

Committee—Environment and Transportation

Sponsored by Delegates Hornberger, Griffith, A. Johnson, S. Johnson, Schmidt, and Tomlinson

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 957 which would allow hunting of Tundra Swans in Maryland. There are not enough of these majestic birds in our state to allow hunting, and their numbers are declining.

Statistics show us that the number of birders in MD is much higher than the combined fishing/hunting segment (<https://birdersguidemddc.org/about-us/birding-economics/>). “The number of birders is much higher than the combined fishing/hunting participants (934 thousand versus 426 thousand for fishing and 88 thousand for hunters). Birders spend more on their activities than hunters (\$264 million), but less than anglers (\$535 million).”

Even more important than the contributions to MD’s economy made by bird related activities, in 2019 - the number of nesting midwinter Tundra swans in Md. (recorded by the DNR) was 4000, down from 17,800 in 2015. With the biodiversity loss that we are experiencing, it makes no sense to hunt this elegant bird whose numbers have already declined so precipitously.

Tundra Swans pair for life; if one member is shot the other likely will not find another partner for the rest of its life. The remaining partner very often can die from a broken heart after their mate dies. Swans have been known to be with a new mate if their first mate has been gone for a long time, but it may take years. This does not bode well for replenishment of the species. These birds deserve full protection in Maryland.

**Please vote against HB0957.**

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