



## Announcement of Temporary Closure to Waterfowl Hunting

Under the authority of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) § [26-101](#), the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) may establish a closed area for hunting on public lands or waters when such closure is necessary for public safety.

As Commissioner of DEEP, I find the following:

In August of 2025, DEEP conducted a Hunting Review Team (HRT) assessment of the section of the Black Hall River in Old Lyme between the Mile Creek Road bridge (northern boundary) and the Amtrak rail line (southern boundary) in response to adjacent homeowner concerns about waterfowl hunting in this river section. The intent of the HRT assessment was to determine whether the criteria in CGS § [26-67c](#) for amendment of hunting regulations was met, namely whether the physical setting of the locality in question “presents an unreasonable risk that hunters may violate the regulations regarding hunting in proximity to buildings occupied by persons or domestic animals or used for storage of flammable or combustible materials or the regulations regarding shooting towards persons, buildings or animals,” or whether “a record of documented complaints reveals that violations of such regulations occur with significant frequency.”

The findings of the HRT assessment included:

- Prior to 2025, no formal complaints or violations concerning waterfowl hunting in the river section in question were recorded by DEEP Environmental Conservation Police (EnCon). On January 11, 2025, EnCon investigated a homeowner complaint concerning waterfowl hunters in this river section. Upon investigation, it was determined that the hunters were hunting legally.
- The approx. 0.5-mile section of river bordered to the north by the Mile Creek Road bridge and to the south by the second tidal creek upstream of the Amtrak rail line provides very few opportunities for legal waterfowl hunting. Per Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) § [26-66-1\(d\)](#), waterfowl hunters carrying or discharging firearms in tidal waters shall maintain a minimum distance of 250 feet from occupied dwellings (subject to certain exceptions), and per RCSA § [26-66-1\(e\)](#) no hunting weapon shall be discharged towards a person or building when the same is within range. Given the physical configuration of this river stretch and the presence of potentially occupied buildings adjacent to the shoreline on both sides of the river, there are very few legal waterfowl hunting locations and shooting angles, thus presenting an unreasonable risk that waterfowl hunters may violate prevailing hunting regulations.
- Within the remaining approximately 0.23 river section extending from the above-referenced tidal creek south to the Amtrak rail line, the physical configuration of the river section and the relative lack of potentially occupied buildings adjacent to the shore means there is no unreasonable risk that hunters may violate prevailing hunting regulations.



Based on the findings of the HRT assessment, I conclude that the criteria for amendment of hunting regulations in CGS § [26-101](#) and CGS § [26-67c](#) have been met for the section of the Black Hall River between the Mile Creek Road Bridge and the second tidal creek upstream of the Amtrak line, and accordingly under the authority of CGS § [26-101](#) I declare that this river section is temporarily closed to hunting. DEEP intends to seek to permanently codify this closure in RCSA § [26-66-4](#) via a formal regulatory amendment.

*Katherine S. Dykes 11/7/2025*

Katherine Dykes  
Commissioner

Date