

Sec. 26-86a-11. Deer management for Bluff Point

(a) **Hunting at Bluff Point.** No person shall hunt at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve except for deer pursuant to an authorization lawfully obtained from the Commissioner under this section of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. All deer hunting at Bluff Point shall be conducted in accordance with subsections (d), (e), (f), (h), (I), (l) and (m) of section 26-66-1, section 26-86a- 3 and this section of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(b) **Seasons for deer hunting, hours and deer hunting closure procedures.**

(1) Through the issuance of press releases or using similar means, the Commissioner may declare a deer hunting season when the deer population as estimated by the Commissioner in November preceding the calendar year in which a hunt will occur exceeds by at least ten deer the population goal established under subsection (c) of this section. The Commissioner shall estimate the deer population on the basis of aerial survey data, night spotlight data, and any other scientifically recognized deer population survey methods that the Commissioner deems appropriate.

(2) If the Commissioner declares a deer hunting season, it may run for up to, but no more than, 20 days beginning no earlier than the first Monday in January and ending no later than the last day of March. During any such season, no person shall hunt on Sunday if such hunting is prohibited by law.

(3) The Commissioner shall close a deer hunting season when 90 percent of the harvest quota has been tagged at the check station. If 90 percent of the harvest quota is reached prior to 12:00 noon, the season shall close at sunset of that day. If 90 percent of the quota is reached after 12:00 noon, the season shall close at 12:00 noon on the following day. Upon conclusion of the deer hunting season, all permits issued for that season by the Commissioner for deer hunting at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve shall be null and void.

(4) The hours for hunting deer during a deer hunting season shall be from one half hour before sunrise until sunset.

(5) During a deer hunting season no person shall enter Bluff Point State Park or Bluff Point Coastal Reserve except for persons with lawful authorization from the Commissioner issued in connection with the taking of deer or state personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

(c) **Population goals and hunting quotas.**

(1) Each year the Commissioner shall establish a deer population goal. The Commissioner shall establish such goal considering (A) any biological data collected from deer harvested at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve in previous years, (B) any data collected during field research at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve, and (C) any other relevant data or information, including, without limitation, vegetation conditions and deer health. The Commissioner's policy in establishing a deer population goal is to maintain the deer herd at a level consistent with sound principles of wildlife management, which include the health of the deer and of the Bluff Point Coastal Reserve ecosystem. For the first year following the effective date of this section, the Commissioner shall establish a deer population goal of 25. Thereafter, the Commissioner shall establish the deer population goal in accordance with the policy and procedures described in this subsection.

(2) Each year in which the Commissioner declares a deer hunting season, he shall establish a deer harvest quota. The deer harvest quota shall be the number of deer which is

equal to the Commissioner's deer population estimate minus the deer population goal.

(3) In any year in which there has been a deer hunting season but the deer harvest quota has not been achieved, the Commissioner may take as many deer as necessary to achieve such quota. In any year in which there has not been a hunting season but the deer population exceeds the deer population goal, the Commissioner may take as many deer as necessary to achieve such goal. The Commissioner may take deer pursuant to this subsection and he may close Bluff Point State Park and Bluff Point Coastal Reserve for such purpose or he may take deer during hours when Bluff Point State Park and Bluff Point Coastal reserve are not open to the public. The Commissioner may use any legal method for any such taking.

(d) **Restrictions on hunters.** The Commissioner may limit the number of persons allowed on any day to hunt deer, and at no time shall that number exceed 30. Only graduates of Connecticut's Conservation Education/Firearms Safety program or an equivalent training program from another state or governmental entity and who possess a current valid Connecticut hunting license shall be eligible to receive a permit from the Commissioner to hunt deer at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve.

(e) **Check station and reporting.**

(1) Any person engaged in deer hunting shall, prior to beginning hunting on any day, check in at the Department of Environmental Protection Bluff Point Coastal Reserve deer check station and, after completing hunting on such day, check out at such station.

(2) Any person who takes a deer shall register such deer, and have a metal possession seal affixed thereto, at the official Bluff Point Coastal Reserve deer check station. Such deer shall be registered on the same date taken. No person shall register, or allow to be registered in his name, any deer which such person did not lawfully take. Employees of the Department of Environmental Protection may collect biological data, including removing teeth, jaws, or organs, from any deer registered at the Department of Environmental Protection deer check station for scientific or management purposes. No person shall hinder or interfere with the collection of such biological data.

(f) **Firearms and ammunition.** No person shall hunt deer except with a 12, 16, or 20 gauge smooth or rifled bore shotgun using ammunition loaded with a single soft alloy projectile. Any shotgun used to hunt deer shall be capable of carrying no more than three shells and shall be plugged with a one piece filler that cannot be removed unless the gun is disassembled.

(g) **Clothing color requirements.** No person shall hunt, pursue, wound or kill any deer during a deer hunting season at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve unless such person is wearing at least 400 square inches of fluorescent orange clothing visible from all sides.

(h) **Permits and tags.**

(1) No person shall apply for or be issued more than one permit to hunt deer at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve in a calendar year. The Commissioner shall issue permits for deer hunting at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve on the basis of a random selection of completed applications by applicants who possess a current valid Connecticut hunting license and who have completed Connecticut's Conservation Education/Firearms Safety Course or an equivalent training program from another state or governmental entity. Prior to selecting applicants, the Commissioner shall determine the number of permits to be issued. For the

first deer hunting season following the effective date of this section, if the deer harvest quota is 49 or less deer, up to 200 permits will be issued, and if the deer harvest quota is 50 or more deer, up to 360 permits will be issued; thereafter, the Commissioner may make reasonable adjustments to the number of permits to be issued based upon experience from prior hunts, the factors set forth in subsection 26-86a-11(c)(1) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies or any other factor aimed at promoting, or consistent with, sound principles of wildlife management.

(2) Any permit issued pursuant to this section shall contain conditions reasonably deemed necessary by the Commissioner relating to the hunt. These conditions may include the number of days a person can hunt, the number of deer a person may take, the locations or areas within which a person can hunt, the allowable or non-allowable hunting methods or any condition related to the safety of the hunt.

(3) Each person who takes a deer shall, immediately upon taking such deer, detach a deer tag from his permit, punch out and remove the proper areas on the tag indicating the month and day the deer was killed, and immediately attach the tag to the carcass.

(4) No person shall (A) change or alter a permit issued by the Commissioner to hunt deer or a deer tag, (B) loan a permit or tag issued to himself to another person or allow another person to have or use such permit or tag, or (C) use any permit or tag issued to another.

(5) The Commissioner shall not issue to any person more than one deer hunting permit during any calendar year, except that the Commissioner may issue a replacement deer hunting permit to a permittee if such permittee makes a complete application therefore, pays the application fee established under section 26-86a of the general statutes, and demonstrates that the original permit has been lost, destroyed or mutilated beyond recognition.

(6) False or misleading information contained in an application for a deer hunting permit or replacement deer hunting permit shall be cause for the Commissioner to deny such application or revoke a permit issued pursuant to such permit.

(i) **Definitions.** For the purposes of subsection 26-86a-11(a)-(h) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies:

“Check station” means the Department of Environmental Protection’s deer check station at Bluff Point Coastal Reserve.

“Commissioner” is defined as in section 22a-2 of the general statutes.

“Person” is defined as in section 22a-2 of the general statutes.

“Taking” is defined as in section 26-1 of the general statutes.

(Effective October 4, 1995; Amended February 14, 2013)