

OPPOSITION TO HUNTING ON SUNDAYS SENATE BILLS

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SB 356 (Calvert), **SB 603** (Caroline), **SB 475** (Talbot), **SB 605** Queen Anne, **SB 633** (Worcester)

These bills are fiscally neutral and the deer population has stabilized, if not declined (as evidenced by DNR's reduced bag limits. These are simply bills of convenience for the 2% of Marylanders who hunt, and they directly contravene the opinions of a majority of Marylanders -- as evidenced by a DNR commissioned survey, and well as other surveys -- who do not favor Sunday hunting or want it expanded.

DNR's hunting accident incident reports are shockingly incomplete. One unreported accident occurred in 2014 when a biker in Tuckahoe State Park was shot in the legs. In 2016 an 87 year old man was struck in the head by a bullet while walking on his own property which adjoined Patuxant River Park in Montgomery County. In 2019 a woman was shooting a groundhog in her back yard and grazed a man's shoulder; he was walking in a park which bordered her land. Our neighbor's dog was killed. The windshields of cars in our driveway were pockmarked with birdshot.

Here are a few of the many recorded DNR hunting incident reports:

2019 An unknown Washington County Deer Hunter... shot a crossbow bolt through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victim's driveway. Deer frequent the lawn of this residence and other residences within the neighborhood most evenings.

2017 A Talbot County hunter shot at 2 deer with 12 gauge shotgun slugs. A shot missed and struck an occupied residence just to one side of the front door.

2017 A Carroll County deer hunter sent a 7 mm projectile through the side of a residence, through the bedroom wall, through a wooden dresser, then through a closet all before coming to rest in a pile of towels in the closet. Two people were in the bed room at the time.

2017 A Cecil County deer hunter took two shots at deer with a 30/30 rifle toward the direction of a neighboring farm. One of the shots struck a dining room window of the adjacent residence ...(and) was found in the windowsill.

Brenda Kibler – a retired DNR officer, was quoted in an article in the Feb 14 issue of the Star Democrat: (QUOTE) “DNR was often short-staffed, and hunting accidents were common -- there were constant hunting complaints...it was ridiculous -- and Sunday is a hard day to

enforce because officers need days off, too, “ Ms. Kibler predicts DNR will be even more stretched if hunting is allowed on more Sundays .

How many other accidents would there be if the perception of danger deprived so many Marylanders of the ability to recreate outside?

Our population is growing -- there is currently a 200% increase in real estate sales on the Eastern Shore. Hunting accidents and confrontations are bound to increase due to increasing pressures on access to finite public and private outdoor spaces on which to recreate. This is even more true because all public and private properties are intertwined.

We should accommodate wildlife enthusiasts who spend 3 times more money than hunters spend (US Fish & Wildlife Services Census Bureau report, 2016, p 7), rather than create obstacles to their enjoyment and access to the outdoors

A friend told me "This Blue Law is not antiquated - rather it is anchored in basic cultural values, developed over centuries." There should be an equitable division of time and place, and this should not be adversarial.

If the rationale for more Sundays on which to hunt is to produce more income, we should consider alternatives – what about a Lottery for Wildlife?

So much energy, time, and dollars have been wasted on the Sunday hunting issue. I believe it is time for us to come together with facts and reason to resolve this issue for once and for all.

Joyce and Wayne Bell, Easton, Talbot County, Maryland

Excerpts from 10 years of DNR’s Annual Hunting Accident Reports (prepared by MD Hunter Education Program) <https://dnr.maryland.gov/nrp/Pages/Hunting-Incident-Reports.aspx>

2020

--- A Frederick County resident observed damage to the exterior of their residence, which was consistent with that of pellet strikes from a shotgun. While investigating officers located no hunting activity in the area, the incident did occur during the end of spring turkey season.

2019

---- A 61-year-old Washington County Woodchuck Hunter was shooting from the front of their residence off a picnic table for support when one shot went errant and struck a person fishing at an adjacent pond, grazing their shoulder. The victim was approximately two tenths of a mile away obscured by heavy brush and tree cover. Rimfire .22 long rifle ammunition from a rifle was the implement used.

--- An unknown Washington County Deer Hunter (Archery season) shot a crossbow bolt through a Honda SUV while it was parked in the victims driveway. Deer frequent the lawn of this residence and other residences within the neighborhood most evenings.

---- A Montgomery County residence received a broken window caused by a stray bullet fired from a rifle. The projectile was recovered on scene lodged in between two plates of glass. No suspects at the time of the shooting but several shots were reported just before the window received damage.

2017

--- A 26 year old Talbot County deer hunter (firearms season) shot at two deer with 12 gauge shotgun slugs. The first deer was struck and ran 40 yards before collapsing, the second deer was shot at but the first slug went over its back, the second shot dropped the deer in the location where it was standing. Apparently the slug that missed struck an occupied residence just to one side of the front door.

--- An unknown Carroll County deer hunter (firearms season) sent a 7mm projectile through the side of a residence, through the bedroom wall, through a wooden dresser, then through a closet wall before coming to rest in a pile of towels in the closet. Two people were in the bedroom at the time but neither was injured. A search of nearby farms was unsuccessful in locating any hunter(s).

--- A 52 year old Cecil County deer hunter (late firearms season) took two shots at a deer with a 30/30 rifle toward the direction of a neighboring farm. One of the shots (both of which missed the deer) struck a dining room window of the adjacent residence and stopped, being found on the windowsill. During the investigation it was determined that the round that struck the window had ricocheted off of the ground. The distance from the shooter to the house was 398 yards.

(DNR's on-line annual report for 2017 is identical to DNR'S 2016's report – the 2016 appears to be missing)

2015

--- A 16 year old Allegany County turkey hunter fired two (2) shots from a 12 gauge shotgun at what they believed to be the white head of a spring gobbler. The shot traveled approximately 53 yards and struck a 70 year old camouflaged turkey hunter in the face. This hunter had walked into the woods, sat down and was listening for turkey's completely camouflaged except for the side of his face which is what the shooter was observing and mistook for a turkey.

--- Carroll County Fox Hunter sent a 6mm rifle round through a patio glass door. The round went through a vinyl garden hose and a plastic lawn chair before going through the door and striking a kitchen chair. The homeowner was and they were in bed sleeping.

--- A 52 year old Kent County Turkey Hunter (Spring Season) took two shots at a gobbler out in an open field. The second shot was at the bird while in flight. One pellet struck the storm door of an adjacent house causing the glass to shatter. The homeowner was present in the home at the time.

2014

--- A 50 year old Carroll County Fox Hunter sent a 6mm rifle round through a patio glass door. The round went through a vinyl garden hose and a plastic lawn chair before going through the door and striking a kitchen chair. The homeowner was the only occupant in the residence at the time and they were in bed sleeping.

2013 --- A 47 year old Calvert County rabbit hunter received a gunshot (shotgun) wound to his body/thigh/head when he was shot by a 15 year old hunting partner.The shooter stated that he could not see the other hunter when he shot at the rabbit

--- The victim A 52 year old Charles County deer hunter shot his 22 year old son with a rifle across an open field. The shooter and the victim had been hunting together and at dusk the shooter fired out at movement in the field which he mistook for a deer walking through the field .

--- A 28 year old Charles County deer hunter while hunting within the safety zone ---discharged his shotgun resulting in the rifled slug passing through a window of the residence striking a chandelier in the dining room and becoming embedded in a wall.

--- A rifle round was recovered from a Frederick County home during the second day of the extended fire arms deer season. The round went through the wall of the home and struck a sliding glass door causing it to shatter. The round was recovered at the scene by the sheriff's department. The nearest wooded area was over 400 yards away. Property Damage Only

--- A rifle round was recovered from a "second" Frederick County home during the extended firearms deer season. The round entered through the front wall of the residence blew out the drywall in the living room at which time the bullet came to rest on the floor and was recovered by the homeowner. The bullet was a full metal jacket round (illegal to use on big game)

2012 --- A 62 year old Harford County landowner was struck by a random shot on their property. Upon investigation it was determined the landowner had been hearing a volley of shots repeatedly behind her home. As she and her husband went outside to investigate, a piece of shot struck her in the left forearm. Law enforcement responded and never found hunters in the area. Non Fatal.

--- A home in Dorchester County was struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the homeowner heard shots and found a French door in the back of their home was shattered due a projectile striking the lower left hand pane. The area behind the home is a public hunting area.

2011--- A 41 year old Carroll County woman was struck in the right leg by a stray projectile while she was in her back yard Upon investigation it was determined two individuals were plinking and shooting at squirrels & birds with a .22 cal. rifle in a wooded area behind her residence. Due to an unsafe backstop, it was determined their projectile traveled approximately .26 miles to the victim's property causing

the leg injury. --- A 57 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 57 year old hunting companion who he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter and victim had split up to hunt deer.The shooter observed a dark movement coming towards his location. The shooter was using a .30-06 scoped rifle. The shooter advised he determined he was shooting at a deer by looking through his scope, and shot at center mass.

--- A 48 year old Caroline County deer hunter shot his 46 year old hunting companion that he had mistaken for a deer: Upon investigation it was determined the shooter heard a disturbance of brush and saw movement, thinking it was a deer. The shooter fired a crossbow bolt at the movement at a distance of 62 yards, striking the victim in his left tibia.

--- A 16 year old Dorchester County deer hunter shot his 19 year old hunting companion while shooting at a running deer: Upon investigation 8 hunters had organized a deer drive in a marshy dense wooded area. 5 hunters were pushing deer while 3 were standers. As a deer passed between two standers, the shooter shot at a running deer, striking his hunting companion in both femurs with a .12 ga. shotgun using #4 buckshot at a distance of 60 yards. The shooter advised he never saw the victim. Both hunters were wearing daylight fluorescent orange. Non Fatal.

--- A 56 year old Dorchester County turkey hunter shot his 36 year old hunting companion, mistaking him for game: Upon investigation it was determined the two hunters entered their hunting area and posted three turkey decoys in an open field. They then split up to hunt the area and the shooter advised he did not see which direction the victim went..... the shooter saw a movement then shot. He had shot his hunting companion. The movement he saw was the victim putting his cell phone away. The victim was shot at a distance of 38 yards. The victim received 24 #4 shotgun pellets which were fired from the shooters 12 .ga shotgun. The victim was struck in the right side of his body receiving wounds in his head, neck, shoulder, torso, calf, knee, and ankle. The shooter was charged with Negligent Hunting. Non Fatal.

--- A 13 year old Dorchester County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter discharged a .45 cal. muzzleloader at a deer 6 minutes after legal shooting hours. The projectile, missing the deer, traveled 242 yards striking a house 48 inches from the ground. As the projectile entered the house, it penetrated exterior and interior walls and lodge in a recliner. A resident in the home was sitting in the chair at the time and received a red mark on their shoulder where the projectile stopped on impact. Non Fatal

2010

--- During the 2010 Firearm Deer Season, residents of a home located in the area of Walkersville (Frederick County), reported their house had been struck by a projectile: Upon investigation it was determined the home had been struck by a projectile doing damage to the exterior & interior walls..... It was never determined who may have been the shooter, but one scenario did reveal a hunter had fired a .30.30 rifle at a deer pointed in the direction that the home approximately 3,940 feet away. No evidence was found to support charges. Non Fatal.

--- A 45 year old Frederick County deer hunter, while shooting at a deer, struck a home in the background: Upon investigation the shooter had discharged a .12 gauge shotgun using slugs at a herd of deer. The gun jammed, the shooter cleared the gun, turned and shot at another deer in the direction of the home. The shooter advised he had become disoriented as to the direction he was shooting. **The slug entered the home at a distance of 114 yards, traveled through the exterior and two interior walls, through two rooms, and into appliances and home furnishings.** No one was in the home at the time of the incident.

--- A 53 year old **Howard County deer hunter was shot by his 36 year old hunting companion.** The shooter shot at a standing deer with a .12 gauge slug in an open field at approximately 243 yards. The bullet missed the deer, striking the victim sitting in a wooden ground blind at the opposite end of the field. The victim received injuries to his right arm and hand. Non Fatal. Charges pending an investigation

--- A 46 year old Queen Anne's County deer hunting was shot by his 25 year old hunting companion. With both subjects participating in a deer drive, the shooter shot at a running deer twice with a .20 gauge shotgun slug. **A slug traveled 70 yards, striking the victim positioned at the opposite end of the field in the left leg.** Non Fatal.

2009

--- A 57 year-old goose hunter in Kent County was shot by another hunter while attempting to retrieve a wounded goose. **The victim received a minor wound to the face from a shotgun pellet which deflected off the water striking the victim.**

--- **A window was broken at an occupied daycare facility from a slug fired by a shotgun in Howard County.** Several hunters were found in the area and interviewed by several police agencies.

--- A window in a house was struck and broken by a sabot round fired by a deer hunter in Talbot County. The investigation found that in this case , the hunter was not negligent and charges were not filed.

--- **While checking vacant buildings, several Frederick County Sheriff Deputy vehicles were struck by shot gun pellets** causing minor damage. Several individuals who were hunting quail in the area were located and charges were filed by the States Attorney's office for Reckless Endangerment.