

Dear Chairman Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 957, a bill that would allow the hunting of Tundra Swans in Maryland, which I **strongly oppose**. I am a retired environmental policy and communications professional, a Maryland Master Naturalist, and a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional. I live in Calvert County on the Chesapeake Bay.

The Tundra Swan is a spectacular, graceful bird that mates for life, which means that if one is killed it results in much more than a 50% reduction in the number of Tundra Swans, because no more chicks will be born. These magnificent birds nest in the remote Arctic of North America during warmer months and migrate often more than 3,000 miles to spend winters in the Chesapeake Bay area and a few other places in the mid-Atlantic region.

For multiple reasons – e.g., disappearing habitat, lead poisoning from spent gun shot, climate change, and oil and gas drilling in the Arctic -- the population of Tundra Swans wintering in Maryland has plummeted precipitously in recent years.

It's not clear why anyone would want to hunt Tundra Swans. They are not dangerous, they are not a nuisance, there are centuries-old cultural taboos against eating swan, and given their large size and often slow, lumbering manner, it is hard to imagine any sport in hunting them.

According to [a report](#) by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland's percentage of Tundra Swans in the [Atlantic Flyway](#) has fallen from as high as 80% in the 1960s to about 8% in 2020 – representing a decline from more than 50,000 to just 7,000 Tundra Swans wintering in Maryland over that period. From 2012 to 2022, according to the report, there were no reports of damage to crops or aircraft in Maryland from Tundra Swans.

I know of one person who saw a lone Tundra Swan last year.

Given the trend, it is clear that these elegant creatures should be protected – not hunted!

I urge you to vote **against** HB 957, which would allow hunting of Tundra Swans in Maryland.

Sincerely yours,

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CC: Sponsors of HB 957

District Representative Mark Fisher