Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 571—Chapter 80
"Salvage of Fish and Game"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 481A.11, 481A.38, and 481A.39

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code sections 481A.11, 481A.38, and 481A.39

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally will be held via conference call as follows. Persons who wish to attend the conference call should contact Matt Bruner via email. A conference call number will be provided prior to the hearing. Persons who wish to make oral comments at the conference call public hearing must submit a request to Matt Bruner prior to the hearing to facilitate an orderly hearing.

September 23, 2025 9 a.m.	Via Google Meet

Free language assistance: If you need assistance in a language other than English, contact the Department of Natural Resources (Department) at matt.bruner@dnr.iowa.gov or civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov or by telephone at 515.336.5456 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 matt.bruner@dnr.iowa.gov o civilrights@dnr.iowa.gov o por teléfono a 515.336.5456 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:

Captain Matt Bruner
Iowa DNR Law Enforcement Bureau
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Phone: 515.336.5456
Email: matt.bruner@dnr.iowa.gov

Free language access: If you speak a non-English language, the Department offers language assistance services free of charge. Contact the Department at matt.bruner@dnr.iowa.gov.

Asistencia lingüística gratuita: Si habla un idioma que no sea el inglés, los servicios de asistencia lingüística están disponibles de forma gratuita, comuníquese con el Departamento al matt.bruner@dnr.iowa.gov.

Purpose and Summary

Proposed Chapter 80 establishes rules for the lawful salvage, distribution, and possession of fish and game that are either accidentally killed by motor vehicles, confiscated by authorities, or found dead. The proposed chapter ensures that salvaged resources are used appropriately (primarily for human consumption or animal feed) and not exploited for commercial gain or illegal poaching. The chapter also outlines procedures for collecting shed antlers and found-dead deer ("deadheads") during different times of the year.

Analysis of Impact

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

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

Individuals who seek to salvage game or fish will have minimal to no costs to comply with the tagging and authorization process. Self-paced 24/7 online digital reporting requirements (e.g., electronic deadhead reporting) during certain times of the year will decrease wait times and streamline the collection and authorization process.

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

Hunters and wildlife enthusiasts benefit from clearer, simplified rules and expanded, flexible options for collecting deadheads and shed antlers. Public institutions and nonprofits retain prioritized access to salvaged or confiscated fish and game. The general public benefits from improved regulatory transparency and consistent application of salvage processes.

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:**

Minimal to no direct economic cost is expected. Updates to the chapter primarily involve improving clarity, reducing redundancy, and increasing administrative efficiency. No new fees are introduced. Existing salvage tag protocols remain in place and are shifted to electronic reporting for deadheads during parts of the year.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

The rules encourage lawful collection and use of salvageable game, antlers, and fish and increase clarity of authorized activities. The rules increase efficiency for the public by allowing digital submission options.

3. **Costs to the State:**

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

Minor administrative updates to digital platforms, such as online reporting for deadheads, will be required. Overall enforcement cost is expected to decrease due to improved clarity, reporting structure, and digital deadhead reporting parts of the year versus the current exclusively in-person reporting and tagging system.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

No significant impact is anticipated. There are no new permits or fees, and salvage is still not a revenue-generating activity.

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

Costs of inaction include continued public confusion, inconsistent enforcement, and potential underutilization of salvageable resources. Benefits of action include regulatory clarity, improved compliance, and administrative efficiency without imposing new costs.

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

No less costly or intrusive methods were identified. The proposed rulemaking reflects the least burdensome, most efficient method to achieve the goals of Chapter 80 and the requirements of Executive Order 10.

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

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

Eliminating Chapter 80, including salvage and deadhead provisions, and retaining the original chapter without edits were considered.

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

Eliminating salvage rules would reduce public access to usable game and fish and diminish wildlife resource utilization, which is contrary to public and conservation interests.

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 rulemaking does not have a substantial impact on small business. If any businesses (e.g., venison processors or taxidermists) interact with salvaged game, existing prohibitions on commercial use remain unchanged. There are no additional compliance or reporting requirements imposed on small business. The chapter is already written in a performance-based, flexible manner (e.g., offering electronic or verbal authorization). Small businesses are not subject to design or operational standards under this chapter. No small business exemptions are necessary since none are burdened.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Rescind 571—Chapter 80 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 80
SALVAGE OF FISH AND GAME

571—80.1(481A) Salvage. Salvage authorizes the possession of confiscated fish or game or game accidentally killed by a motor vehicle on a public highway for the purpose of human consumption or the feeding of domestic animals. Any other benefits derived from the possession of legally salvaged game (such as legal sale of hides, plumage, or antlers) is a secondary benefit only. Peace officers are not to salvage game solely for the purpose of financial gain or commercial taxidermy.

80.1(1) The following game when accidentally killed by a motor vehicle shall not be considered salvageable: spotted fawn deer and hen pheasants.

80.1(2) All salvaged game or fish shall be accompanied with a salvage tag signed by the holder and a peace officer or designee of the director of the department of natural resources and shall be valid for the time period assigned on the tag. The salvage tag shall remain with the game or fish until the game or fish is consumed. All salvage tags referred to in this chapter are not transferable.

571—80.2(481A) Game killed by motor vehicle.

80.2(1) Any person wanting to possess game accidentally killed by a motor vehicle on a highway shall immediately contact the nearest conservation officer, Iowa state trooper, sheriff's department, or police department to request and receive a salvage tag prior to taking possession of said game. The whole carcass of the game animal must be removed from the scene.

80.2(2) When a request is made for game accidentally killed by a motor vehicle, the game shall, when salvageable, be disposed of in accordance with the following priorities:

a. Individuals involved in the accident;

b. Public institutions;
c. Nonprofit organizations;
d. Others.

571—80.3(481A) Confiscated fish or game.

80.3(1) The following conditions shall apply to a person being allowed to take possession of fish or game confiscated by the department of natural resources or a court.

80.3(2) Confiscated fish or game, when salvageable, shall be disposed of in accordance with the following priorities:

a. Public institutions.
b. Nonprofit organizations.
c. Others.

571—80.4(481A) Deadheads and shed-antlers.

80.4(1) Naturally shed deer antlers may be collected and possessed at any time of year.

80.4(2) Found-dead deer heads with attached antlers, also known as deadheads, may be collected and possessed by individuals who possess a valid hunting license and have paid the habitat fee pursuant to Iowa Code section 483A.1 unless exempt under Iowa Code section 483A.24(1) or 483A.24(8). Collection is permitted during the following time periods under the following conditions:

a. February 1 through July 31: an individual must electronically complete and submit a deadhead report and possession authorization through the department's website prior to collecting and possessing each deadhead.

b. August 1 through January 31: an individual must contact the local conservation officer and request a physical deadhead tag prior to taking possession. Verbal or electronic authorization from a conservation officer is sufficient for temporary possession until a physical tag can be issued and affixed by a conservation officer.

80.4(3) This rule does not apply to deer that have been shot or killed by unlawful methods or means.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.11, 481A.38, and 481A.39.