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Judicial Proceedings Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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March 10, 2021

Senate Bill 899 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 899 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits. This bill would require the bag limit for all Canada geese to be uniform across the State during the migratory Atlantic population Canada goose hunting season.

There are currently two different goose hunting zones in Maryland: one for Atlantic Population Geese who migrate and leave the contiguous 48 states, and one for resident population geese who live in the contiguous 48 states all year, including the migrant geese we have in Maryland that migrate to upstate New York but do not enter Canada. The State is divided into these zones based on the type of geese that are generally found in that area, the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone and the Resident Population Hunt Zone. The season for hunting resident population geese is managed by the State and is over 70 hunting days with a daily limit of five birds. The season for hunting Atlantic Population Geese is managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and is considerably more restricted, as the season is 30 hunting days with a daily limit of one bird.

Atlantic Population geese are currently being shot at an alarming rate in the Resident areas during the AP season. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that the entire State abides by these lower bag limits during the 30-day Atlantic Population season. This is necessary because the geese that migrate to Maryland do not necessarily abide by the lines that we have drawn dividing the State into these two hunting zones. It is common for the migratory geese to be chased from the Atlantic Population Zone into the resident zone, thus removing these important protections for these geese.

It is critical at this time during the pandemic to protect our AP breeding population. As a result of the pandemic and the inability for biologists to count the breeding pairs, the entire East Coast Flyway – every state – is already being reduced to a 30 day, one bird per day limit for hunting AP geese during the next hunting season. This bill simply does our part in protecting a resource that was under a moratorium in this State less than 30 years ago.

Senate Bill 899 will only affect the bag limits in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Hunt Zone during the 30-day Atlantic Population season. As soon as the Atlantic Population season is over, hunters in the resident hunting zone will be able to return to the higher limit. By protecting these migratory geese from overharvest, we will ensure that a moratorium will not be issued on hunting geese in Maryland, as the Atlantic Population geese are what sets the standard for the whole population. The bill still allows a late resident season and USDA permits for nuisance resident geese are not affected.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 899. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey