

# SENATE BILL 643

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CF 6lr2234

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By: Senator Bailey

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

### 2 **Natural Resources – Hunting – Management**

3 FOR the purpose of providing that the Department of Natural Resources may authorize the  
4 reduction of the deer population on certain property with deer damage using certain  
5 methods; altering the time restrictions for Sunday deer hunting in certain counties  
6 during deer firearms season; repealing the prohibition against hunting migratory  
7 game birds on Sundays and authorizing the Department to allow Sunday hunting  
8 for migratory game birds, subject to a certain requirement; repealing certain  
9 provisions of law governing Sunday hunting on a county-by-county basis and  
10 authorizing the Department to adopt regulations allowing Sunday hunting during  
11 game bird and game mammal seasons, subject to a certain standard; and generally  
12 relating to hunting management.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
14 Article – Natural Resources  
15 Section 10–206 and 10–410(a)  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
19 Article – Natural Resources  
20 Section 10–410(a)  
21 Annotated Code of Maryland  
22 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)  
23 (As enacted by Section 1 of this Act)

24 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
25 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

### 26 **Article – Natural Resources**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 10-206.

2 (A) The Department may reduce the wildlife population in any county, election  
3 district, or other identifiable area of the State after a thorough investigation reveals that  
4 protected wildlife is seriously injurious to agricultural or other interests in the affected  
5 area. The method of reducing the wildlife population is at the Department's discretion,  
6 except that trapping is preferred whenever feasible. The Department shall dispose of  
7 wildlife taken pursuant to the provisions of this section as the Department deems  
8 advisable.

9 (B) (1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, "DEER DAMAGE" INCLUDES:

10 (I) WIDESPREAD DAMAGE CAUSED BY DEER, INCLUDING THE  
11 ELIMINATION OF FOREST UNDERSTORY, TREE REGENERATION, AND NATIVE  
12 PLANTS; AND

13 (II) THE DESTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL CROPS OR  
14 LANDSCAPING, INCLUDING ORNAMENTAL LANDSCAPING, CAUSED BY DEER.

15 (2) THE DEPARTMENT MAY AUTHORIZE THE REDUCTION OF THE  
16 DEER POPULATION ON ANY SINGLE, CONTIGUOUS PROPERTY OF AT LEAST 10 ACRES  
17 WHERE THE DEPARTMENT HAS DOCUMENTED DEER DAMAGE.

18 (3) (1) THE METHOD OF REDUCING THE DEER POPULATION:

19 1. IS AT THE DEPARTMENT'S DISCRETION; AND

20 2. SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS  
21 PARAGRAPH, MAY INCLUDE THE ISSUANCE OF A PERMIT TO A PROPERTY OWNER, OR  
22 THE PROPERTY OWNER'S EMPLOYEE, LESSEE, OR AGENT, TO SHOOT DEER ON THE  
23 PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS.

24 (II) A PERMIT ISSUED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I)2 OF THIS  
25 PARAGRAPH SHALL PROHIBIT DEER HUNTING ON SUNDAYS DURING DEER  
26 FIREARMS SEASON WITHIN 25 YARDS OF A DEPARTMENT TRAIL DESIGNATED FOR  
27 EQUESTRIAN USE.

28 (4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

29 (I) MAP AREAS OF THE STATE TO WHICH A PERMIT MAY APPLY  
30 UNDER THIS SUBSECTION; AND

31 (II) MAKE THE MAPS READILY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

1 10-410.

2 (a) (1) (i) The Department may allow a person to hunt on each Sunday of  
3 the game bird and game mammal seasons in:

4 1. Allegany County;

5 2. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Calvert  
6 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

7 3. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Caroline  
8 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

9 4. Cecil County;

10 5. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Charles  
11 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

12 6. Subject to subparagraph (iv) of this paragraph, Dorchester  
13 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

14 7. Garrett County;

15 8. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Queen  
16 Anne's County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

17 9. St. Mary's County;

18 10. Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, Somerset  
19 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

20 11. Washington County;

21 12. Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, Worcester  
22 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. and

23 13. Subject to subparagraph (v) of this paragraph, Wicomico  
24 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.

25 (ii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)10 and 12 of this  
26 paragraph do not apply:

27 1. On each Sunday of the deer firearms season; and

28 2. On the last three Sundays in October and the first two  
29 Sundays in November of the deer bow hunting season.

(iii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)2, 3, 5, and 8 of this paragraph do not apply:

3 1. On each Sunday during the deer firearms season;

7 (iv) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)6 of this paragraph  
8 do not apply:

2. On each Sunday of the spring turkey hunting season.

12 (v) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)(13) of this  
13 paragraph do not apply:

14 1. **A.** On the first Sunday of the deer firearms season; and

B. ON THE REMAINING SUNDAYS OF THE DEER  
OR WHICH THE TIME RESTRICTIONS SHALL BE FROM 30  
RISE UNTIL 10:30 A.M. AND FROM 3:00 P.M. UNTIL SUNSET;

24 (i) Carroll County; and

25 (ii) Frederick County.

29 1. Kent County;

30 2. Montgomery County; and

### 3. Talbot County.

(ii) The time restrictions under this paragraph do not apply:

1. To a participant in a junior deer hunt authorized under

**B. ON THE REMAINING SUNDAYS OF THE DEER  
OR WHICH THE TIME RESTRICTIONS SHALL BE FROM 30  
RISE UNTIL 10:30 A.M. AND FROM 3:00 P.M. UNTIL SUNSET;**

3. In Kent County, on each Sunday during the deer bow  
er muzzle loader season;

4. In Montgomery County, on one Sunday designated by the deer bow hunting season; and

5. In Talbot County, on the last three Sundays in October and the first three Sundays in November during the bow hunting season.

Department may allow a person to hunt deer during the deer

(i) On each Sunday in Harford County; and

(ii) On the first Sunday in Anne Arundel County.

Department may allow a person to hunt deer during

The last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in

Department may allow a person to hunt turkey on each Sunday of

(14) **H**<sub>2</sub> + **G**<sub>1</sub> → **1**

(iii) Talbot County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.

(7) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle, the Department may allow a person with [a]:

7 (II) A DEER DAMAGE PERMIT ISSUED UNDER § 10-206(B) OF  
8 THIS TITLE TO SHOOT DEER ON ANY SUNDAY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR IN  
9 ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE PERMIT.

(11) The Department may allow a person who is 16 years old or younger to hunt on Sunday if participating in a junior hunt established by the Department in accordance with this subtitle.

(12) Except as provided in paragraphs (8) through (10) of this subsection and subject to paragraph (7) of this subsection, a person may not hunt on Sunday in:

23 (i) Baltimore City;

24 (ii) Baltimore County;

25 (iii) Howard County; or

26 (iv) Prince George's County.

27 (13) (I) [A person may not] SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS  
28 PARAGRAPH, THE DEPARTMENT MAY ALLOW A PERSON TO hunt migratory game birds  
29 on Sunday.

30 (II) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ALLOW THE FOLLOWING  
31 PERSONS TO HUNT MIGRATORY CANADA GEESE (ATLANTIC POPULATION) ON  
32 SUNDAYS DURING THE OPEN SEASON:

- 1                   **1. JUNIOR HUNTERS;**
- 2                   **2. SENIOR HUNTERS;**
- 3                   **3. APPRENTICE HUNTERS; AND**
- 4                   **4. FULL-TIME STUDENTS WHO HOLD A HUNTING**
- 5                   **LICENSE.**

6                   (14) A person may not hunt on public land within the State park system on  
7                   Sunday.

8                   (15) (i) The Department may not allow a person to hunt on public land  
9                   designated for hunting by the Department on Sunday except in:

- 10                   1. Allegany County;
- 11                   2. Cecil County;
- 12                   3. Garrett County;
- 13                   4. St. Mary's County;
- 14                   5. Washington County;
- 15                   6. Dorchester County, for turkey during the spring turkey  
16                   hunting season;
- 17                   7. Frederick County, for deer from the first Sunday in  
18                   October through the second Sunday in January of the following year, inclusive;

19                   8. Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, Somerset  
20                   County, on public land leased to a hunt club from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30  
21                   a.m.;

22                   9. Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, Worcester  
23                   County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.; and

24                   10. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Wicomico  
25                   County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.

26                   (ii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)8 and 9 of this  
27                   paragraph do not apply:

- 28                   1. On each Sunday of the deer firearms season; and

2. On the last three Sundays in October and the first two  
2 Sundays in November of the deer bow hunting season.

3 (iii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)10 of this paragraph  
4 do not apply:

6 B. ON THE REMAINING SUNDAYS OF THE DEER  
7 FIREARMS SEASON, FOR WHICH THE TIME RESTRICTIONS SHALL BE FROM 30  
8 MINUTES BEFORE SUNRISE UNTIL 10:30 A.M. AND FROM 3:00 P.M. UNTIL SUNSET;  
9 AND

2. On the last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November of the deer bow hunting season.

12 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read  
13 as follows:

## Article – Natural Resources

15 10-410.

18 1. Allegany County;

3. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Caroline  
County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

23 4. Cecil County;

24 5. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, Charles  
25 County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.;

28 7. Garrett County;

3 9. St. Mary's County;

6 11. Washington County;

11 (ii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)10 and 12 of this  
12 paragraph do not apply:

13 1. On each Sunday of the deer firearms season; and

16 (iii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)2, 3, 5, and 8 of this  
17 paragraph do not apply:

18 1. On each Sunday during the deer firearms season;

21 3. On each Sunday of the spring turkey hunting season.

22 (iv) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)6 of this paragraph  
23 do not apply:

26                   2.     On each Sunday of the spring turkey hunting season.

27 (v) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)(13) of this  
28 paragraph do not apply:

(2) The Department may allow a person to hunt deer on each Sunday of the deer hunting seasons from the first Sunday in October through the second Sunday in January, inclusive, in:

9 (i) Carroll County; and

(ii) Frederick County.

(3) (i) Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the Department may allow a person to hunt deer on each Sunday of the deer hunting seasons from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m. in:

4 1. Kent County;

2. Montgomery County; and

3. Talbot County.

7 (ii) The time restrictions under this paragraph do not apply:

1. To a participant in a junior deer hunt authorized under  
this subtitle;

(4) The Department may allow a person to hunt deer during the deer firearms season:

(5) The Department may allow a person to hunt deer during the deer bow hunting season on:

(i) The last three Sundays in October and the first two Sundays in November in Harford County; and

9 (ii) The first Sunday in November in Anne Arundel County.

10 (6) The Department may allow a person to hunt turkey on each Sunday of  
11 the spring turkey hunting season in:

12 (i) Carroll County;

13 (ii) Kent County; and

14 (iii) Talbot County, from 30 minutes before sunrise until 10:30 a.m.]

15 (1) (i) SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION, THE  
16 DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS ALLOWING PERSONS TO HUNT ON  
17 SUNDAYS DURING THE GAME BIRD AND GAME MAMMAL SEASONS.

22                   **[(7)] (2)**    Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle, the  
23 Department may allow a person with:

24 (i) A deer management permit issued under § 10-206(a) of this title  
25 to shoot deer on any Sunday throughout the year in accordance with the terms of the  
26 permit; and

(ii) A deer damage permit issued under § 10-206(b) of this title to shoot deer on any Sunday throughout the year in accordance with the terms of the permit.

29                   [(8)] (3)    The Department may allow a person using a State certified  
30 raptor to hunt game birds or mammals on each Sunday during the open season for the  
31 game birds or mammals.

1                   **[(9)] (4)**    The Department may allow an unarmed person participating in  
2 an organized fox chase to chase foxes on Sunday.

3                   **[(10)] (5)**    The Department may allow a person shooting pen-reared game  
4 birds or tower-released flighted mallard ducks to hunt on Sunday at a regulated shooting  
5 ground in accordance with § 10-906 of this title.

6                   **[(11)] (6)**    The Department may allow a person who is 16 years old or  
7 younger to hunt on Sunday if participating in a junior hunt established by the Department  
8 in accordance with this subtitle.

9                   **[(12)] (7)**    Except as provided in paragraphs **[(8)] (3)** through **[(10)] (5)** of  
10 this subsection and subject to paragraph **[(7)] (2)** of this subsection, a person may not hunt  
11 on Sunday in:

- 12                   (i)     Baltimore City;
- 13                   (ii)    Baltimore County;
- 14                   (iii)   Howard County; or
- 15                   (iv)   Prince George's County.

16                   **[(13)] (8)**    (i)    Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the  
17 Department may allow a person to hunt migratory game birds on Sunday.

18                   (ii)    The Department shall allow the following persons to hunt  
19 migratory Canada geese (Atlantic population) on Sundays during the open season:

- 20                   1.     Junior hunters;
- 21                   2.     Senior hunters;
- 22                   3.     Apprentice hunters; and
- 23                   4.     Full-time students who hold a hunting license.

24                   **[(14)] (9)**    A person may not hunt on public land within the State park  
25 system on Sunday.

26                   **[(15)] (i)**    The Department may not allow a person to hunt on public land  
27 designated for hunting by the Department on Sunday except in:

- 28                   1.     Allegany County;

16 (ii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)8 and 9 of this  
17 paragraph do not apply:

18 1. On each Sunday of the deer firearms season; and

21 (iii) The time restrictions under subparagraph (i)10 of this paragraph  
22 do not apply:

23 1. A. On the first Sunday of the deer firearms season; and

29 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1,  
30 2029, the Department of Natural Resources shall:

4 (2) include in the report input from all relevant stakeholders.

5 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 2 of this Act shall take  
6 effect July 1, 2027. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of June  
7 30, 2030, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly,  
8 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

9                   SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, except as provided in Section  
10 4 of this Act, this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.