

February 4, 2025

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Senate Bill 335 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

I am writing in favor of Senate Bill 335 which would require that the bag limit for all Canada Geese in the State conform to the migratory Canada Goose limit during the migratory waterfowl season, including the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population zones.

Currently, even during the migratory waterfowl season when the migratory limit is 2 geese, the limit is 6 in the Atlantic Flyway Resident zones. In some cases, the only thing separating the migratory zone from the resident zone is a highway. There is nothing to prevent the migratory Canada Geese from flying into the resident zone where the limit is 6.

While DNR claims that the over winter Canada Goose population in Maryland in 2024 was higher than the five-year average, in 2023 the over winter population was just 320,000 which is the second lowest count since the goose hunting moratorium. The moratorium was instituted in 1995 and US Fish and Wildlife stated they were trying to rebuild the breeding-pair population to 300,000. In 2023, the actual observed breeding pair population according to US Fish and Wildlife was 115,328. The integrated population model used to set the bag limits in 2023 was found to be a 57% overestimate from the 2023 observed aerial breeding pair survey.

Managing the migratory waterfowl population in Maryland is a complex and moving target. Allowing for triple the migratory bag limit in the resident zones, even during the migratory waterfowl season, will not contribute to migratory Canada Goose survivability and population rebound. Maintaining the resident limit during the resident only season will address concerns of crop and property damage by land owners and managers in that region.

I urge your favorable report on Senate Bill 335

Jared Thompson
Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Association
President