

SB1544



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB1544

Introduced 2/4/2025, by Sen. Li Arellano, Jr.

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

520 ILCS 5/2.25

from Ch. 61, par. 2.25

Amends the Wildlife Code. Provides that any deer herd management plan established by the Department of Natural Resources, including length of seasons and bag and possession limits, shall take into account economic damage and public safety concerns caused by deer.

LRB104 08608 BDA 18660 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning wildlife.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Wildlife Code is amended by changing
5 Section 2.25 as follows:

6 (520 ILCS 5/2.25) (from Ch. 61, par. 2.25)

7 Sec. 2.25. It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer
8 except (i) with a shotgun, handgun, single shot centerfire
9 rifle, or muzzleloading rifle or (ii) as provided by
10 administrative rule, with a bow and arrow, during the open
11 season of not more than 14 days which will be set annually by
12 the Director between the dates of November 1st and December
13 31st, both inclusive, or a special 3-day, youth-only season
14 between the dates of September 1 and October 31. For the
15 purposes of this Section, legal handguns and rifles are
16 limited to centerfire handguns that are either a single shot
17 or revolver and centerfire rifles that are single shot. The
18 only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or rifle is a
19 bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with
20 a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths inches, or a
21 straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger,
22 both of which must be available as a factory load with the
23 published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a

1 capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle.
2 The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches. Full metal
3 jacket bullets may not be used to harvest deer.

4 The Department shall make administrative rules concerning
5 management restrictions applicable to the firearm and bow and
6 arrow season.

7 It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except
8 with a bow and arrow during the open season for bow and arrow
9 set annually by the Director between the dates of September
10 1st and January 31st, both inclusive.

11 It shall be unlawful for any person to take deer except
12 with (i) a muzzleloading rifle or (ii) bow and arrow during the
13 open season for muzzleloading rifles set annually by the
14 Director.

15 The Director shall cause an administrative rule setting
16 forth the prescribed rules and regulations, including bag and
17 possession limits and those counties of the State where open
18 seasons are established, to be published in accordance with
19 Sections 1.3 and 1.13 of this Act.

20 The Department may establish separate harvest periods for
21 the purpose of managing or eradicating disease that has been
22 found in the deer herd. This season shall be restricted to gun
23 or bow and arrow hunting only. The Department shall publicly
24 announce, via statewide news release, the season dates and
25 shooting hours, the counties and sites open to hunting.

26 The Department is authorized to establish a separate

1 harvest period at specific sites within the State for the
2 purpose of harvesting surplus deer that cannot be taken during
3 the regular season provided for the taking of deer. This
4 season shall be restricted to gun or bow and arrow hunting only
5 and shall be established during the period of September 1st to
6 February 15th, both inclusive. The Department shall publicly
7 announce, via statewide news release, the season dates and
8 shooting hours, and the counties and sites open to hunting.
9 The Department shall publish suitable prescribed rules and
10 regulations established by administrative rule pertaining to
11 management restrictions applicable to this special harvest
12 program. The Department shall allow unused gun deer permits
13 that are left over from a regular season for the taking of deer
14 to be rolled over and used during any separate harvest period
15 held within 6 months of the season for which those tags were
16 issued at no additional cost to the permit holder subject to
17 the management restrictions applicable to the special harvest
18 program.

19 Beginning July 1, 2019, and on an annual basis thereafter,
20 the Department shall provide a report to the General Assembly
21 providing information regarding deer management programs
22 established by the Code or by administrative rule that
23 includes: (1) the number of surplus deer taken during each
24 separate harvest season; (2) the number of deer found to have a
25 communicable disease or other abnormality; and (3) what
26 happens to the deer taken during each separate harvest season.

1 Any deer herd management plan established by the
2 Department, including length of seasons and bag and possession
3 limits, shall take into account economic damage and public
4 safety concerns caused by deer.

5 (Source: P.A. 101-66, eff. 7-12-19; 102-314, eff. 1-1-22;
6 102-932, eff. 1-1-23.)