

NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION[571]

Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 571—Chapter 108
“Wild Furbearer Trapping and Hunting”

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 481A.6, 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.87, 481A.90 and 481A.92

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code sections 481A.6, 481A.38 and 481A.92 and 2026 Iowa Acts, Senate File 654

Public Hearing

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

September 22, 2026
1 to 2 p.m.

6200 Park Avenue, Second Floor
Des Moines, Iowa

Free language assistance: If you need assistance in a language other than English, contact the Department of Natural Resources (Department) at chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov or civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov or by telephone at 515.326.0430 at least seven days before the event.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si necesita ayuda en un idioma que no sea inglés, comuníquese con el Departamento al chris.ensminger@dnr.iowa.gov o civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov o por teléfono a 515.326.0430 al menos siete días antes del evento.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the 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 108 sets the season dates, bag limits, possession limits, and areas open to hunting or trapping furbearers. Three categories of changes are proposed, but only the first two amount to substantive changes to the existing rules.

First, this proposed rulemaking expands bobcat harvest to be statewide. Bobcat population data gathered annually since 2007 indicates that Iowa’s bobcat population continues to grow and expand its

distribution into more counties across central and north Iowa. Bobcat data is compiled from a variety of sources, such as hunter surveys, harvest information, field reports, and sightings. This proposed change is biologically responsible, as required by State law, and will also increase recreational opportunities for Iowa fur harvesters while helping to minimize social issues associated with high bobcat densities.

Second, this proposed rulemaking partly implements 2026 Iowa Acts, Senate File 654. Under that legislation, trappers are allowed to identify traps with their name and address or Department-issued customer identification number. This provision is being incorporated into the chapter's trap tag requirements.

Finally, this proposed rulemaking restates the existing river otter bag limit in clearer terms but does not change the number of otters allowed to be taken. The phrase "seasonal daily bag limit" is being simplified to "seasonal bag limit."

Analysis of Impact

1. Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:

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

The proposed rulemaking will not generate additional costs.

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

Iowa fur harvesters will benefit from added recreational opportunity through an expanded bobcat harvest zone and added flexibility in labeling their traps.

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:**

No additional costs are expected.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

Iowa fur harvesters will benefit from added recreational opportunity through an expanded bobcat harvest zone and added flexibility in labeling their traps.

3. Costs to the State:

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

None. These changes will result in no increase in costs for the Department.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

The proposed rulemaking is not expected to have a significant effect on State revenues.

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

Iowa fur harvesters will benefit from added recreational opportunity through an expanded bobcat harvest zone and added flexibility in labeling their traps.

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

No less costly or less intrusive methods exist.

6. Alternative methods considered by the agency:

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

No alternative methods were seriously considered. This proposed rulemaking implements, in part, 2026 Iowa Acts, Senate File 654. Additionally, Iowa's bobcat population has grown and expanded steadily over the past two decades, and increasing harvest is biologically responsible at this time.

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

Not applicable. This proposed rulemaking implements 2026 Iowa Acts, Senate File 654. Iowa's bobcat population has grown and expanded steadily over the past two decades, and increasing harvest is biologically responsible at this time.

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?

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on small business.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Amend subrule 108.7(2) as follows:

108.7(2) *Open area.* River otters and bobcats may be taken statewide. ~~Bobeats may be taken in the following counties: Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Audubon, Boone, Cass, Cedar, Cherokee, Clarke, Clinton, Crawford, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Delaware, Des Moines, Fremont, Guthrie, Harrison, Henry, Iowa, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Jones, Keokuk, Lee, Louisa, Lucas, Lyon, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Mills, Monona, Monroe, Montgomery, Muscatine, Page, Plymouth, Polk, Pottawattamie, Poweshiek, Ringgold, Scott, Shelby, Sioux, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, and Woodbury.~~

ITEM 2. Amend subrule 108.7(3) as follows:

108.7(3) *Seasonal ~~daily~~ bag limit and bobcat zones.*

- a. The seasonal ~~daily~~ bag limit for river otters is 3 river otters per person.
- b. The seasonal ~~daily~~ bag limit for bobcats is ~~1 bobcat~~ 3 bobcats per person ~~in the following counties: Audubon, Boone, Cedar, Cherokee, Clinton, Crawford, Dallas, Delaware, Guthrie, Harrison, Iowa, Jackson, Jasper, Johnson, Jones, Lyon, Monona, Muscatine, Plymouth, Polk, Poweshiek, Scott, Shelby, Sioux, Webster, and Woodbury.~~
- c. No more than 3 bobcats and 3 river otters total can be legally harvested by a fur harvester in a season. River otters or bobcats trapped in excess of the seasonal bag limit must be turned over to the department; the fur harvester shall not be penalized.
- e. ~~d.~~ The seasonal ~~daily~~ bag limit for bobeats is 3 bobeats per person in Of the 3 total bobcats that can be legally harvested in a season, up to 3 may be taken from any single county within Zone A. Zone A is comprised of the following counties: Adair, Adams, Appanoose, Cass, Clarke, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Des Moines, Fremont, Guthrie, Henry, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Louisa, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Mills, Monroe, Montgomery, Page, Polk, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Warren, Washington, and Wayne. For Zone B, comprised of all Iowa counties not included in Zone A, 1 bobcat per person per county may be taken up to the total of 3 allowed per season.
- d. ~~No more than 3 bobeats total can be legally harvested by a fur harvester in a season. River otters or bobeats trapped in excess of the seasonal daily bag limit or in a closed area must be turned over to the department; the fur harvester shall not be penalized.~~

ITEM 3. Amend rule 571—108.15(481A) as follows:

571—108.15(481A) Trap tag requirements. All traps and snares, whether set or not, possessed by a person who can reasonably be presumed to be trapping shall have a metal tag attached plainly labeled with the user's name and address or the user's department-issued customer identification number.