



2021 BILL

1 **AN ACT relating to:** administrative rules relating to hunting wild turkeys.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to modify administrative rules relating to the hunting of wild turkeys to combine hunting zones and seasons and to modify youth hunting restrictions.

Current DNR rules create a spring open season for the hunting of wild turkeys that begins on the third Wednesday in April and continues Wednesday through Tuesday of the following week for six consecutive seven-day time periods. The bill requires DNR to combine the six periods into two periods. The first period would last for two weeks and be open only to those issued hunting licenses and authorizations under the cumulative preference system. The second period would last for four weeks, during which hunting licenses and authorizations would be issued to applicants in the order in which applications are received, regardless of accumulated preference points.

Current DNR rules provide that a person under the age of 16 who possesses the necessary approvals may hunt turkeys for two consecutive days starting on the Saturday before the beginning of the spring turkey hunting season. If the person does not successfully harvest a turkey during the youth hunt, the authorization remains valid during the time period and in the zone for which the authorization was issued. The bill requires DNR to provide that the authorization remains valid in the same hunting zone during both hunting periods that follow the youth hunt.

Current DNR rules create seven wild turkey hunting zones. The bill requires DNR to create a southern zone, to consist of current zones 1 to 3, and a northern zone, to consist of current zones 4 to 7.

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For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1. Nonstatutory provisions.**

2 (1) WILD TURKEY HUNTING RULES.

3 (a) *Open seasons.* The department of natural resources shall modify
4 department administrative rules relating to the open season for hunting wild
5 turkeys to combine the six hunting periods currently authorized into two periods.
6 The first period shall be for two consecutive weeks and shall be open for hunting wild
7 turkeys only by individuals issued wild turkey hunting licenses and authorizations
8 under the cumulative preference system under s. 29.164 (3). The second period shall
9 immediately follow the first period and shall be for four consecutive weeks. For the
10 second period, the department of natural resources shall issue wild turkey hunting
11 licenses and authorizations to applicants in the order in which applications are
12 received and regardless of any points accumulated under the cumulative preference
13 system under s. 29.164 (3).

14 (b) *Hunting zones.* The department of natural resources shall modify
15 department administrative rules relating to wild turkey hunting zones to create a
16 southern zone, to consist of current zones 1 to 3, and a northern zone, to consist of
17 current zones 4 to 7.

18 (c) *Youth turkey hunt.* The department of natural resources shall modify
19 department administrative rules relating to the youth turkey hunt to provide that
20 a youth who does not successfully harvest a turkey during the youth hunt may use

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1 his or her harvest authorization in the same hunting zone during both hunting
2 periods that follow the youth hunt.

3 (d) *Deadline.* The department shall complete the promulgation of rules as
4 required under this subsection so that the rules will first apply to the 2023 spring
5 wild turkey hunting season.

6 (END)