

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 335 (Senator Bailey)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits**

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This bill establishes that during the migratory Canada goose (Atlantic population) hunting season, the bag limit for all Canada geese in the State, including geese found in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone and the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone, must conform to the bag limit for Atlantic population Canada geese adopted annually by the Department of the Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances.

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

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Under the Natural Resources Article, a Canada goose is considered a wetland game bird, which is a type of migratory game bird. A “migratory game bird” means any wetland game bird, dove, or woodcock. A “wetland game bird” means brant, coots, ducks, gallinules, geese, mergansers, rails, snipe, and swan. A Maryland migratory game bird stamp, in addition to a hunting license, is required to hunt all migratory game birds.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulations (COMAR [08.03.03.02](#)) establish that the State’s seasons, bag limits, and possession limits for migratory game birds conform to regulations adopted by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Under USFWS's 2024-2025 migratory bird hunting regulations ([89 Fed. Reg. 70,545](#)), apart from special early seasons in September, the Canada goose hunting seasons and bag/possession limits in Maryland are:

- Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone – (1) season (referred to in DNR's guide to hunting and trapping as the Late Resident Canada Goose Season) – November 23 to 29 and December 16 to March 10; (2) bag limit – 5; and (3) possession limit – 15; and
- Atlantic Population Hunt Zone – (1) season (referred to in DNR's guide to hunting and trapping as the Migratory Canada Goose (Atlantic Population) Season) – December 20 to January 4, and January 15 to February 1; (2) bag limit – two; and (3) possession limit – six.

The Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone includes Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Montgomery, and Washington counties, as well as the western halves of Carroll, Charles, and Prince George's counties.

The Atlantic Population Hunt Zone includes the entire Eastern Shore (Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties), as well as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Harford, Howard, and St. Mary's counties. It also covers the eastern halves of Carroll, Charles, and Prince George's counties.

**Small Business Effect:** DNR indicates that the higher bag limit in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone, where the Canada geese are primarily resident geese (the geese in the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone are primarily wintering, migratory geese), is intended to reduce the resident goose population and the damage and complaints caused by the geese. The bill's requirement that the bag limit in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone be the same as the bag limit in the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone during the Migratory Canada Goose (Atlantic Population) Season reduces the number of geese that can be harvested during that time (December 20 to January 4, and January 15 to February 1), potentially negatively affecting small businesses, including farms, that are negatively affected by resident geese.

DNR indicates that in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone, from 2013-2022, on average 5,145 geese were harvested each year and 1,200 hunters hunted on a combined 4,757 days each year. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, estimated that resident Canada geese were responsible for \$500,000 in agricultural damage in Maryland.

## Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 42 of 2022.

**Designated Cross File:** HB 892 (Delegate Jacobs, *et al.*) - Environment and Transportation.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources; U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 2, 2025  
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