

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 911 (Delegate Lisanti)
Environment and Transportation

Natural Resources - Waterfowl Hunting - Susquehanna Flats

This bill specifies that a person hunting wild waterfowl in the waters of the Susquehanna Flats while standing in water on the natural bottom may only hunt in areas designated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The bill also prohibits a person who is hunting wild waterfowl from a boat that is anchored, drifting, or being sculled from hunting in the areas of the Susquehanna Flats designated by DNR for hunting wild waterfowl while standing in water on the natural bottom. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances. DNR can designate certain areas of the Susquehanna Flats for hunting wild waterfowl, as specified, with existing resources.

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

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Current Law: With certain exceptions, a person must have a Maryland resident or nonresident hunting license in order to hunt or attempt to hunt all legal game birds and mammals during the appropriate season in the State. A Maryland migratory game bird stamp, in addition to a hunting license, is required to hunt all migratory game birds (coots, doves, rails, snipe, waterfowl, and woodcock). A person must also have a Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program permit, which is issued in conjunction with the Maryland migratory game bird stamp, to hunt all migratory game birds in the State. The fee is \$9.

Additionally, a federal migratory bird hunting and conservation stamp, also referred to as a “Federal Duck Stamp,” is required to hunt waterfowl and coots. The fee for the federal stamp is either \$25 or \$27, depending on where the stamp is purchased. After obtaining the appropriate licenses and stamps, a person is authorized to hunt wild waterfowl in the locations described below, subject to specified exceptions and requirements.

A person may hunt wild waterfowl *while standing in water on the natural bottom* only in (1) the waters of the Susquehanna Flats; (2) the nontidal waters of the Potomac River; (3) the waters of Tangier Sound, Fishing Bay, Monie Bay, Manokin River, Big Annemessex River, Pocomoke Sound, and Kedges Straits in the waters of Dorchester, Somerset, and Wicomico counties; and (4) in other waters of the State in areas and on days DNR establishes by regulation. A person may also hunt wild waterfowl while standing in water on the natural bottom at a licensed offshore stationary blind or blind site. A person may not hunt wild waterfowl while standing in State waters on the natural bottom when the natural bottom is privately owned, unless the hunter has the written permission of the landowner. Further, except at a licensed stationary blind or blind site, a nonresident may not hunt wild waterfowl standing in water on the natural bottom unless accompanied by a Maryland resident.

A person may hunt wild waterfowl *from a boat that is drifting or being sculled* only in (1) the nontidal waters of the Potomac River, Conococheague Creek, and the Monocacy River; (2) the Susquehanna Flats, Elk River, and a specified portion of the Sassafras River in Cecil County; (3) Chincoteague Bay, Sinepuxent Bay, Isle of Wight, Assawoman Bay, and their respective tributaries in Worcester County; (4) the waters of Tangier Sound, Fishing Bay, Monie Bay, Manokin River, Big Annemessex River, Pocomoke Sound, and Kedges Straits in the waters of Dorchester, Somerset, and Wicomico counties; or (5) zones established by DNR by regulation. A nonresident may not hunt wild waterfowl from a boat that is drifting or being sculled unless accompanied by a Maryland resident.

A person may hunt wild waterfowl *from a boat that is anchored* only in (1) the nontidal waters of the Potomac River; (2) the waters of the Susquehanna Flats, Elk River, and a specified portion of the Sassafras River in Cecil County; (3) the waters of Chincoteague Bay, Sinepuxent Bay, Isle of Wight, Assawoman Bay, and their respective tributaries in Worcester County; (4) the waters of Tangier Sound, Fishing Bay, Monie Bay, Manokin River, Big Annemessex River, Pocomoke Sound, and Kedges Straits in the waters of Dorchester, Somerset, and Wicomico counties; or (5) zones established by DNR by regulation. A person may also hunt wild waterfowl from a boat that is anchored at a licensed offshore stationary blind or blind site. Except at a licensed stationary blind or blind site, a nonresident may not hunt wild waterfowl from a boat that is anchored unless accompanied by a Maryland resident.

“Wild waterfowl” means brant, coots, ducks, geese, mergansers, and swans or any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of any of them, including birds raised in captivity and released to the wild or otherwise used for hunting purposes. “Migratory game bird” means any wetland game bird, dove, or woodcock, or any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of any of them. “Wetland game birds” are brant, coots, ducks, gallinules, geese, mergansers, rails, snipe, and swan or any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of them, including birds raised in captivity and released to the wild or otherwise used for hunting purposes.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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md/lgc

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