

Gov. Walker: Signs four sportsman bills into law

Posted on Monday, Nov 13, 2017

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT: Tom Evenson, (608) 266-2839

MADISON – Governor Scott Walker signed four bills relating to hunting into law today at the Executive Residence.

Assembly Bill 528 – This bill restores a prohibition (from 2015 Act 100) revoked by 2017 Act 59, which eliminated deer carcass tags from being required under law and thereby re-legalized the harvest of antlerless deer by adults using a youth antlerless deer hunting license under group hunting circumstances. This bill re-establishes the 2015 Act 100 prohibition for adults from harvesting antlerless deer using a youth antlerless carcass tag under group hunting allowances. Authored by Senator Terry Moulton (R—Chippewa Falls) and Representative Kathy Bernier (R—Oconomowoc), the bill passed the Senate on a voice vote and was concurred by the Assembly on a voice vote. This is 2017 Act 61.

Assembly Bill 455 – This bill eliminates the requirement that a person be at least ten years of age to hunt under the hunting mentorship program, leaving it up to parents to decide. The bill also eliminates the current limit of one (1) hunting device that a mentor and a mentee may have while hunting. They both may now carry hunting devices. Finally, the bill prohibits a person who is serving as a mentor in a group hunting party from killing a deer for the mentee or using a deer carcass tag issued to the mentee, in line with other statutes with youth hunting. Authored by Senator Terry Moulton (R—Chippewa Falls) and Representative Rob Stafsholt (R—New Richmond), the bill passed the Senate by a vote of 21-12 and was concurred by the Assembly by a vote of 57-32. This is 2017 Act 62.

Senate Bill 225 – This bill extends the fall turkey, gray (Hungarian) partridge, and

pheasant hunting and trapping seasons. These seasons currently close on December 31. The bill sets them as open through the Sunday nearest January 6 (including the New Year's holiday weekend) and would statutorily prohibit variation. The bill changes the archer deer season. The season currently closes Sunday nearest January 6 (including the New Year's holiday weekend) except for six metro areas (Green Bay, Hudson, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, and Superior). The metro areas are currently open through January 31. The bill sets the archer deer season as open through the Sunday nearest January 6 for metro areas in addition to all other areas and would statutorily prohibit variation.

The bill, as amended, becomes effective February 1, 2018, or the day after publication of the bill, whichever is later. It provides that if DNR determines, based on harvest registration data for an animal in a specific area of the state, that it is likely that more than the quota set for that animal for the open season will be taken in that area, DNR may close the season for that animal in that area, notwithstanding the uniform season end date created in the bill. The bill also authorizes DNR to change the end date for an open season for any of the animals listed in the bill in specific areas of the state if DNR determines it is necessary to promote the growth or control the population of that animal in that area, notwithstanding the uniform season end date created in the bill. Finally, the bill authorizes metro bow/crossbow hunting from the Monday closest to January 6th through January 31st, as was strongly supported by the most recent Wisconsin Conservation Congress.

Authored by Senator Terry Moulton (R—Chippewa Falls) and Representative Nick Milroy (D—Superior), the bill passed the Senate on a voice vote and was concurred by the Assembly on a voice vote. This is 2017 Act 63.

Assembly Bill 323 - This bill defines woodchucks as "game animals" and "fur-bearing animals." As a result, a person may hunt woodchucks under the authority of a small game hunting license and trap woodchucks under a trapping license. Also under this bill as amended, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to establish a year-round open season for woodchucks. DNR may not impose a bag or possession limit for this season. This bill also, as amended, adds woodchucks to the list of species (beaver, rabbit, raccoons, and squirrels) that a landowner or occupant, and any member of his or her family, or an individual who has the landowner's or occupant's consent may take at any time by means of live trapping with box traps in areas where the discharge of a firearm is illegal. Authored by Senator Tom Tiffany (R—Hazelhurst) and Representative Andre Jacque (R—De Pere), the bill passed the Senate on a voice vote and was concurred by the Assembly on a

voice vote. This is 2017 Act 64.