

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 990 (Delegate Beitzel)
Environmental Matters

Garrett County - Deer Hunting - Three-Point Rule

This bill prohibits a person from hunting in Garrett County for an antlered deer with fewer than three points up, measuring one inch or longer on the main beam of one antler. A point does not include a brow tine.

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. There are three seasons to hunt deer in Maryland: deer bow hunting season, deer firearms season, and deer muzzle loader season.

Under current regulations, Maryland has two deer management regions. Region A includes Allegany and Garrett counties and the western portion of Washington County. Region B includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Washington (eastern portion), Wicomico, and Worcester counties.

In Garrett County, one antlered deer and one antlerless deer may be harvested by a hunter in each of the three deer hunting seasons. “Antlered deer” are deer with two or more points to one antler or with one antler that measures three inches or longer. “Antlerless deer” are female or male deer with spike antlers (antlers with only one point) less than three inches long.

Background: Deer antlers have many parts, including the “brow tine,” which is the first division of an antler from a deer’s head, and the “beam,” which is the central stalk of a deer’s antler. Generally, “points” on a deer are the slender pointed parts coming off the beam of an antler. There is strong interest in hunting for “trophy” antlered deer that have several points on their antlers.

According to DNR, regulated hunting remains the most cost-effective deer population control mechanism available throughout most of the State. During the 2012-2013 deer hunting season, 2,326 antlered deer and 1,811 antlerless deer were harvested in Garrett County. DNR estimates that the bill reduces the number of antlered deer eligible for harvest in the county by 60%. Because the bill does not alter the definition of antlerless deer, male deer with spike antlers less than three inches are still considered antlerless deer. Thus, it is anticipated that harvest pressure will shift to antlerless deer, effectively increasing the antlerless deer harvest by 50% or more during the first year.

DNR advises that the bill may adversely impact (1) the health of Garrett County’s deer herd and (2) interest in junior hunting, as approximately 44% of the deer harvested in the county during the 2012 junior hunting weekend would not have been eligible for harvest under the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Garrett County, Department of Natural Resources, <http://www.infovisual.info/02/074-en.html>, Department of Legislative Services

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mlm/lgc

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