

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 144

(Delegate Eckardt, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Caroline County and Dorchester County - Turkey Hunting on Private Property -
Sundays

This emergency bill authorizes turkey hunting on private property in Caroline and Dorchester counties on Sundays 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. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. Currently, wild turkey hunting takes place during the fall – in only Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties and with a bag limit of one turkey – and the spring. During the 2011-2012 hunting season, turkey hunting is authorized October 29 through November 5, April 18 through May 23, and April 14 (junior hunting only).

With specified exceptions, hunting game birds or mammals on Sundays is generally prohibited. Among the exceptions, in Allegany and Garrett counties, a person may hunt turkey on the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, except if it is Easter Sunday.

Background: Maryland's spring turkey hunting season is generally a five-week period running from mid-April through May. During the spring hunting season, only male wild turkeys may be taken by hunters. In the spring of 2011, approximately 780 hunters harvested 210 turkeys in Dorchester County, and 462 hunters harvested 132 turkeys in Caroline County. This is below Dorchester County's 10-year average spring harvest of 264 turkeys and above Caroline County's 10-year average spring harvest of 82 turkeys.

DNR's annual hunter mail survey estimates that the number of turkey hunters in Maryland has generally declined over 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. The most recent hunter mail survey estimates that 10,532 spring turkey hunters hunted 42,178 days during the 2009-2010 hunting season.

Based on the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation, turkey hunters contributed over \$5.0 million to the State's economy in the form of food, lodging, equipment, and transportation while hunting in Maryland.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 105 (Senator Colburn) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 25, 2012
mc/lgc Revised - House Third Reader - March 16, 2012

Analysis by: Amanda Mock

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510