Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 571—Chapter 106
"Deer Hunting Licenses"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 455A.5(6)"a," 481A.39 and 481A.48

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code sections 481A.38, 481A.39 and 481A.48

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

August 12, 2025	6200 Park Avenue, Second Floor
1 to 2 p.m.	Des Moines, Iowa

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department of Natural Resources (Department) no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

Chris Ensminger
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Phone: 515.250.6886
Email: chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov

Free language assistance: if you speak a non-English language, the Department offers language assistance services free of charge. Contact the Department at chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov.

Servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística: si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita. Comuníquese con el Departamento al chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov.

Purpose and Summary

Chapter 106 governs deer hunting by residents and nonresidents in the State of Iowa. This chapter regulates deer hunting and sets forth season dates, bag limits, possession limits, shooting hours, areas open to hunting, licensing procedures, means and methods of take, and transportation and reporting requirements.

This rulemaking proposes several amendments. The majority of them propose to establish a new resident hunting zone, along with new licensing procedures and means and methods of take specific for that zone. Other amendments will implement 2025 Iowa Acts, Senate File 423 and House File 885, which collectively create a new disabled veterans deer privilege, clarify youth deer licenses are available to purchase throughout all deer seasons, and make a minor change to the deer depredation program.

Analysis of Impact

1. **Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

- **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable. The proposed amendments do not change the fee structure of deer hunting in Iowa. Additionally, none of the changes create new or different financial burdens to participate in deer hunting.

- **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

Deer hunters will benefit.

2. **Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

There is no economic impact or cost associated with this rulemaking. There should not be a noticeable change overall in deer hunting in Iowa based upon this proposed rulemaking. The proposed changes are designed to recover deer populations in Zone B and will not significantly alter license sales overall. The following types of jobs are positively impacted by deer hunting in Iowa generally and should see no noticeable change due to this rulemaking: hunting equipment retailers (firearms, ammunition, clothing, chairs, stands, binoculars, and other supporting equipment); field guides and outfitters; taxidermists; and restaurants, hotels, and gas stations for hunters traveling around the State.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

The burdens imposed by this new framework are consistent with general hunting burdens. Territorial limitations on hunting (i.e., zones) are common with other species, but this is a new population management approach for deer in Iowa.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

The Department currently provides management and oversight of deer hunting in Iowa, and those services will not change due to the proposed rulemaking.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

The proposed rulemaking does not have any effect on State revenues. No significant changes to license sales are expected from the proposed amendments.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

The public does not have any costs to comply with the process and requirements set forth in these rules.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

There are no costs associated with this proposed rulemaking.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

None were considered.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

This proposed rulemaking does not have any impact on small business. The following types of jobs are positively impacted by deer hunting in Iowa generally and should see no noticeable change due to this rulemaking: hunting equipment retailers (firearms, ammunition, clothing, chairs, stands, binoculars, and other supporting equipment); field guides and outfitters; taxidermists; and restaurants, hotels, and gas stations for hunters traveling around the State.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Amend rule 571—106.1(481A), introductory paragraph, as follows:

571—106.1(481A) Licenses. When hunting deer, all hunters must have in their possession a valid deer hunting license and a valid resident or nonresident hunting license and must have paid the habitat fee (if normally required to have a hunting license and to pay the habitat fee to hunt). An "any-deer" license shall mean the same as an "any sex" license as referenced in Iowa Code chapter 483A.

ITEM 2. Amend paragraph **106.1(1)"a"** as follows:

a. General deer licenses. General deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer in one resident hunting zone per season selected at the time the license is purchased. General deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer of one or either sex ~~except in counties designated by the natural resource commission (commission) during the first regular gun season when the general deer license will be valid for taking deer with at least one forked antler~~ depending on the resident hunting zone selected at the time of purchase. Paid general deer licenses shall be valid ~~statewide~~ zonewide except where prohibited in deer population management zones established under 571—Chapter 105. Free general deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer of either sex only on the farm unit of an eligible landowner or tenant in the season or seasons selected at the time the license is obtained.

ITEM 3. Reletter paragraphs **106.1(1)"b"** to **106.1(1)"e"** as **106.1(1)"c"** to **106.1(1)"f"**.

ITEM 4. Adopt the following **new** paragraph **106.1(1)"b"**:

b. Any-deer licenses. Any-deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer of either sex in the zone, county, and season selected by the hunter at the time of purchase.

ITEM 5. Renumber subrules **106.1(2)** and **106.1(3)** as **106.1(3)** and **106.1(4)**.

ITEM 6. Adopt the following **new** subrule 106.1(2):

106.1(2) *Resident hunting zones.*

a. Resident zone boundaries. Boundaries are as specified in the resident deer hunting zones map (dated October 2025) published on the department's website (www.iowadnr.gov/deerhunting, "Resident Deer Hunting Zones.")

b. Zone A. Paid general deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer of either sex zonewide.

c. Zone B. Paid general deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer with at least one forked antler zonewide. Paid any-deer licenses shall be valid for taking deer of either sex in only the county selected at the time of purchase. Hunters may obtain no more than one zone B any-deer license annually.

ITEM 7. Amend renumbered subrule 106.1(3) as follows:

106.1(3) *January antlerless-deer-only resident licenses.*

a. Population management season. Licenses for the population management January antlerless-deer-only season may be issued for counties designated by the commission following a 30-day public comment period. Population management January antlerless-deer-only licenses shall be issued for a county only when a minimum of 100 antlerless-deer-only licenses, as described in 106.10(5), remain unsold in that county as of the third Monday in December. If 100 or more antlerless-deer-only licenses remain unsold for a given county as of the third Monday in December, those remaining antlerless-deer-only licenses shall be made available for the population management January antlerless-deer-only season in that county until the relevant antlerless-deer-only quota as described in 106.10(5) is met. Population management season licenses will be available for purchase starting at 9 a.m. Central Standard Time (CST) on the Tuesday morning following the third Monday in December.

b. Excess tag season. Licenses for the excess tag January antlerless-deer-only season may be issued in any county. Excess tag January antlerless-deer-only licenses shall be issued for a county only when a minimum of one antlerless-deer-only license, as described in 106.10(5), remains unsold for a given county through January 10. Remaining antlerless-deer-only licenses shall be made available starting at 9 a.m. CST on January 11 for the excess tag January antlerless-deer-only season in that county until the relevant antlerless-deer-only quota as described in 106.10(5) is met.

ITEM 8. Amend renumbered paragraph **106.1(4)"g"** as follows:

g. Excess tag January antlerless-deer-only license. Beginning at 9 a.m. CST on January 11, nonresident hunters may obtain antlerless-deer-only licenses for the excess tag January antlerless-deer-only season specified in 106.2(4). Licenses will be available only in those counties specified in 106.10(3) until the quota provided in 106.10(5) is filled. All regulations specified in Chapter 106 for the January antlerless deer season for resident hunters including limits, shooting hours, method of take, tagging and reporting requirements will also apply to nonresident hunters during this season.

ITEM 9. Amend subrule 106.7(1) as follows:

106.7(1) *Zone license quotas.* Nonresident license quotas are as follows:

	~~Any-sex~~ Any-deer licenses		Mandatory	Optional
	All Methods	Bow	Antlerless-deer-only	Antlerless-deer-only
Zone 1	90	31	90	
Zone 2	90	31	90	
Zone 3	560	196	560	
Zone 4	1280	448	1280	
Zone 5	1600	560	1600	
Zone 6	800	280	800	
Zone 7	360	126	360	
Zone 8	240	84	240	
Zone 9	880	308	880	
Zone 10	100	35	100	
Total	6000	2099	6000	3500

ITEM 10. Amend subrule 106.10(3) as follows:

106.10(3) *Population management and excess tag January antlerless-deer-only seasons.* Only antlerless-deer-only licenses, paid or free, are available in counties pursuant to the conditions described in ~~106.1(2)~~ 106.1(3). A license must be used during the population management or excess tag January antlerless-deer-only season as described in 106.2(4) and in the county or deer population management area selected at the time the license is purchased. Free antlerless-deer-only licenses shall be available only in the portion of the farm unit located in a county where paid antlerless-deer-only licenses are available during the population management or excess tag January antlerless-deer-only season.

ITEM 11. Amend subrule 106.10(5) as follows:

106.10(5) *Antlerless-deer-only licenses and zone B any-deer licenses.* Paid antlerless-deer-only licenses and zone B any-deer licenses shall be available by county as designated annually by the commission. Prior to the commission designating the quotas, the department shall publish on its website (~~www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/Deer-Hunting~~ www.iowadnr.gov/deerhunting) a proposed allocation and accept public comments for at least 30 days.

ITEM 12. Adopt the following **new** subrule 106.10(6):

106.10(6) *Disabled veteran any-deer licenses.* A paid any-deer license shall be available for a resident disabled veteran consistent with Iowa Code section 483A.8D as enacted by 2025 Iowa Acts, House File 885. The fee for this license shall be the same as the general deer license set forth in 571—15.10(1). Resident disabled veteran any-deer licenses shall be valid during any established firearm season using the method of take authorized for that season. A person may obtain only one disabled veteran any-deer license but may also obtain any other paid or free general deer and antlerless-deer-only licenses that are available to other hunters.

ITEM 13. Amend paragraph **106.13(2)"a"** as follows:

a. Resident party hunting. During the first and second regular gun seasons and the January antlerless-deer-only seasons in resident zone A only, any resident hunter present in the hunting party may use their tag on a deer harvested by another resident. Party hunting is not allowed in resident zone B.

ITEM 14. Amend subrule 106.14(1) as follows:

106.14(1) *Licenses.*

a. Youth deer hunt. A youth deer license shall be valid for taking a deer of either sex statewide. A youth deer license may be issued to any Iowa resident who is not over 15 years old on the day the youth obtains the license. The youth license may be paid or free to persons eligible for free licenses. If the youth obtains a free landowner/tenant license, it will count as the one free general deer license for which the youth's family is eligible.

Each participating youth must be accompanied by an adult who possesses a regular hunting license and has paid the habitat fee (if the adult is normally required to have a hunting license and to pay the habitat fee to hunt). Only one adult may participate for each youth hunter. The accompanying adult must not possess a long gun, bow, or crossbow and must be in the direct company of the youth at all times.

A person may obtain only one youth general deer license but may also obtain any other paid or free general deer and antlerless-deer-only licenses that are available to other hunters. Antlerless-deer-only or any-deer licenses must be obtained in the same manner with which other hunters obtain them, as described in 106.10(2).

b. Severely disabled hunt. Any severely disabled Iowa resident meeting the requirements of Iowa Code section 321L.1(8) may be issued one general deer license to hunt deer during the youth season. A person applying for this license must either possess a disability parking permit or provide a completed form from the department of natural resources. The form must be signed by a physician verifying that the person's disability meets the criteria defined in Iowa Code section 321L.1(8). The attending physician shall be currently practicing medicine and shall be a medical doctor, a doctor of osteopathy, a physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner. Forms are available online at www.iowadnr.gov, by visiting the Department of Natural Resources office at ~~the Wallace State Office Building~~ 6200 Park Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, or any district office, or by calling 515.725.8200. A person between 16 and 65 years of age must also possess a regular hunting license and have paid the habitat fee to obtain a license (if normally required to have a hunting license and to pay the habitat fee to hunt). A severely disabled person obtaining this license may obtain any other paid and free general deer and antlerless-deer-only licenses that are available to other hunters. Antlerless-deer-only licenses must be obtained in the same manner by which other hunters obtain them, as described in 106.10(2).

ITEM 15. Amend rule 571—106.16(481A), introductory paragraph, as follows:

571—106.16(481A) Deer depredation management. The deer depredation management program provides assistance to producers through technical advice and additional deer licenses and permits where the localized reduction of female deer is needed to reduce damage. Upon signing a depredation management agreement with the department, producers of agricultural or high-value horticultural crops ~~may~~ shall be issued, consistent with this rule, deer depredation licenses and deer shooting permits to shoot deer causing excessive crop damage. If immediate action is necessary to forestall serious damage, depredation licenses or shooting permits may be issued before an agreement is signed. Further licenses or permits will not be authorized until an agreement is signed.