fee for a license, for their services.

L. A New Mexico resident registered outfitter shall be a registered outfitter who is a resident as defined in Section 17-3-4 NMSA 1978. The state game commission shall adopt regulations that set forth additional requirements and that shall include at a minimum that a resident registered outfitter shall maintain a business address in New Mexico and, except as provided in Subsection Q of this section, derive at least fifty percent of his guiding or outfitting income from guiding or outfitting in New Mexico, as determined by gross receipts or corporate or individual income tax returns for the immediately preceding three years.

M. The department of game and fish shall maintain for public distribution a list of New Mexico registered outfitters.

N. The annual registration fee for a registered guide in New Mexico is fifty dollars (\$50.00) for a resident and one hundred dollars (\$100) for a nonresident.

O. The annual registration fee to be a registered outfitter in New Mexico is five hundred dollars (\$500) for either a resident or a nonresident.

P. Annual registration fees for guides and outfitters shall be deposited in the game protection fund.

Q. A resident interim registered or registered outfitter may apply for inactive status of his registration for any period in which he does not operate as an outfitter. The state game commission shall reactivate an outfitter registration at the request of the outfitter

and upon proof that the outfitter complies with the provisions of this section and upon payment of the annual registration fee for the year the registration is being reinstated and payment of a reinstatement fee of not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).

R. The state game commission shall adopt by September 1, 1996 interim regulations, consistent to the greatest extent practicable with the provisions of this section, to provide for the granting of interim registrations to guides and outfitters. The commission shall issue interim registrations prior to mailing applications for 1997 licensed hunts to persons who qualify for interim registration and submit applications to the department of game and fish.

S. A person adversely affected by an action, other than a regulation, taken pursuant to the provisions of this section, including the denial, suspension or revocation of a registration, license, permit or certificate, may seek review of the action pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform Licensing Act [61-1-1 to 61-1-31 NMSA 1978].

T. A person adversely affected by a regulation adopted by the state game commission pursuant to this section may appeal to the court of appeals. All appeals shall be made upon the record at the hearing and shall be taken to the court of appeals within thirty days following the date of the action. The date of the action shall be the date of the filing of the regulation by the commission, pursuant to the provisions of the State Rules Act [Chapter 14, Article 4 NMSA 1978].

U. Upon appeal, the court of appeals shall set aside a regulation only if it is found to be:

- (1) arbitrary, capricious or an abuse of discretion;
- (2) not supported by substantial evidence in the record; or
- (3) otherwise not in accordance with law.

V. After a hearing and a showing of good cause by the appellant, a stay of a regulation being appealed may be granted:

- (1) by the state game commission; or
- (2) by the court of appeals if the state game commission denies a stay or fails to act upon an application for a stay within sixty days after receipt of the application.

W. The appellant shall pay all costs for any appeal found to be frivolous by the court of appeals.

History: Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 5; 1997, ch. 119, § 2; 2001, ch. 63, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

"Revocation" and "suspension" construed. — Where the New Mexico department of game and fish (department) denied respondent's application for a New Mexico outfitter's license pursuant to 17-2A-3(C)(2) NMSA 1978, which precludes an individual from working as a registered outfitter if the person has had a guide or outfitter license revoked in another state, and where the district court reversed the decision of the department, finding that the department applied an inapplicable section of 17-2A-3 NMSA 1978 and violated the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, 11-16-1 to -12 NMSA 1978, the district court did not err in reversing the department's decision, because the evidence in this case established that the actions of the Arizona commission on which the department relied to deny respondent a license are akin to a suspension, rather than a revocation, and therefore the department erroneously applied 17-2A-3(C)(2) NMSA 1978. An applicant whose license has been taken away for a specified period of time or until the applicant comes into compliance with the requirements established by game and fish is subject to the provision of 17-2A-3(C)(3) NMSA 1978. *N.M. Dep't of Game & Fish v. Rawlings*, 2019-NMCA-018.

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1997, ch. 119, § 4B repealed Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 6, which provided for the repeal of this section on June 30, 1999.

Laws 1997, ch. 119, § 6 provided that in the event the act was not enacted with the emergency clause, its provisions shall be made retroactive in operation to April 1, 1997. Although the act was enacted with the emergency clause, it was not signed by the governor until April 9, 1997.

The 2001 amendment, effective June 15, 2001, in Subsection K, inserted "Except as provided in this subsection" and inserted the last sentence, which begins "Persons involved in licensing services".

The 1997 amendment, effective April 9, 1997, deleted former Paragraphs E(3) and H(5) relating to being endorsed by a registered outfitter; rewrote Paragraphs I(3) and (5); inserted "resident or" preceding "nonresident" and added the clause beginning with "except" in Subsection K; deleted former Subsection L, relating to a point system to provide preferences to registered outfitters who are New Mexico residents; added Subsection Q; and redesignated Subsections M through Q as Subsections L through P.

ARTICLE 3

Licenses and Permits

PART 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

17-3-1. Current license required.

Each license issued under Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, runs from April 1 through March 31 of the following calendar year. No person shall shoot, hunt, kill, injure or take, in any manner, any game animal, game bird or game fish without paying for, and having in his possession, the proper license required by law for the year in which the shooting, hunting, fishing or taking is done. No nonresident shall shoot, hunt, kill or take, in any manner, any nongame animal or nongame bird without paying for, and having in his possession, any one of the nonresident hunting licenses listed in Section 17-3-13 NMSA 1978 required by law for the year in which the shooting, hunting or taking is done.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-1, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 1; 1967, ch. 4, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals and reenactments. — Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 1, repealed former 53-3-1, 1953 Comp., relating to hunting and fishing licenses and shipping permits, and enacted a new 17-3-1 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For what are game mammals, game birds and game fish, see 17-2-3 NMSA 1978.

For penalty for violation of fish and game laws, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

For licenses for Indians and Indian reservations, see 17-2-28 NMSA 1978 and notes thereto.

For permits respecting endangered species, see 17-2-42 and 17-2-45 NMSA 1978.

For license and permit fees, see 17-3-13 NMSA 1978.

Bear as game animal. — A statute denominating bear as a game animal could not validate a previous unauthorized regulation of the game commission classifying bear as a game animal, especially as the statute did not purport to be a validating statute; but where a previous statute had specified the closed season for bear, it sufficiently showed the statutory intent to define bear as a game animal. *State ex rel. Sofeico v. Heffernan*, 1936-NMSC-069, 41 N.M. 219, 67 P.2d 240. See 17-2-1, 17-2-3 NMSA 1978 and notes thereto.

A state may enact game laws which discriminate against nonresidents in the enjoyment of the privileges of hunting and fishing. 1964 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 64-91.

State may require special season deer tag on Jicarilla reservation and Tierra Amarilla grant. — The state game commission may lawfully require that one who hunts in the Jicarilla reservation and Tierra Amarilla grant obtain a \$2.00 special season deer tag. 1962 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 62-135.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 45.

Power of game commission to open or close season, 34 A.L.R. 832.

Validity of discrimination against nonresidents, 61 A.L.R. 337, 112 A.L.R. 63.

Applicability of state fishing license laws or other public regulations to fishing in private lake or pond, 15 A.L.R.2d 754.

Rights of boating and fishing on inland lakes, 57 A.L.R.2d 569.

Right of public to use shore of inland navigable lakes between high and low water mark, 40 A.L.R.3d 776.

36A C.J.S. Fish § 36; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 61, 63, 64, 67.

17-3-2. Classes of licenses.

A. As used with reference to licenses in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978:

(1) "fishing" entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open seasons for each species;

(2) "game hunting" entitles the licensee to hunt game birds, other than wild turkey, and squirrel during the open seasons for each and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey;

(3) "deer" entitles the licensee to hunt deer during the open season;

(4) "antelope" entitles the licensee to hunt antelope during the open season;

(5) "elk" entitles the licensee to hunt elk during the open season;

(6) "bighorn sheep" entitles the licensee to hunt bighorn sheep during the open season;

(7) "Barbary sheep" entitles the licensee to hunt Barbary sheep during the open season;

(8) "javelina" entitles the licensee to hunt javelina during the open season;

(9) "bear" entitles the licensee to hunt bear during the open season;

(10) "nongame" entitles the licensee to hunt or take any animal or bird not protected by law;

(11) "temporary fishing" entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during a specific period of time indicated on the license;

(12) "oryx" entitles the licensee to hunt oryx during the open season;

(13) "ibex" entitles the licensee to hunt ibex during the open season;

(14) "cougar" entitles the licensee to hunt cougar during the open season;

(15) "turkey" entitles the licensee to hunt turkey during the open season;

(16) "special season turkey" entitles the licensee to hunt turkey during special seasons designated by the state game commission;

(17) "quality elk" entitles the licensee to hunt elk during a special quality elk season, to be established by the state game commission, when the timing of the season and hunter density is specially regulated and the elk population is managed with an intent to provide the licensee an increased opportunity to take a mature elk;

(18) "quality deer" entitles the licensee to hunt deer during a special quality deer season, to be established by the state game commission, when the timing of the season and hunter density is specially regulated and the deer population is managed with an intent to provide the licensee an increased opportunity to take a mature deer;

(19) "temporary game hunting" entitles the licensee to hunt game birds, except wild turkey, and squirrel during a specific period of time indicated on the license;

(20) "second rod" entitles the licensee to fish using two fishing rods to fish for game fish during the open seasons for each species; and

(21) "fishing and game hunting combination" entitles the licensee to hunt squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, and to fish for game fish during the open season for each.

B. A hunting license does not entitle the licensee to hunt, kill or take game animals or birds within or upon a park or enclosure licensed or posted as provided by law or within or upon a privately owned enclosure without consent of the owner or within or upon a game refuge or game management area.

C. A fishing license does not entitle the licensee to fish for or take fish within or upon a park or enclosure licensed or posted as provided by law or within or upon a privately owned enclosure without consent of the owner or in or on closed waters.

D. A junior fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has reached the age of twelve years but has not reached the age of eighteen years. A junior fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

E. A senior fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has reached the age of sixty-five years. A senior fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

F. A nonresident junior fishing license may be purchased by a nonresident who has reached the age of twelve years but has not reached the age of eighteen years. A nonresident junior fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

G. A senior game hunting license may be purchased by a resident who has reached the age of sixty-five years. A senior game hunting license entitles the licensee to hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open seasons for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

H. A junior, resident or nonresident, game hunting license may be purchased by a person who has not reached the age of eighteen years. A junior game hunting license entitles the licensee to hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open seasons for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

I. A handicapped fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has a severe physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who can furnish adequate proof of this disability to the state game commission. A handicapped fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has a developmental disability as defined in Subsection H of Section 43-1-3 NMSA 1978 and who can furnish adequate proof of this disability to the state game commission. A handicapped fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

J. A handicapped game hunting license may be purchased by a resident who has a severe physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who can furnish adequate proof of this disability to the state game commission. A handicapped game hunting license entitles the licensee to hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open season for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

K. A fishing license may be obtained at no cost by a resident who has reached the age of seventy years.

L. A second rod validation may be purchased by either a resident or nonresident. A second rod validation entitles the licensee to fish using two rods for game fish during the open season for each species.

M. A junior-senior elk license may be purchased by a resident who has not reached the age of eighteen years or by a resident who has reached the age of sixty-five years. A junior-senior elk license entitles the licensee to hunt for elk during the open season for that species.

N. A junior-senior deer license may be purchased by a resident who is younger than eighteen years or older than sixty-five years. A junior-senior deer license entitles the licensee to hunt for deer during the open season for that species.

O. A junior or senior fishing and game hunting combination license may be purchased by a resident who is younger than eighteen years or older than sixty-five years. A junior or senior fishing and game hunting combination license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish or hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open seasons for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

P. Except for a resident, disabled veteran, fishing and game hunting combination license issued pursuant to Section 17-3-13 NMSA 1978, a New Mexico resident who is a veteran of the United States military or who is active duty military is eligible for a fifty percent discount on any license, permit or stamp purchase upon valid proof of service as determined by the state game commission.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-1.1, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 2; 1969, ch. 28, § 2; 1971, ch. 75, § 4; 1973, ch. 268, § 1; 1977, ch. 180, § 1; 1979, ch. 286, § 1; 1983, ch. 117, § 1; 1989, ch. 129, § 1; 1992, ch. 28, § 1; 1993, ch. 189, § 1; 1995, ch. 87, § 1; 1998, ch. 51, § 1; 2003, ch. 195, § 1; 2005, ch. 74, § 1; 2007, ch. 8, § 1; 2009, ch. 230, § 1; 2010, ch. 45, § 1; 2011, ch. 25, § 1; 2011, ch. 186, § 2; 2015, ch. 148, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 2015, ch. 148, § 3 repealed Laws 2011, ch. 25, § 1, effective April 1, 2016.

Cross references. — For power of state game commission to establish open and closed seasons, see 17-2-1 NMSA 1978.

For special nonresident bird licenses for regulated shooting preserves, see 17-3-39 NMSA 1978.

For hunting and fishing in licensed private parks or lakes, see 17-4-15 NMSA 1978.

The 2015 amendment, effective April 1, 2016, removed certain game and fish licenses for residents who are disabled veterans and military members, enacted a new provision entitling veterans and active duty military residents to purchase any license under this section at a fifty percent discount, and provided for an exception; deleted Subsection P,

relating to a disabled veteran fishing and game hunting combination license; deleted Subsection Q, relating to a military game hunting and fishing license; and added a new Subsection P.

The 2011 amendment, effective April 1, 2012, eliminated the distinction between small game hunting and general hunting licenses and permitted game hunting licensees to apply for and purchase a license to hunt specified mammal species.

The 2010 amendment, effective May 19, 2010, added Subsection Q.

The 2009 amendment, effective July 1, 2009, added Subsection P.

The 2007 amendment, effective April 1, 2008, added Paragraph (23) of Subsection A to define the fishing and small game combination license; added Subsection N to provide for a junior-senior deer license; and added Subsection O to provide for a junior-senior fishing and small game combination license.

The 2005 amendment, effective April 1, 2006, eliminates the bison and gazelle classes of licenses in Subsection A, creates for a junior fishing license for persons between the ages of twelve and eighteen in Subsection D, creates a senior fishing license for residents who are 65 years of age or older in Subsection E, creates a junior general hunting license for residents who have are not 18 years of age in Subsection H and creates a junior-senior elk license for residents under 18 years of age and 65 years of age or older.

The 2003 amendment, effective on July 1, 2003 for trout water anglers and April 1, 2004 for warm water anglers, added Paragraph A(24); substituted "A" for "No" and "does not entitle" for "entitles" preceding "the licensee to" in Subsections B and C; added Subsection J; and substituted "a" for "any" throughout the section.

The 1998 amendment, effective July 1, 1998, added Paragraph A(23); deleted Subsection F and redesignated the remaining subsections accordingly; and deleted the proviso at the end of Subsection G.

Access to public waters. — A private landowner cannot prevent persons from fishing in a public stream that flows across the landowner's property, provided the public stream is accessible without trespass across privately owned adjacent lands. 2014 Op. Att'y Gen. 14-04.

This section applies to non-Indians on Indian lands. 1973 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 73-18. See 17-2-28 NMSA 1978 and notes thereto.

Applicability to Indians constitutional. — This section is constitutional if, in application, Indian lands are brought into its scope via non-Indian action. 1973 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 73-18.

17-3-2. Classes of licenses. (Effective April 1, 2026.)

A. As used with reference to licenses in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978:

(1) *"fishing" entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open seasons for each species;*

(2) *"game hunting" entitles the licensee to hunt game birds, other than wild turkey, and squirrel during the open seasons for each and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey;*

(3) *"deer" entitles the licensee to hunt deer during the open season;*

(4) *"antelope" entitles the licensee to hunt antelope during the open season;*

(5) *"elk" entitles the licensee to hunt elk during the open season;*

(6) *"bighorn sheep" entitles the licensee to hunt bighorn sheep during the open season;*

(7) *"Barbary sheep" entitles the licensee to hunt Barbary sheep during the open season;*

(8) *"javelina" entitles the licensee to hunt javelina during the open season;*

(9) *"bear" entitles the licensee to hunt bear during the open season;*

(10) *"nongame" entitles the licensee to hunt or take any animal or bird not protected by law;*

(11) *"temporary fishing" entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during a specific period of time indicated on the license;*

(12) *"oryx" entitles the licensee to hunt oryx during the open season;*

(13) *"ibex" entitles the licensee to hunt ibex during the open season;*

(14) *"cougar" entitles the licensee to hunt cougar during the open season;*

(15) *"turkey" entitles the licensee to hunt turkey during the open season;*

(16) *"special season turkey" entitles the licensee to hunt turkey during special seasons designated by the state wildlife commission;*

(17) *"quality elk" entitles the licensee to hunt elk during a special quality elk season, to be established by the state wildlife commission, when the timing of the season and hunter density is specially regulated and the elk population is managed with an intent to provide the licensee an increased opportunity to take a mature elk;*

(18) *"quality deer" entitles the licensee to hunt deer during a special quality deer season, to be established by the state wildlife commission, when the timing of the season and hunter density is specially regulated and the deer population is managed with an intent to provide the licensee an increased opportunity to take a mature deer;*

(19) *"temporary game hunting" entitles the licensee to hunt game birds, except wild turkey, and squirrel during a specific period of time indicated on the license;*

(20) *"second rod" entitles the licensee to fish using two fishing rods to fish for game fish during the open seasons for each species;*

(21) *"fishing and game hunting combination" entitles the licensee to hunt squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, and to fish for game fish during the open season for each; and*

(22) *"shed hunter license" entitles the licensee to shed hunting; provided that a shed hunter license shall not be required for shed hunting by a resident.*

B. A hunting license does not entitle the licensee to hunt, kill or take game animals or birds within or upon a park or enclosure licensed or posted as provided by law or within or upon a privately owned enclosure without consent of the owner or within or upon a game refuge or game management area.

C. A fishing license does not entitle the licensee to fish for or take fish within or upon a park or enclosure licensed or posted as provided by law or within or upon a privately owned enclosure without consent of the owner or in or on closed waters.

D. A junior fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has reached the age of twelve years but has not reached the age of eighteen years. A junior fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

E. A senior fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has reached the age of sixty-five years. A senior fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

F. A nonresident junior fishing license may be purchased by a nonresident who has reached the age of twelve years but has not reached the age of eighteen years. A nonresident junior fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

G. A senior game hunting license may be purchased by a resident who has reached the age of sixty-five years. A senior game hunting license entitles the licensee to hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open seasons for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

H. A junior, resident or nonresident, game hunting license may be purchased by a person who has not reached the age of eighteen years. A junior game hunting license entitles the licensee to hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open seasons for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

I. A disabled fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has a severe physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who can furnish adequate proof of this disability to the state wildlife commission. A disabled fishing license may be purchased by a resident who has a developmental disability as defined in Subsection H of Section 43-1-3 NMSA 1978 and who can furnish adequate proof of this disability to the commission. A disabled fishing license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish during the open season for each species.

J. A disabled game hunting license may be purchased by a resident who has a severe physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who can furnish adequate proof of this disability to the state wildlife commission. A disabled game hunting license entitles the licensee to hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open season for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

K. A fishing license may be obtained at no cost by a resident who has reached the age of seventy years.

L. A second rod validation may be purchased by either a resident or nonresident. A second rod validation entitles the licensee to fish using two rods for game fish during the open season for each species.

M. A junior-senior elk license may be purchased by a resident who has not reached the age of eighteen years or by a resident who has reached the age of sixty-five years. A junior-senior elk license entitles the licensee to hunt for elk during the open season for that species.

N. A junior-senior deer license may be purchased by a resident who is younger than eighteen years or older than sixty-five years. A junior-senior deer license entitles the licensee to hunt for deer during the open season for that species.

O. A junior or senior fishing and game hunting combination license may be purchased by a resident who is younger than eighteen years or older than sixty-five years. A junior or senior fishing and game hunting combination license entitles the licensee to fish for game fish or hunt for squirrel and game birds, other than wild turkey, during the open seasons for each species and to apply for or purchase a license to hunt for deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, javelina, bear, oryx, ibex, cougar and wild turkey.

P. Except for a resident, disabled veteran, fishing and game hunting combination license issued pursuant to Section 17-3-13 NMSA 1978, a New Mexico resident who is a veteran of the United States military or who is active duty military is eligible for a fifty percent discount on any license, permit or stamp purchase upon valid proof of service as determined by the state wildlife commission.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-1.1, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 2; 1969, ch. 28, § 2; 1971, ch. 75, § 4; 1973, ch. 268, § 1; 1977, ch. 180, § 1; 1979, ch. 286, § 1; 1983, ch. 117, § 1; 1989, ch. 129, § 1; 1992, ch. 28, § 1; 1993, ch. 189, § 1; 1995, ch. 87, § 1; 1998, ch. 51, § 1; 2003, ch. 195, § 1; 2005, ch. 74, § 1; 2007, ch. 8, § 1; 2009, ch. 230, § 1; 2010, ch. 45, § 1; 2011, ch. 25, § 1; 2011, ch. 186, § 2; 2015, ch. 148, § 1; 2025, ch. 9, § 8.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2025 amendment, effective April 1, 2026, references to the "state game commission" were changed to the "state wildlife commission" and added "shed hunter license" to the list of classes of licenses referenced in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978; and in Subsection A, added a new Paragraph A(22).

17-3-3. Repealed.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 1983, ch. 117, § 6, repealed 17-3-3 NMSA 1978, as enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 3, relating to prohibited shipments and penalties therefor, effective April 1, 1983.

17-3-4. Residence.

As used in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978:

A. a "resident" entitled to purchase resident hunting and fishing licenses is any person:

(1) who is a United States citizen and who, for a period of not less than ninety days immediately preceding the date of application for the license, has been domiciled in New Mexico and has not claimed residency elsewhere for any purpose;

(2) who is not a citizen of the United States but who is legally within the United States and has actually lived in this state for ninety days immediately preceding his license application;

(3) not otherwise entitled to claim residence, who is a student attending any educational institution in this state, has so attended and actually lived in this state for at least one full term immediately preceding his license application and presents with his application a certificate of such attendance from proper authorities of the educational institution;

(4) not otherwise entitled to claim residence, who is a member of the armed forces of the United States and permanently assigned to a military installation located within this state and presents with his license application a certificate of such assignment from his commanding officer or designated representative, or the spouse or dependent of such person, not otherwise entitled to claim residence, living within the same household and similarly certified by the person's commanding officer; or

(5) not otherwise entitled to claim residence, who is a member of the armed forces of the United States and officially stationed at a military reservation located partially in this state and partially in an adjacent state but only for a special license valid only for hunting and fishing in this state on those reservations; and

B. a "nonresident" who must purchase nonresident hunting and fishing licenses is any person not a resident, including any temporary resident who maintains his home outside of the state.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-1.3, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 4; 1967, ch. 22, § 1; 1971, ch. 17, § 1; 1971, ch. 170, § 1; 1979, ch. 340, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

A state may enact game laws which discriminate against nonresidents in the enjoyment of the privileges of hunting and fishing. 1964 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 64-91.

No resident license without residence for required period. — A person who is a bona fide resident of this state may not procure a resident hunting license prior to his having resided in this state for a period of six months (now 90 days). 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-228.

Military dependent may become resident. — A dependent of a permanently assigned military person is qualified to purchase a resident hunting or fishing license after residing in New Mexico six months (now 90 days) prior to applying for same. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-116.

Los Alamos residents for six months (now 90 days) or more are not by reason of such residence entitled to resident licenses unless they had previously established a bona

fide residence elsewhere in the state and have not abandoned such other place as their legal New Mexico residence. 1948 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 48-5175.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 35, 45.

36A C.J.S. Fish § 36; 38 C.J.S. Game §§ 52, 53.

17-3-5. Application for hunting or fishing licenses; contents; filing.

A. The director of the department of game and fish shall prepare and furnish blank applications for all persons applying for fishing or hunting licenses within the state. Except as provided in Subsection B or E of this section, each person, before receiving any fishing or hunting license, shall make application on a blank so provided. Among other matters that may be shown by the application, a statement shall show the exact residence of the applicant. Except as provided in Subsection B or E of this section, the application shall be signed by the applicant. All applications for licenses shall be filed with and issued by license vendors appointed by the director. All fishing and hunting licenses and the applications therefor shall contain the place of residence of the person to whom any license may be issued.

B. License vendors, as authorized by the director of the department of game and fish, may take applications for hunting and fishing licenses or authorizations via telephone or the internet. The vendor or applicant shall fill out a license application with the same information as required for other applications. The vendor shall mail the license to the applicant, and the license shall be in the possession of the hunter or angler unless otherwise provided in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978. All money collected through telephone or internet sales shall be remitted to the director by the tenth day of the month following the sale. An individual receiving a license pursuant to this subsection is not required to sign an application prior to issuance of the license; provided, however, that the individual is subject to prosecution pursuant to Section 17-3-6 NMSA 1978 for any false or fraudulent statement or other misrepresentation as if the individual had signed an application for license.

C. Upon request, an applicant for a fishing or game hunting license shall receive an authorization number as assigned by the director of the department of game and fish through the vendor. The authorization number may be used in lieu of the actual license only by the individual who applies and meets the requirements for a license. The authorization number shall serve as a license for the purposes of Sections 17-3-1 and 17-3-17 NMSA 1978. It is a misdemeanor to hunt or fish with an invalid authorization number or a number issued to another person.

D. Each license vendor authorized to sell licenses via telephone or internet may collect the actual cost, not to exceed five dollars (\$5.00), of shipping and handling the application and license issuance.

E. The director of the department of game and fish may prepare and furnish an electronic application for all persons applying for hunting license drawings. A person making an electronic application is not required to sign an application prior to issuance of the license; provided that the person is subject to prosecution pursuant to Section 17-3-6 NMSA 1978 for any false or fraudulent statement or other misrepresentation as if the person had signed an application.

History: Laws 1923, ch. 129, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 57-218; 1941 Comp., § 43-302; Laws 1945, ch. 99, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-2; Laws 1973, ch. 63, § 1; 1995, ch. 99, § 1; 2005, ch. 326, § 1; 2011, ch. 186, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For power of state game commission to withhold license, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

For blank forms and applications for licenses, see 17-3-7 NMSA 1978.

The 2011 amendment, effective April 1, 2012, eliminated the distinction between small game hunting and general hunting licenses.

The 2005 amendment, effective June 17, 2005, provides in Subsection B that license vendors may take applications via the internet and that all money collected via internet sales shall be remitted to the director and adds Subsection E to provide that the director may provide for electronic applications for hunting license drawings, that a persons making an electronic application is not required to sign the application and that a person is subject to prosecution for a false or fraudulent statement or misrepresentation as if the person signed the application.

The 1995 amendment, effective June 16, 1995, designated the existing provision as Subsection A; added Subsections B through D; and, in Subsection A, inserted "of the department of game and fish" in the first sentence, added "except as provided in Subsection B of this section" at the beginning of the second and third sentences, and made minor stylistic changes.

It would not be legal for any person to sign the name of another as an applicant when applying for a hunting or fishing license in New Mexico. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-116.

False certificate by witness is subject to prosecution. — Witness who makes a false certificate concerning the residence of an applicant for a fishing or hunting license is subject to prosecution under 17-3-6 NMSA 1978 since signature by the witness corroborates the applicant's statement and is an essential part of the application. 1941 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 41-3973.

17-3-6. False statements; using license issued to another; hunting without license lawfully procured; altering licenses.

It is a misdemeanor:

A. to certify or sign any false or fraudulent statement relative to the residence of any applicant for a hunting or fishing license or permit;

B. for any nonresident of New Mexico, for the purpose of securing a New Mexico hunting or fishing license, to make or cause to be made any false or fraudulent statements or representations to any person issuing hunting and fishing licenses in this state;

C. to use a hunting or fishing license issued to or in the name of any other person or in the name of any fictitious person;

D. to hunt game or fish in New Mexico without a license lawfully procured;

E. for any license vendor or any licensee to alter or predate or postdate any license, certificate or permit; or

F. for any nonresident to possess a resident hunting, fishing or trapping license issued in the nonresident's name pursuant to a telephone, electronic or hard copy application.

History: Laws 1923, ch. 129, § 2; C.S. 1929, § 57-219; 1941 Comp., § 43-303; Laws 1945, ch. 99, § 3; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-3; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 3; 1979, ch. 340, § 7; 2005, ch. 326, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For penalties for acts described in this section, see 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

The 2005 amendment, effective June 17, 2005, added Subsection F to provide that it is a misdemeanor for a nonresident to possess a resident license issued in the nonresident's name pursuant to a telephone, electronic or hard copy application.

Magistrate has jurisdiction of violations of this section. 1953 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 53-5860.

17-3-7. Blank forms; license issued only on application; false statement voids license; records; reports; accounting for fees collected; refund of fees; transfer of hunting license.

A. The director of the department of game and fish shall prescribe and procure the printing of all forms and blanks that may be required to carry out the intent of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978. All necessary blanks shall be furnished by the director to the license collectors. No license shall be issued except as provided in Section 17-3-5 NMSA 1978. Any false statement in any application shall render the license issued void.

B. A license collector shall keep a correct and complete record of licenses issued, which record shall remain in the license collector's office and be open to inspection by the public at all times.

C. A license collector may collect and retain a vendor fee for each license or permit issued; provided the fee shall be just and reasonable, as determined by regulation of the state game commission, and shall not exceed one dollar (\$1.00) for each license or permit issued; and provided further that no such fee shall be collected by the department of game and fish from the purchaser of a special license. "Special license" includes those licenses for the following species: antelope, elk, Barbary sheep, bighorn sheep, bison, oryx, ibex, gazelle and javelina.

D. A license collector shall remit to the director of the department of game and fish the statutory fee of all licenses and permits sold on or before the tenth day of the month following and shall by the same time report the number and kind of licenses issued.

E. Except as provided in Section 17-1-14 NMSA 1978, the director of the department of game and fish shall turn over all money so received to the state treasurer to be credited to the game protection fund.

F. The director of the department of game and fish, in the director's sole discretion, may authorize a refund of the amount of a hunting license fee from the game and fish suspense fund if:

(1) upon written application by the licensee, prior to the time of the hunt for which the license has been issued, the director finds that:

(a) the licensee has a disability, due to a verified injury or life-threatening illness, that prohibits the licensee from hunting during the period that the license is valid; or

(b) the licensee has been deployed by the military and the deployment prevents the licensee from traveling to the hunt during the period that the license is valid;

(2) upon written application by a personal representative of a licensee's estate, the director finds that the licensee died prior to the time of the hunt for which the license was issued; or

(3) the director cancels a hunt due to forest fire or other natural disaster.

G. The director of the department of game and fish, in the director's sole discretion, may authorize a transfer of a hunting license:

(1) to the licensee's designee if, upon written application by the licensee, prior to the time of the hunt for which the license has been issued, the director finds that:

(a) the licensee has a disability, due to a verified injury or life-threatening illness, that prohibits the licensee from hunting during the period that the license is valid; or

(b) the licensee has been deployed by the military and the deployment prevents the licensee from traveling to the hunt during the period that the license is valid;

(2) to the designee of the licensee's estate if, upon written application by the personal representative of the licensee's estate, the director finds that the licensee died prior to the time of the hunt for which the license was issued; or

(3) upon written application by a licensee, to a nonprofit organization approved by the state game commission.

H. The state game commission may prescribe, by rule, the documentation necessary for a finding pursuant to Subsection F or G of this section.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 48; Code 1915, § 2471; C.S. 1929, § 57-256; Laws 1937, ch. 210, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-305; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5; Laws 1959, ch. 64, § 1; 1973, ch. 140, § 1; 1977, ch. 180, § 2; 1978, ch. 105, § 1; 1992, ch. 29, § 3; 1995, ch. 99, § 2; 2005, ch. 38, § 2; 2012, ch. 32, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For preparation and contents of forms and filing of applications, see 17-3-5 NMSA 1978.

The 2012 amendment, effective May 16, 2012, provided for refunds of license fees due to forest fires or other natural disasters and in Subsection F, added Paragraph (3).

The 2005 amendment, effective June 17, 2005, added Subsections F and G to provide that the director of the game and fish department may, in the director's discretion, authorize a refund of a hunting license from the game and fish suspense fund or a transfer of a hunting license if a licensee has been prevented from hunting during the time of the license because of a disability or because of a deployment by the military or if the licensee died to the time of the hunt.

It would not be legal for any person to sign the name of another as an applicant when applying for a hunting or fishing license in New Mexico. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-116.

There are no provisions for reimbursement of license fees in any circumstances; therefore, persons who have purchased a second license illegally are not entitled to reimbursement for the second license. 1975 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 75-38.

17-3-7. Blank forms; license issued only on application; false statement voids license; records; reports; accounting for fees collected; refund of fees; transfer of hunting license. (Effective April 1, 2026.)

A. The director of the department of wildlife shall prescribe and procure the printing of all forms and blanks that may be required to carry out the intent of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978. All necessary blanks shall be furnished by the director to the license collectors. No license shall be issued except as provided in Section 17-3-5 NMSA 1978. Any false statement in any application shall render the license issued void.

B. A license collector shall keep a correct and complete record of licenses issued, which record shall remain in the license collector's office and be open to inspection by the public at all times.

C. A license collector may collect and retain a vendor fee for each license or permit issued; provided that the fee shall be just and reasonable, as determined by regulation of the state wildlife commission, and shall not exceed vendor costs for each license or permit issued; and provided further that no such fee shall be collected by the department of wildlife from the purchaser of a special license. "Special license" includes those licenses for the following species: antelope, elk, Barbary sheep, bighorn sheep, bison, oryx, ibex and javelina.

D. A license collector shall remit to the director of the department of wildlife the statutory fee of all licenses and permits sold on or before the tenth day of the month following and shall by the same time report the number and kind of licenses issued.

E. Except as provided in Section 17-1-14 NMSA 1978, the director of the department of wildlife shall turn over all money so received to the state treasurer to be credited to the game protection fund.

F. The director of the department of wildlife, in the director's sole discretion, may authorize a refund of the amount of a hunting license fee from the game and fish suspense fund if:

(1) upon written application by the licensee, prior to the time of the hunt for which the license has been issued, the director finds that:

(a) the licensee has a disability, due to a verified injury or life-threatening illness, that prohibits the licensee from hunting during the period that the license is valid; or

(b) the licensee has been deployed by the military and the deployment prevents the licensee from traveling to the hunt during the period that the license is valid;

(2) upon written application by a personal representative of a licensee's estate, the director finds that the licensee died prior to the time of the hunt for which the license was issued; or

(3) the director cancels a hunt due to forest fire or other natural disaster.

G. The director of the department of wildlife, in the director's sole discretion, may authorize a transfer of a hunting license:

(1) to the licensee's designee if, upon written application by the licensee, prior to the time of the hunt for which the license has been issued, the director finds that:

(a) the licensee has a disability, due to a verified injury or life-threatening illness, that prohibits the licensee from hunting during the period that the license is valid; or

(b) the licensee has been deployed by the military and the deployment prevents the licensee from traveling to the hunt during the period that the license is valid;

(2) to the designee of the licensee's estate if, upon written application by the personal representative of the licensee's estate, the director finds that the licensee died prior to the time of the hunt for which the license was issued; or

(3) upon written application by a licensee, to a nonprofit organization approved by the state wildlife commission.

H. The state wildlife commission may prescribe, by rule, the documentation necessary for a finding pursuant to Subsection F or G of this section.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 48; Code 1915, § 2471; C.S. 1929, § 57-256; Laws 1937, ch. 210, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-305; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5; Laws 1959, ch. 64, § 1; 1973, ch. 140, § 1; 1977, ch. 180, § 2; 1978, ch. 105, § 1; 1992, ch. 29, § 3; 1995, ch. 99, § 2; 2005, ch. 38, § 2; 2012, ch. 32, § 1; 2025, ch. 9, § 9.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2025 amendment, effective April 1, 2026, references to the "department of game and fish" were changed to the "department of wildlife", references to the "state game commission" were changed to the "state wildlife commission" and removed licenses for gazelle from the "special license" category; and in Subsection C, after "ibex" deleted "gazelle".

17-3-8. Loss of application blanks by license collector; accounting.

In the event that a license collector shall lose any of the application blanks for hunting or fishing licenses issued to him by the director of the department of game and fish, he shall immediately notify the director of the loss of the blanks and he shall inform the director of the number and the serial number of each of the application blanks lost.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5.1, enacted by Laws 1959, ch. 144, § 1.

17-3-9. Application blanks lost by license collector to be void.

Upon the receipt of a notice from the license collector that an application blank has been lost, the director of the department of game and fish shall immediately declare the blank void. The director shall notify the various conservation officers throughout the state and such other persons as he shall deem necessary that the application blanks containing the serial numbers reported by the license collector are void.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5.2, enacted by Laws 1959, ch. 144, § 2.

17-3-10. Presumption of loss [sale]

In any case where a license collector has notified the director of the department of game and fish of the loss of an application blank for hunting or fishing licenses, it shall be presumed that the blank has been sold.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5.3, enacted by Laws 1959, ch. 144, § 3.

17-3-11. Possession of license declared void is unlawful.

Any person in possession of a hunting or fishing license containing the serial number which was reported by the collector as the application blank which was lost and which was declared void by the director of the department of game and fish, and the license was not validly issued to him, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5.4, enacted by Laws 1959, ch. 144, § 4.

17-3-12. Accounting for licenses.

When a license vendor is unable to account for hunting and fishing licenses issued to him, the state game commission shall determine the extent of liability of the vendor and the decision of the commission shall be final.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-5.6, enacted by Laws 1959, ch. 144, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

Highest value for which missing licenses could have been sold may be used. —

Since by 17-3-7 NMSA 1978 it is the duty of each license collector to account properly for the licenses sold by him, in the event a vendor is not able to accurately account for any missing licenses, the director is justified in assuming that they have been sold for the highest dollar value which could have been received for their sale, and until the license collector is able to prove the contrary to the director's satisfaction, he should be held responsible for that sum. 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6028 (issued prior to enactment of this section).

17-3-13. License fees.

A. The director of the department of game and fish shall keep a record of all money received and licenses and permits issued by the department, numbering each class separately. Upon satisfactory proof that a license or permit has been lost before its expiration, the director may issue a duplicate and collect a just and reasonable fee for it as determined by regulation of the state game commission.

B. The director of the department of game and fish shall collect the following fees for each license of the class indicated:

Resident, fishing	\$25.00
Resident, game hunting	15.00
Resident, deer	31.00
Resident, junior-senior, deer	19.00
Resident, senior, handicapped, game hunting and fishing	20.00
Resident, fishing and game hunting combination	30.00
Resident, junior, fishing and game hunting combination	15.00
Resident, disabled veteran, fishing and game hunting combination	10.00
Resident, antelope	50.00
Resident, elk cow	50.00
Resident, elk bull or either sex	80.00
Resident, junior-senior, elk	48.00
Resident, bighorn sheep, ram	150.00
Resident, bighorn sheep, ewe	75.00
Resident, Barbary sheep	100.00
Resident, bear	44.00
Resident, turkey	25.00
Resident, cougar	40.00

Resident, oryx	150.00
Resident, ibex	100.00
Resident, javelina	55.00
Resident, fur dealer	15.00
Resident, trapper	20.00
Resident, junior trapper	9.00
Nonresident, fishing	56.00
Nonresident, junior fishing	15.00
Nonresident, junior, game hunting	15.00
Nonresident, game hunting	65.00
Nonresident, deer	260.00
Nonresident, quality deer	345.00
Nonresident, bear	250.00
Nonresident, cougar	280.00
Nonresident, turkey	100.00
Nonresident, antelope	260.00
Nonresident, elk cow	315.00
Nonresident, elk bull or either sex	525.00
Nonresident, quality elk	750.00
Nonresident, bighorn sheep	3,150.00
Nonresident, Barbary sheep	350.00
Nonresident, oryx	1,600.00
Nonresident, ibex	1,600.00
Nonresident, javelina	155.00
Nonresident, fur dealer	125.00
Nonresident, trapper	345.00
Nonresident, nongame	65.00
Resident, senior, handicapped, fishing	8.00
Resident, junior fishing	5.00
Temporary fishing, one day	12.00
Temporary fishing, five days	24.00
Resident, senior, handicapped, game hunting	15.00
Resident, junior, game hunting	10.00
Temporary game hunting, four days	33.00
Second rod validation	4.00.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-6, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 5; 1965, ch. 32, § 1; 1966, ch. 17, § 1; 1967, ch. 2, § 1; 1969, ch. 28, § 3; 1971, ch. 75, § 5; 1973, ch. 268, § 2; 1977, ch. 180, § 3; 1979, ch. 286, § 2; 1980, ch. 17, § 1; 1983, ch. 117, § 2; 1992, ch. 28, § 2; 1993, ch. 189, § 2; 1995, ch. 87, § 2; 1996, ch. 87, § 1; 1998, ch. 51, § 2; 2003, ch. 195, § 2; 2005, ch. 74, § 2; 2007, ch. 8, § 2; 2009, ch. 230, § 2; 2010, ch. 45, § 2; 2011, ch. 25, § 2; 2011, ch. 186, § 4; 2015, ch. 148, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals and reenactments. — Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 5, repealed former 53-3-6, 1953 Comp., relating to license fees and prohibiting fishing without a license, and enacted a new 17-3-13.1 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For depositing money received in game protection fund, see 17-1-14, 17-3-7, 17-3-20 and 17-5-7 NMSA 1978.

For placing portion of certain license fees in game and fish bond retirement fund, see 17-1-22 NMSA 1978.

For fee for additional deer license fee, see 17-3-15 NMSA 1978.

For fee for special Boy Scout fishing license, see 17-3-19 and 17-3-20 NMSA 1978.

For license fee for taking and selling minnows and nongame fish for bait, see 17-3-27 NMSA 1978.

For license fee for special nonresident bird licenses for regulated shooting preserves, see 17-3-39 NMSA 1978.

The 2015 amendment, effective April 1, 2016, removed from the list of license fees, certain licenses for military members; in Subsection B, after the first occurrence of "Resident, senior, handicapped," deleted "military", after the second occurrence of "Resident, junior fishing", deleted "Temporary active-duty fishing, five days 12.00", and after "Resident, junior, game hunting", deleted "Temporary active-duty game, four days 16.00".

The 2011 amendment, effective April 1, 2012, eliminated the distinction between small game hunting and general hunting licenses; lowered resident game hunting, deer and combined game hunting and fishing license fees; and increased nonresident game hunting license fees.

The 2010 amendment, effective May 19, 2010, in Subsection B, changed the license class "Resident, senior, handicapped" to the license class "Resident, senior, handicapped, military".

The 2009 amendment, effective July 1, 2009, in Subsection B, added the "Resident, disabled veteran, fishing and small game combination" license fee of \$10.00.

The 2007 amendment, effective April 1, 2008, in Subsection B provided fees for the resident, junior-senior deer license; the resident, fishing and small game combination license; and the resident, junior-senior, fishing and small game combination license.

The 2005 amendment, effective April 1, 2006, increases fees for all classes of fishing and hunting licenses.

The 2003 amendment, effective July 1, 2003 for trout water anglers and April 1, 2004 for warm water anglers, added the last entry of the table in Subsection B.

The 1998 amendment, effective July 1, 1998, added a fee for a temporary small game license at the end of the section.

The 1996 amendment, effective April 1, 1997, in Subsection B, changed the general hunting and fishing fee from \$23.00 to \$20.00; changed the resident elk cow fee from \$45.00 to \$37.00; changed the resident elk bull or either sex fee from \$75.00 to \$60.00; changed the nonresident bison fee from \$200.00 to \$1,000.00; and changed the resident junior-senior handicapped fishing fee from \$10.50 to \$5.00.

Fee structure, although discriminatory, not offensive. — The present fee structure in this section, which discriminates against nonresidents, is not offensive to either the privileges and immunities clause, U.S. Const., art. IV, § 2, or the U.S. Const., amend. XIV. *Terk v. Gordon*, No. 74-387-M (D.N.M., filed Aug. 25, 1977), *aff'd*, 436 U.S. 850, 98 S. Ct. 3063, 56 L. Ed. 2d 751 (1978).

1964 act was not retroactive. — Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, which enacted or amended certain statutes dealing with hunting and fishing licenses, was not retroactive in operation, since it operated prospectively from May 25, 1964. 1964 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 64-91.

Increasing fees is not impermissibly discriminatory. — Where an act of the legislature increases hunting or fishing license fees as of a certain date, any discrimination between persons on the basis of when they purchase a license is permissible, rational and unavoidable. 1964 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 64-91.

There is no discrimination in an act which increases hunting or fishing license fees as of a certain effective date except that which may result from an individual's own action or inaction. 1964 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 64-91.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 45.

17-3-13. License fees; fee adjustments. (Effective April 1, 2026.)

A. The director of the department of wildlife shall keep a record of all money received and licenses and permits issued by the department, numbering each class separately. Upon satisfactory proof that a license or permit has been lost before its expiration, the director may issue a duplicate and collect a just and reasonable fee as determined by state wildlife commission rule.

B. Beginning April 1, 2027 and on April 1 of each successive year, the state wildlife commission may adjust the fees provided by this section for inflation as provided in Subsection C of this section. The director of the department of wildlife shall collect the following fees for each license of the class indicated:

<i>Resident, fishing</i>	\$35.00
<i>Resident, game hunting</i>	25.00
<i>Resident, deer</i>	50.00
<i>Resident, junior-senior, deer</i>	25.00
<i>Resident, senior, disabled, game hunting and fishing</i>	20.00
<i>Resident, fishing and game hunting combination</i>	42.00
<i>Resident, junior, fishing and game hunting combination</i>	15.00
<i>Resident, disabled veteran, fishing and game hunting combination</i>	10.00
<i>Resident, antelope</i>	60.00
<i>Resident, elk cow</i>	60.00
<i>Resident, elk bull or either sex</i>	90.00
<i>Resident, junior-senior, elk</i>	60.00
<i>Resident, bighorn sheep, ram</i>	150.00
<i>Resident, bighorn sheep, ewe</i>	75.00
<i>Resident, Barbary sheep</i>	120.00
<i>Resident, bear</i>	55.00
<i>Resident, turkey</i>	35.00
<i>Resident, cougar</i>	55.00
<i>Resident, oryx</i>	175.00
<i>Resident, ibex</i>	110.00
<i>Resident, javelina</i>	55.00
<i>Resident, fur dealer</i>	50.00
<i>Resident, trapper</i>	50.00
<i>Resident, junior trapper</i>	20.00
<i>Nonresident, fishing</i>	90.00
<i>Nonresident, junior fishing</i>	20.00
<i>Nonresident, junior, game hunting</i>	20.00
<i>Nonresident, game hunting</i>	90.00
<i>Nonresident, deer</i>	375.00
<i>Nonresident, quality deer</i>	600.00
<i>Nonresident, bear</i>	350.00
<i>Nonresident, cougar</i>	350.00
<i>Nonresident, turkey</i>	125.00
<i>Nonresident, antelope</i>	400.00
<i>Nonresident, elk cow</i>	550.00
<i>Nonresident, elk bull or either sex</i>	750.00
<i>Nonresident, quality elk</i>	975.00
<i>Nonresident, bighorn sheep</i>	3,500.00
<i>Nonresident, Barbary sheep</i>	350.00
<i>Nonresident, oryx</i>	1,600.00
<i>Nonresident, ibex</i>	1,600.00
<i>Nonresident, javelina</i>	155.00
<i>Nonresident, fur dealer</i>	200.00
<i>Nonresident, trapper</i>	500.00
<i>Nonresident, nongame</i>	65.00
<i>Nonresident, shed hunter license</i>	200.00

<i>Resident, senior, disabled, fishing</i>	8.00
<i>Resident, junior fishing</i>	5.00
<i>Temporary fishing, one day</i>	12.00
<i>Temporary fishing, five days</i>	30.00
<i>Resident, senior, disabled, game hunting</i>	15.00
<i>Resident, junior, game hunting</i>	10.00
<i>Temporary game hunting, four days</i>	40.00
<i>Second rod validation</i>	10.00.

C. On April 1, 2027 and on April 1 of each successive year, the state wildlife commission may adjust the fees provided by Subsection B of this section by an amount up to the total amount reflected by the annual percentage change in the consumer price index; provided that the fees shall not be adjusted below the minimum amounts of the previous year as a result of a decrease in the consumer price index, and the fees shall be adjusted on April 1, 2032 and every five years thereafter. The amount of the adjustment shall be rounded to the nearest dollar. By November 1, 2026 and by November 1 of each successive year, the department of wildlife shall post on its website the fees provided in Subsection B of this section for the next year.

D. Residents who participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program are eligible to receive a twenty-five percent discount on all license fees after qualifying with the department of wildlife.

E. As used in this section, "consumer price index" means the consumer price index, not seasonally adjusted, for all urban consumers, United States city average for all items, or its successor index, as published by the United States department of labor for a twelve-month period ending September 30.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-6, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 5; 1965, ch. 32, § 1; 1966, ch. 17, § 1; 1967, ch. 2, § 1; 1969, ch. 28, § 3; 1971, ch. 75, § 5; 1973, ch. 268, § 2; 1977, ch. 180, § 3; 1979, ch. 286, § 2; 1980, ch. 17, § 1; 1983, ch. 117, § 2; 1992, ch. 28, § 2; 1993, ch. 189, § 2; 1995, ch. 87, § 2; 1996, ch. 87, § 1; 1998, ch. 51, § 2; 2003, ch. 195, § 2; 2005, ch. 74, § 2; 2007, ch. 8, § 2; 2009, ch. 230, § 2; 2010, ch. 45, § 2; 2011, ch. 25, § 2; 2011, ch. 186, § 4; 2015, ch. 148, § 2; 2025, ch. 9, § 10.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2025 amendment, effective April 1, 2026, references to the "state game commission" were changed to the "state wildlife commission", raised license fees for most categories of licenses, allowed the state wildlife commission to adjust for inflation the license fees provided for in this section, and required the department of wildlife to post on its website the fees provided for in this section for the next year, and provided for certain discounts on all license fees; in Subsection B, after the subsection designation, added "Beginning April 1, 2027 and on April 1 of each successive year, the state wildlife commission may adjust the fees provided by this section for inflation as provided in Subsection C of this section."; and added new Subsections C through E.

17-3-13.1. Disabled veteran; license fee exemption; lifetime license.

A. The director of the department of game and fish shall issue without a fee a general hunting and fishing license and class A trout stamp to any resident who was one hundred percent disabled as a result of having served in the armed forces of the United States, upon submission by the person of proof satisfactory to the commission that he was one hundred percent disabled as a result of having served in the armed forces of the United States.

B. Any license and stamp issued pursuant to the provisions of Subsection A of this section shall be issued only once, but shall be issued for the life of the licensee, provided the licensee is a resident of New Mexico and provided the licensee notifies the director of the department of game and fish promptly of any change of residence within or outside the state.

C. Any person holding a license and stamp under the provisions of this section shall be subject to all applicable hunting and fishing regulations, provisions and penalties of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1981, ch. 344, § 1.

17-3-13.2. Repealed.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals. — Laws 1985, ch. 118, § 2 repealed 17-3-13.2, as enacted by Laws 1985, ch. 118, § 1, relating to the fees and use of wild turkey validations, effective July 1, 1988.

17-3-13.3. Big game depredation damage stamp required; disposition of receipts.

A. Each license to hunt big game shall include a big game depredation damage stamp. The department of game and fish shall, by rule, set the fee for the stamp; provided that the fee shall not exceed five dollars (\$5.00) for each resident license or ten dollars (\$10.00) for each nonresident license.

B. No license to hunt big game shall be considered to be a proper and valid license unless it indicates, by a stamp, check off or other official mark, that the fee for the big game depredation damage stamp has been paid.

C. Revenues received by the department of game and fish from the sale of big game depredation damage stamps shall be deposited to the credit of the big game depredation damage fund.

History: Laws 2001, ch. 213, § 1.

17-3-13.4. Big game depredation damage fund; creation; expenditure.

A. The "big game depredation damage fund" is created in the state treasury. The fund consists of appropriations made to the fund, revenues received by the department of game and fish from the sale of big game depredation damage stamps and earnings from the investment of the fund. The fund shall be administered by the department and money in the fund is appropriated to the department to carry out the provisions of Subsection B of this section. Payments from the fund shall be by warrant of the secretary of finance and administration upon vouchers signed by the director of the department or his authorized representative. Balances in the fund shall not revert to any other fund.

B. The department of game and fish shall, by rule, establish a program to correct damage to federal, state or private land caused by big game and to prevent such damage in the future. Pursuant to rules adopted by the department, expenditures from the big game depredation damage fund shall be made by the department to carry out the established program; provided that money in the fund shall not be expended for any administrative costs.

History: Laws 2001, ch. 213, § 2.

17-3-13.5. Elk licenses reserved.

The state game commission shall reserve no more than two elk licenses a year for sale to persons under the age of twenty-one who have been determined by a licensed physician to have a life-threatening illness and who have been qualified through a nonprofit wish-granting organization approved by the commission.

History: Laws 2003, ch. 290, § 1.

17-3-13.6. Disabled military members and veterans; fishing license fee exemption.

The director of the department of game and fish shall issue without any fee on an annual or seasonal basis a fishing license and appropriate habitat management stamp to a disabled member or veteran of the United States armed forces who is undergoing a rehabilitation program that:

A. involves learning and practicing fishing skills;

B. is sponsored by the federal government or a nonprofit organization authorized by the federal government; and

C. is under the direction of a military or federal veterans administration rehabilitation center.

History: Laws 2010, ch. 72, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2010, ch. 72, § 2 made the provisions of Laws 2010, ch. 72, § 1 effective July 1, 2010.

17-3-13.7. Nonresident disabled military members and veterans; hunting licenses at resident fee.

A nonresident disabled active duty member or veteran of the United States armed forces who is undergoing a rehabilitation program that involves hunting activities and that is sponsored by the federal government or a nonprofit organization authorized by the federal government and is under the direction of a military or federal veterans administration rehabilitation center may purchase:

- A. a deer license at the resident deer license fee;
- B. an antelope license at the resident antelope license fee;
- C. an elk license at the resident elk license fee;
- D. a javelina license at the resident javelina license fee;
- E. a turkey license at the resident turkey license fee; or
- F. an oryx license at the resident oryx license fee.

History: Laws 2011, ch. 45, § 1; 2013, ch. 126, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2013 amendment, effective June 14, 2013, provided for nonresident disabled military members and veterans to hunt oryx at a resident fee; and added Subsection F.

17-3-14. Director authorized to issue license when agreement to hunt antelope on deeded or leased property is made.

In any case where the department of game and fish enters into an agreement with the owner of deeded property or the lessee of property held under a grazing lease to obtain permission for the hunting of antelope on the property, the director of the department of game and fish is authorized to issue an antelope license free of charge to

the owner or lessee of the property in consideration for the permission to hunt on the property.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-6.1, enacted by Laws 1959, ch. 143, § 1; 1961, ch. 17, § 1; 1967, ch. 3, § 1.

17-3-14.1. Landowner permits for elk.

The director of the department of game and fish shall issue landowner permits for the lawful taking of elk in accordance with regulations of the state game commission.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-3-14.1, enacted by Laws 1989, ch. 86, § 1.

17-3-14.2. Landowner permits; management of certain big game species.

The director of the department of game and fish may issue landowner permits for the lawful taking of elk, antelope, oryx, and deer. The permits may be issued when, in the determination of the director, they are necessary to effectively reduce conflicts between humans and wildlife and provide sport-hunting opportunities in accordance with regulations of the state game commission.

History: Laws 1998, ch. 12, § 1.

17-3-15. Additional deer license.

A. It is a misdemeanor for any person to procure or use more than one license to hunt big game in one year, except as provided in this section, or to use any tag after it has been used once.

B. For the purpose of effectuating better game management and control, the state game commission may by regulation authorize the sale of not more than one additional deer license each year to any person holding a license that entitled the person to hunt deer during that year. The fee for an additional deer license shall be the resident or nonresident deer license fee pursuant to Section 17-3-13 NMSA 1978.

C. It is a misdemeanor for any person to take or attempt to take a deer with an additional deer license unless the person has the additional deer license and the other license that entitled the person to hunt deer for that year in the person's possession. Possession of an additional deer license without the other license that entitled the person to hunt deer for that year is prima facie evidence of violation of this section.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-6.3, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 6; 1983, ch. 117, § 3; 2007, ch. 142, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For the resident and nonresident deer license fees, see 17-3-13 NMSA 1978.

The 2007 amendment, effective June 15, 2007, provided that the fee for an additional deer license is the resident or nonresident deer license fee.

17-3-16. Funds; special drawings for licenses.

A. The director of the department of game and fish may provide special envelopes and application blanks when a special drawing is to be held to determine the persons to receive licenses. Money required to be submitted with these applications, if enclosed in the special envelopes, need not be deposited with the state treasurer but may be held by the director until the successful applicants are determined. At that time, the fees of the successful applicants shall be deposited with the state treasurer and the fees submitted by the unsuccessful applicants shall be returned to them.

B. Beginning with the licenses issued from a special drawing for a hunt code that commences on or after April 1, 2012:

(1) licenses shall be issued as follows:

(a) ten percent of the licenses to be drawn by nonresidents and residents who will be contracted with a New Mexico outfitter prior to application; and

(b) six percent of the licenses to be drawn by nonresidents who are not required to be contracted with an outfitter; and

(2) a minimum of eighty-four percent of the licenses shall be issued to residents of New Mexico.

C. If the number of applicants who apply for licenses pursuant to the provisions of Paragraphs (1) and (2) of Subsection B of this section does not constitute the allocated licenses for either category, then the additional licenses available may be granted to another category of applicants. The director shall offer first choice of undersubscribed hunts to residents, whenever practicable.

D. If the determination of the percentages in Subsection B of this section yields a fraction of:

(1) five-tenths or greater, the number of licenses to be issued shall be rounded up to the next whole number; and

(2) less than five-tenths, the number of licenses shall be rounded down to the next whole number.

E. The fee for a nonresident license for a special drawing in a high-demand hunt covered in Subsection B of this section shall be assessed at the same rate as a license for nonresident quality elk or quality deer. As used in this subsection, "high-demand hunt" means:

(1) a hunt where the total number of nonresident applicants for a hunt code in each unit exceeds twenty-two percent of the total applicants and where the total applicants for a hunt exceeds the number of licenses available based on application data indicating that this criteria occurred in each of the two immediately preceding years; or

(2) an additional hunt code designated by the department of game and fish as a quality hunt.

F. All antlerless elk hunts pursuant to this section shall be exclusively for New Mexico residents.

G. Hunts on all state wildlife management areas shall be allocated exclusively to New Mexico residents.

H. As used in this section, "New Mexico outfitter" means a person who has a business:

(1) with a valid New Mexico state, county or municipal business registration and a valid outfitter license issued by the department of game and fish;

(2) that is authorized to do and is doing outfitting business under the laws of this state;

(3) that has paid property taxes or rent on real property in New Mexico, paid gross receipts taxes and paid at least one other tax administered by the taxation and revenue department in each of the three years immediately preceding the submission of an affidavit to the department of game and fish;

(4) the majority of which is owned by the person who has resided in New Mexico during the three-year period immediately preceding the submission of an affidavit to the department of game and fish;

(5) that employs at least eighty percent of the total personnel of the business who are New Mexico residents; and

(6) that has either leased property for ten years or purchased property greater than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in value in New Mexico;

(7) that, if it has changed its name from that of a previously certified business, the business is identical in every way to the previously certified business that meets all criteria;

(8) that possesses all required federal or state land use permits for the hunt; and

(9) that operates as a hunting guide service during which at least two days are accompanied with the client in the area where the license is valid.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-7, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 7; 1996, ch. 89, § 1; 1997, ch. 119, § 3; 2011, ch. 186, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

Repeals and reenactments. — Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 7, repealed former 53-3-7, 1953 Comp., relating to nonresident temporary fishing licenses, and enacted a new 17-3-16 NMSA 1978. The attorney general had ruled that Laws 1949, ch. 13, amending 17-3-13 NMSA 1978, had repealed by implication former 53-3-7, 1953 Comp. See 1949 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 49-5200.

Laws 1997, ch. 119, § 4 repealed 17-3-16 NMSA 1978, as enacted by Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 2, effective April 9, 1997. Laws 1996, ch. 89, § 2 provided for the repeal and reenactment of this section, and was to become effective on June 30, 1999.

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1997, ch. 119, § 6 provided that in the event the act is not enacted with the emergency clause, its provisions shall be made retroactive in operation to April 1, 1997. Although the act was enacted with the emergency clause, it was not signed by the governor until April 9, 1997.

The 2011 amendment, effective April 1, 2012, increased the percentage of licenses issued to residents from seventy-eight percent to eighty-four percent; lowered the number of licenses issued to nonresidents who use a New Mexico outfitter from twelve percent to ten percent and to nonresidents who do not use an outfitter from ten percent to six percent; required the director to offer unsubscribed licenses to residents; added Subsection F to restrict antlerless elk hunts to residents; added Subsection G to restrict hunts on state wildlife management areas to residents; and added Subsection H to define "New Mexico outfitter".

The 1997 amendment, effective April 9, 1997, rewrote Paragraph B(1); deleted former Paragraph B(2) providing for 3% of licenses issued to applications listing residents and nonresidents; redesignated Paragraph B(3) as B(2) and substituted "seventy-eight" for "eighty"; rewrote Subsection C; substituted "the percentages in" for "seventeen percent or three percent in Paragraphs (1) and (2)" in Subsection D; and substituted the phrase beginning with "and where" for "based on data for the two immediately preceding years;

or" following "applicants" in Paragraph E(1); and inserted "of game and fish" following "department" in Paragraph E(2).

The 1996 amendment, effective July 1, 1996, designated the existing language as Subsection A; and added Subsections B through E.

Administrative regulations inconsistent with this section. – As applied to the issuance of licenses for bull elk hunting in the Valles Caldera Preserve, the regulations found in 19.31.8.24 NMAC are inconsistent with this section, which specifies how licenses issued through a special drawing must be allocated among state residents and non-residents. 2003 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 03-06.

Valles Caldera Preserve Act does not supersede this section. – The legislature did not intend that this section's requirements could be avoided by simply having the federal Valles Caldera Preserve Trust conduct a special drawing, given Congress' express intent that the Valles Caldera Preserve Act not supercede New Mexico's laws pertaining to the issuance of hunting licenses; thus, the trust cannot use its authority to regulate access to the preserve in a manner that interferes with the application of this section. 2003 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 03-06.

Application of "hunt code" to rule regulating the hunt of bighorn sheep. — Where the current population levels of rocky mountain and desert bighorn sheep made it impossible for the New Mexico state game commission (commission) and the department of game and fish to assign a single hunt code to each hunt area during each hunt window for the bighorn sheep hunting season without running afoul of the statutory allocation requirements for resident and nonresident hunters dictated by NMSA 1978, § 17-3-16(B), the commission's application of the term "hunt code" that combines the rocky mountain bighorn sheep by sex and weapon type in several hunt areas and over several hunt windows under one hunt code, and, similarly, that groups the hunting season for desert bighorn rams in several hunt areas and over several hunt windows under one hunt code does not violate this section. The commission's application of the term "hunt code" to its rules regulating the bighorn sheep hunting season is lawful, in that it incorporates the elements [species, weapon type, time frame, specific hunt] that make up the definition of "hunt code," while also giving effect to the requirements of § 17-3-16(B). *New Mexico State Game Comm'n's Application of the term "Hunt Code"* (4/5/22), [Att'y Gen. Adv. Ltr. 2022-01](#).

17-3-16.1. Bighorn sheep enhancement permits; issuance; use.

A. The state game commission shall direct the department of game and fish to authorize not more than four of the permits available for issuance in the license year for the taking of four bighorn rams for the purpose of raising funds for programs and projects to benefit bighorn sheep.

B. The state game commission shall prescribe by regulation the form, design and manner of issuance of the bighorn sheep enhancement permits. The issuance of two

permits shall be subject to auction by the department or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, as determined by the commission, and shall be sold to the highest bidder. The issuance of the other two permits shall be subject to a lottery by the department or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, as determined by the commission.

C. All money collected from the issuance and sale of the bighorn sheep enhancement permits shall be credited to the game protection fund to be used exclusively for bighorn sheep preservation, restoration and management.

History: Laws 1989, ch. 384, § 1; 1999, ch. 81, § 1; 2012, ch. 34, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2012 amendment, effective May 16, 2012, authorized additional bighorn sheep enhancement permits; in Subsection A, after "not more than", deleted "two" and added "four" and after "for the taking of", deleted "two" and added "four"; and in Subsection B, in the second sentence, after "The issuance of" deleted "one permit" and added "two permits" and in the third sentence, after "issuance of the other", deleted "permit" and added "two permits".

The 1999 amendment, effective June 18, 1999, substituted "two" for "one" in two places in Subsection A; and, in Subsection B, substituted "one" for "such" in the next-to-last sentence, added the last sentence, and made minor stylistic changes.

17-3-16.2. Elk enhancement permit; issuance; use.

A. The state game commission shall direct the department of game and fish to authorize two elk enhancement permits each license year for the taking of two elk bulls to raise funds for programs and projects to better manage elk.

B. The state game commission shall prescribe by rule the form, design and manner of issuance of the two elk enhancement permits. The issuance of one permit shall be subject to auction by the department or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, as determined by the commission, and shall be sold to the highest bidder. The issuance of the other permit shall be subject to a lottery by the department or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, as determined by the commission.

C. All money collected from the issuance and sale of the elk enhancement permits shall be credited to the game protection fund to be used exclusively for elk restoration and management.

History: Laws 1999, ch. 69, § 1.

17-3-16.3. Lieutenant governor's deer enhancement permits; issuance; use.

A. The state game commission shall direct the department of game and fish to authorize two deer enhancement permits each license year for the taking of two deer to raise funds for programs and projects to better manage deer.

B. The state game commission shall prescribe by rule the form, design and manner of issuance of the two deer enhancement permits. The issuance of one permit shall be subject to auction by the department or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, as determined by the commission, and shall be sold to the highest bidder. The issuance of the other permit shall be subject to a lottery by the department or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, as determined by the commission.

C. All money collected from the issuance and sale of the lieutenant governor's deer enhancement permits shall be credited to the game protection fund to be used exclusively for deer restoration and management.

History: Laws 2003, ch. 69, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For general powers and duties of the state game commission and the game protection fund, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

17-3-16.4. Gould's turkey enhancement permits; issuance; use.

A. The state game commission may direct the department of game and fish to authorize Gould's turkey enhancement permits for the taking of Gould's turkeys, *Meleagris gallopavo mexicana*, to raise funds for programs and projects to better manage the Gould's turkey population in New Mexico.

B. The state game commission shall prescribe by rule the form, design and manner of issuance of the Gould's turkey enhancement permits. The issuance of the permits shall be subject to a lottery or auction. Such allotment of the permits may be conducted by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wildlife, in cooperation with and overseen by the commission and the department of game and fish.

C. The state game commission shall direct the department of game and fish to authorize Gould's turkey enhancement permits only after the department has documented that the issuance of each enhancement permit will not jeopardize the prospects for the survival and recruitment of the Gould's turkey within New Mexico.

D. Gould's turkey enhancement permits shall be authorized only when doing so does not conflict with the Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-33 to 17-2-36 NMSA 1978] or any rules implementing that act.

E. Money collected from the issuance and sale of the Gould's turkey enhancement permits shall be credited to the game protection fund to be used exclusively for the restoration and management of Gould's turkeys and Gould's turkey habitats, which support a variety of other unique and rare wildlife of southwestern New Mexico.

History: Laws 2005, ch. 149, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2005, ch. 149, § 2 made Laws 2005, ch. 149, § 1 effective July 1, 2005.

17-3-16.5. Hunting and fishing authorizations; governor's special events.

The director of the department of game and fish may annually make available to the governor no more than twelve big game special authorizations and twelve game bird or trophy fish special authorizations. The authorizations shall be allocated by auction in conjunction with special events called by the governor to raise money for fish and wildlife conservation. Any auction used to allocate an authorization shall comply with rules adopted by the state game commission. Each authorization shall allow the holder to purchase a license to hunt or fish for the species indicated on the authorization during dates and times at locations specified by the state game commission. The director may designate the species allowable for each authorization, but no more than three authorizations shall be issued for any one species each year. Money collected pursuant to the special authorizations of the governor shall be deposited in the game protection fund.

History: Laws 2007, ch. 105, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2007, ch. 105, contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 15, 2007, 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature.

17-3-16.6. Enhancement authorization packages; habitat enhancement.

The state game commission shall adopt rules for the department of game and fish to issue enhancement authorization packages each license year for the taking of one each

of elk, deer, oryx, ibex and pronghorn antelope. Each enhancement authorization package shall be auctioned by the department of game and fish or by an incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and sold to the highest bidder. Money collected from the enhancement authorization packages shall be deposited in the game protection fund and shall be used exclusively for big game habitat enhancement, conservation and protection.

History: Laws 2007, ch. 243, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2007, ch. 243 contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 15, 2007, 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature.

17-3-17. Fishing without license; exceptions.

A. It is a misdemeanor for any person, except children who have not reached their twelfth birthday, to take or attempt to take any game fish from any public stream or water in this state without carrying a proper fishing license as provided by law. The presence of any person, except children who have not reached their twelfth birthday, along any public stream or water in this state with fishing rod, hook or line, without carrying a proper fishing license, is prima facie evidence of the violation of this section. The director of the department of game and fish or any conservation officer may require any person along any public stream or water in this state with fishing rod, hook or line to exhibit the person's license.

B. The director, with the approval of the state game commission, may designate no more than two nonconsecutive two-day weekends in each year as free fishing days. During the free fishing days, residents and nonresidents may exercise the privileges of holders of proper fishing licenses without having proper fishing licenses and without payment of any license fees, subject to all limitations, restrictions, conditions, laws, rules and regulations applicable to holders of proper fishing licenses.

C. The director may designate, by special permit, fishing events during which the requirement for a fishing license or permit pursuant to Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 is waived exclusively for designated event participants. During the special permitted events, residents and nonresidents may exercise only the privileges as allowed by the director. The director's special permit shall substitute for the requirement of any license or permit pursuant to Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, and no payment of any license fee is required. The director's special permit shall be for a period of no longer than three days, and all other laws and rules shall apply.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-9, enacted by Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 8; 1973, ch. 268, § 3; 1979, ch. 340, § 8; 1991, ch. 96, § 1; 2013, ch. 29, § 1; 2023, ch. 147, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2023 amendment, effective June 16, 2023, increased the number of free fishing days designated by the state game commission from two nonconsecutive Saturdays to two nonconsecutive two-day weekends; and in Subsection B, after "two nonconsecutive", deleted "Saturdays" and added "two-day weekends".

The 2013 amendment, effective June 14, 2013, provided for special fishing event permits; and added Subsection C.

The 1991 amendment, effective July 1, 1991, substituted "Exceptions" for "Exception" in the catchline; redesignated the formerly undesignated provision as Subsection A and inserted "of the department of game and fish" following "director" in the final sentence thereof and added Subsection B.

This section applies to non-Indians on Indian lands. 1973 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 73-18.

Application is constitutional. — This section is constitutional if, in application, Indian lands are brought into its scope via non-Indian action. 1973 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 73-18.

Requirement of possession of license is mandatory. — Neither the state game commission, the state game warden (now director) nor any other person may waive the provision that persons over 14 (now 11) years of age must have fishing license in their possession when fishing since the statutory requirement is mandatory. 1947 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 47-5017.

17-3-18. Director authorized to issue fishing permit without license to certain handicapped persons.

The director of the department of game and fish is authorized to issue a fishing permit without a license to any group of mentally or physically handicapped persons who participate in a field trip of less than one week's duration under the supervision provided by a special institution or school for handicapped persons.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-9.1, enacted by Laws 1977, ch. 180, § 4.

17-3-19. Special license; minors fishing on scout property.

Every citizen of the United States who is a resident or nonresident of the state of New Mexico and under the age of eighteen years shall, upon the payment of two dollars (\$2.00), be issued a special temporary license to fish for ten days during the proper open season in any waters or streams located on the property owned and operated by the boy scouts of America in Colfax county, New Mexico. Such temporary license shall not authorize fishing in any other waters of this state.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-309a, enacted by Laws 1949, ch. 149, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-10; Laws 1983, ch. 117, § 4; 2005, ch. 74, § 3; 2013, ch. 5, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2013 amendment, effective June 14, 2013, created a special temporary fishing license for nonresidents under the age of eighteen; in the first sentence, after "state of New Mexico and", deleted "of the age of fourteen, fifteen, sixteen or seventeen" and added "under the age of eighteen".

The 2005 amendment, effective April 1, 2006, increased the fee for a special temporary license from \$1.50 to \$2.00.

17-3-20. Fee disposition.

Of the two dollars (\$2.00) collected for each temporary license issued pursuant to Section 17-3-19 NMSA 1978, one dollar fifty cents (\$1.50) shall be paid to the department of game and fish to be credited to the game protection fund and fifty cents (\$.50) shall be paid to the vendor of the license.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-309b, enacted by Laws 1949, ch. 149, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-11; 2005, ch. 74, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2005 amendment, effective April 1, 2006, provided that \$1.50 of the fee collected under Section 17-3-19 NMSA 1978, shall be credited to the game protection fund and \$0.50 shall be paid to the license vendor.

17-3-21. [Season and bag limits applicable to minors holding special license.]

All fishing under the privileges granted to the holders of such special licenses shall be in accordance with the seasons and bag limits and other regulations established by the state game commission.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-309c, enacted by Laws 1949, ch. 149, § 3; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-12.

17-3-22. [Administration of 17-3-19 to 17-3-22.]

The state game and fish department is hereby charged with the proper administration of this act [17-3-19 to 17-3-22 NMSA 1978].

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-309d, enacted by Laws 1949, ch. 149, § 4; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-13.

17-3-23. Fishing on lands of New Mexico boy's school near Springer authorized for resident children without a license.

It is lawful for any child who has been committed under the Children's Code [Chapter 32A NMSA 1978] to and is resident at the New Mexico boy's school near Springer, New Mexico to fish without a license in waters located on the property of the school.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-309e, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 60, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-14; Laws 1972, ch. 97, § 69.

17-3-24. [Supervision of fishing at boys' school.]

Provided however, that such fishing by said wards [resident children] as provided by Section 1 [17-3-23 NMSA 1978] of this act, shall be done under the supervision of the officials of said New Mexico industrial school [boys' school], and in conformity with seasons and bag limits established by the state game commission.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-309f, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 60, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-15.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

17-3-25. Patients at Carrie Tingley crippled children's hospital; fishing on hospital lands by patients; supervision.

Any person between the age of fourteen and the age of majority, who is a patient in the Carrie Tingley crippled children's hospital, may fish without a license in waters located on the property of the Carrie Tingley crippled children's hospital at Truth or Consequences. Fishing shall be done only under the supervision of the officials of the Carrie Tingley crippled children's hospital, and in conformity with seasons and bag limits established by the state game commission.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-15.1, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 26, § 1; 1973, ch. 138, § 22.

17-3-26. Taking minnows and nongame fish to sell as bait; license required; exception.

It is unlawful for any person, except children under the age of twelve years, to take from the streams or public waters of this state minnows and nongame fish for the purpose of sale to fishermen or others for bait without having first procured from the state game commission a license therefor as provided in Sections 17-3-26 through 17-3-28 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 27, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-313; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-19; Laws 1955, ch. 60, § 1; 1979, ch. 340, § 9.

ANNOTATIONS

License and bond are required of sellers or takers of bait fish. — This section would seem to point to the conclusion that only those who take minnows and nongame fish from public waters are required to be licensed. However, the first sentence of 17-3-27 NMSA 1978 is phrased in the disjunctive, and the application of that statute is to those engaged in the business of selling minnows and nongame fish or to those who take the minnows and nongame fish from the streams of the state. Thus, not only those who take minnows from the streams are to be licensed and bonded, but also those who otherwise engage in the business of selling them irrespective of where they were originally secured. And if one taking minnows or other nongame fish from private waters sells them, it would appear that he is engaging in a business for which a license and bond are required. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-150.

Including those employed on commission basis. — Whereas this section and 17-3-27 NMSA 1978 do not apply to persons hired on salary basis for nongame fishing on behalf of a licensee, persons employed by a licensee on a "split the profit" or commission basis are required to be licensed. 1947 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 47-5119.

17-3-27. Bait license; bond; fee; issuance.

Any person desiring to procure a license for the purpose of engaging in the business of selling minnows and nongame fish for bait or taking minnows and nongame fish from the streams of this state for the purpose of sale to others shall apply to the state game commission for a license. The application shall be upon forms provided by the commission and shall set forth the public streams or waters out of which the applicant intends to take the minnows and nongame fish and the place at which they are to be sold. The application shall be accompanied by a just and reasonable fee as determined by regulation of the state game commission. Upon receipt of the application, it shall be the duty of the state game commission or, when it is not in session, the director of the department of game and fish to pass upon the application and to issue a license authorizing the taking and the manner of taking of the minnows and nongame fish by the applicant from those waters in the state as in the opinion of the state game commission or director will not be detrimental to the public or injurious to protected fish. The license when so issued shall specify the manner of taking and the waters from which the applicant is permitted to take minnows and nongame fish for sale for bait.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 27, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 43-314; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-20; Laws 1955, ch. 55, § 1; 1992, ch. 29, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1992 amendment, effective April 1, 1992, added the present section catchline; in the text, substituted the present third sentence for the former third and fourth sentences, relating to a fee of \$20 and a bond of \$1,000, in the present fourth sentence, deleted "and bond" following "the application" and inserted "of the department of game and fish"; and made stylistic changes.

This license fee is a regulatory measure rather than a revenue gathering device. 1965 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 65-18.

County or municipal licenses are not precluded. — The licensing of bait sellers, under this section, is not a preemption of the field so as to preclude licensing by the county or a municipality of the same business enterprise. 1959 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 59-32.

17-3-28. [Exceptions from 17-3-26, 17-3-27; taking bait for own use; persons under 15; unlawful to place nongame fish in certain waters.]

Nothing in this act [17-3-26 to 17-3-28 NMSA 1978] shall be construed to prevent licensed fishermen from taking minnows and other nongame fish for his [their] own use for bait; or to any minor under fifteen (15) years of age taking minnows not for resale; provided, however, that it shall be unlawful for licensed fishermen or any other person using nongame fish for bait to place any of such nongame fish which are not used for bait in any waters stocked or reserved for game fish by the state game commission of the state of New Mexico.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 27, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 43-315; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-21.

17-3-29. Permit to take game, birds or fish as specimens or for scientific or propagating purposes; eligibility; issuance; contents; nonassignable; sale for food purposes prohibited.

The state director may issue permits to any person to take, capture, kill, transport within or out of the state any game, birds or fish mentioned in this chapter at any time when satisfied that such person desires the same exclusively as specimens or for scientific or propagating purposes. Such permit shall be in writing and shall state the kind and number to be taken and the manner of taking, the name of the person to whom issued, the name of the place to which the same is to be transported and the name of the persons shipping such game, birds or fish, and shall be signed by him. Such permit shall not be transferable nor shall it be lawful to sell or barter any of the animals, birds or

fish taken or exported under such permit for food purposes, and the holder of such permit shall be liable to the penalties provided in this chapter if he violates any of its provisions.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 42; Code 1915, § 2465; C.S. 1929, § 57-250; 1941 Comp., § 43-317; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-23; Laws 1957, ch. 134, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The words "this chapter" were substituted by the 1915 Code compilers for the words "this act" and may refer to Chapter 47, 1915 Code (composed of Laws 1912, ch. 85). For the disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see the note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978. However, the words "this chapter" were also used in Laws 1957, ch. 134, § 1, amending this section, and may therefore refer to Chapter 53, 1953 Comp., the presently effective provisions of which are compiled in this chapter of NMSA 1978, together with subsequently enacted provisions.

State permit not required by federal authorities to kill deer in national park for study. — The secretary of interior and his subordinates have authority to kill deer within the boundaries of a national park for an ecology study to determine deer range conditions within that park without obtaining state permits. *New Mexico State Game Comm'n v. Udall*, 410 F.2d 1197 (10th Cir.), cert. denied, 396 U.S. 961, 90 S. Ct. 429, 24 L. Ed. 2d 426 (1969).

This section relates to propagation for own use. — Any person breeding game for sale is required to have a permit under 17-4-8 NMSA 1978. A person desiring to propagate birds only for his own use without barter, sale or exchange may secure a permit under the provisions of this section. 1955 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 55-6176.

17-3-30. [Sending game animals, birds and fish to officers of other states.]

The state warden [director of the department of game and fish] may, upon application from the game and fish warden or corresponding officer of any other state, procure and transmit to such officer alive specimens of the game animals, birds and fish of this state to be used for scientific or propagating purposes.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 43; Code 1915, § 2466; C.S. 1929, § 57-251; 1941 Comp., § 43-318; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-24.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-3-31. [Permit to capture or destroy protected game damaging crops or property; beavers.]

The state game and fish warden [director of the department of game and fish] may grant permits to owners or lessees of land and for the capture or destruction on their lands of any protected game doing damage to their cultivated crops or property; provided, that on said permit or permits so issued as aforesaid, the state game and fish warden shall fix the numerical limit of any protected game so to be captured or destroyed and shall also therein fix the time limit within which any such protected game shall be so captured.

The state game and fish warden shall also grant permits, preferably to owners or lessees of land, for the capture of such beaver as interfere with the operation of any lawful canal, ditch or dam, or cause or threaten the destruction of private property and for the capture of beaver to be transferred from one stream to another; provided, however, that all skins of beaver taken under the provisions of this section shall be turned in to the state game and fish warden, to be by him sold and one-half of the proceeds therefor to be by said state game and fish warden conveyed into the game protection fund and the other one-half of the proceeds to be by said state game and fish warden turned over to the holder of said permit.

History: Code 1915, ch. 47, § 84, added by Laws 1919, ch. 133, § 9; C.S. 1929, § 57-326; 1941 Comp., § 43-319; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-25.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For application of this section to beaver, see 17-5-2 NMSA 1978.

For permits to take fur-bearing animals doing damage, see 17-5-3 NMSA 1978.

17-3-32. Importing game animals; permits.

In order to protect game animals, birds and fish against importation of undesirable species and introduction of infectious or contagious diseases, it is a misdemeanor to import any live animals, birds or fish into this state, except domesticated animals or domesticated fowl or fish from government hatcheries, without first obtaining a permit from the department of game and fish.

History: Laws 1927, ch. 37, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 57-501; 1941 Comp., § 43-320; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-26; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Fertile eggs come within the classification of live birds. 1955 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 55-6154.

Burden is on importer to prove game birds were domesticated. — This section requires the person importing any live animals, birds or fish into this state to obtain a permit from the director. It exempts domesticated animals or domesticated fowl, and the burden of proving that any such birds, if within the birds declared to be game birds, were domesticated would fall upon the person desiring to import them without a permit. 1955 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 55-6154.

17-3-32.1. Exceptions from certain permits.

The provisions of Sections 17-2-14 and 17-3-32 NMSA 1978 shall not apply to any raptor belonging to and used by a nonresident under a valid falconer's license or permit from another state, providing that the importation into and possession within New Mexico is only for purposes of transit or to hunt mammals or birds during legal falconry or nongame seasons; except that any nonresident who uses a raptor to hunt any mammal or bird in New Mexico shall otherwise abide by regulations established with reference to hunting by nonresident falconers in the state.

History: Laws 1979, ch. 109, § 1.

17-3-33. Presumption from possession of game or fish without license; showing license to officer.

The possession of game or fish at any time unaccompanied by a proper and valid license, game tag, certificate or permit or invoice, as provided in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, shall be prima facie evidence that such game or fish was unlawfully taken and is unlawfully held in possession, and it shall be the duty of every person having possession or control of game or fish to produce the proper license, game tag, certificate, permit or invoice when one is required by Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 on demand of any officer, and to permit the same to be copied by such officer. Violation of any provision of this section is a misdemeanor and is punishable as provided by Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 14; Code 1915, § 2437; C.S. 1929, § 57-222; 1941 Comp., § 43-321; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-27; 1979, ch. 340, § 10.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For invoice upon sale from licensed lake or park, see 17-4-16 to 17-4-20 NMSA 1978.

Documentation required. — Since a tag is not the only form of documentation recognized by game and fish laws, and since a tag, even when required, need not be directly affixed to game animal parts stored or displayed within a home, a reasonable

officer with a working knowledge of game and fish laws would not have assumed that the game animal parts visible within defendant's home were "unaccompanied" by proper documentation merely because they were untagged. *State v. Moran*, 2008-NMCA-160, 145 N.M. 297, 197 P.3d 1079.

17-3-34. Revocation of license, certificate or permit for violation of law; notice and hearing; judicial review.

A. If the holder of any license, certificate or permit persistently, flagrantly or knowingly violates or countenances the violation of any of the provisions of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 or of any regulations referred to in Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978, the license, certificate or permit shall be revoked by the state game commission after reasonable notice given the accused of the alleged violation and after the accused is afforded an opportunity to appear and show cause against the charges.

B. At the hearing, the state game commission shall cause a record of the hearing to be made and shall allow the person charged to examine witnesses testifying at the hearing. Any person whose license, certificate or permit has been revoked by the commission may appeal to the district court pursuant to the provisions of Section 39-3-1.1 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 35; Code 1915, § 2458; C.S. 1929, § 57-244; 1941 Comp., § 43-322; 1953 Comp., § 53-3-28; Laws 1977, ch. 290, § 4; 1998, ch. 55, § 26; 1999, ch. 265, § 27.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For procedures governing administrative appeals to the district court, see Rule 1-074 NMRA.

The 1999 amendment, effective July 1, 1999, substituted "Section 39-3-1.1" for "Section 12-8A-1" in Subsection B.

The 1998 amendment, effective September 1, 1998, in Subsection A, deleted "shall" following "permit", substituted "violates" for "violate" and "countenances" for "countenance", inserted "after the accused is afforded" and deleted "afforded" following "opportunity"; and rewrote Subsection B.

PART 2

REGULATED SHOOTING PRESERVE ACT

17-3-35. Short title.

This act [17-3-35 to 17-3-42 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the Regulated Shooting Preserve Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-29, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For licensed private parks or lakes, see 17-4-8 to 17-4-28 NMSA 1978.

17-3-36. Regulated shooting preserves; fees.

The state game commission may issue licenses authorizing the establishment and operation of regulated propagated game bird shooting preserves on private lands when in the judgment of the commission such areas will not conflict with any reasonable prior interest. The commission shall govern and prescribe by regulation the following:

- A. the minimum and maximum size of the areas, including the type of fences and signs;
- B. the method of hunting;
- C. the open and closed seasons, which need not conform to the regular hunting seasons;
- D. the releasing, possession and use of legally propagated pen-raised game birds on the preserves; and
- E. the fee for the licenses, which shall be just and reasonable.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-30, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 2; 1992, ch. 29, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1992 amendment, effective April 1, 1992, deleted the former second sentence, which read "The fee for such permit shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per license year"; in Subsection D, substituted "game birds on the preserves" for "game birds thereon"; and added Subsection E and made related stylistic changes.

17-3-37. Definition.

"Game bird," as used in the Regulated Shooting Preserve Act [17-3-35 to 17-3-42 NMSA 1978], means pheasant, quail, chukar and mallards.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-31, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 3; 1961, ch. 33, § 1; 1967, ch. 5, § 1.

17-3-38. Tags.

All game birds taken from preserves shall be tagged, with tags to be furnished by the commission at a reasonable fee, before being transported.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-32, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 4.

17-3-39. Special nonresident licenses.

The commission may issue special nonresident bird licenses to nonresidents to hunt on regulated shooting preserves with the owner's consent for legally propagated game birds upon the payment of a license fee of five dollars and twenty-five cents (\$5.25). The license must be carried on the person at all times when hunting on private shooting preserves.

Five dollars (\$5.00) of the special nonresident bird license fee is to be paid to the state game and fish department. Twenty-five cents (\$.25) of the fee is to be retained by the issuing agent.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-33, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 5.

17-3-40. Regular licenses.

Residents or nonresidents may hunt on private shooting preserves when possessed of the appropriate bird or hunting license. All hunting on shooting preserves covered in the Regulated Shooting Preserve Act shall be done only with the consent of the owner of the private preserve.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-34, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 6; 2011, ch. 186, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2011 amendment, effective April 1, 2012, eliminated the category of general hunting license.

17-3-41. Commercial operation of.

Operators of private shooting preserves may charge fees for hunting on the preserves.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-35, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 7.

17-3-42. Revocation of permits.

Any permit issued under the Private [Regulated] Shooting Preserve Act [17-3-35 to 17-3-42 NMSA 1978] may be revoked for a violation of any provision or any regulation made by the commission relating to the act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-36, enacted by Laws 1957, ch. 194, § 8.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

PART 3 AIRBORNE HUNTING ACT

17-3-43. Short title.

Sections 17-3-43 through 17-3-47 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Airborne Hunting Act".

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-37, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 13, § 1.

17-3-44. Definitions.

As used in the Airborne Hunting Act [17-3-43 to 17-3-47 NMSA 1978]:

A. "aircraft" means any contrivance used for flight in the air; and

B. "menacing" means threatening, harassing or having the intent to injure, capture or kill.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-38, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 13, § 2.

17-3-45. Shooting from aircraft; causing injury by aircraft; penalty.

It is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in excess of six months but less than one year or a fine of not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500) for any person while airborne in an aircraft to:

A. shoot or attempt to shoot for the purpose of injuring, capturing or killing any bird, fish or other animal;

B. fly or attempt to fly the aircraft in any manner intentionally menacing to any bird, fish or other nondomestic animal which causes the bird, fish or other nondomestic animal to move from its chosen place of rest or change its direction of travel; or

C. knowingly participate in using an aircraft for any purpose referred to in Subsection A or B.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-39, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 13, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game § 47.

17-3-46. Applicability.

The Airborne Hunting Act [17-3-43 to 17-3-47 NMSA 1978] shall not apply to any person who is employed as an authorized agent of the state or federal government or is operating under a permit of the state granted by the director of the department of game and fish.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-40, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 13, § 4.

17-3-47. Permit.

The director of the department of game and fish may grant a permit to any person to carry out acts which are prohibited by the Airborne Hunting Act [17-3-43 to 17-3-47 NMSA 1978]. Permits shall be granted only to protect or aid in the administration or protection of land, water, wildlife, livestock, domesticated animals, human life or crops. Each person operating under a permit shall report to the director of the department of game and fish each calendar quarter, the number of birds, fishes or other animals so injured, captured or killed.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-3-41, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 13, § 5.

PART 4 PENALTIES

17-3-48. Purchase or use of license, certificate or permit, or hunting or fishing while under suspension or revocation; penalty.

Any person who purchases a hunting or fishing license, or hunts or fishes during the period in which his hunting or fishing license, permit or certificate has been revoked or suspended in accordance with Section 17-2-10 or 17-3-34 NMSA 1978 is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished as provided by Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-3-48, enacted by Laws 1979, ch. 340, § 11.

17-3-49. Computer-assisted remote hunting prohibited; penalties.

A. A person shall not:

- (1) engage in computer-assisted remote hunting;
- (2) provide or operate facilities for the purpose of computer-assisted remote hunting;
- (3) create, maintain, provide, advertise or sell computer software or an internet web site for the purpose of computer-assisted remote hunting; or
- (4) entice, possess or confine an animal or bird for the purpose of computer-assisted remote hunting.

B. A person who violates the provisions of this section shall be sentenced in accordance with the provisions of Section 17-2-10 NMSA 1978.

C. When a person who violates the provisions of this section possesses a license, certificate or permit issued by the state game commission, the license, certificate or permit shall be subject to revocation by the commission pursuant to Sections 17-1-14 and 17-3-34 NMSA 1978.

D. As used in this section:

- (1) "computer-assisted remote hunting" means the use of a computer or other electronic device, equipment or software to access the internet and remotely control the aiming and discharge of a bow, crossbow or firearm of any kind for the purpose of hunting, taking or capturing an animal or bird; and
- (2) "facilities for computer-assisted remote hunting" means the real property and improvements on the property associated with computer-assisted remote hunting, including hunting blinds, offices and rooms equipped to facilitate computer-assisted remote hunting.

History: Laws 2006, ch. 86, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2006, ch. 86, § 2 made the act effective July 1, 2006.

ARTICLE 4

Propagation of Fish and Game

17-4-1. [Power of state game commission to acquire land.]

The state game commission of the state of New Mexico is hereby authorized and empowered to acquire by purchase, gift, bequest or lease; and to hold, develop and improve lands for fish hatcheries, game farms, game refuges, bird refuges, resting and nesting grounds, field stations, dams, lakes, ditches, flumes, waterways, pipelines, canals, rights-of-way, trails, roads and for all purposes incidental to the propagation, preservation, protection and management of the game, birds, fish and wildlife of the state of New Mexico.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 223, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-401; Laws 1947, ch. 48, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-1.

ANNOTATIONS

Commission may pay rentals and charge fees to defray them. — This section is a broad grant of power to the state game commission. First, it includes the express power to acquire lands (including lakes) by lease for fish and game purposes. Such necessarily includes the power to pay rentals (within fiscal limits) to continue the lease, and keeping in mind the nature of the statute, it may be fairly implied that the state game commission would have authority to impose fees or other charges to help defray the expenses necessitated by the lease and operations thereunder, particularly where the fees charged and collected are directly related to the rentals paid the lessor. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-80.

County ordinance cannot limit authority of state game commission. — County land use ordinances attempting to restrict traditional federal and state regulatory authority are preempted by this section which allows the state game commission to acquire land for fish hatcheries, game farms, game refuges, and other relevant purposes and, thus, such county ordinances are of no consequence. 1994 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 94-01.

17-4-2. Eminent domain power; abandonment or relinquishment of property acquired.

Any property or rights-of-way required for use by the state game commission may be acquired as for a public purpose and as a matter of public necessity under the power of eminent domain, by and with the written approval of the board of county commissioners of the county in which the property or rights-of-way sought are located, in an action instituted and prosecuted in the name of the state, according to the procedure for condemnation provided by the Eminent Domain Code [42A-1-1 to 42A-1-33 NMSA 1978]. Provided nevertheless, that any property right acquired under the provisions of this section, if and when the use for which it was acquired has been abandoned for three years or otherwise relinquished, shall revert to the grantor from whom it was derived.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 223, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 43-402; Laws 1947, ch. 48, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-2; Laws 1981, ch. 125, § 47.

17-4-3. [Exchange, sale, lease, sublease and assignment of lands by commission; proceeds.]

The state game commission, except as herein limited, is authorized to exchange, sell, lease, sublease or assign any interest in any lands and leases heretofore or hereafter acquired including but not limited to the sale or lease of timber, oil, gas, minerals or any other severable product of or interest in real estate, when, in the judgment of said commission, such transaction will be in the interest of the state game commission and said lands, leases, products or severable parts thereof, are, in the opinion of such commission, no longer necessary for the purposes for which such lands were acquired or where such lease or sublease will not materially interfere with or conflict with the use of such lands for the purpose for which they were acquired. The proceeds of any such sale, exchange, lease or assignment shall be converted into the game protection fund and disbursed as the other moneys in said fund are disbursed.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 223, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 43-403; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-3; Laws 1955, ch. 86, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Whether to lease is left to commission's sole discretion. — Whether or not a lease should be executed is a question to be determined by the judgment and discretion of the game commission. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-149.

Commission may itself conduct sale of lands. — Under this section the state game commission is itself authorized to sell its lands, or interests therein, unfettered by the provisions of the general statute governing the sale of property by state agencies or local public bodies. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-76.

If the commission chooses to itself sell the lands, it could, if it wanted, advertise the proposed sale, or otherwise notify prospective purchasers. But such is a matter to be determined by the commission in its sound discretion. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-76.

17-4-4. [Sale of former state bird farm; mineral rights reserved.]

The sale of the surface and water rights, but not the mineral rights, notwithstanding any other provision of the law, to the highest bidder after advertised for public bid of approximately eighty-seven acres of land and improvements, known as the former state bird farm, located at the northern boundary of the city of Carlsbad in Eddy county, New Mexico is approved. The advertisement for public bid shall be made after the effective date of this act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-4-3.1, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 260, § 1.

17-4-5. [Fish hatcheries established by United States; exemption from state laws.]

In case the United States shall establish one or more fish hatching and fish cultural stations in the state of New Mexico, the United States commissioner of fisheries and his duly authorized agents are hereby accorded the right to conduct fish hatching and fish culture and all operations connected therewith, in any manner and at any time that may be by them considered necessary and proper, any fisheries laws of this state to the contrary notwithstanding.

History: Laws 1927, ch. 59, § 1; C.S. 1929, § 57-601; 1941 Comp., § 43-404; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-4.

17-4-6. Hunting and fishing on private property; posting; penalty.

A. Whenever the owner or lessee desires to protect or propagate game birds, animals or fish within the owner's or lessee's enclosure or pasture, the owner or lessee shall publish notices in English and Spanish warning all persons not to hunt or fish within the enclosure or pasture. The notices shall be posted in at least six conspicuous places on the premises and published for three consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the premises are situated. In the event a public road enters or crosses the enclosure or pasture, an additional notice shall be posted conspicuously within three hundred yards of the point where each public road enters the posted property.

B. After the publication and posting, it is a misdemeanor for any person to enter the premises for the purpose of hunting or fishing or to kill or injure any bird, animal or fish within the enclosure or pasture without permission of the owner or lessee.

C. No person engaged in hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, hiking, sightseeing, the operation of watercraft or any other recreational use shall walk or wade onto private property through non-navigable public water or access public water via private property unless the private property owner or lessee or person in control of private lands has expressly consented in writing.

D. Nothing in this act shall be interpreted to affect or influence whether a water is a navigable water or a water of the United States for purposes of the federal Clean Water Act of 1977, 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 10; Code 1915, § 2433; C.S. 1929, § 57-215; 1941 Comp., § 43-405; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-5; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 5; 1965, ch. 172, § 1; 2015, ch. 34, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For prohibition against hunting or fishing in licensed private park or lake without permission, see 17-4-15 NMSA 1978.

For posting notices against trespassing on licensed private parks or lakes, see 17-4-26 NMSA 1978.

For publication of notices generally, see 14-11-1 to 14-11-13 NMSA 1978.

The 2015 amendment, effective July 1, 2015, prohibited persons engaged in hunting and fishing from entering private property without the consent of the land owner or lessee; in Subsection A, after "within", deleted "his" and added "the owner's or lessee's", and after "pasture," deleted "he" and added "the owner or lessee"; and added Subsections C and D.

Both publication and posting are required. — Only by publishing a notice in English and Spanish, and by the posting of handbills in English and Spanish in six conspicuous places on the premises does the owner put into effect on his property a penal statute which protects him against trespassers. *State v. Barnett*, 1952-NMSC-065, 56 N.M. 495, 245 P.2d 833.

An appeal does not lie to supreme court from an order overruling a motion to quash an information brought against defendants for violation of this section in the absence of express statutory authority therefor. *State v. Barnett*, 1951-NMSC-084, 56 N.M. 1, 238 P.2d 694.

English notice only is insufficient. — Where the publication and posting were in English only, this section imposing criminal sanctions, did not become operative. *State v. Barnett*, 1952-NMSC-065, 56 N.M. 495, 245 P.2d 833.

Subsection C can be construed to avoid a constitutional question. — Section 17-4-6(C) NMSA 1978 can be interpreted one of two ways: (1) the public cannot walk or wade onto private property (excluding the beds of public water) from public water, and the public cannot gain access to public water by crossing over private property, or (2) the public cannot walk or wade onto private property (including the beds of public water) from public water, and the public cannot gain access to public water by crossing over private property. The former raises no constitutional question; trespass onto privately owned lands is not permitted. The latter would be an unconstitutional limitation on the public's right to recreate and fish in public waters. Statutes should be construed, if possible, to avoid constitutional questions. *Adobe Whitewater Club v. State Game Comm'n*, 2022-NMSC-020.

New Mexico state game commission lacked the authority to promulgate regulations that limited the public's right to access public waters. — Where petitioners sought a writ of prohibitory mandamus challenging the constitutionality of regulations promulgated by the New Mexico state game commission (commission) which outlined the process for landowners to obtain a certificate allowing them to close

public access to segments of public water flowing over private property, the writ of mandamus was granted, because the regulations conflicted with a constitutional reading of § 17-4-6(C) NMSA 1978. The commission lacked the legislative authority to promulgate regulations that place an unconstitutional limitation on the public's right to recreate and fish in public waters. The public has the right to recreate and fish in public waters and this right includes the privilege to do such acts as are reasonably necessary to effect the enjoyment of such right. *Adobe Whitewater Club v. State Game Comm'n*, 2022-NMSC-020.

A tract of land which is not enclosed by fences may not be posted under the terms of this section so as to subject persons who enter for the purpose of hunting and fishing to the penalties therein provided. 1957 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 57-237.

Posting by lessee permitted provided lessee does not conflict with action by commissioner of public lands. — Assuming full and strict compliance with this section, as interpreted, a lessee of state land could not in all cases post under the statute. This section, insofar as this problem is concerned, must be read in light of the peculiar nature of the land involved. It must be borne in mind that under the Enabling Act, the constitution and statutes based thereon, the complete dominion and control over state lands is vested in the commissioner of public lands. In short, the lessee of state lands, even if he acts strictly in accordance with this section, could not do so in a manner in conflict with a duly taken action of the commissioner. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-194.

Posting does not prevent hunting or fishing by owner or permittees. — If posting is duly accomplished, the landowner does not thereby deprive himself of hunting and fishing privileges on these lands. The owner, or those permitted by him to do so, could still hunt or fish so long as done in accordance with the game and fish laws and lawful game fish regulations. 1958 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 58-194.

New Mexico constitution does not permit a law to exclude the public from using public water on, or running through, private property. — The New Mexico supreme court has construed this section to give members of the public the right to use public water in streams and lakes for fishing and other recreational activities, even when those streams and lakes are on private property, and therefore a 2015 amendment to 17-4-6 NMSA 1978, which added a prohibition against accessing private property through public water or accessing public water through private property without the property owner's consent, is constitutional only to the extent it prohibits a person, absent the required consent, from gaining access to private property from a stream or other public water and gaining access to a stream or other public water from private property. The constitution does not allow a law that would exclude the public from using public water on, or running through, private property for recreational uses if the public water is accessible without trespassing on private property. *Access to Public Waters on Private Property* (8/5/16), [Att'y Gen. Adv. Ltr. 2016-06](#).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Title to fish and game taken by trespasser, 23 A.L.R. 1402.

Injunction against repeated or continuing trespasses by fishing, 32 A.L.R. 463, 60 A.L.R.2d 310.

Reservation in grant of land of right to hunt and fish, with like right to the grantee, as limiting the right of the grantee to actual owners of the land, 32 A.L.R. 1533.

Rights, title and remedies of hunter in respect of game which he is pursuing or has killed or wounded, 49 A.L.R. 1498.

Inland lakes as public fisheries, 57 A.L.R.2d 569.

36A C.J.S. Fish § 34; 38 C.J.S. Game § 59.

17-4-7. Liability of landowner permitting persons to hunt, fish or use lands for recreation; duty of care; exceptions.

A. Any owner, lessee or person in control of lands who, without charge or other consideration, other than a consideration paid to the landowner by the state, the federal government or any other governmental agency, grants permission to any person or group to use the owner's, lessee's or land controller's lands for the purpose of hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, hiking, sightseeing, the operation of aircraft, cave exploring or any other recreational use does not thereby:

- (1) extend any assurance that the premises are safe for such purpose;
- (2) assume any duty of care to keep such lands safe for entry or use;
- (3) assume responsibility or liability for any injury or damage to or caused by such person or group; or
- (4) assume any greater responsibility, duty of care or liability to such person or group than if permission had not been granted and the person or group were trespassers.

B. This section shall not limit the liability of any landowner, lessee or person in control of lands that may otherwise exist by law for injuries to any person granted permission to hunt, fish, trap, camp, hike, sightsee, operate aircraft, explore caves or use the land for recreation in exchange for a consideration, other than a consideration paid to the landowner by the state, the federal government or any other governmental agency.

C. For the purposes of this section, "cave" means a natural, geologically formed void or cavity beneath the surface of the earth, but does not mean a mine, tunnel, aqueduct or other manmade excavation.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-4-5.1, enacted by Laws 1967, ch. 6, § 1; 2011, ch. 63, § 1; 2019, ch. 24, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2019 amendment, effective June 14, 2019, limited the liability of landowners permitting persons to explore caves on private property, and defined "cave"; in Subsection A, after "operation of aircraft", added "cave exploring"; in Subsection B, after "operate aircraft", added "explore caves"; and added Subsection C.

The 2011 amendment, effective June 17, 2011, limited the liability of owners, lessees and persons in control of land who, without consideration, permit the use of the land by others for the operation of aircraft.

Organized team sports not a protected activity. — Protections of the statute apply only when landowners allow free public access for a limited range of outdoor activities, and organized team sports do not fall within that range of activities. *Lucero v. Richardson & Richardson, Inc.*, 2002-NMCA-013, 131 N.M. 522, 39 P.3d 739, cert. denied, 131 N.M. 737, 42 P.3d 842.

Comparison with off-highway recreational vehicle use statute. — Since the general recreational land use statute contained in Section 17-4-7 NMSA 1978 broadly immunizes landowners who permit entry upon their lands for "any . . . recreational use", the legislature in adopting Section 66-3-101 NMSA 1978, obviously intended to extend the immunity of landowners as to claims resulting from injuries to operators or passengers of off-highway recreational vehicles beyond that provided by Section 17-4-7 NMSA 1978. *Matthews v. State*, 1991-NMCA-116, 113 N.M. 291, 825 P.2d 224.

United States liability. — The United States was not liable under the New Mexico recreational use statute, Section 17-4-7 NMSA 1978, for the plaintiff's injuries resulting from a diving accident in a national forest since the United States was exempt from liability under the New Mexico statute. *Maldonado v. United States*, 893 F.2d 267 (10th Cir. N.M. 1990).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 62 Am. Jur. 2d Premises Liability § 156 et seq.

65 C.J.S. Negligence § 10.

17-4-8. [Parks or waters for propagation of game or fish; license required.]

No person shall have or maintain any park, enclosure, lake or body of water for the purpose of keeping or propagating therein any game or game fish for sale, nor shall any living game or game fish from such park, enclosure, lake or body of water be sold or offered for sale, unless the owner, proprietor or lessee thereof shall first procure a license as hereinafter provided.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 59; Code 1915, § 2482; C.S. 1929, § 57-301; 1941 Comp., § 43-406; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-6.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For regulated shooting preserves, see 17-3-35 to 17-3-42 NMSA 1978.

Section applies to breeding game for sale. — Any person breeding game for sale is required to have a permit under this section. A person desiring to propagate birds only for his own use without barter, sale or exchange may secure a permit under the provisions of 17-3-29 NMSA 1978. 1955 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 55-6176.

17-4-9. [Unlicensed parks or lakes deemed public nuisance; abatement; liberation of game or fish; each day separate offense.]

Any park, enclosure, lake or body of water maintained in violation of this chapter shall be deemed a continuing public nuisance and may be abated as provided by law for the abatement of public nuisances and the game or game fish therein liberated, or any obstruction to the free ingress or egress of fish removed, and each day the same is maintained in violation hereof, shall be a separate offense.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 60; Code 1915, § 2483; C.S. 1929, § 57-302; 1941 Comp., § 43-407; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-7.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this chapter" for the words "this act." Chapter 47, 1915 Code, comprised the whole of Laws 1912, ch. 85. For disposition of Chapter 47, 1915 Code, in NMSA 1978, see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

17-4-10. [Transportation of game or fish taken from unlicensed parks or waters prohibited.]

No persons shall transport or sell, keep or expose or offer for transportation or sale any game or game fish, taken from any park, enclosure, lake or body of water, public or private, unless the same be licensed as provided in this chapter, and then only as provided in this division, and this section shall apply to game and fish held by private

ownership as well as to game and fish the ownership of which may be acquired under this chapter.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 61; Code 1915, § 2484; C.S. 1929, § 57-303; 1941 Comp., § 43-408; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-8.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The words "this division" refer to Laws 1912, ch. 85, §§ 59 to 80, which comprised Division A of that law, and are compiled as 17-4-8 to 17-4-29 NMSA 1978.

For meaning of words "this chapter," see compiler's note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

Fee may be charged for breeder's license. — The state game commission and the state game warden (now director) may charge a fee for a game breeder's license. 1953 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 53-5874.

17-4-11. [Licensing of private lakes and parks; "proprietor" defined.]

The provisions of this article in relation to private parks and lakes, the licensing thereof for the keeping and propagation of game and game fish therein, and permitting the same thereof, shall apply to every park or lake or such part thereof, as is on land held by private ownership, and to every lake, the water of which, or the right to use of such water, in whole or in part, has been or may hereafter be acquired under the laws of this state or of the United States, for irrigation purposes, and the owner of such land or water right shall be deemed the proprietor of such park or lake, and of the game or fish therein to the extent of his ownership of such land or water right.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 62; Code 1915, § 2485; C.S. 1929, § 57-304; 1941 Comp., § 43-409; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-9.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For lessee or grantee being deemed proprietor, see 17-4-23 NMSA 1978.

Compiler's notes. — The compilers of the 1915 Code substituted the words "this article" for the words "this division." "This division" would refer to "Division A" of Laws 1912, ch. 85. See compiler's notes to 17-4-10 NMSA 1978. "This article" would mean Article 2, Chapter 47, 1915 Code, compiled as 17-2-27, 17-4-8 to 17-4-29 NMSA 1978.

17-4-12. [Application for license; contents; maximum area; fencing.]

Any person having already established or desiring to establish or maintain a park or lake for the purpose of keeping or propagating and selling the game or game fish therein or to be placed therein, shall apply in writing to the warden [director of the department of game and fish] stating the name, location, extent and proprietorship of the same, and kind and as near as may be, the number of game or game fish kept or desired to be kept therein, the term for which the license is desired and inclosing the fee therefor, and if upon examination by the warden it shall appear that the application is in good faith, and in other respects proper and reasonable, he shall grant to such applicant a license therefor; provided that the maximum area that may be included within any park shall not exceed three thousand two hundred acres, and that every park shall be enclosed by a game proof fence which shall conform to specifications required by the state game commission.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 63; Code 1915, § 2486; C.S. 1929, § 57-305; Laws 1937, ch. 107, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-410; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-10.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For power of state game commission to suspend, revoke or withhold licenses, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

For including series of lakes in license, see 17-4-24 NMSA 1978.

For licenses in case of diverse proprietorship, see 17-4-25 NMSA 1978.

For transfer of license upon transfer of interest, see 17-4-27 NMSA 1978.

For duration and renewal of licenses and license fees, see 17-4-28 NMSA 1978.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Licensing or otherwise regulating business of breeding and dealing in game or undomesticated animals, constitutionality of, 62 A.L.R. 473.

17-4-13. [Form of license.]

Such license shall be substantially in the following form:

STATE OF NEW MEXICO.

Department of Game and Fish.

Licensed Parks and Lakes.

This certifies that proprietor of a (public or private) (park or lake) called and situated on Sec. Twp. Range ... in county, New Mexico, is hereby authorized to keep and propagate therein and dispose of as provided by law the following (game quadrupeds, birds or fish), viz.: together with such additions thereto (with the natural increase of all) as may be hereafter lawfully acquired. This license expires years after date.

.....Warden [Director].

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 64; Code 1915, § 2487; C.S. 1929, § 57-306; 1941 Comp., § 43-411; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-11.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For licenses being for one year and renewable annually, see 17-4-28 NMSA 1978.

17-4-14. [Reduction in flow of water detrimental to fish in stream prohibited.]

No person owning or controlling any reservoir, lake or body of water into which public waters flow and which furnishes the water supply in whole or in part to any stream containing game fish shall divert or lessen such water in flow or supply to an extent detrimental to the fish in such stream, reservoir, lake or body of water.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 65; Code 1915, § 2488; C.S. 1929, § 57-307; 1941 Comp., § 43-412; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-12.

ANNOTATIONS

United States held not liable for injuries from dredging canals. — Where the United States, acting through the bureau of reclamation, dredged and removed from the canals and ditches the silt and deposits which had accumulated therein over the years, and as a natural consequence of these dredging operations, the water in appellee's ponds seeped back into the irrigation canals and the ponds were emptied, the trial court, citing this section, concluded that the act of the defendant in draining the plaintiff's property of all water, destroying plaintiff's fish and frogs, and leaving the plaintiff's land an arid desert land, constituted negligence per se. However, the court of appeals held that liability under the federal Tort Claims Act is not carte blanche, that the United States is

liable as an individual only in the manner and to the extent to which it has consented, and that the facts fell clearly within the area of the exempted "discretionary function." *United States v. Gregory*, 300 F.2d 11 (10th Cir. 1962).

Bodies of water covered. — All reservoirs, lakes and other bodies of water into which public waters flow are covered by this section. 1947 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 47-5111.

17-4-15. [Game and fish in licensed private parks or lakes property of licensee; hunting or fishing in any licensed park or lake without consent prohibited; reduction of game or fish in private preserve; permit.]

Except as in this division otherwise provided, all game and fish, with the natural increase thereof, held or confined in any private preserve, park or lake, licensed under the provisions of this act shall, during the existence of the license or any renewal thereof, be deemed the property of the licensee of the same to the extent that he may lawfully retain, pursue, capture, kill, use, sell or dispose of the game or fish therein in any quantity, in any manner and at any time of the year, and the pursuit, capture, wounding or killing of any game or fish in any licensed preserve, park or lake, public or private, without the consent of the proprietor, shall be unlawful; provided, that the aggregate number of game animals or fish in any licensed private preserve, park or lake, which contained game or fish belonging to the state at the time or date of the issuing of such license, shall not be lessened by the killing, use, sale or disposition thereof, it being the purpose of this provision to restrict such killing, use, sale and disposition to a number not exceeding in the aggregate the natural increase. If by reason of controlling necessity or for the purpose of stocking or replenishing some other park or lake, any proprietor of a licensed preserve, park or lake may desire to lessen the aggregate number above provided for, the state game and fish warden [director of the department of game and fish] may, on being satisfied of the property [propriety] thereof, grant a permit therefor.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 66; Code 1915, § 2489; Laws 1915, ch. 101, § 18; C.S. 1929, § 57-308; 1941 Comp., § 43-413; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-13.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — The words "this division" refer to "Division A" of Laws 1912, ch. 85. See compiler's notes to 17-4-10 NMSA 1978.

The words "this act" first appeared in the 1915 amendment and Laws 1915, ch. 101, the presently effective provisions of which are compiled as 17-2-13, 17-2-19, 17-4-15 and 17-4-26 NMSA 1978.

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For posting private property against hunting and fishing, see 17-4-6 NMSA 1978.

17-4-16. [Invoice to be delivered to purchaser; form; duplicate mailed to director.]

When the proprietor of any licensed park or lake of class A shall sell or dispose of any game or game fish as herein provided, he shall, at the same time deliver to the purchaser or donee or attach thereto an invoice signed by such proprietor or his agent, stating the number of the license and name of such park, or lake, the date of disposition, the kind, and as near as practicable the number and weight of such game or fish, the name and address of the purchaser, consignee or donee. Such invoice shall authorize transportation within this state, possession and use for thirty days after its date, and shall be substantially in the following form:

STATE OF NEW MEXICO.

Department of Game and Fish.

Private Parks and Lakes - Invoice.

Name of park or lake Class A. No. of license Date 19 ...

Kind and number of game and fish Weight of same lbs. Name of consignee Address of consignee

This authorizes transportation within this state, possession and sale for thirty days after date if attached to article.

.....Proprietor.

By Agent.

Such proprietor or his agent shall at the same time mail, postpaid, a duplicate of such invoice to the warden [director of the department of game and fish] at Santa Fe.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 67; Code 1915, § 2490; C.S. 1929, § 57-309; 1941 Comp., § 43-415; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-15.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-4-17. [Invoice to be attached during shipment.]

When any such game or fish for which an invoice is required, is to be shipped by rail, express or other carrier, public or private, the invoice shall be securely attached thereto or to the package containing the same in plain sight, and the same may then be lawfully carried and delivered within this state to the consignee named in such invoice.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 68; Code 1915, § 2491; C.S. 1929, § 57-310; 1941 Comp., § 43-416; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-16.

17-4-18. [Offering game or fish for sale; storage; keeping in hotel or eating place; invoice to remain attached.]

If such game or game fish is held, exposed or offered for sale or sold by the consignee or kept in any storage, hotel, restaurant, cafe or boardinghouse, such invoice shall be kept attached thereto as aforesaid until the same shall have been prepared for consumption.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 69; Code 1915, § 2492; C.S. 1929, § 57-311; 1941 Comp., § 43-417; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-17.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For menu as evidence of possession of game or fish, see 17-2-18 NMSA 1978.

17-4-19. [Copy of invoice to be furnished purchaser upon resale.]

In case of a sale or disposition of such game or game fish or any part thereof the vendor shall at the same time make a copy of such invoice and endorse thereon the date of sale, the number and kind of game or fish so disposed of and the name of the purchaser, and sign and deliver the same to the purchaser or donee, who shall keep it attached as aforesaid until the game or fish is prepared for consumption, and the same shall have the same force and effect as the original invoice.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 70; Code 1915, § 2493; C.S. 1929, § 57-312; 1941 Comp., § 43-418; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-18.

17-4-20. [Misstatements render invoice void; violation of law; possession of game or fish without invoice unlawful.]

Any willful misstatement in or any omission of a substantial requirement from any invoice or copy thereof, shall render the same void and be deemed a violation of this chapter, and the possession of any game or game fish without such invoice or a copy thereof attached thereto when so as above required shall be unlawful.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 71; Code 1915, § 2494; C.S. 1929, § 57-313; 1941 Comp., § 43-419; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-19.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — For meaning of words "this chapter", see note to 17-2-11 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For menu as evidence of possession, see 17-2-18 NMSA 1978.

For possession without invoice being prima facie evidence of unlawful taking or possession, see 17-3-33 NMSA 1978.

17-4-21. [Proprietors of licensed private parks and lakes to furnish reports to director.]

The proprietor of every private park and lake licensed under the preceding sections shall, whenever required by the warden [director of the department of game and fish], make and send to the warden [director of the department of game and fish] at Santa Fe a report showing as near as practicable the kind, number, age and sex of the game, and the kind and number or weight of the game fish, added and disposed of during the year preceding and on hand at the date of the report.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 72; Code 1915, § 2495; C.S. 1929, § 57-314; 1941 Comp., § 43-420; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-20.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-4-22. [Channels connecting private lakes under one license; use of screens.]

The rights acquired by the proprietor of a private lake licensed hereunder, and the prohibitions hereof, shall extend to and include all channels connecting a series or group of lakes under one license, and the warden [director of the department of game and fish] may authorize the use of such screens or other appliances as may be necessary to prevent the fish in a licensed lake of class A from escaping, and it shall be the duty of the proprietor to adopt and use such screens or other appliances as the warden [director of the department of game and fish] may direct to prevent the fish in public waters from entering such lake.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 73; Code 1915, § 2496; C.S. 1929, § 57-315; 1941 Comp., § 43-421; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-21.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For including series of lakes in one license, see 17-4-24 NMSA 1978.

17-4-23. [Lease or grant of private park or lake; lessee or grantee deemed proprietor.]

When the owner of a private park or lake has granted or leased to another the right to keep and propagate game or fish therein, the grantee or lessee shall be deemed the proprietor and entitled to the license.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 74; Code 1915, § 2497; C.S. 1929, § 57-316; 1941 Comp., § 43-422; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-22.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For transfer of license being required upon transfer of interest, see 17-4-27 NMSA 1978.

17-4-24. [Series of lakes may be included in one license.]

A series or group of lakes under one proprietorship or lease and situated in a reasonable proximity to each other may be included in one license, either as a private lake or licensed preserve.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 75; Code 1915, § 2498; C.S. 1929, § 57-317; 1941 Comp., § 43-423; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-23.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For connecting channels being included, see 17-4-22 NMSA 1978.

17-4-25. [Diverse proprietorship; joint or separate licenses.]

In case of diverse proprietorship the license may be joint if the proprietors so elect, otherwise a separate license shall be required for each interest and the rights thereunder shall be coextensive with or in proportion to such interest.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 76; Code 1915, § 2499; C.S. 1929, § 57-318; 1941 Comp., § 43-424; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-24.

17-4-26. [Notices against trespassing to be posted.]

There shall be kept posted conspicuously at every gate where a road or trail enters or crosses each licensed park or preserve, and at conspicuous places along the border of each licensed lake, plain notices not less than one foot square, stating that the same is private property, and warning persons against trespassing thereon.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 77; Code 1915, § 2500; Laws 1915, ch. 101, § 19; C.S. 1929, § 57-319; 1941 Comp., § 43-425; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-25.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For posting notice of intention to protect game on private property, see 17-4-6 NMSA 1978.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Entry on private lands in pursuit of wounded game as criminal trespass, 41 A.L.R.4th 805.

17-4-27. [Transfer of license required upon transfer of interest.]

In case of a transfer of proprietorship or interest in any park, lake or preserve, the transferee, shall, within thirty days thereafter procure from the warden [director of the department of game and fish] a transfer of the license endorsed on the back thereof.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 78; Code 1915, § 2501; C.S. 1929, § 57-320; 1941 Comp., § 43-426; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-26.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For lessee or grantee being deemed proprietor, see 17-4-23 NMSA 1978.

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

17-4-28. Parks, lakes and preserves; license; fees.

A. Licenses for private parks, lakes and preserves may be for one year, and any license shall be renewed annually at the request of the licensee.

B. The director of the department of game and fish shall charge and collect just and reasonable fees for the following permits under Sections 17-4-8 through 17-4-28 NMSA 1978, as determined by regulation of the state game commission:

- (1) permit to capture or exchange;
- (2) quadruped park license;
- (3) each renewal of each quadruped park license;
- (4) one lake license;
- (5) each renewal of one lake license;
- (6) each additional lake license;
- (7) each renewal of each additional lake license; and
- (8) each certificate, permit or license not provided for in this section.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 79; Code 1915, § 2502; C.S. 1929, § 57-321; 1941 Comp., § 43-427; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-27; Laws 1973, ch. 141, § 1; 1992, ch. 29, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1992 amendment, effective April 1, 1992, rewrote the introductory language in Subsection B, deleted references to specific dollar amounts in Paragraphs (1) to (8); and made stylistic changes.

17-4-29. Floating logs in fish stream; restocking; penalty.

All persons floating logs, timber, lumber, ties or poles in any stream containing game fish shall, for each mile of the streams used, annually deposit one thousand trout fry or fingerlings at times and places designated by the department of game and fish. Any person failing to comply with the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.

History: Laws 1912, ch. 85, § 80; Code 1915, § 2503; C.S. 1929, § 57-322; 1941 Comp., § 43-428; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-28; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 6.

17-4-30. [Federal aid.]

The state of New Mexico hereby assents to the provisions of the act of congress of the United States of America entitled "An act to provide that the United States shall aid

the states in fish restoration and management projects, and for other purposes," approved August 9, 1950 (Public Law 681, 81st Congress), and the state game commission is hereby authorized and directed to perform all such acts as may be necessary to the conduct and establishment of cooperative fish restoration and management projects, as defined by said act of congress and in compliance with said act, and rules and regulations promulgated by the secretary of agriculture [secretary of the interior] thereunder.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-429, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 66, § 1; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-29.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

Compiler's notes. — For the act of congress referred to, see 16 U.S.C. § 777 et seq., under which regulations are promulgated by the secretary of the interior, not the secretary of agriculture.

17-4-31. [Federal funds; disbursement.]

The state game commission is authorized to receive any moneys to which the state of New Mexico may become entitled under the aforesaid act of congress, such moneys, when received, to be deposited with the treasurer of the state of New Mexico to the credit of the state game protection fund, expended for the purpose designated and withdrawn as other moneys are withdrawn from the state game protection fund.

History: 1941 Comp., § 43-430, enacted by Laws 1951, ch. 66, § 2; 1953 Comp., § 53-4-30.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — For meaning of "aforesaid act of congress," see compiler's note to 17-4-30 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For game protection fund, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

17-4-32. Destruction of boundary markers[; penalty].

Every person who shall wilfully [willfully], maliciously and without cause, break down, injure, remove or destroy any sign, marker or poster erected for the purpose of designating the boundaries of any tract of land, refuge, sanctuary for wildlife, or for the purpose of designating the boundaries of a hunting area set forth by the state game commission, or under the direction of the director of the department of game and fish, shall, upon conviction thereof, be guilty of a petty misdemeanor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-4-31, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 73, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law.

17-4-33. Gaining access into nature program; policy; additional powers of state game commission.

A. It is the policy of the state of New Mexico to encourage and promote wildlife-associated recreation in New Mexico and to provide for public participation in the use of available natural resources in a manner that will benefit the general public in its enjoyment of public assets and the state and its political subdivisions in increased economic development.

B. To implement the state policy, the state game commission shall develop and administer a "gaining access into nature program" pursuant to the provisions of this section.

C. In addition to its other powers, in order to develop and administer the gaining access into nature program, the state game commission may:

(1) designate areas and properties under its control where activities other than hunting, fishing and trapping are available to the public;

(2) designate activities that may take place on properties under its control and designate conditions and qualifications for the activities;

(3) enter into partnership and joint powers agreements, leases and other contractual arrangements with other state agencies, private landowners and other private entities to jointly administer, promote and expand the gaining access into nature program;

(4) issue permits, special use licenses and other authorizations for access to individuals and organizations to access state game commission properties for purposes of participating in gaining access into nature programs and charge fees for the access privileges; provided that the fees do not exceed the reasonable costs associated with developing and administering the gaining access into nature program;

(5) engage in public outreach programs to identify through public meetings, surveys and educational programs the interests of the public that may be best served by the gaining access into nature program;

(6) adopt such rules as it deems necessary for programs, events or other activities to properly implement the goals and the administration of the gaining access into nature program; and

(7) subject to appropriation by the legislature, expend money from the game protection fund necessary to develop and administer the gaining access into nature program, including:

(a) the reasonable costs of improving habitat and properties in order to make them suitable for the public uses intended;

(b) costs of personnel necessary to service the properties being used for the program and to provide informational and interpretive services on the properties;

(c) the reasonable costs of maintenance and repair of habitat and properties being used for public access under the provisions of this section; and

(d) costs associated with issuing permits, licenses and other authorizations for access.

D. All money collected from issuing and selling gaining access into nature permits, licenses and other authorizations for access shall be deposited in the game protection fund.

History: Laws 2005, ch. 173, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2005, ch. 173 contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 17, 2005, 90 days after adjournment of the legislature.

Cross references. — For the Wildlife Violator Compact, see 11-16-1 NMSA 1978.

17-4-34. Habitat management stamp; fund; expenditure for habitat management; exception.

A. On and after April 1, 2006, each of the following licenses or permits shall include a habitat management stamp. The fee for a habitat management stamp shall be three dollars (\$3.00). Each of the following licenses or permits shall not be considered to be a proper and valid license unless the licensee can demonstrate, by a stamp, check off or other official mark, that the fee for the habitat management stamp has been paid, provided that an individual purchaser shall be required to purchase only one stamp each license year, regardless of the number of licenses or permits purchased by that purchaser:

(1) a resident or nonresident license specified in Section 17-3-13 NMSA 1978; or

(2) a wildlife-associated recreation permit issued by the state game commission pursuant to Section 17-1-4 NMSA 1978.

B. Revenue from the sale of habitat management stamps shall be deposited in the "habitat management fund", hereby created in the state treasury. The fund shall consist of money appropriated and transferred to the fund and revenue from the sale of habitat management stamps deposited in the fund. Earnings from investment of the fund shall be credited to the fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert. Disbursements from the fund shall be made upon warrants drawn by the secretary of finance and administration pursuant to vouchers signed by the director of the department of game and fish.

C. Upon appropriation by the legislature, money in the habitat management fund may be expended by the state game commission only for the improvement, maintenance, development and operation of property for fish and wildlife habitat management.

D. A habitat management stamp shall not be required for persons under the age of eighteen.

History: Laws 2005, ch. 177, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2005, ch. 177 contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 17, 2005, 90 days after adjournment of the legislature.

17-4-35. Aquatic invasive species control.

A. Based on a determination of credible scientific evidence, the director, after consulting with the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources and with the concurrence of the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture, is authorized to designate:

(1) species of exotic or nonnative animals or plants as aquatic invasive species;

(2) water bodies within the state as infested waters; and

(3) specific requirements to decontaminate conveyances and equipment.

B. Prior to entering a conveyance or equipment into any water body in the state, the owner or person in control of a warning-tagged conveyance or warning-tagged equipment or a conveyance or equipment that has been in an infested water body in New Mexico or elsewhere shall:

(1) have the conveyance or equipment decontaminated by a person or entity approved by the director to effect decontamination, and only the person legally effecting the decontamination is authorized to remove a warning tag and provide certification that the conveyance or equipment is free from infestation; or

(2) have the conveyance or equipment inspected and certified as free from infestation by trained personnel prior to entering a water body or if certification or other documentation of decontamination is not available, otherwise demonstrate compliance with the decontamination requirements established by the director.

C. A law enforcement officer may impound a conveyance or equipment if the person transporting the conveyance or equipment refuses to submit to an inspection authorized by this section and the officer has reason to believe that an aquatic invasive species may be present, or if the conveyance or equipment has a warning tag affixed and the operator of the conveyance is attempting to enter a state water body and cannot provide evidence that the conveyance or equipment has been decontaminated. A law enforcement officer shall take action to prevent equipment or conveyances believed or known to contain an aquatic invasive species and warning-tagged equipment or conveyances from entering a state water body.

D. The impoundment of a conveyance or equipment may continue for a reasonable period necessary to inspect and decontaminate the conveyance or equipment.

E. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, no motor vehicle that is drawing a conveyance shall be impounded pursuant to this section.

F. Trained personnel may:

(1) establish, operate and maintain aquatic invasive species check stations and conduct inspections at or adjacent to the entrance to any state-controlled water body or, pursuant to a cooperative agreement, at or adjacent to any county, municipal or federally or privately controlled water body or at or adjacent to the exit point of an infested water body or at a location agreed to by the owner of the conveyance or equipment in order to inspect conveyances and equipment prior to a conveyance or equipment entering, being launched onto or being directly exposed to water bodies of the state or upon the conveyance's or equipment's departure from infested waters;

(2) affix a warning tag to equipment or a conveyance where the presence of an aquatic invasive species has been found;

(3) affix a warning tag to a conveyance or equipment upon the conveyance or equipment leaving an infested water; or

(4) affix a warning tag to a conveyance or equipment that the trained personnel have reason to believe is infested with an aquatic invasive species based on its point of origin or use.

G. Except for state, local, tribal or federal agencies and their respective agents, employees and contractors while performing their duties or contractual obligations specific to management or control of an aquatic invasive species, it is unlawful for a person to:

(1) knowingly possess, import, export, ship or transport an aquatic invasive species into, within or from the state;

(2) knowingly release, place, plant or cause to be released, placed or planted an aquatic invasive species into a water body or adjacent to a water body where it reasonably might be anticipated to be introduced into a water body that is not infested;

(3) remove a warning tag other than as provided pursuant to this section;

(4) introduce any tagged conveyance or equipment or any equipment or conveyance from which a warning tag has been unlawfully removed into a water body without first having that conveyance or equipment decontaminated and certified pursuant to the provisions of this section; or

(5) knowingly introduce into any water body a conveyance or equipment that has been exposed to an infested water body or a water body in any other state known to contain aquatic invasive species without first being decontaminated and certified pursuant to the provisions of this section.

H. Knowingly or willfully violating any provision of this section as a first offense is a petty misdemeanor. A second or subsequent violation of any provision of this section is a misdemeanor. Any violation is punishable pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

I. The director or the director's designee shall coordinate the monitoring of the water bodies of the state for the presence of aquatic invasive species, including privately controlled waters if the director has authorized access to them or has received permission to monitor them from the persons controlling access to such waters.

J. Upon determination of an infested water body in New Mexico, the director shall immediately recommend to the person in control of the infested water body actions to limit access or take other actions to prevent the potential spread of an aquatic invasive species to other water bodies.

K. The commission is authorized to adopt rules pursuant to Section 17-1-26 NMSA 1978, and the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources is authorized to adopt rules pursuant to Section 16-2-32 NMSA 1978 as necessary to implement and enforce the provisions of this section.

L. The director may enter into cooperative agreements with any federal, state, county or municipal authority or private entity that may be in control of a water body potentially affected by aquatic invasive species.

M. As used in this section:

(1) "aquatic invasive species" means quagga mussels and zebra mussels and other exotic or nonnative aquatic animals, including invertebrates but excluding those species listed as protected in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, or any plant or animal species whose introduction into an aquatic ecosystem is determined by the director, after consulting with the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources and with the concurrence of the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture, to cause or be likely to cause harm to the economy, environment or human health or safety;

(2) "commission" means the state game commission;

(3) "conveyance" means a motor vehicle, vessel, trailer or any associated equipment or containers, including, but not limited to, live wells, fish-hauling tanks, ballast tanks, motorized skis and bilge areas that may contain or carry an aquatic invasive species or any other equipment by which aquatic invasive species may be introduced into an aquatic ecosystem;

(4) "decontaminate" means to wash, drain, dry or otherwise treat a conveyance in accordance with guidelines established by the director in order to remove or destroy an aquatic invasive species;

(5) "director" means the director of the department of game and fish;

(6) "equipment" means an article, a tool, an implement, a device or a piece of clothing, including boots and waders, that is capable of containing or transporting water;

(7) "infested water" means a geographic region, water body or water supply system or facility within the state that the director, after consulting with the secretary of energy, minerals and natural resources and with the concurrence of the director of the New Mexico department of agriculture, identifies as carrying or containing an aquatic invasive species or a water body outside the state that has been identified as carrying or containing an aquatic invasive species;

(8) "inspect" means to examine a conveyance or equipment to determine whether an aquatic invasive species is present;

(9) "law enforcement officer" means a state or federal certified law enforcement officer;

(10) "trained personnel" means individuals who have successfully completed the United States fish and wildlife service's aquatic invasive species watercraft inspection and decontamination training, level I or level II, or an equivalent training recognized by the director;

(11) "warning tag" means a tag that is affixed to equipment or a conveyance upon the equipment or conveyance leaving an infested water or upon an inspection determining that the equipment or conveyance contains an aquatic invasive species that requires the equipment or conveyance to be decontaminated; and

(12) "water body" means a natural or impounded surface water, including a stream, river, spring, lake, reservoir, pond, wetland, tank or fountain.

History: Laws 2009, ch. 38, § 1; 2010, ch. 89, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2010 amendment, effective March 8, 2010, in Subsection B, in the introductory sentence, after "Prior to entering", added "a conveyance or equipment into"; in Subsection B(1), after "warning tag and", deleted "(2)"; after "provide certification" deleted "by a person legally authorized to effect decontamination"; and after "free from infestation", deleted "or otherwise demonstrate compliance with the decontamination requirements established by the director"; added Paragraph (2) of Subsection B; in Subsection F, after "Trained personnel", deleted "of the department of game and fish or the state parks division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department"; in Subsection F(1), after "species check stations", added "and conduct inspections" and after "infested water body", added "or at a location agreed to by the owner of the conveyance or equipment"; added Paragraph (4) of Subsection F; in Subsection G, in the introductory sentence, added the language preceding "it is unlawful for a person to"; in Subsection G(2), after "into a water body", added the remainder of the sentence; in Subsection G(4) and (5), after "decontaminated", added the remainder of the sentence; added Subsection J; in Subsection M(7), after "aquatic invasive species", added the remainder of the sentence; and in Subsection M(10), after "level II", added the remainder of the sentence.

ARTICLE 5

Trappers and Fur Dealers

17-5-1. Declaration of policy.

It is the purpose of Sections 17-5-1 through 17-5-9 NMSA 1978 and the policy of New Mexico to provide an adequate and flexible system for the protection of fur-bearing animals to the end that valuable fur resources shall not be wasted or depleted.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 1; 1941 Comp., § 43-501; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-1; Laws 1980, ch. 15, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 35 Am. Jur. 2d Fish and Game §§ 6, 16, 29, 38.

17-5-2. Fur-bearing and nongame animals defined; property of state.

The following quadrupeds are hereby defined as fur-bearing animals, to wit: muskrat, mink, weasel, beaver, otter, nutria, masked or blackfooted ferret, ringtail cat, raccoon, pine marten, coatimundi, badgers, bobcat and all species of foxes. These animals and their pelts are hereby declared to be the property of the state until they shall have been lawfully taken, killed or captured as provided by Sections 17-5-1 through 17-5-9 NMSA 1978, except as to beaver and beaver pelts, the taking of which shall be subjected to the application of Section 17-3-31 NMSA 1978.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 2; 1941 Comp., § 43-502; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-2; Laws 1955, ch. 57, § 1; 1980, ch. 15, § 2; 1981, ch. 342, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Compiler's notes. — Laws 1955, ch. 57, § 4, declares that the part of this section that includes beaver among the nonpredatory fur-bearing animals shall be effective only upon enactment of a New Mexico statute excluding beaver from the list of game animals. Laws 1955, ch. 58, § 1, deleted beaver from the list of game animals. For present list of game mammals, birds and fish, see 17-2-3 NMSA 1978.

17-5-3. Seasons; special permits to take animals doing damage.

Fur-bearing animals as defined in Section 17-5-2 NMSA 1978 shall be taken only during the seasons declared by regulation of the state game commission promulgated as provided in Section 17-5-4 NMSA 1978. The director may, however, issue permits at any time for the taking of fur-bearing animals doing damage to game, private property, poultry or livestock.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 3; 1941 Comp., § 43-503; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-3; Laws 1955, ch. 57, § 2; 1980, ch. 15, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For permit to destroy protected game doing damage, see 17-3-31 NMSA 1978.

17-5-4. State game commission to administer act; rules and regulations.

The state game commission is authorized and directed to administer the provisions of Sections 17-5-1 through 17-5-9 NMSA 1978, and to make such rules and regulations and establish such service as it may deem necessary to carry out all the provisions and purposes of those sections. In making such rules and regulations and providing when and by what means fur-bearing animals may be hunted, taken, captured, possessed or killed, the state game commission shall give due regard to the zones of temperatures and to the distribution, abundance, economic value and breeding habits of such animals. Provided, nothing in Sections 17-5-1 through 17-5-9 NMSA 1978 shall interfere with the authority granted to the president of New Mexico state university under Sections 77-15-1 through 77-15-5 NMSA 1978, or shall prevent livestock producers without a permit from the taking of bobcats that are doing damage to livestock.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 4; 1941 Comp., § 43-504; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-4; Laws 1980, ch. 15, § 4.

17-5-5. Trapper's licenses.

A. No resident who has reached his twelfth birthday shall capture, trap or possess any fur-bearing animal or attempt to do so without first procuring a resident trapper's license; or, in the case of a resident who has reached his twelfth birthday but not his eighteenth birthday, a resident junior trapper's license.

B. No nonresident shall capture, trap or possess any fur-bearing animal or skunk or coyote or attempt to do so without first procuring a nonresident trapper's license.

C. No nonresident who resides in a state that does not permit New Mexico residents to procure nonresident trapper's licenses may purchase a New Mexico nonresident trapper's license.

D. Trappers shall release all fur-bearing animals trapped during closed seasons, and resident trappers who release all fur-bearing animals during open seasons need not procure a trapper's license.

E. Trappers on official business, paid from state and federal funds and under supervision of the department of game and fish, the New Mexico department of agriculture or the United States fish and wildlife service need not purchase a trapper's license.

F. Trapping of animals, both fur-bearing and nongame, by a resident in order to protect his livestock or domesticated animals or fowl shall not be subject to rules and

regulations on trapping made pursuant to Section 17-5-4 NMSA 1978 or to licensing requirements provided in this section.

G. The state game commission may by regulation require holders of trapper's licenses to use bobcat pelt tags and may specify the conditions for use of the tags.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 5; 1941 Comp., § 43-505; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-5; Laws 1955, ch. 57, § 3; 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 9; 1980, ch. 15, § 5; 1981, ch. 342, § 2; 1983, ch. 117, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For power of commission to withhold license, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

For duration of license, see 17-3-1 NMSA 1978.

For amount of license fee, see 17-3-13 NMSA 1978.

For revocation of license, see 17-5-9 NMSA 1978.

17-5-6. Fur dealer licenses.

A. Except for trappers selling their own catches, any person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of buying or selling unprocessed skins or pelts of any fur-bearing animal is a "fur dealer." It is a misdemeanor to engage in business as a fur dealer or solicit such business without first procuring a fur dealer license, except that resident fur dealers who buy and sell less than fifty skins or pelts of fur-bearing animals each year need not purchase a fur dealer license.

B. Every fur dealer shall file with the department of game and fish, not later than the tenth of each month, a sworn statement showing the number and kind of skins and pelts of fur-bearing animals purchased and sold during the preceding month.

C. The provisions of this section apply to fur dealers who buy and sell the skins or pelts of predatory animals as well as to those who buy and sell the skins or pelts of protected nonpredatory fur-bearing animals.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 6; 1941 Comp., § 43-506; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-6; Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 10.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For power of commission to withhold license, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

For duration of license, see 17-3-1 NMSA 1978.

For amount of license fee, see 17-3-13 NMSA 1978.

For revocation of license, see 17-5-9 NMSA 1978.

Effective date provision is invalid. — Laws 1964 (1st S.S.), ch. 17, § 12, making the act effective on April 1, 1964, was a nullity under N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23. Since the act did not pass as an emergency measure, the legislature was proscribed by the constitution from providing that the act would go into effect sooner than 90 days after adjournment on February 25, 1964. 1964 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 64-91.

Permit required whether animals bred or trapped. — All persons, whether dealing in pelts resulting from the commercial enterprise of fur-bearing animal breeding or whether dealing in pelts resulting from the trapping of wild fur-bearing animals, are required by law to secure the permit provided for before engaging in such business. 1954 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 54-6043.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 51 Am. Jur. 2d Licenses and Permits § 31.

17-5-7. [Disposition of license fees.]

All fees for trappers' licenses and fur dealers' licenses shall be collected by the state game warden [director of the department of game and fish] and turned over to the state treasurer to be credited to the game protection fund; provided, that license vendors shall retain ten cents (10¢) for each license sold as compensation for his [their] services, but no regular employee of the state game department shall be entitled to such fee.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 7; 1941 Comp., § 43-507; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-7.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Cross references. — For disposition of fees collected under fish and game laws, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

For amount of license fees, see 17-3-13 NMSA 1978.

17-5-8. [Officers authorized to enforce act.]

All peace officers, port of entry employees [employees of the motor transportation divisions of the taxation and revenue department] and deputy game wardens

[conservation officers] are hereby authorized and required to cooperate fully with the state game commission in the enforcement of this act [17-5-1 to 17-5-9 NMSA 1978]. It shall be the duty of all such persons to make searches, seizures and arrests as in the case of other misdemeanors.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 9; 1941 Comp., § 43-509; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-9.

ANNOTATIONS

Bracketed material. — The bracketed material was inserted by the compiler and is not part of the law. Laws 1955, ch. 59, § 2 transferred the duties of the state game warden. See 17-1-6 NMSA 1978.

Compiler's notes. — The law establishing ports of entry was repealed by Laws 1939, ch. 73, § 24, and the equipment and funds of ports of entry were transferred to the board of supervisors of the New Mexico state police by § 8 of said act. Laws 1939, ch. 73, also created a new division of the New Mexico state police named "the division of field administration," the duties of such division being similar to those formerly performed by the ports of entry. The division of field administration of the state police was changed to the division of courtesy and information of the state of New Mexico by Laws 1941, ch. 147, § 24, which act was then superseded by Laws 1943, ch. 125, which created a department of courtesy and information and transferred property used at ports of entry to the new department. However, by Laws 1967, ch. 97, § 41, such property was transferred to the motor transportation department, which has now been abolished by Laws 1977, ch. 250, § 4, and the motor transportation division of the taxation and revenue department has been established and operates the former ports of entry. See 9-11-4, 65-5-1 to 65-5-3 NMSA 1978.

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — Jury trial in case of seizure or destruction of appliances, 17 A.L.R. 574, 50 A.L.R. 97.

17-5-9. Penalty; revocation of license; sale of pelts.

Any person who violates or aids, abets or assists in the violation of any provision of Sections 17-5-1 through 17-5-9 NMSA 1978 or any person who makes any false statement as to the residence of any applicant for a trapper's license or fur dealer's license or any nonresident who fraudulently procures a resident license is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, the department of game and fish may revoke, for the year in which the violation occurred, the trapper's or fur dealer's license of any person convicted. All skins, pelts or furs involved in the violation remain the property of the state and shall be sold for the benefit of the game protection fund.

History: Laws 1939, ch. 178, § 10; 1941 Comp., § 43-510; 1953 Comp., § 53-5-10; Laws 1963, ch. 213, § 7.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For power of commission to withhold license, see 17-1-14 NMSA 1978.

For seizure and destruction of illegal traps or devices, see 17-2-20 NMSA 1978.

ARTICLE 6

Habitat Protection

17-6-1. Short title.

This act [17-6-1 to 17-6-11 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Habitat Protection Act".

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-1, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 1.

17-6-2. Definitions.

As used in the Habitat Protection Act:

- A. "commission" means the state game commission;
- B. "cross-country" means travel over the countryside other than by road;
- C. "vehicle" means any motor-powered mechanical device used for conveyance;
and
- D. "road" means any maintained or unmaintained right-of-way that has been utilized by the public and includes roads, streets, highways and state scenic, recreation or historical trails.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-2, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 2.

17-6-3. Restrictions on motor vehicle use; recommendations; rules and regulations.

A. When the commission determines that the operation of vehicles within a certain area is or may be damaging to wildlife reproduction, wildlife management or the wildlife habitat of the area, the department, with the concurrence of the private land owner or the land management agency involved, after proper notice, shall hold public meetings in the area affected, on the necessity and desirability of closing such lands to the operation of any vehicles for a stated definite period. Upon finding, after public meetings, that the use of vehicles on such lands is or may be damaging to wildlife reproduction or habitat and that it is necessary and desirable to close such lands to vehicles in order to avoid such damage, the commission shall make and publish an

order closing such lands to vehicle operation except on established roads that are marked by appropriate signs.

B. The commission may also recommend to the appropriate land management agency or the legislature that particular areas of land be set aside or made available for recreational vehicles.

C. The commission may also enter into agreements with or recommend to public land management agencies that certain areas be closed to camping during particular open hunting seasons or that camping be permitted only in designated areas during such open hunting seasons.

D. The commission may enter into agreements with private land owners and land management agencies controlling areas that the commission has made recommendations on pursuant to Subsection B of this section. Any such agreement shall stipulate the restrictions, prohibitions and permitted uses of vehicles in such area and the duties of the commission and such private land owner or land management agency relating to the enforcement of the terms of such agreement. Agreements with private land owners may also include provisions for sharing costs of performing any of the functions as set forth in Section 17-6-7 NMSA 1978.

E. The commission shall adopt and file, in accordance with the State Rules Act [Chapter 14, Article 4 NMSA 1978], rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of the Habitat Protection Act, including regulations setting out procedures for hearings and notice.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-3, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 3; 1975, ch. 66, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Act, see 66-3-1001 to 66-3-1020 NMSA 1978.

17-6-4. Notices of restrictions; posting; publication.

A. For all areas closed to vehicles pursuant to Section 17-6-3 NMSA 1978, the commission shall cause notices of the restrictions, prohibitions or permitted uses of such areas to be posted prior to their effective date on the main traveled roads entering such areas and at such other locations as the commission deems appropriate.

B. In addition to the public meetings required by Section 17-6-3 NMSA 1978 and posted notices required by Subsection A of this section, the commission shall publish a notice of such restrictions, prohibitions or permitted uses, together with a description of the area, in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of the state affected, for three consecutive weeks prior to the effective date of such restrictions, prohibitions or permitted uses. Copies of the notices of restrictions, prohibitions or permitted uses

together with a description or appropriate map of the area affected by the notices shall be made available to the public by the commission.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-4, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For destroying boundary markers, see 17-4-32 NMSA 1978.

17-6-5. Prohibition against vehicle travel.

It is unlawful for any person to drive a vehicle cross-country on lands where such cross-country driving is prohibited by rule or regulation. Conservation officers may issue citations to and may arrest any person violating the provisions of this section.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-5, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 5; 1975, ch. 86, § 2.

17-6-6. Exceptions.

The restrictions, prohibitions or permitted uses established pursuant to the Habitat Protection Act do not apply to:

- A. public employees acting in the scope of their employment;
- B. valid licensees, permittees, lessees or their assignees or designees, of state agencies or public land management agencies, when traveling in the areas or for the specific purposes for which such licenses, permits, leases, assignments or designations were issued or granted; and
- C. emergency situations such as fire or other disasters, or where necessary to protect life or property.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-6, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 6.

17-6-7. Expenditure of funds; functions.

The commission may expend such funds as become available from the game protection fund, state or federal grants or other sources to carry out the provisions of the Habitat Protection Act including, but not limited to:

- A. investigations and surveys of actual or possible wildlife habitat damage by vehicles and the study of areas to be recommended for recreational vehicle use;
- B. posting notices of restrictions, prohibitions and permitted use of vehicles;
- C. providing maps and other necessary information to the public;

D. an informational and educational program on wildlife habitat preservation and restoration; or

E. the enforcement of the provisions of the Habitat Protection Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-7, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 7.

17-6-8. Limitation of liability on landowners.

No person or corporation, or their successors in interest, who has granted a right-of-way or easement across his land to the commission for use under the Habitat Protection Act shall be liable to any user of the land for injuries suffered on said right-of-way or easement unless the injuries are caused by the willful or wanton misconduct of the grantor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-8, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 8.

17-6-9. Enforcement.

All peace officers of the state, counties and municipalities and other duly authorized state authorities shall enforce the provisions of the Habitat Protection Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-9, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 9.

17-6-10. Commissioner of public lands exempt.

Nothing contained in the Habitat Protection Act shall alter, change, restrict or diminish the rights, powers and duties of the commissioner of public lands in the administration, management, care and control of state trust lands as provided for by the Enabling Act and other applicable state statutes.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-10, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 10.

17-6-11. Violations; penalty.

Any person who violates any provision of the Habitat Protection Act or any rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto is guilty of a misdemeanor.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-6-11, enacted by Laws 1973, ch. 242, § 11.

ARTICLE 7

Shooting Range Fund

17-7-1. Short title.

This act [17-7-1 to 17-7-3 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Shooting Range Fund Act".

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-7-1, enacted by Laws 1976 (S.S.), ch. 43, § 1.

17-7-2. Fund created.

There is created in the state treasury a special fund to be known as the "shooting range fund". All money appropriated to this fund or accruing to it as a result of gift, deposit or from other sources, except interest earned on the fund which shall be credited to the general fund, shall not be transferred to another fund or encumbered or disbursed in any manner except as provided in the Shooting Range Fund Act. Appropriated money in the fund shall not revert to the general fund. Money in the fund shall be used for construction or improvement of public shooting ranges pursuant to the Shooting Range Fund Act. Disbursements from the fund shall be made only upon warrant drawn by the secretary of finance and administration pursuant to vouchers signed by the director of the department of game and fish.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-7-2, enacted by Laws 1976 (S.S.), ch. 43, § 2; 1977, ch. 247, § 163; 1989, ch. 324, § 11.

ANNOTATIONS

The 1989 amendment, effective April 7, 1989, deleted "investments" following "deposit" in the second sentence.

General rule is that interest is accretion or increment to principal fund earning it, and becomes a part of that fund. 1980 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 80-17.

Interest earned credited to shooting range fund, not state fund. — Any interest earned on the investment of money in the shooting range fund must be credited to that fund, not the state general fund. 1980 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 80-17.

17-7-3. Administration.

A. The state game commission shall administer the provisions of the Shooting Range Fund Act and shall, pursuant to the State Rules Act [Chapter 14, Article 4 NMSA 1978], adopt such rules and regulations as deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of the Shooting Range Fund Act.

B. Rules and regulations shall include:

- (1) a method for the determination of a county or municipality eligibility for grants from the shooting range fund;
- (2) procedures for applications, approvals and rejections of grant proposals;

(3) a requirement that a county or municipality contribute at least twenty-five percent of the cost necessary to complete a shooting range grant proposal;

(4) a requirement that one-half of the local contribution required by Paragraph (3) of this subsection is to be money;

(5) a requirement that a shooting range project shall be undertaken in accordance with specifications determined by the department of game and fish. Such specifications may provide for pistol, rifle, shotgun and archery facilities; and

(6) provisions for the operation and maintenance of shooting range facilities.

C. Grants from the shooting range fund shall be awarded by the state game commission only for new public shooting range construction or for improvements to existing public shooting ranges. No funds shall be approved for maintenance of shooting ranges nor for shooting range renovation prior to 1980. No grant from the money appropriated to the shooting range fund shall exceed:

(1) twenty-five percent of the cost of any one project; nor

(2) more than ten percent of the amount appropriated to the shooting range fund by the Shooting Range Fund Act.

D. The state game commission may expend not more than five percent of the appropriated money in the shooting range fund each fiscal year for administrative purposes to carry out the provisions of the Shooting Range Fund Act.

History: 1953 Comp., § 53-7-3, enacted by Laws 1976 (S.S.), ch. 43, § 3.

ARTICLE 8

Sport Shooting Range

17-8-1. Short title.

This act [17-8-1 to 17-8-6 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Sport Shooting Range Act".

History: Laws 2002, ch. 72, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Cross references. — For municipal zoning regulations, see 3-21-1 to 3-21-26 NMSA 1978.

For abatement of a public nuisance, see 30-8-8 NMSA 1978.

17-8-2. Purpose of act.

The purpose of the Sport Shooting Range Act is to protect the normal operation and use of sport shooting ranges by establishing when a person who owns, operates or uses a sport shooting range is liable for civil penalties.

History: Laws 2002, ch. 72, § 2.

17-8-3. Definition.

As used in the Sport Shooting Range Act, a "sport shooting range" is an area designed and operated for the use of rifles, shotguns or pistols as a means of silhouette, skeet, trap, black powder or other sport shooting or firearms training.

History: Laws 2002, ch. 72, § 3.

17-8-4. Immunity from nuisance actions based on noise or noise pollution.

A. The use or operation of a sport shooting range shall not be enjoined as a nuisance on the basis of noise or noise pollution:

(1) if the sport shooting range is in compliance with noise control statutes, rules or ordinances that apply to the range and its operation at the time that the initial operation of the range commenced;

(2) due to changes made to noise control statutes, rules or ordinances that apply to the sport shooting range and its operation, if the changes take effect after the initial operation of the range commenced; or

(3) if noise control statutes, rules or ordinances were not in effect at the time that the original operation of the sport shooting range commenced.

B. The use or operation of a sport shooting range may not be enjoined as a nuisance on the basis of noise or noise pollution by a person who acquires an interest in real property adversely affected by the normal operation and use of a sport shooting range that commenced operation prior to the time the person acquired the interest in real property.

History: Laws 2002, ch. 72, § 4.

17-8-5. Local government authority.

The provisions of the Sport Shooting Range Act shall not prohibit a local government from regulating the location and construction of sport shooting ranges after July 1, 2002.

History: Laws 2002, ch. 72, § 5.

17-8-6. Exemptions.

The provisions of the Sport Shooting Range Act do not apply:

A. to recovery for an act or omission relating to recklessness, negligence, wanton misconduct or willful misconduct in the operation or use of a sport shooting range;

B. to a nuisance action on the basis of trespass involving the operation or use of a sport shooting range;

C. to the operation or use of a sport shooting range that substantially and adversely affects public health or public safety; or

D. if there has been a substantial change in the primary use of a sport shooting range.

History: Laws 2002, ch. 72, § 6.

ARTICLE 9

Wildlife Corridors

17-9-1. Short title.

Chapter 17, Article 9 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Wildlife Corridors Act".

History: Laws 2019, ch. 97, § 1; 2023, ch. 27, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

The 2023 amendment, effective July 1, 2023, deleted "This act" and added "Chapter 17, Article 9 NMSA 1978".

17-9-2. Definitions.

As used in the Wildlife Corridors Act:

A. "human-caused barrier" means a road, culvert, commercial or residential development or other human-made structure that has the potential to affect the natural movement of wildlife across the landscape;

B. "large mammal" includes mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, black bear and mountain lions;

C. "species of concern" means a wildlife species identified by the department of game and fish as being adversely affected by habitat fragmentation exacerbated by human-caused barriers and the high potential of wildlife-vehicle collisions; and

D. "wildlife corridors" means those areas used routinely by wildlife to travel through their habitat and includes corridors used by migrating wildlife.

History: Laws 2019, ch. 97, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2019, ch. 97 contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 14, 2019, 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature.

17-9-3. Wildlife corridors action plan; creation; department coordination.

A. The department of game and fish, in coordination with the department of transportation, shall create a state "wildlife corridors action plan".

B. The wildlife corridors action plan shall contain:

(1) identification of existing highway crossings that pose a risk to successful wildlife migration or that pose a risk to the traveling public because large mammals use the crossing;

(2) identification of other human-caused barriers, especially road segments that negatively affect wildlife habitat and movement;

(3) information about the habitat and movement needs of species of concern with particular attention to large mammals or other species that pose a risk to the traveling public;

(4) projections of anticipated effects that drought and other stressors will have on wildlife habitat, dispersal and movement;

(5) information about the habitat quality needed to support and maintain viable populations of wildlife;

(6) information about how increased movement of species could benefit overused and highly impacted habitat areas;

(7) maps that identify locations of:

(a) existing populations of species of greatest concern;

(b) existing wildlife crossings; and

(c) areas requiring additional monitoring or research;

(8) protocols for post-completion monitoring of wildlife corridors projects in order to assess their effectiveness in establishing, maintaining and promoting wildlife movements;

(9) economic benefits anticipated from preserving wildlife movement patterns, including the potential impact of reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions;

(10) opportunities to collaborate with and enter into joint powers agreements as provided in the Joint Powers Agreements Act [11-1-1 to 11-1-7 NMSA 1978] as necessary with New Mexico Indian nations, tribes or pueblos; relevant agencies or Indian nations, tribes or pueblos in neighboring states; and relevant federal agencies to protect wildlife corridors that cross state or tribal lines;

(11) the wildlife corridors project list; and

(12) additional information that the department of game and fish and the department of transportation deem necessary and appropriate to carry out the intent and purposes of the Wildlife Corridors Act.

C. The department of game and fish and the department of transportation shall consult with and actively seek the involvement of tribal governments in the development of the wildlife corridors action plan.

D. The initial wildlife corridors action plan shall be:

(1) open for public comment before being finalized; provided that, once finalized, the department of game and fish and the department of transportation shall publish the initial action plan on their websites and shall submit the action plan to the governor and the legislature on or before January 15, 2020; and

(2) updated at least every ten years and may be amended prior to a full update as new research and data become available or changes in conditions affecting wildlife and wildlife-human interactions arise.

E. The wildlife corridors action plan or the provisions of the Wildlife Corridors Act do not apply to private property or private property owners, unless private property owners choose to participate voluntarily.

History: Laws 2019, ch. 97, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2019, ch. 97 contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 14, 2019, 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature.

17-9-4. Prioritized wildlife corridors project list; publication.

A. As part of the wildlife corridors action plan, the department of game and fish and the department of transportation shall publish a prioritized "wildlife corridors project list" of projects to be undertaken.

B. The department of game and fish and the department of transportation shall prioritize projects within the wildlife corridors project list by assessing the following criteria, listed in order of importance:

(1) the potential to reduce wildlife-vehicle collision and enhance safety to the traveling public;

(2) the relative current population size of select large mammal species and species of concern or the value of proposed infrastructure that will improve wildlife corridors;

(3) the feasibility and constructability of wildlife corridors infrastructure;

(4) the potential costs and economics of wildlife corridors infrastructure, including benefits or other effects on local communities;

(5) local community support for proposed wildlife corridors infrastructure;

(6) the value of the project to native large mammals and other native species;
and

(7) surrounding land-use and ownership, especially tribal lands, and an evaluation of the need for conservation easements or other real estate instrument necessary to maintain the viability of a proposed wildlife corridor.

C. On an annual basis following the issuance of the first wildlife corridors project list, the department of game and fish and the department of transportation shall issue a report to the governor and the legislature stating the progress toward completing the enumerated projects as of the current fiscal year. The report shall represent progress toward completion of a project as a percentage, with a corresponding explanation for the represented number and plans for future progress.

History: Laws 2019, ch. 97, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2019, ch. 97 contained no effective date provision, but, pursuant to N.M. Const., art. IV, § 23, was effective June 14, 2019, 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature.

17-9-5. Wildlife corridors fund; created; purpose.

A. The "wildlife corridors fund" is created as a nonreverting fund in the state treasury. The fund consists of appropriations, gifts, grants, donations, income from investment of the fund and any other money distributed or otherwise allocated to the fund. The department of transportation shall administer the fund, and money in the fund is appropriated to the department of transportation for the purposes set forth in Subsection B of this section. Disbursements from the fund shall be made by warrant of the secretary of finance and administration pursuant to vouchers signed by the secretary of transportation or the secretary's authorized representative.

B. Money in the wildlife corridors fund shall be used:

(1) to provide safe road crossings for wildlife and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, including the projects contained in the wildlife corridors project list prepared as a part of the wildlife corridors action plan pursuant to Section 17-9-3 NMSA 1978;

(2) for costs related to:

(a) project feasibility studies;

(b) planning, construction, retrofitting and maintenance of wildlife road crossing infrastructure;

(c) roadkill tracking and studies;

(d) animal detection systems;

(e) signage;

(f) exclusionary fencing;

(g) wildlife jump outs; and

(h) private land conservation efforts;

(3) to provide matching money as required by federal grant programs relating to wildlife corridor projects; and

(4) for administrative and personnel expenses related to the purposes of the fund as set forth in this subsection.

C. The department of transportation shall:

(1) consult with the department of game and fish concerning the distribution of money from the wildlife corridors fund for the purposes set forth in Subsection B of this section and, if the money is distributed to a project on or adjacent to lands owned by Indian nations, tribes or pueblos, consult with the appropriate tribal government; and

(2) consider distributing money from the fund to projects to fill funding gaps for wildlife road crossings and connectivity that are not otherwise budgeted or required for projects under other federal or state obligation.

D. By October 1, 2024, and by October 1 of each year thereafter, the department of transportation shall provide a report to the governor and the legislative finance committee regarding:

(1) an aggregate accounting of all money expended from the wildlife corridors fund during the prior fiscal year; and

(2) a listing of all projects receiving funding from the fund and the amount of funding for each project during the prior fiscal year.

History: Laws 2023, ch. 27, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2023, ch. 27, § 3 made Laws 2023, ch. 27, § 2 effective July 1, 2023.

ARTICLE 10

Wildlife Trafficking

17-10-1. Short title.

This act [17-10-1 to 17-10-6 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the "Wildlife Trafficking Act".

History: Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 7 made Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 1 effective July 1, 2020.

17-10-2. Definitions.

As used in the Wildlife Trafficking Act:

A. "covered animal part or product" means any portion of a covered animal species; any item that contains, is advertised as containing or is wholly or partially made from a part that comes from a covered animal species; or shark fins;

B. "covered animal species" means any extant species of elephant, lion, rhinoceros or other species covered by Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;

C. "distribute" means either a change in possession for consideration or a change in legal ownership;

D. "educational or scientific institution" means an institution that has an educational or scientific tax exemption from the federal internal revenue service or the institution's national or state tax authority;

E. "sell" includes bartering for, exchanging, trading or possessing with the intent to sell and each such transaction made by any person, with or without remuneration, including any intrastate sale through the internet; and

F. "total value of the covered animal species or covered animal part or product" means the fair market value of such part or product, the price at which the part or product was offered for sale or the actual price paid for the part or product, whichever is greater.

History: Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 7 made Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 2 effective July 1, 2020.

17-10-3. Prohibited acts.

A. Except as provided in Section 4 [17-10-4 NMSA 1978] of the Wildlife Trafficking Act, it is unlawful for a person to knowingly sell or purchase any covered animal species or covered animal part or product.

B. The act of obtaining an appraisal of any covered animal species or covered animal part or product alone does not constitute possession with intent to sell.

History: Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 7 made Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 3 effective July 1, 2020.

17-10-4. Exceptions.

It is not a violation of Section 3 [17-10-3 NMSA 1978] of the Wildlife Trafficking Act if any of the following conditions are satisfied:

A. the covered animal part or product is a fixed component of an antique product that is not made wholly or primarily of covered animal parts or products; provided that the antique status is established by the owner or seller with evidence proving origin and showing that:

- (1) the covered animal part or product is more than one hundred years old;
- (2) the total weight of the covered animal part or product is less than two hundred grams; and
- (3) at least fifty percent of the value of the antique product does not stem from the covered animal part or product;

B. the covered animal part or product is a component of a gun or musical instrument, including stringed instruments and bows, wind and percussion instruments and pianos;

C. the covered animal species or covered animal part or product is lawfully possessed by an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian nation, tribe or pueblo for traditional, cultural or religious purposes;

D. the owner distributed the covered animal species or covered animal part or product to an educational or scientific institution, and such institution establishes, through evidence, that it is in compliance with all federal laws regulating the covered animal species or covered animal part or product;

E. the noncommercial transfer of ownership of the covered animal species or covered animal part or product is to a legal beneficiary of an estate, trust or other inheritance upon the death of the owner of the covered animal species or covered animal part or product or is a gift;

F. the sale, trade or purchase of the covered animal species or covered animal part or product is authorized by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or by federal or state law or permit; or

G. the alleged violation of a provision of Section 3 of the Wildlife Trafficking Act is by an employee or agent of a federal, state or local law enforcement agency who is

operating in the employee's or agent's official capacity as a federal, state or local law enforcement officer.

History: Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 7 made Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 4 effective July 1, 2020.

17-10-5. Criminal and civil penalties.

A. A person who violates Section 3 [17-10-3 NMSA 1978] of the Wildlife Trafficking Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished pursuant to the provisions of Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

B. Each covered animal species or covered animal part or product sold or purchased in violation of Section 3 of the Wildlife Trafficking Act is a separate offense. Two or more offenses may be charged in the same complaint, information or indictment and punished as separate offenses for each covered animal species or covered animal part or product involved.

C. With or without a criminal conviction, a person who violates Section 3 of the Wildlife Trafficking Act and anyone who benefited or would have benefited from the violation may be sued in district court and is subject to a penalty not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or three times the total value of the covered animal species or covered animal part or product, whichever is greater.

D. Upon conviction in a criminal court or a finding in a civil court for a violation of Section 3 of the Wildlife Trafficking Act, the court shall order that the covered animal species or covered animal part or product be:

- (1) given to the United States fish and wildlife service, if requested by that agency;
- (2) destroyed; or
- (3) donated to an educational or scientific institution.

History: Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 7 made Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 5 effective July 1, 2020.

17-10-6. Enforcement authority.

A. The criminal enforcement provisions of the Wildlife Trafficking Act may be enforced by any commissioned law enforcement officer, including an officer employed by the department of game and fish and the state parks division of the energy, minerals and natural resources department.

B. The civil enforcement provision of the Wildlife Trafficking Act may be enforced by any agency or political subdivision of the state that employs commissioned law enforcement officers or by any person authorized by the attorney general.

History: Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 6.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 7 made Laws 2020, ch. 77, § 6 effective July 1, 2020.

ARTICLE 11

Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety

17-11-1. Short title.

Chapter 17, Article 11 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act".

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-11-1, enacted by Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 1.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 6 made Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 1 effective April 1, 2022.

17-11-2. Definitions.

As used in the Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act:

A. "bona fide scientific research" means a research project that is not being conducted for commercial gain from the sale of animal parts and that is conducted by employees or contractors of the department or authorized by a scientific collection permit from the department;

B. "cage trap" means a trap that captures a live animal but does not grip an animal's body or body part and is not intended to kill the animal, including a live trap, a cage or

box trap, a colony trap, a net and a suitcase-type live beaver trap, but does not include a corral;

C. "department" means the department of game and fish;

D. "depredation trapping" means the act of setting traps, snares or poisons on public land to reduce or prevent damage caused by wildlife to property or waterways, including harvested and stored crops and livestock;

E. "domestic animal" means any animal that is bred for and is typically subject to human control;

F. "ecosystem management" means actions that are necessary to maintain or increase the long-term sustainability and integrity of an entire system of living wildlife and their environment, including the restoration and conservation of wildlife populations and habitat, wildlife relocation, medical treatment of wildlife and the protection of threatened or endangered species;

G. "feral animal" means a domestic animal existing in an untamed state outside captivity or domestication and not under human control;

H. "government entity" means a local, state or federal government body or agency, a political subdivision of the state or an employee, agent or representative of the body, agency or political subdivision when acting within the scope of its governmental duties, but does not include an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo;

I. "leghold trap" means a spring-actuated device, either padded or unpadded, designed to capture an animal by the foot, leg or other limb, including a steel-jawed leghold trap, a padded-jaw leghold trap, a foot-hold trap, an egg trap, a duffer trap and all other similar traps;

J. "lethal body-gripping trap" means a rotating jaw trap designed to capture an animal by the body that is intended to fatally crush or otherwise kill the animal and includes conibear traps and all other similar traps;

K. "public land" means state-owned land, state-leased land, lands held in trust by the state, lands administered by the United States fish and wildlife service, the United States forest service, the federal bureau of land management, the national park service, the United States department of defense, state parks and any county or municipality, but does not include the interior of physical structures or land belonging to or held in trust for an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo;

L. "snare" means a wire or cable with a single closing device, often with a noose, with or without stops, that is used to capture, strangle or otherwise entangle an animal, but does not include use of a catch pole, leash or tether lawfully used by a person to temporarily restrain or relocate an animal;

M. "trap" includes a leghold trap, lethal body-gripping trap or cage trap;

N. "wildlife" means a member of a vertebrate species that is native to or found in New Mexico that is not under the direct control of a human or in captivity, but does not include a feral or escaped domestic animal; and

O. "wildlife poison" means an explosive compound or deleterious substance used in a manner intended to kill wildlife.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-11-2, enacted by Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 2.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 6 made Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 2 effective April 1, 2022.

17-11-3. Prohibitions on public land.

It is a violation of the Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act to use a trap, snare or wildlife poison for purposes of capturing, injuring or killing an animal on public land except as provided in Section 17-11-4 NMSA 1978.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-11-3, enacted by Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 3.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 6 made Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 3 effective April 1, 2022.

17-11-4. Exceptions.

The provisions of the Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act do not apply to:

A. the taking of wildlife with firearms, fishing equipment, archery equipment, falconry equipment or other implements in hand, when used as authorized by law;

B. the taking or control of birds, fish or rodents not defined as furbearers in Section 17-5-2 NMSA 1978;

C. a government entity acting in the course of its official duties to prevent or mitigate actual threats to human health and safety;

D. ecosystem management conducted by the department, the United States fish and wildlife service or a conservancy district of the state or its employee, agent or representative acting in the course of its official duties;

E. bona fide scientific research;

F. depredation trapping conducted by the department or a designated agent of the department using non-lethal traps or non-lethal snares, but only when accompanied by visible signs at the location of each device notifying the public of the presence of such devices;

G. the use of cage traps to recover or to provide veterinary care or husbandry to a domestic animal or feral animal as authorized by law, or to abate damages caused by any animal to property, crops or livestock; provided that:

(1) once the damage has been abated, use of the cage trap shall cease; and

(2) any captured animal is disposed of in accordance with rules established by the department or appropriate animal agency; or

H. enrolled members of a federally recognized Indian nation, tribe or pueblo when trapping is conducted solely for religious or ceremonial purposes pursuant to rules issued by the department of game and fish in collaboration with the secretary of Indian affairs and consistent with federal procedures for recognition and protection of bona fide Indian nation, tribe or pueblo religious ceremonies.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-11-4, enacted by Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 4.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 6 made Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 4 effective April 1, 2022.

17-11-5. Penalties.

A. A person who violates the Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act is guilty of a misdemeanor. Each individual trap, snare or application of wildlife poison shall constitute a single violation of that act.

B. Any penalties under this section shall be cumulative to any other available penalties provided by law.

C. In addition to other penalties, upon conviction, the court may consider appropriate restitution to a state agency that incurs costs in enforcing the Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act.

History: 1978 Comp., § 17-11-5, enacted by Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 5.

ANNOTATIONS

Effective dates. — Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 6 made Laws 2021, ch. 25, § 5 effective April 1, 2022.