

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]

Adopted and Filed

Rulemaking related to trail cameras

The Natural Resource Commission (Commission) hereby amends Chapter 51, “Game Management Areas,” Iowa Administrative Code.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is adopted under the authority provided in Iowa Code sections 455A.5(6)“a” and 481A.6.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code sections 456A.24(2)“a,” 481A.6 and 481A.39.

Purpose and Summary

This rulemaking defines “trail camera” and prohibits the use of trail cameras on game management areas except when specifically authorized by permit or when used directly by the Department of Natural Resources (Department) or its designated agents. The proliferation of trail cameras has generated numerous concerns and complaints from the public. This measure will protect the recreational experience of sportsmen and sportswomen and other visitors to these wild areas. Additionally, this prohibition is consistent with the ethical hunting principle of fair chase, ensuring that a hunter does not gain an improper or unfair technological advantage over game.

Public Comment and Changes to Rulemaking

Notice of Intended Action for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on July 8, 2026, as **ARC 0409D**. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- July 28, 2026

No one attended the public hearing. One hundred and two public comments were received. Of the comments received, 59 supported the amendments, 35 opposed, and 8 asked for a modified ban on trail cameras.

No changes from the Notice have been made.

Adoption of Rulemaking

This rulemaking was adopted by the Commission on August 13, 2026.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Commission for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 7—Chapter 2504.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

Effective Date

This rulemaking will become effective on February 1, 2027.

The following rulemaking action is adopted:

ITEM 1. Adopt the following **new** definition of "Trail camera" in rule **571—51.1(481A)**:

"Trail camera" or "game camera" means any remote motion-activated or infrared camera in which the shutter is activated by sound triggers, proximity sensation, radio transmitters, or a self-timer built into the trail camera or game camera.

ITEM 2. Amend rule 571—51.6(481A), catchwords, as follows:

571—51.6(481A) Use of blinds, and decoys, and trail cameras on game management areas.

ITEM 3. Adopt the following **new** subrule 51.6(5):

51.6(5) *Trail cameras.* Trail cameras are prohibited on game management areas unless specifically authorized by permit or when used directly by the department or its designated agents.

[Filed 8/13/26, effective 2/1/27]

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For replacement pages for IAC, see IAC Supplement 9/2/26.