

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 979

FINAL READING

Introduced by Brandt, 32; DeKay, 40.

Read first time January 12, 2026

Committee: Natural Resources

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Game and Parks Commission; to amend
2 sections 37-327.01, 37-406, 37-431, 37-484, and 37-1241.02, Reissue
3 Revised Statutes of Nebraska, sections 37-201, 37-247.01, 37-324,
4 37-415, 37-447, 37-449, 37-450, 37-456, 37-456.01, 37-457, and
5 37-4,111, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2024, and sections
6 37-327.04, 37-451, 37-455, and 37-1214, Revised Statutes Supplement,
7 2025; to redefine a term; to change provisions relating to funds,
8 fees, permits, and floatation devices; to provide for mountain lion
9 permits; to provide for fees for educational programs; to provide a
10 penalty; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original
11 sections.
12 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 **Section 1.** Section 37-201, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2 2024, is amended to read:

3 37-201 Sections 37-201 to 37-814 and 37-1501 to 37-1510 and sections
4 6 and 20 of this act and the State Park System Construction Alternatives
5 Act shall be known and may be cited as the Game Law.

6 **Sec. 2.** Section 37-247.01, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
7 2024, is amended to read:

8 37-247.01 Wildlife abatement means ~~the use of a trained raptor~~ to
9 frighten, flush, haze, take, or kill certain wildlife to manage
10 depredation, damage, or other threats to human health and safety or
11 commerce caused by such wildlife.

12 **Sec. 3.** Section 37-324, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
13 2024, is amended to read:

14 37-324 (1) The funds derived from the sale of permits and
15 publications as provided in the Game Law, any unexpended balance now on
16 hand from the sale of hunting, fur-harvesting, and fishing permits, and
17 all money required by the Game Law to be paid into the State Game Fund
18 are hereby appropriated to the use of the commission (a) for the
19 propagation, importation, protection, preservation, and distribution of
20 game and fish and necessary equipment therefor and all things pertaining
21 thereto, (b) for the creation of cash funds under section 37-326, (c) for
22 the administration and enforcement of the State Boat Act, (d) for boating
23 safety educational programs, (e) for the construction and maintenance of
24 boating and docking facilities, navigation aids, and access to boating
25 areas and such other uses which will promote the safety and convenience
26 of the boating public in Nebraska, (f) for abatement ~~payment of claims by~~
27 ~~landowners in Nebraska for property~~ damage caused by deer, antelope, or
28 elk ~~, if such payment is in compliance with federal laws and regulations,~~
29 and (g) for publishing costs for publications relating to topics listed
30 in subdivisions (a) and (b) of this subsection and other topics of
31 general interest to the state as approved by the commission. An amount

1 equal to two dollars from each annual resident fishing permit and two
2 dollars from each combination hunting and fishing permit sold in this
3 state shall be used by the commission for the administration,
4 construction, operation, and maintenance of fish hatcheries and for the
5 distribution of fish.

6 (2) Expenditures for publications on topics of general interest to
7 the state shall not exceed the income derived from single-copy and
8 subscription sales of commission publications and advertising revenue
9 from such publications.

10 **Sec. 4.** Section 37-327.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
11 amended to read:

12 37-327.01 (1) The Game Law Investigation Cash Fund is created. The
13 commission shall use the fund for investigations to enforce the purpose
14 ~~of obtaining evidence for enforcement of~~ the Game Law. The fund shall be
15 funded through revenue collected under the Game Law and budgeted or
16 allocated to the fund by the commission, and through donations from
17 persons, wildlife groups, and other charitable sources. Any money in the
18 fund available for investment shall be invested by the state investment
19 officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska
20 State Funds Investment Act.

21 (2) For the purpose of establishing and maintaining legislative
22 oversight and accountability, the commission shall formulate record-
23 keeping procedures for all expenditures, disbursements, and transfers of
24 cash from the Game Law Investigation Cash Fund. Based on these record-
25 keeping procedures, the commission shall prepare and deliver
26 electronically to the Clerk of the Legislature by September 15 of each
27 year a detailed report of the previous fiscal year which includes, but is
28 not limited to:

29 (a) The June 30 balance in the Game Law Investigation Cash Fund and
30 the amounts delivered to the commission for distribution to agents and
31 informants;

1 (b) ~~The the~~ total amount of expenditures;

2 (c) ~~The the~~ purpose of the expenditures including: (i) Salaries and
3 any expenses of all agents and informants; (ii) front money for wildlife
4 purchases; (iii) type of wildlife and amount purchased; ~~and~~ (iv) amount
5 of front money recovered; (v) investigative vehicles and specialized
6 investigatory equipment; (vi) digital investigative services; and (vii)
7 specialized investigative training;

8 (d) ~~The the~~ total number of informants on payroll; and

9 (e) ~~The the~~ results procured through such transactions. Each member
10 of the Legislature shall receive an electronic copy of such report by
11 making a request for it to the secretary of the commission.

12 (3) The commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations
13 to carry out this section.

14 **Sec. 5.** Section 37-327.04, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2025, is
15 amended to read:

16 37-327.04 The Game and Parks Commission Educational Fund is created.
17 The fund shall consist of money credited pursuant to section 60-3,163.02
18 and section 6 of this act, any gifts, grants, bequests, or other
19 contributions to such fund, and any other money as determined by the
20 Legislature. The commission shall use the fund to provide youth education
21 programs relating to wildlife conservation practices. Any money in the
22 fund available for investment shall be invested by the state investment
23 officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska
24 State Funds Investment Act.

25 **Sec. 6.** The commission may establish and collect reasonable fees
26 for providing programs relating to fish and wildlife education. Fees for
27 providing such programs shall not exceed the costs of staffing and
28 materials for such programs. The proceeds of all such fees shall be
29 remitted to the State Treasurer for credit to the Game and Parks
30 Commission Educational Fund.

31 **Sec. 7.** Section 37-406, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is

1 amended to read:

2 37-406 (1) Licenses, permits, and stamps required under the Game Law
3 shall be issued by the commission and may be procured from the secretary
4 of the commission. The commission may provide for the electronic issuance
5 of any license, permit, or stamp required under the Game Law and may
6 enter into contracts to procure necessary services and supplies for the
7 electronic issuance of licenses, permits, and stamps. Except for permits
8 issued under sections 37-462 and 37-463, the commission may provide for
9 the issuance of any license, permit, or stamp required under the Game Law
10 in the form of a number which identifies the holder in the records of the
11 commission. The commission may designate itself and other persons, firms,
12 and corporations as agents to issue licenses, permits, and stamps and
13 collect the prescribed fees. The commission and any person, firm, or
14 corporation authorized by the commission to issue licenses, permits, and
15 stamps shall be entitled to collect and retain an additional fee of not
16 more than four ~~three~~ dollars, for each license, permit, or stamp issued
17 as reimbursement for the clerical work of issuing the license, permit, or
18 stamp and collecting and remitting the fees.

19 (2) The commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations
20 regarding electronic issuance of licenses, permits, and stamps, including
21 electronic issuance devices, deposits by agents, and remittance of fees.
22 The commission may provide for the electronic issuance of a license,
23 permit, or stamp by acknowledging the purchase of such license, permit,
24 or stamp without requiring a physical license, permit, or stamp or
25 facsimile of such.

26 (3) It shall be unlawful for any person to duplicate any
27 electronically issued license, permit, or stamp. Any person violating
28 this subsection shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor and shall be
29 fined at least seventy-five dollars, and any license, permit, or stamp
30 involved in such violation shall be confiscated by the court.

31 **Sec. 8.** Section 37-415, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,

1 2024, is amended to read:

2 37-415 (1) The commission may issue to any Nebraska resident a
3 lifetime fur-harvesting, fishing, hunting, or combination hunting and
4 fishing permit upon application and payment of the appropriate fee. The
5 fee for a resident lifetime fur-harvesting or hunting permit shall not
6 exceed twenty times the annual fee for such permit, as such fees are
7 established by the commission pursuant to section 37-327. The fee for a
8 resident lifetime fishing or combination hunting and fishing permit shall
9 not exceed twenty times the annual fee for such permit ~~permit shall be~~
10 ~~not more than two hundred ninety-nine dollars, the fee for a resident~~
11 ~~lifetime hunting permit shall be not more than three hundred ninety-six~~
12 ~~dollars, the fee for a resident lifetime fishing permit shall be not more~~
13 ~~than four hundred fifty-seven dollars plus the cost of a lifetime aquatic~~
14 ~~habitat stamp, and the fee for a resident lifetime combination hunting~~
15 ~~and fishing permit shall be not more than seven hundred ninety-two~~
16 ~~dollars plus the cost of a lifetime aquatic habitat stamp, as such fees~~
17 ~~are established by the commission pursuant to section 37-327. Payment of~~
18 ~~the fee shall be made in a lump sum at the time of application.~~

19 (2) A resident lifetime permit shall not be made invalid by reason
20 of the holder subsequently residing outside the state.

21 (3) The commission may issue to any nonresident a lifetime fishing,
22 hunting, or combination hunting and fishing permit upon application and
23 payment of the appropriate fee. The fee for a nonresident lifetime
24 hunting permit shall not exceed twenty times the annual fee for such
25 permit, as such fees are established by the commission pursuant to
26 section 37-327. The fee for a nonresident lifetime fishing or combination
27 hunting and fishing permit shall not exceed twenty times the annual fee
28 for such permit ~~be not more than one thousand five hundred sixty-two~~
29 ~~dollars, the fee for a nonresident lifetime fishing permit shall be not~~
30 ~~more than one thousand one hundred twenty-five dollars plus the cost of a~~
31 ~~lifetime aquatic habitat stamp, and the fee for a nonresident lifetime~~

1 ~~combination hunting and fishing permit shall be not more than two~~
2 ~~thousand three hundred forty two dollars~~ plus the cost of a lifetime
3 aquatic habitat stamp, as such fees are established by the commission
4 pursuant to section 37-327. Payment of the fee shall be made in a lump
5 sum at the time of application.

6 (4) A replacement resident or nonresident lifetime permit may be
7 issued if the original has been lost or destroyed for no additional fee.
8 This subsection applies only to a paper permit and not a commemorative
9 brass plate permit.

10 (5) The commission may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to
11 carry out this section and sections 37-416 and 37-417. Such rules and
12 regulations may include, but need not be limited to, establishing fees
13 which vary based on the age of the applicant.

14 **Sec. 9.** Section 37-431, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
15 amended to read:

16 37-431 (1)(a) The Nebraska Habitat Fund is created. The commission
17 shall remit fees received for annual and multiple-year habitat stamps and
18 annual and multiple-year Nebraska migratory waterfowl stamps to the State
19 Treasurer for credit to the Nebraska Habitat Fund. Any money in the fund
20 available for investment shall be invested by the state investment
21 officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska
22 State Funds Investment Act. Fees received and income from such
23 investments may be expended by the commission pursuant to section 37-432.
24 ~~Up to twenty-five percent of the annual receipts of the fund may be spent~~
25 ~~by the commission to provide access to private wildlife lands and habitat~~
26 ~~areas, and the remainder of the fund shall not be spent until the~~
27 ~~commission has presented a habitat plan to the Committee on~~
28 ~~Appropriations of the Legislature for its approval.~~

29 (b) Fees received for lifetime habitat stamps and lifetime Nebraska
30 migratory waterfowl stamps under the Game Law shall be credited to the
31 Nebraska Habitat Fund. Twenty-five percent of the fees for such stamps

1 shall not be expended but may be invested by the state investment officer
2 pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State
3 Funds Investment Act. Income from such investments may be expended by the
4 commission pursuant to section 37-432.

5 (2)(a) The Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Fund is created. The commission
6 shall remit fees received for annual and multiple-year aquatic habitat
7 stamps and one dollar of the one-day fishing permit fee as provided in
8 section 37-426 to the State Treasurer for credit to the Nebraska Aquatic
9 Habitat Fund. Any money in the fund available for investment shall be
10 invested by the state investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital
11 Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act. Fees received
12 and income from such investments may be expended by the commission
13 pursuant to section 37-432. Up to thirty percent of the annual receipts
14 of the fund may be spent by the commission to provide public waters
15 angler access enhancements and to provide funding for the administration
16 of programs related to aquatic habitat and public waters angler access
17 enhancements, and the remainder of the fund shall not be spent until the
18 commission has presented a habitat plan to the Committee on
19 Appropriations and the Committee on Natural Resources of the Legislature
20 for their approval.

21 (b) Fees received for lifetime aquatic habitat stamps shall be
22 credited to the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Fund. Twenty-five percent of the
23 fees for such stamps and shall not be expended but may be invested by the
24 state investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act
25 and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act. Income from such investments
26 may be expended by the commission pursuant to section 37-432.

27 (3) The secretary of the commission and any county clerk or public
28 official designated to sell habitat stamps, aquatic habitat stamps, or
29 Nebraska migratory waterfowl stamps shall be liable upon their official
30 bonds or equivalent commercial insurance policy for failure to remit the
31 money from the sale of the stamps, as required by sections 37-426 to

1 37-433, coming into their hands. Any agent who receives stamp fees and
2 who fails to remit the fees to the commission within a reasonable time
3 after demand by the commission shall be liable to the commission in
4 damages for double the amount of the funds wrongfully withheld. Any agent
5 who purposefully fails to remit such fees with the intention of
6 converting them is guilty of theft. The penalty for such violation shall
7 be determined by the amount converted as specified in section 28-518.

8 **Sec. 10.** Section 37-447, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
9 2024, is amended to read:

10 37-447 (1) The commission may issue permits for the hunting of deer
11 and adopt and promulgate rules and regulations and pass commission orders
12 pursuant to section 37-314 to prescribe limitations for the hunting,
13 transportation, and possession of deer. The commission may offer permits
14 or combinations of permits at temporarily reduced rates for specific
15 events or during specified timeframes. The commission may specify by rule
16 and regulation the information to be required on applications for such
17 permits. Rules and regulations for the hunting, transportation, and
18 possession of deer may include, but not be limited to, rules and
19 regulations as to the type, caliber, and other specifications of firearms
20 and ammunition used and specifications for bows and arrows used. Such
21 rules and regulations may further specify and limit the method of hunting
22 deer and may provide for dividing the state into management units or
23 areas, and the commission may enact different deer hunting regulations
24 for the different management units pertaining to sex, species, and age of
25 the deer hunted.

26 (2) The number of such permits may be limited as provided by the
27 rules and regulations of the commission, and except as provided in
28 section 37-454, the permits shall be allocated in an impartial manner.
29 Whenever the commission deems it advisable to limit the number of permits
30 issued for any or all management units, the commission shall, by rules
31 and regulations, determine eligibility to obtain such permits. In

1 establishing eligibility, the commission may give preference to persons
2 who did not receive a permit or a specified type of permit during the
3 previous year or years.

4 (3) Such permits may be issued to allow deer hunting in the Nebraska
5 National Forest and other game reserves and such other areas as the
6 commission may designate whenever the commission deems that permitting
7 such hunting will not be detrimental to the proper preservation of
8 wildlife in Nebraska in such forest, reserves, or areas.

9 (4)(a) The commission may, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
10 charge a nonrefundable application fee of not more than nine ~~seven~~
11 dollars for deer permits in those management units awarded on the basis
12 of a random drawing. The commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327,
13 establish and charge a fee of not more than fifty ~~thirty-nine~~ dollars for
14 residents and not more than four hundred eighty ~~three hundred sixty-nine~~
15 dollars for nonresidents for each permit issued under this section except
16 as otherwise provided in subdivision (b) of this subsection and
17 subsection (6) of this section. The commission may, pursuant to section
18 37-327, establish and charge a fee of not more than twenty-four dollars
19 for residents and not more than seventy-two dollars for nonresidents for
20 the issuance of a preference point, in addition to any application fee.
21 The commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for
22 issuing a preference point , ~~in lieu of entering the draw for a deer~~
23 ~~permit during the application period for the random drawing.~~

24 (b) The fee for a statewide buck-only permit limited to white-tailed
25 deer shall be no more than two and one-half times the amount of a regular
26 deer permit. The fee for a statewide buck-only deer permit that allows
27 harvest of mule deer shall be no more than five times the amount of a
28 regular deer permit.

29 (5)(a) The commission may issue nonresident permits after preference
30 has been given for the issuance of resident permits as provided in rules
31 and regulations adopted and promulgated by the commission.

1 (b) In management units specified by the commission, the commission
2 may issue nonresident permits after resident preference has been provided
3 by allocating at least eighty-five percent of the available permits to
4 residents. The commission may require a predetermined application period
5 for permit applications in specified management units. Such permits shall
6 be issued after a reasonable period for making application, as
7 established by the commission, has expired. When more valid applications
8 are received for a designated management unit than there are permits
9 available, such permits shall be allocated on the basis of a random
10 drawing. All valid applications received during the predetermined
11 application period shall be considered equally in any such random drawing
12 without regard to time of receipt of such applications by the commission.

13 (6) The commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
14 charge a fee of not more than twenty-five dollars for residents and not
15 more than forty-five dollars for nonresidents for a youth deer permit.

16 (7) Any person violating the rules and regulations adopted and
17 promulgated or commission orders passed pursuant to this section shall be
18 guilty of a Class II misdemeanor and shall be fined at least one hundred
19 dollars upon conviction.

20 **Sec. 11.** Section 37-449, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
21 2024, is amended to read:

22 37-449 (1) The commission may issue permits for hunting antelope and
23 may adopt and promulgate separate and, when necessary, different rules
24 and regulations therefor within the limitations prescribed in sections
25 37-447 and 37-452 for hunting deer. The commission may offer permits or
26 combinations of permits at reduced rates for specific events or during
27 specified timeframes.

28 (2) The commission may, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
29 charge a nonrefundable application fee of not more than nine ~~seven~~
30 dollars for antelope permits in those management units awarded on the
31 basis of a random drawing. The commission shall, pursuant to section

1 37-327, establish and charge a fee of not more than fifty thirty-nine
2 dollars for residents and not less than three hundred sixty-nine dollars
3 and not more than four hundred eighty ~~not more than two hundred fifty-~~
4 ~~seven~~ dollars for nonresidents for each permit issued under this section
5 except as provided in subsection (4) of this section. The commission may,
6 pursuant to section 37-327, establish and charge a fee of not more than
7 twenty-four dollars for residents and not more than seventy-two dollars
8 for nonresidents for the issuance of a preference point, in addition to
9 any application fee. The commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and
10 regulations for issuing a preference point , ~~in lieu of entering the draw~~
11 ~~for an antelope permit during the application period for the random~~
12 ~~drawing.~~

13 (3) The provisions for the distribution of deer permits and the
14 authority of the commission to determine eligibility of applicants for
15 permits as described in sections 37-447 and 37-452 shall also apply to
16 the distribution of antelope permits.

17 (4) The commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
18 charge a fee of not more than twenty-five dollars for residents and not
19 more than forty-five dollars for nonresidents for a youth antelope
20 permit.

21 (5) Any person violating the rules and regulations adopted and
22 promulgated pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class II
23 misdemeanor and shall be fined at least one hundred dollars upon
24 conviction.

25 **Sec. 12.** Section 37-450, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
26 2024, is amended to read:

27 37-450 (1) The commission may issue permits for hunting elk and may
28 adopt and promulgate separate and, when necessary, different rules and
29 regulations therefor within the limitations prescribed in sections 37-447
30 and 37-452 for hunting deer.

31 (2) The commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and

1 charge (a) a nonrefundable application fee of not more than twelve
2 dollars for a resident elk permit and not to exceed three times such
3 amount for a nonresident elk permit and (b) a fee of not more than one
4 hundred ninety-eight dollars for each resident elk permit issued and
5 three times such amount for each nonresident elk permit issued. The
6 commission may, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and charge a fee of
7 not more than twenty-four dollars for residents and not more than
8 seventy-two dollars for nonresidents for the issuance of a preference
9 point or a bonus point, in addition to any application fee. The
10 commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for issuing a
11 preference point or bonus point , ~~in lieu of entering the draw for an elk~~
12 ~~permit during the application period for the random drawing.~~

13 (3) An applicant shall not be issued a resident elk permit that
14 allows the harvest of an antlered elk more than once every five years. A
15 person may only harvest one antlered elk in his or her lifetime except
16 when harvesting an antlered elk with a limited permit to hunt elk
17 pursuant to subdivision (1)(b) of section 37-455 or an auction or lottery
18 permit pursuant to section 37-455.01.

19 (4) The provisions for the distribution of deer permits and the
20 authority of the commission to determine eligibility of applicants for
21 permits as described in sections 37-447 and 37-452 shall also apply to
22 the distribution of elk permits.

23 (5) Any person violating the rules and regulations adopted and
24 promulgated pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class III
25 misdemeanor and shall be fined at least two hundred dollars upon
26 conviction.

27 **Sec. 13.** Section 37-451, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2025, is
28 amended to read:

29 37-451 (1) The commission may issue permits for hunting mountain
30 sheep and may adopt and promulgate separate and, when necessary,
31 different rules and regulations therefor within the limitations

1 prescribed in subsection (1) of section 37-447 and section 37-452 for
2 hunting deer. Such rules and regulations shall include provisions
3 allowing persons who find dead mountain sheep, or any part of a mountain
4 sheep, to turn over to the commission such mountain sheep or part of a
5 mountain sheep. The commission may dispose of such mountain sheep or part
6 of a mountain sheep as it deems reasonable and prudent. Except as
7 otherwise provided in this section, the permits shall be issued to
8 residents of Nebraska.

9 (2) The commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
10 charge a nonrefundable application fee of not more than forty-four
11 ~~thirty-four~~ dollars for permits issued only to residents. Any number of
12 resident-only permits, as authorized by the commission, shall be awarded
13 by random drawing to eligible applicants. No permit fee shall be charged
14 in addition to the nonrefundable application fee.

15 (3) No more than two additional permits may be authorized and issued
16 pursuant to an auction open to residents and nonresidents. The number of
17 such permits shall not exceed the number of those awarded pursuant to
18 subsection (2) of this section. The auction shall be conducted according
19 to rules and regulations prescribed by the commission. Any money derived
20 from the sale of permits by auction shall be used only for perpetuation
21 and management of mountain sheep, elk, and deer.

22 (4) If the commission determines to limit the number of permits
23 issued for any or all management units, the commission shall by rule and
24 regulation determine eligibility requirements for the permits.

25 (5) A person may obtain only one mountain sheep permit in his or her
26 lifetime, except that an auction permit issued in accordance with
27 subsection (3) of this section to harvest a mountain sheep shall not
28 count against such total.

29 (6) Any person violating the rules and regulations adopted and
30 promulgated pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class III
31 misdemeanor and shall be fined at least five hundred dollars upon

1 conviction.

2 **Sec. 14.** Section 37-455, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2025, is
3 amended to read:

4 37-455 (1) The commission may issue a limited permit for deer,
5 antelope, wild turkey, ~~or~~ elk, or mountain lion to a person who is a
6 qualifying landowner or leaseholder or a member of such person's
7 immediate family as described in this section. The commission may issue
8 nonresident landowner limited permits after preference has been given for
9 the issuance of resident permits as provided in rules and regulations
10 adopted and promulgated by the commission. Except as provided in
11 subsection (4) of this section, a permit shall be valid during the
12 predetermined period established by the commission pursuant to sections
13 37-447 to 37-450, 37-452, 37-456, or 37-457. Upon receipt of an
14 application in proper form as prescribed by the rules and regulations of
15 the commission, the commission may issue (a) a limited deer, antelope, or
16 wild turkey permit valid for hunting on all of the land which is owned or
17 leased by the qualifying landowner or leaseholder if such lands are
18 identified in the application or (b) a limited elk or mountain lion
19 permit valid for hunting on the entire elk or mountain lion management
20 unit of which the land of the qualifying landowner or leaseholder
21 included in the application is a part.

22 (2)(a) The commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and
23 regulations prescribing procedures and forms and create requirements for
24 documentation by an applicant or permittee to determine whether the
25 applicant or permittee is a Nebraska resident and is a qualifying
26 landowner or leaseholder of the described property or is a member of the
27 immediate family of such qualifying landowner or leaseholder. The
28 commission may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations that create
29 requirements for documentation to designate one qualifying landowner
30 among partners of a partnership or officers or shareholders of a
31 corporation that owns or leases eighty acres or more of farm or ranch

1 land for agricultural purposes and among beneficiaries of a trust that
2 owns or leases eighty acres or more of farm or ranch land for
3 agricultural purposes. Only a person who is a qualifying landowner or
4 leaseholder or a member of such person's immediate family may apply for a
5 limited permit. An applicant may apply for no more than one permit per
6 species per year except as otherwise provided in subsection (4) of this
7 section and the rules and regulations of the commission. For purposes of
8 this section, member of a person's immediate family means and is limited
9 to the spouse of such person, any child or stepchild of such person or of
10 the spouse of such person, any spouse of any such child or stepchild, any
11 grandchild or stepgrandchild of such person or of the spouse of such
12 person, any spouse of such grandchild or stepgrandchild, any sibling of
13 such person sharing ownership in the property, and any spouse of any such
14 sibling.

15 (b) The conditions applicable to permits issued pursuant to sections
16 37-447 to 37-450, 37-452, 37-456, or 37-457, whichever is appropriate,
17 shall apply to limited permits issued pursuant to this section, except
18 that the commission may pass commission orders for species harvest
19 allocation pertaining to the sex and age of the species harvested which
20 are different for a limited permit than for other hunting permits. For
21 purposes of this section, white-tailed deer and mule deer shall be
22 treated as one species.

23 (3)(a) To qualify for a limited permit to hunt deer or antelope, the
24 applicant shall be a Nebraska resident who (i) owns or leases eighty
25 acres or more of farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes or a member
26 of such person's immediate family or (ii) is the partner, officer,
27 shareholder, or beneficiary designated as the qualifying landowner by a
28 partnership, corporation, or trust as provided in the rules and
29 regulations under subdivision (2)(a) of this section or a member of the
30 immediate family of the partner, officer, shareholder, or beneficiary.
31 The number of limited permits issued annually per species for each farm

1 or ranch shall not exceed the total acreage of the farm or ranch divided
2 by eighty. The fee for a limited permit to hunt deer or antelope shall be
3 one-half the fee for the regular permit for such species.

4 (b) A nonresident of Nebraska who owns three hundred twenty acres or
5 more of farm or ranch land in the State of Nebraska for agricultural
6 purposes or a member of such person's immediate family may apply for a
7 limited deer or antelope permit. The number of limited permits issued
8 annually per species for each farm or ranch shall not exceed the total
9 acreage of the farm or ranch divided by three hundred twenty. The fee for
10 such a permit to hunt deer or antelope shall be one-half the fee for a
11 nonresident permit to hunt such species.

12 (c) The commission may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations
13 providing for the issuance of an additional limited deer permit to a
14 qualified individual for the taking of a deer without antlers at a fee
15 equal to or less than the fee for the original limited permit.

16 (4)(a) In addition to any limited permit to hunt deer issued to a
17 qualifying landowner under subsection (3) of this section, the commission
18 shall issue up to eight limited permits to hunt deer during the three
19 days of Saturday through Monday immediately preceding the opening day of
20 firearm deer hunting season to any qualifying landowner meeting the
21 requirements of subdivision (b) of this subsection and designated members
22 of his or her immediate family. The fee for each permit issued under this
23 subsection shall be five dollars. Permits shall be issued subject to the
24 following:

25 (i) No more than eight permits may be issued per qualifying
26 landowner to the landowner or designated members of his or her immediate
27 family, except that no more than one permit shall be issued per person
28 for the qualifying landowner or any designated member of his or her
29 immediate family;

30 (ii) Of the eight permits that may be issued, no more than six
31 permits may be issued to persons who are younger than nineteen years of

1 age and no more than two permits may be issued to persons who are
2 nineteen years of age or older; and

3 (iii) For a Nebraska resident landowner, the number of permits
4 issued shall not exceed the total acreage of the farm or ranch divided by
5 eighty, and for a nonresident landowner, the number of permits issued
6 shall not exceed the total acreage of the farm or ranch divided by three
7 hundred twenty.

8 (b) For purposes of this subsection, the qualifying criteria for a
9 Nebraska resident described in subdivisions (3)(a)(i) and (ii) of this
10 section and the ownership criteria for a nonresident of Nebraska
11 described in subdivision (3)(b) of this section apply.

12 (c) The commission may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to
13 carry out this subsection.

14 (5)(a) To qualify for a limited permit to hunt wild turkey, the
15 applicant shall be a Nebraska resident who (i) owns or leases eighty
16 acres or more of farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes or a member
17 of such person's immediate family or (ii) is the partner, officer,
18 shareholder, or beneficiary designated as the qualifying landowner by a
19 partnership, corporation, or trust as provided in the rules and
20 regulations under subdivision (2)(a) of this section or a member of the
21 immediate family of the partner, officer, shareholder, or beneficiary.
22 The number of limited permits issued annually per season for each farm or
23 ranch shall not exceed the total acreage of the farm or ranch divided by
24 eighty. An applicant may apply for no more than one limited permit per
25 season. The fee for a limited permit to hunt wild turkey shall be one-
26 half the fee for the regular permit to hunt wild turkey.

27 (b) A nonresident of Nebraska who owns three hundred twenty acres or
28 more of farm or ranch land in the State of Nebraska for agricultural
29 purposes or a member of such person's immediate family may apply for a
30 limited permit to hunt wild turkey. Only one limited wild turkey permit
31 per three hundred twenty acres may be issued annually for each wild

1 turkey season under this subdivision. The fee for such a permit to hunt
2 shall be one-half the fee for a nonresident permit to hunt wild turkey.

3 (6)(a) To qualify for a limited permit to hunt elk, (i) the
4 applicant shall be (A) a Nebraska resident who owns three hundred twenty
5 acres or more of farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes, or is the
6 partner, officer, shareholder, or beneficiary designated as the
7 qualifying landowner by a partnership, corporation, or trust as provided
8 in the rules and regulations under subdivision (2)(a) of this section,
9 (B) a Nebraska resident who leases six hundred forty acres or more of
10 farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes or has a combined total of
11 six hundred forty leased and owned acres of farm or ranch land used for
12 agricultural purposes, or is the partner, officer, shareholder, or
13 beneficiary designated as the qualifying landowner by a partnership,
14 corporation, or trust as provided in the rules and regulations under
15 subdivision (2)(a) of this section, (C) a nonresident of Nebraska who
16 owns at least one thousand two hundred eighty acres of farm or ranch land
17 for agricultural purposes, or is the partner, officer, shareholder, or
18 beneficiary designated as the qualifying landowner by a partnership,
19 corporation, or trust as provided in the rules and regulations under
20 subdivision (2)(a) of this section, or (D) a member of such owner's or
21 lessee's immediate family and (ii) the qualifying farm or ranch land of
22 the applicant shall be within an area designated as an elk management
23 zone by the commission in its rules and regulations.

24 (b) An applicant shall not be issued a limited bull elk permit more
25 than once every three years, and the commission may give preference to a
26 person who did not receive a limited elk permit or a specified type of
27 limited elk permit during the previous years.

28 (c) The fee for a resident landowner limited permit to hunt elk
29 shall not exceed one-half the fee for the regular permit to hunt elk. The
30 fee for a nonresident landowner limited permit to hunt elk shall not
31 exceed three times the cost of a resident elk permit.

1 (d) The number of applications allowed for limited elk permits for
2 each farm or ranch shall not exceed the total acreage of the farm or
3 ranch divided by the minimum acreage requirements established for the
4 property. No more than one person may qualify for the same described
5 property.

6 (7)(a) To qualify for a limited permit to hunt mountain lions, (i)
7 the applicant shall be (A) a Nebraska resident who owns three hundred
8 twenty acres or more of farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes, or
9 is the partner, officer, shareholder, or beneficiary designated as the
10 qualifying landowner by a partnership, corporation, or trust as provided
11 in the rules and regulations under subdivision (2)(a) of this section,
12 (B) a Nebraska resident who leases six hundred forty acres or more of
13 farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes or has a combined total of
14 six hundred forty leased and owned acres of farm or ranch land used for
15 agricultural purposes, or is the partner, officer, shareholder, or
16 beneficiary designated as the qualifying landowner by a partnership,
17 corporation, or trust as provided in the rules and regulations under
18 subdivision (2)(a) of this section, or (C) a member of such owner's or
19 lessee's immediate family and (ii) the qualifying farm or ranch land of
20 the applicant shall be within an area designated as a mountain lion
21 management zone by the commission in its rules and regulations.

22 (b) The commission may give preference to a person who did not
23 receive a limited mountain lion permit during the previous years.

24 (c) The application fee for a resident landowner limited permit to
25 hunt mountain lions shall not exceed one-half the application fee for the
26 regular permit to hunt mountain lions.

27 (d) The number of applications allowed for limited mountain lion
28 permits for each farm or ranch shall not exceed the total acreage of the
29 farm or ranch divided by the minimum acreage requirements established for
30 the property. No more than one person may qualify for the same described
31 property.

1 **Sec. 15.** Section 37-456, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
2 2024, is amended to read:

3 37-456 The issuance of limited antelope permits pursuant to section
4 37-455 in any management unit shall not exceed seventy-five percent of
5 the regular permits authorized for such antelope management unit. The
6 issuance of limited elk permits pursuant to section 37-455 in any
7 management unit shall not exceed seventy-five percent of the regular
8 permits authorized for such elk management unit. The issuance of limited
9 mountain lion permits pursuant to section 37-455 in any management unit
10 shall not exceed seventy-five percent of the regular permits authorized
11 for such mountain lion management unit.

12 **Sec. 16.** Section 37-456.01, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
13 2024, is amended to read:

14 37-456.01 (1) The commission may issue one free-earned landowner elk
15 permit for the taking of either sex of elk to any person owning or
16 leasing at least eighty acres of farm or ranch land used for agricultural
17 purposes, or to any member of the immediate family of such person as
18 defined in subdivision (2)(a) of section 37-455, when the qualifying
19 number of antlerless elk have been harvested on such land by hunters with
20 a permit issued under section 37-448 or 37-450. Such permit shall be
21 limited to hunting on the lands owned or leased by the qualifying
22 landowner. Receipt of a free-earned landowner elk permit shall not in any
23 way affect a person's eligibility for a permit issued under section
24 37-450 or 37-455.

25 (2) The commission may shall adopt and promulgate rules and
26 regulations prescribing issuance of free-earned landowner elk permits,
27 accumulation of antlerless elk harvests, procedures, forms, and
28 requirements for documentation by landowners or lessees as described in
29 subsection (1) of this section to annually report antlerless elk
30 harvested on their property for eligibility, and the number of antlerless
31 elk required to be harvested on such property to qualify for a free-

1 earned landowner elk permit. ~~The number of antlerless elk harvested to~~
2 ~~qualify shall accumulate each year until such time as a free earned~~
3 ~~landowner elk permit is awarded.~~

4 **Sec. 17.** Section 37-457, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,
5 2024, is amended to read:

6 37-457 (1) The commission may issue permits for hunting wild turkey
7 and prescribe and establish regulations and limitations for the hunting,
8 transportation, and possession of wild turkey. The commission may offer
9 multiple-year permits or combinations of permits at reduced rates. The
10 number of such permits may be limited as provided by the regulations of
11 the commission, but the permits shall be disposed of in an impartial
12 manner. Such permits may be issued to allow wild turkey hunting in the
13 Nebraska National Forest and other game reserves and such other areas as
14 the commission may designate whenever the commission deems that
15 permitting such hunting would not be detrimental to the proper
16 preservation of wildlife in such forest, reserves, or areas.

17 (2) The commission may, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
18 charge a nonrefundable application fee of not more than nine dollars for
19 turkey permits to be awarded on the basis of a random drawing. The
20 commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and charge a fee
21 of not more than ~~forty~~ ~~thirty-one~~ dollars for residents and not more than
22 ~~two~~ ~~one~~ hundred ~~fourteen~~ ~~sixty-four~~ dollars for nonresidents for each
23 permit issued under this section except as provided in subsection (5) of
24 this section. The commission may, pursuant to section 37-327, establish
25 and charge a fee of not more than twenty-four dollars for residents and
26 not more than seventy-two dollars for nonresidents for the issuance of a
27 preference point, in addition to any application fee. The commission
28 shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for the issuance of a
29 preference point.

30 (3) The commission may issue nonresident permits after preference
31 has been given for the issuance of resident permits as provided in rules

1 and regulations adopted and promulgated by the commission. The commission
2 may require a predetermined application period for permit applications in
3 specified management units.

4 (4) The provisions of subsection (5) of section 37-447 for the
5 distribution of deer permits also may apply to the distribution of wild
6 turkey permits. No permit to hunt wild turkey shall be issued without
7 payment of the fee required by this section.

8 (5) The commission shall, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
9 charge a fee of not more than twenty-five dollars for residents and not
10 more than forty-five dollars for nonresidents for a youth wild turkey
11 permit.

12 **Sec. 18.** Section 37-484, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
13 amended to read:

14 37-484 Any person or persons owning, holding, or controlling by
15 lease or otherwise, which possession must be for a term of five or more
16 years, any tract or tracts of land having an area of not less than eighty
17 acres and not more than two thousand five hundred sixty acres who desires
18 to establish a game breeding and controlled shooting area to propagate,
19 preserve, and shoot game birds under the regulations as provided in
20 sections 37-484 to 37-496 shall make application to the commission for a
21 license as provided by such sections. Such application shall be made
22 under oath of the applicant or one of its principal officers if the
23 applicant is an association, club, or corporation and shall be
24 accompanied by a license fee of not more than two hundred fifty-eight ~~one~~
25 ~~hundred ninety-eight~~ dollars, as established by the commission pursuant
26 to section 37-327. Any controlled shooting area existing on February 18,
27 1987, shall continue in operation on the existing acreage until such
28 controlled shooting area license is not renewed or canceled. If the
29 applicant is an individual, the application shall include the applicant's
30 social security number.

31 **Sec. 19.** Section 37-4,111, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,

1 2024, is amended to read:

2 37-4,111 The commission may adopt and promulgate rules and
3 regulations to provide for the issuance of permits for the taking of
4 paddlefish. The commission may, pursuant to section 37-327, establish and
5 charge a fee of not more than thirty-five dollars for residents. The fee
6 for a nonresident permit to take paddlefish shall be two times the
7 resident permit fee. In addition, the commission may, pursuant to section
8 37-327, establish and charge a nonrefundable application fee of not more
9 than nine ~~seven~~ dollars. The commission may, pursuant to section 37-327,
10 establish and charge a fee of not more than twenty-four dollars for
11 residents and not more than seventy-two dollars for nonresidents for the
12 issuance of a preference point, in addition to any application fee. The
13 commission shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for issuing a
14 preference point , in lieu of applying for a paddlefish permit during the
15 application period. All fees collected under this section shall be
16 remitted to the State Treasurer for credit to the State Game Fund.

17 **Sec. 20.** It shall be unlawful for any person to possess, transport,
18 sell, purchase, barter, trade, import, export, or conspire to possess,
19 transport, sell, purchase, barter, trade, import, or export any wildlife
20 taken, possessed, transported, or exported in violation of the Game Law.
21 Any person violating this section shall be guilty of a Class I
22 misdemeanor.

23 **Sec. 21.** Section 37-1214, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2025, is
24 amended to read:

25 37-1214 (1) Except as otherwise provided in section 37-1211, the
26 owner of each motorboat shall register such vessel or renew the
27 registration every three years as provided in section 37-1226. The owner
28 of such vessel shall file an initial application for a certificate of
29 number pursuant to section 37-1216 with a county treasurer on forms
30 approved and provided by the commission. The application shall be signed
31 by the owner of the vessel, shall contain the year manufactured, and

1 shall be accompanied by a registration fee for the three-year period of
2 ~~forty twenty-eight~~ dollars for Class 1 boats, ~~sixty fifty-one~~ dollars for
3 Class 2 boats, ~~eighty seventy-two~~ dollars and ~~fifty cents~~ for Class 3
4 boats, and one hundred ~~thirty twenty~~ dollars for Class 4 boats. Of each
5 motorboat registration fee, not more than ten dollars may be used for the
6 Aquatic Invasive Species Program.

7 (2) The owner of a motorboat not registered in Nebraska shall
8 purchase an aquatic invasive species stamp for the Aquatic Invasive
9 Species Program valid for one calendar year prior to launching into any
10 waters of the state. The cost of such one-year stamp shall be established
11 pursuant to section 37-327 and be not more than thirty dollars plus an
12 issuance fee pursuant to section 37-406. Such one-year stamp may be
13 purchased electronically or through any vendor authorized by the
14 commission to sell other permits and stamps issued under the Game Law
15 pursuant to section 37-406. The aquatic invasive species stamp shall be
16 permanently affixed on the starboard and rearward side of the vessel. The
17 proceeds from the sale of stamps shall be remitted to the State Game
18 Fund.

19 (3) This subsection applies beginning on an implementation date
20 designated by the Director of Motor Vehicles in cooperation with the
21 commission. The director shall designate an implementation date on or
22 before January 1, 2021, for motorboat registration. In addition to the
23 information required under subsection (1) of this section, the
24 application for registration shall contain (a)(i) the full legal name as
25 defined in section 60-468.01 of each owner or (ii) the name of each owner
26 as such name appears on the owner's motor vehicle operator's license or
27 state identification card and (b)(i) the motor vehicle operator's license
28 number or state identification card number of each owner, if applicable,
29 and one or more of the identification elements as listed in section
30 60-484 of each owner, if applicable, and (ii) if any owner is a business
31 entity, a nonprofit organization, an estate, a trust, or a church-

1 controlled organization, its tax identification number.

2 **Sec. 22.** Section 37-1241.02, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska,
3 is amended to read:

4 37-1241.02 (1) A personal watercraft may not be operated on the
5 waters of this state unless each person aboard the personal watercraft is
6 wearing a ~~Type I, Type II, Type III, or Type V~~ United States Coast Guard-
7 approved floatation device approved for use on personal watercraft.

8 (2) Each person operating a personal watercraft on the waters of
9 this state which is equipped by the manufacturer with a lanyard-type
10 engine cutoff switch shall attach the lanyard to the operator's person,
11 clothing, or floatation device as appropriate.

12 **Sec. 23.** Original sections 37-327.01, 37-406, 37-431, 37-484, and
13 37-1241.02, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, sections 37-201,
14 37-247.01, 37-324, 37-415, 37-447, 37-449, 37-450, 37-456, 37-456.01,
15 37-457, and 37-4,111, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2024, and
16 sections 37-327.04, 37-451, 37-455, and 37-1214, Revised Statutes
17 Supplement, 2025, are repealed.