

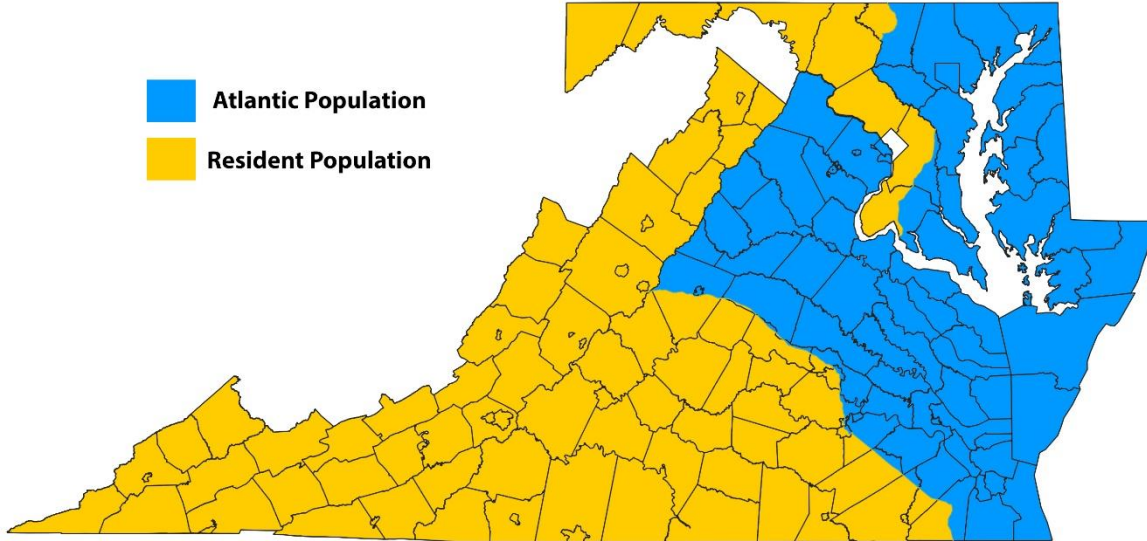
# Goose Map Handout.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

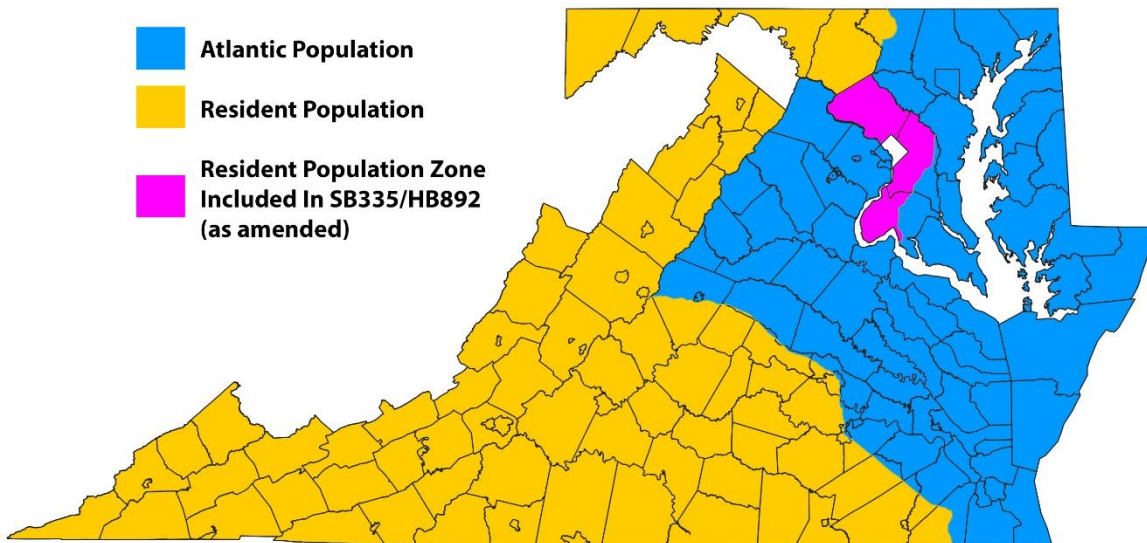
Current:

# Maryland and Virginia Goose Hunting Zones



Proposed Under SB335/HB892 As Amended:

# Maryland and Virginia Goose Hunting Zones



**SenatorBailey\_FAV\_SB335\_House.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

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Legislative District 29  
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



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March 26, 2025

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

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 335, which would require the bag limit for all Canada geese to be uniform across the State outside of Western Maryland during the migratory Atlantic Population Canada goose hunting season.

Currently, there is an inconsistency between where Maryland and Virginia choose to protect the Atlantic Population (AP) of Canada Geese. Virginia's boundary begins significantly further west than our boundary in Maryland does. I have attached to this letter a map that shows the combined Atlantic Population zones of each state, which I believe demonstrates the problems with these inconsistent lines. These different boundaries create a gap in our protection of these geese. The intent of this bill is to protect the migratory geese that enter this narrow corridor where lower bag limits would otherwise apply on both sides.

This bill is cross-filed with House Bill 892, which you heard earlier this session. To better align this bill with this intent, this bill was amended in the Senate to exempt the Western Maryland counties that are currently in the resident zone – Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties, as well as the portion of Carroll County that is west of Routes 97 and 31 – from this bill. I believe that, even with this region exempted, the bill still accomplishes its goal of expanding protection of AP geese while being consistent with the boundaries of not only Virginia, but also Pennsylvania, where the boundary through Carroll County continues along Route 97 as it crosses the state line.

Senate Bill 335 would not change DNR's ability to move the line between the AP hunting zone and the resident hunting zone in any way. However, the decision to move that boundary would have implications on goose hunting in these areas outside of the AP season, which is currently set at 30 days. This bill would only apply during the AP season and would leave these areas unaffected for the rest of the year. For that reason, I believe that this bill provides a more logical area of protection for AP geese while still allowing as many goose hunting opportunities as possible for Marylanders.

This bill as amended also includes a five-year sunset on the bill to ensure that this issue will be revisited based on the data the State receives during that period. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 335. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey', written over a horizontal line.

Senator Jack Bailey

**SB0335\_DNR\_LOI\_ENT\_3-26-25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Emily Wilson

Position: INFO



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 26, 2025

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 335 - Third Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION**

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The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information regarding Senate Bill 335 related to Canada Geese hunting bag limits.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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Maryland Canada goose hunting is regulated by the federal government’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There are two Canada goose hunting seasons in Maryland; one that targets resident geese and another for the migratory Atlantic Population (AP) geese that nest in the subarctic Ungava Peninsula region of Canada and migrate to Maryland for the winter.

Population trends for resident geese and migratory geese are vastly different, with resident geese considered over-populated, while migratory AP goose numbers are more limited and managed much more conservatively. Fortunately, numerous years of scientific studies involving banding of individual geese, as well as large-scale radio-telemetry studies have provided the Department with the information needed to delineate the wintering grounds of migratory geese. As a result, the Department, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and all other Atlantic Flyway states, have established resident and migratory hunt zones to focus appropriate amounts of hunting pressure on the two Canada Goose populations.

The Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone, as designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, largely avoids the migratory AP goose wintering grounds. The Canada goose population in this zone is comprised primarily of locally produced resident geese, and only 3-4% of the geese harvested within this zone are migratory AP Canada geese. The designated Atlantic Population Hunt Zone encompasses the known wintering grounds for migratory AP Canada geese in Maryland.

Both season length and bag limits are different for the resident and migratory goose hunt zones. Currently, in the Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone, hunters have approximately 80 days to hunt geese and can harvest 5 geese per day. In the AP Hunt Zone, hunters have approximately 30 days to hunt and will be able to harvest 1 goose per day starting with the 2025-2026 season. Senate Bill 335, if adopted, will require that approximately 30 of the 80 hunt days in the resident Canada Goose Zone change from a 5

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geese daily bag limit to a 1 goose daily bag limit in 2025-2026. The daily bag limit could change four times during the course of the 80-day season, potentially causing confusion for hunters.

The primary purpose of the Resident Canada Goose Zone is to allow liberal hunting regulations to help address the agricultural, ecological and nuisance problems caused by resident geese. Resident geese are a common problem in many states within the Atlantic Flyway, and in Maryland they can cause an estimated \$500,000 in damage annually. The Department routinely responds to complaints from farmers, golf courses, and HOA's regarding over-abundant resident geese, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Wildlife Services commonly issues depredation permits to assist with Canada goose population management and site-specific damage and nuisance issues.

Based on a hunter mail survey conducted annually by the Department, from 2013-2022 an average of 1,200 hunters hunted resident geese in the Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone. They spent on average 4,757 days hunting in this zone and harvested 5,145 geese annually. It is expected that these numbers would decline if the bag limit is reduced in this zone during the AP migratory goose season.

### **BILL EXPLANATION**

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SB 335, as amended, would require the Department to apply the Canada goose daily bag limit established for the migratory Atlantic Population (AP) Goose Hunt Zone to a part of the Resident Goose Hunt Zone when the migratory AP Canada goose season is open. The daily bag limit would follow the current AP Hunt Zone bag limit as annually established by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.