

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 1014

(Senator Eckardt)

Rules

Hunting - Regulated Shooting Areas - Offshore Stationary Blinds and Blind Sites

This bill (1) establishes that a regulated shooting area may include an offshore stationary blind or blind site that is licensed to the person holding the regulated shooting area permit; (2) authorizes a person to hunt captive raised mallard ducks from a licensed offshore stationary blind or blind site that is included in a regulated shooting area, subject to the conditions set forth in the applicable regulated shooting area permit; (3) replaces references to a “regulated shooting ground” with “regulated shooting area”; and (4) makes conforming and stylistic changes. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances or operations. To the extent that the bill results in more mallard ducks being raised in captivity and hunted, there could be a potential minimal increase in revenues and expenditures for the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) related to conducting necropsy examinations and disease investigations on mallard ducks and collecting related fees.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local government finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law/Background:

Regulated Shooting Grounds

A regulated shooting ground is a State-licensed tract of land or water on which an operator may raise, release, and hunt certain captive-raised game birds in accordance with specified conditions. In order to operate a regulated shooting ground, a person must have a regulated shooting ground permit. A regulated shooting ground permit enables the purchaser to raise, release, and hunt captive-raised pheasant, bobwhite quail, chukar partridge, Hungarian partridge, turkeys, and mallard ducks on the permitted regulated shooting ground as specified on the permit and in regulation. The permit is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 each year. The annual fee for the regulated shooting ground permit is \$150.

Generally, a person may not hunt these game birds on a regulated shooting ground without a regulated shooting ground special hunting license or a Maryland resident or nonresident hunting license. A regulated shooting ground special hunting license enables a person who does not have a resident or nonresident hunting license to hunt certain game birds on a regulated shooting ground. A regulated shooting ground special hunting license is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 of the following year. The annual fee for a regulated shooting ground special hunting license is \$6.

DNR advises that during the 2019-2020 hunting season, there were 122 licensed regulated shooting grounds that were permitted to shoot captive-raised mallards.

Regulations prohibit the hunting of wetland game birds on an area where tame or captive live ducks or geese are present unless the birds are, and have been for a period of 10 consecutive days before hunting, confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals the birds from the sight of wetland game birds.

Offshore Blinds

A stationary offshore blind site is an offshore structure built on pilings or stakes that is used for hunting wild waterfowl. A stationary offshore blind site must be licensed in order for a person to hunt wild waterfowl from the site. A stationary offshore blind site license enables any person, regardless of their state of residence, who owns riparian property in the State to license their shoreline to (1) establish offshore stationary blinds or blind sites or (2) prevent the shoreline from being licensed at a later date by another person. When a portion of shoreline is licensed, no other person may receive a license for the same portion

of shoreline, regardless of whether the original license holder establishes a stationary blind or blind site. A stationary offshore blind site license is valid for a period of one or three years and expires on June 30 one or three years after the date of issuance. The annual fee is \$20 for a one-year license and \$60 for a three-year license.

An offshore blind site is a specific location in the water where a person may hunt wild waterfowl from a boat that is tied to or anchored at a stake. An offshore blind site must be licensed in order for a person to hunt wild waterfowl from the site. Subject to certain exceptions, an offshore blind site license enables any Maryland resident who possesses a current or prior year hunting license to license riparian shoreline for the purpose of establishing an offshore blind site. Stationary offshore blind site licenses have priority over offshore blind site licenses, and a person who does not own riparian property may license up to two offshore blind sites per day. An offshore blind site license is valid from the date of issuance through June 30 of the following year. The annual fee is \$20 for a one-year offshore blind site license and \$60 for a three-year license.

Maryland Department of Agriculture Animal Necropsy Investigations

MDA's Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratories conducts necropsy examinations on animals and also performs avian diagnostics. There is a fee for these services; charges for each necropsy examination are generally based upon the species and size of the animal submitted.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 1296 (Delegate Adams) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

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rh/lgc

Analysis by: Kathleen P. Kennedy

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