

Speaking of drought, a statewide open burning ban is still in effect, and wildlife officers are joining the enforcement effort.

Officers of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission will be on the lookout for violations of a statewide open burning ban, in cooperation with the N.C. Division of Forest Resources. The ban has been in effect since Tuesday. In conjunction with the ban, all burning permits have been cancelled until further notice.

The hot, dry conditions have created an extremely high fire danger, officials say. Wednesday alone yielded reports of almost 50 forest fires burning more than 370 acres across the state.

Officials urge citizens to report illegal burning and wildfires immediately by calling the local ranger district or fire department. During the statewide crisis, the Wildlife Resources Commission will also accept illegal burning and wildfire reports toll-free at 1-800-662-7137.