

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 628 (Senator Hershey)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Kent County - Turkey Hunting on Private Property - Sundays

This emergency bill authorizes a person in Kent County to hunt turkey on private property on any Sunday during the spring turkey hunting season.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals by regulation each year. Forest game birds include ruffed grouse and turkey. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife.

Hunting game birds or mammals on Sundays is generally prohibited, with specified exceptions. DNR may allow hunting on Sundays in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties for any game bird or mammal, except migratory and wetland game birds, during the open season for these animals on specified private property and public land designated for Sunday hunting by DNR.

Turkey hunting is authorized on private property in Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, and St. Mary's counties on Sundays during the spring turkey hunting season.

In Dorchester County, an individual may hunt turkeys on Sundays on public land during the spring turkey hunting season; however, this authorization is limited to public lands designated for hunting by DNR.

Background: The statewide spring turkey hunting season is generally a five-week season, running from mid-April through May. During the spring hunting season, only male wild turkeys may be taken by hunters. During the 2016 spring turkey hunting season, hunters in Kent County harvested 181 turkeys. DNR advises that this is well above Kent County's 10-year average of 110 spring turkeys harvested.

DNR's annual hunter mail survey estimates that the number of turkey hunters in Maryland has declined in the last 10 years. Spring turkey hunting participation peaked in the mid-1990s when the season was opened statewide and has gradually declined since then.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 305 (Delegate Jacobs, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Kent County; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

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md/lgc

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