

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB899.pdf

Uploaded by: Bailey, Jack

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 402
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3673 · 301-858-3673
800-492-7122 Ext. 3673
Jack.Bailey@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Dorsey Professional Park
23680 Three Notch Road, Unit 101
Hollywood, Maryland 20636
240-309-4238

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

Legislation SB 899 Goose Hunting Bag Limits.pdf

Uploaded by: miles, william

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 501
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639
billmilesmd@comcast.net

SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
March 10, 2021

SENTE BILL 899
Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits
SUPPORT

“The Atlantic Population (AP) of Canada geese has experienced below average reproduction seven out of the past ten years due to poor weather conditions on their sub-Artic breeding grounds, aka Canada’s Ungava Peninsula. Consequently, the number of breeding pairs of AP geese has declined and triggered the need to move into the Atlantic Flyway’s restrictive hunt package to reduce hunter harvest.”

Josh Homyack
Maryland’s DNR Waterfowl Program Manager, May 14, 2019

THE HONORABLE PAUL G. PINSKY, Chair
HONORABLE MEMBERS OF SEHEA

The Hunters of Maryland commend Senator Bailey for his conservation-minded foresight in proposing to mitigate the unintended consequences of harvesting migratory Canada geese (“AP” Atlantic population) during Maryland’s resident Canada goose hunting seasons. For the pending 2021/2022 season, there will be 3 split seasons for hunting resident Canada geese – those nesting within the lower 48 States in the months of March, April, May, or June, and reside within the lower 48 States in the months of April, May, June, July, and August – for a total of over 100 days with a daily bag limit of 5 birds. Comparatively speaking, the season for AP Canada geese is only 30 days with a 1 bird daily bag limit. The 2021/2022 season is the third consecutive restrictive season at 30-days with 1 bird. Accordingly, AP Canada geese experienced a near-total reproductive failure in 2018 b/c of an extremely late spring on their northern Quebec breeding grounds.

Due to the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic, most migratory breeding surveys (e.g., the Breeding Waterfowl Population and Habitat Survey, Breeding Bird Survey, and others) conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, as well as state and provincial agencies were canceled in spring 2020. Clearly, the need for a third year of restrictive hunting of AP Canada geese in 2021/2022 is without question. No one has a defensible projection of the number of AP breeding pairs, gosling production and overall population b/c of COVID. Simply put, why risk harvesting 5 resident geese each day during a 100-day plus season when there is a chance some of those resident birds could be AP birds? We must be cautionary.

The last thing we want in Maryland is to see what happened in 1995, resulting in a 6-year moratorium on AP Canada goose hunting. Breeding surveys of key AP nesting areas in northern Quebec documented a more precipitous decline in AP numbers from 118,000 nesting pairs recorded in 1988 to 90,000 in 1993, 40,000 in 1994, and 29,000 pairs in 1995. This dramatic change in numbers of AP geese, greater than 75 percent in less than a decade, prompted State, Federal, and Provincial wildlife agencies in 1995 to suspend the sport hunting season of AP geese in the United States and in the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The resultant 6-year closure, caused by a precipitous 75 percent drop in this flyway's migratory goose population, figured to cost the region – Maryland’s Eastern Shore -- anywhere from \$20 to \$40 million each year.

Bill Miles,
Advocate, Hunters of Maryland

SB 899 Opposition IMB.pdf

Uploaded by: Beam, Ian

Position: UNF

February 20, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Letter of Opposition - Senate Bill 899 - Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits

Dear Honorable Chair Pinsky and Honorable Members of the Senate:

I write to offer the following letter of opposition to provide further information and clarification for the Committee's consideration on Senate Bill 899. I believe this information will serve to clarify and illustrate the potential ramifications and negative consequences of this proposed legislation.

Senate Bill 899 would have the intended purpose of subjectively lowering the established daily limits on Canada geese harvested in the Canada Goose Resident Population Hunting Zones. These zones are designated by the biologists of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in consultation and cooperation with the Federal scientists and researchers of the United States Fish and Wildlife Administration (USF&W) and the National Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL).

Due to climate change and decreased habitat, many Canada geese have adapted to these conditions by no longer migrating to and from historic breeding grounds in northern Canada. These geese have become endemic, or residential to the Mid-Atlantic and other regions around the United States. As the Canada goose is a voracious large bird averaging around 7 pounds in weight, these residential flocks have become overpopulated and cause great damage when feeding to farmer's cover crops planted by law to mitigate soil erosion. This depletion will further endanger the health of Maryland's greatest natural resource, our Chesapeake Bay

The Canada goose is also notorious for its foul droppings, which contain large amounts of nitrates as well as harboring parasites and other infectious pathogens, such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Giardia* along with *L. monocytogenes*, which can cause bacterial meningitis in both children and adults. In the large quantities left by these residential overpopulated flocks, these droppings can contaminate water sources and cause eutrophication and lower dissolved oxygen levels in water. Thankfully, when properly prepared and cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit, these pathogens are negated, and the goose can be an excellent source of protein.

Resident Canada geese will continue these depredatory behaviors in a large portion of Maryland during the six-week Atlantic Flyway season relatively unchecked if this arbitrary measure is allowed to be enacted. The biologists and naturalists of the DNR, USF&W and BBL who serve our communities in these roles have made these designations and the resultant hunting zones using sound data, observation and science, and these zones and the respective limits on Canada geese per zone should be allowed to stand as previously determined by these subject matter experts.

For the aforementioned reasons, I, along with Maryland farmers, hunters and conservationists, very respectfully request the Committee to consider this information during their deliberations and issue an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 899.

Respectfully submitted,

Ian Beam

SB0899_DNR_OPP_3-11-21 EHEA.pdf

Uploaded by: McKittrick, James

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 899 – Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information on Senate Bill 899. This bill requires the less liberal bag limit for the migratory, Atlantic Population (AP) Canada goose be applied to resident Canada goose bag limits in the State during the AP Canada goose season.

SB 899 would eliminate the opportunity for farmers and hunters to take resident Canada geese consistent with the resident Canada goose bag limits set by the department in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The higher bag limits for resident Canada geese are necessary to minimize the impact of these birds on agricultural fields, community parks and ponds, and turf-based recreational facilities. There is excellent scientifically supported data evidencing that there are distinct populations of AP geese and resident geese. The data demonstrate that there is no risk to our migratory populations from the higher bag limits offered for resident birds.

Maryland is divided into two zones for Canada goose hunting. The AP Hunt Zone includes all of the Eastern Shore, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Harford, Howard and St. Mary's counties and the eastern halves of Carroll, Charles and Prince George's counties. The wintering goose population in this zone is primarily migrants from eastern Canada. Currently, only one goose per day may be harvested by a hunter. The western zone is the remainder of the state. The Canada goose population in this zone is primarily resident geese. Five geese per day may be harvested by a hunter in this Late Resident Goose Hunt Zone. This liberal bag limit is intended to reduce the resident goose population and the damage they cause.

The number of resident Canada geese harvested in the resident zone would be drastically reduced as a result of SB 899. Reducing the harvest on these birds will lead to an increase in damage to private and public landowners by these birds. The bill would also codify the rules for a migratory species in Maryland law. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is ultimately responsible for migratory birds in consultation with the states. SB 899 would derail that process by eliminating the options available to the Department offered by our federal partners and contravening the science that guides that process.

Thank you for allowing the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to provide this letter regarding Senate Bill 899.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick