

Maryland HB 954 SCI Testimony_Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Beebe Frederick

Position: FAV



1 March 2023

Re: Support for House Bill 954

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee,

Safari Club International (SCI) supports House Bill 954 that would allow for a regulated tundra swan hunt in the state of Maryland. SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide, and we respectfully ask for your leadership, in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in establishing this unique new recreational opportunity.

As you know, this legislation would require the Maryland DNR to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to establish an annual tundra swan hunt, via permits provided by the USFWS and distributed through a lottery-based system. House Bill 954 would require a permit for hunting tundra swan and require permit holders to report the necessary information for management purposes to the DNR following a potential season.

Currently, nine states – including Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina in the Atlantic Flyway – allow for the opportunity to harvest tundra swans. According to the most recent information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Survey, the population estimate for the Eastern Population of tundra swans is 95,000 which is 9% higher than the previous year. This population of tundra swans winter along the Mid-Atlantic eastern shore coastal areas of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Similar to the other states, a potential tundra swan season in Maryland would be “authorized and conducted as specified in the Atlantic Flyway Tundra Swan Management Plan and Hunt Plan, with limits and guidelines as specified under an MOU with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service”. Currently, there are 5,600 hunting permits allowed for the Eastern Population of tundra swans with most of those permits allocated to North Carolina (4,721). The remaining permits are split between Virginia with 532 and Delaware with 347. With the current population count, potential hunting permits for Maryland would not be additional permits, rather reallocated from nearby states.

SCI strongly believes in scientific management of wildlife. Using this proven model, as seen with the management of other waterfowl and game birds, regulated hunting opportunities as determined by the technical experts at state and federal wildlife agencies, do not detrimentally impact population levels. Hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both for game and non-game wildlife, and maximizing opportunity for hunting is key to long-term funding for all conservation. Hunting benefits wildlife conservation. In Maryland, the latest numbers show that the state’s 93,000 hunters spend \$328 million on hunting-related purchases, support over 4,100 jobs, contribute \$301 million to the state’s GDP, and provide \$29 million in state and local taxes. Additional funds generated from the application and sale of tundra swan permits would support the DNR’s mission and allow for accomplishment of additional conservation work.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 954 and for your consideration of this important bill.



Sincerely,

Sven K. Lindquist

Sven Lindquist
President - Safari Club International

Support of HB 954 - Natural Resources - Hunting -

Uploaded by: Colby Ferguson

Position: FAV



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

March 3, 2023

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 954 - Natural Resources - Hunting - Tundra Swans**

On behalf of our Farm Bureau member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 954, legislation that requires the Department of Natural Resources to establish an annual tundra swan hunting season if authorized by federal law. It requires the Department to request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorize an annual tundra swan hunting season in the State and provide the Department and requires the Department to distribute tundra swan permits annually using a lottery-based system.

Game birds and waterfowl cause significant crop damage especially on the Eastern Shore. The Tundra swan is one of these waterfowl that does significant damage to row crops in the spring. Having the ability to control the population in Maryland will assist with lessening the crop damage they cause.

MDFB Policy: In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management regulations.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 954 & REQUESTS A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396

HOM Testimony on Tundra Swan Legislation.pdf

Uploaded by: william miles

Position: FAV



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

March 3, 2023

**HONORABLE CHAIR & MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE**

SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 954 (Natural Resources --Hunting – Tundra Swans)

The HUNTERS OF MARYLAND represent the interests of Maryland's hunting community at both the State and local level. Few realize that hunters underwrite 100% of all wildlife management/research costs through their purchase of hunting license fees/ equipment. For the record, hunters do so willingly b/c of **American System of Conservation Funding**, a user-pay model celebrating its 85th Anniversary which also underscores the noble story of hunters as America's original conservationists.

Steve Keithley, Founder (301/785-4774 [sssbkeith@comcast.net])
Bill Miles, Advocate (443/404-7449 [billmilesmd@comcast.net])

Relevant to the General Assembly's debate on House Bill 954 is the Report presented by DNR pursuant to the General Assembly's 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) which reads as follows:

Tundra Swan Hunting Season: The committees are interested in exploring the possibility of a tundra swan hunting season in Maryland. Therefore, the committees request DNR to submit a report on the status of its work with the U.S. Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct the necessary flyover studies for permit allocation and to establish a fee and application process for licensed hunters. The report is requested to be submitted by October 1, 2022.

DNR responded as shown in the following link: [2022_82\(b\).pdf \(state.md.us\)](#)

Accordingly: "Maryland is considered a wintering state in the Management Plan for the Eastern Population of Tundra Swans, signed by the flyway councils in 2007. As such, we could be eligible for a percentage of the total number of permits allocated for the eastern population (5,600). Maryland would receive approximately 478 permits, which would constitute roughly 10% of our wintering population. The management plan harvest strategy assumes a 50% success rate for hunters that draw permits, however the actual success rate would likely be closer to 35% (167 swans). This would translate to 2-3% of Maryland's wintering swan population being harvested."

Other factors to be considered if enacted: (1) Maryland would join its neighbors within the Atlantic Flyway --, Virginia, Delaware and North Carolina – which authorize permitted hunting of tundra swans **CONDITIONED ON APPROVAL BY THE USFW**; (2) hunters would likely be eligible for only one permit annually and would be limited to one tundra swan per season; (3) permits would likely be issued through an annual random lottery; (4) all lottery revenues would be credited to the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund (§ 10-209 NR); (5) enhanced opportunities afield is consistent with and responsive to America's 3R initiative, aka, recruitment, retention and reactivation...ways/means to encourage more hunting.

William R. Miles, Advocate

HB954_FAV_HSUS.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Position: UNF



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

March 3, 2023

Bill: HB 954 – Tundra swan hunting season
Committee: House Committee of Environment and Transportation
Position: OPPOSE

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the House Committee of Environment and Transportation:

We submit this testimony in opposition to HB 954, which would require the Maryland DNR to establish an annual tundra swan hunting season if authorized by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. There is no justification for opening up Maryland's tundra swans to hunting just to provide a new opportunity for a very small number of hunters,¹ and doing so could put Maryland's recovering trumpeter swans at risk of accidental kills because swan identification is difficult at best (see comparative images from Cornell Lab of Ornithology).²

Trumpeter swans in Maryland could be killed by hunters shooting at lookalike tundra swans.

In November of 2022, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources announced that *for the fourth consecutive year*, it was closing the state's tundra swan season early because hunters had reached the quota for mistakenly killing 20 lookalike, rare trumpeter swans.³ Even experienced birders have noted that it is difficult to distinguish between trumpeter and tundra swans, both of whom have black beaks with only small differences in coloration.⁴ Trumpeter swans have been sighted in Maryland and northern Virginia.⁵

The largest and one of the heaviest of North America's native waterfowl, trumpeter swans were nearly driven to extinction by the early 20th century by market hunting and habitat loss. While these magnificent birds have begun to make a recovery because of protection from hunting, they continue to face myriad risks from lead poisoning due to ingestion of lead sinkers and spent shot, collisions with power lines, loss of habitat, diseases such as avian influenza, the effects of climate change, and illegal shooting.⁶ A tundra swan hunting season in our state would add yet another, entirely unnecessary and completely avoidable hazard that this iconic species could face.

¹ Only 10 U.S. states (Alaska, Delaware, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Virginia) currently allow the hunting of tundra swans.

² Cornell Lab of Ornithology's swan identification: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Tundra_Swan/id#.

³ Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (November 17, 2022). "Utah's swan hunt closes early for 4th consecutive year after federal harvest limit for trumpeter swans met." <https://wildlife.utah.gov/news/utah-wildlife-news/1549-utahs-swan-hunt-closes-early-for-4th-consecutive-year.html>

⁴ The Trumpeter Swan Society: "Which Swan Species Did You See?" <https://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/swan-information/identification/overview.html>

⁵ Cher Muzyk: "Rare trumpeter swans spotted locally late into spring." *Prince William Times*, May 6, 2022 https://www.princewilliamtimes.com/news/rare-trumpeter-swans-spotted-locally-late-into-spring/article_75a84d9a-cc8a-11ec-9bd6-7379f8422e7e.html; Hugh Vandervoort, "Rare Trumpeter Swans Breeding in Maryland." *Patch*, June 1, 2022 <https://patch.com/maryland/annapolis/rare-trumpeter-swans-breeding-maryland>; Timothy B. Wheeler: "Trumpeter swans add flourish to Patuxent Refuge's winter." *Bay Journal*, March 19, 2018 https://www.bayjournal.com/archives/trumpeter-swans-add-flourish-to-patuxent-refuge-s-winter/article_3b411a8a-d6b5-5af5-bc24-724bb2bca69f.html

⁶ Audubon: "Trumpeter Swan" at <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/trumpeter-swan>; The Trumpeter Swan Society: "Top 10 Threats to Trumpeter Swans" at <https://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/swan-information/threats-to-trumpeter-swans/top-10-threats-to-trumpeter-swans.html>.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Maryland’s wildlife is worth far more alive than dead, there is no justification for adding another species to be hunted.

Recent landmark research led by Colorado State University titled the “America’s Wildlife Values Project” found that animal welfare has become an increasingly important concern for the general public, and the number of those who value wildlife as “part of their extended social network” has grown.⁷ In that study, more Marylanders identified with a “mutualist” view that favors coexistence with wildlife, than a “traditionalist” view that wildlife should be used and management for human benefit. And more than 67% of Maryland residents surveyed agreed that their state should strive for environmental protection over economic growth.

Nationwide and in Maryland, wildlife watchers and those who participate in non-consumptive outdoor recreation outnumber and outspend hunters and trappers by a wide margin.⁸ (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

Fig. 2

USFWS: Wildlife Recreation Participation & Expenditures: 2011 vs. 2016 data From: 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation			
	2011	2016	Percent change
Wildlife watchers	71.8M	86.0M	20
Wildlife watcher expenditures	\$59.1B	\$75.9B	28
Hunter numbers	13.7M	11.5M	-16
Hunter expenditures	\$36.3B	\$25.6B	-29

Fig. 3

Outdoor recreation spending in the U.S. (2021) From: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis		
Activity	Spending [in millions of dollars]	% of total
Hunting and trapping	4,831	1.27
Other outdoor recreation	62,796	16.5
Trips and travel	123,860	32.6
Total outdoor recreation	380,471	100.00

Maryland’s non-consumptive public land users outnumber and outspend hunters and trappers by a wide margin. The National Park Service reports, “In 2021, 6.7 million park visitors spent an estimated \$247 million in local gateway regions while visiting National Park Service lands in Maryland. These expenditures supported a total of 2,940 jobs, \$130 million in labor income, \$215 million in value added,

⁷ Manfredo, M.J., Sullivan, L., Don Carlos, A.W., Dietsch, A.M., Teel, T.L., Bright, A.D., & Bruskotter, J. (2018). *America’s Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in the U.S.* National report from the research project entitled “America’s Wildlife Values.” Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University, Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources. <https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/wildlifevalues/>

⁸ The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation (2016) at <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/fhw16-nat.pdf>; and Dept. of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, “Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2021,” <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

and \$344 million in economic output in the Maryland economy.”⁹

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis-Dept. of Commerce, outdoor recreation in Maryland generated more than \$6.5 billion for the state’s economy in 2021. Of that figure, hunting and trapping generated 1.3%, while spending for RVing was more than twice that. And people spent almost 24 times more on travel and tourism in Maryland than on hunting and trapping (Fig. 4).¹⁰

Fig. 4. Outdoor recreation spending in Maryland (2021 data from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis)

Outdoor recreation spending in Maryland (2021) From: <i>U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis</i>		
Sample activities	Spending (in thousands of dollars)	% of total
Hunting and trapping	86,230	1.3
RVing	181,823	2.8
Other outdoor recreation	1,137,125	17.3
Travel and tourism	2,042,090	31.1
Total Outdoor Recreation	6,567,148	100.00

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that in 2021, only 1.9% of Maryland residents were paid hunting license holders.¹¹ There is no reason to allow the hunting of tundra swans, and put trumpeter swans at risk, simply to provide additional recreational activities for a tiny percentage of the state’s population.

We therefore ask that you issue an unfavorable report for HB 954 to authorize the hunting of tundra swans in Maryland. Thank you again for the opportunity to share these comments.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel
Maryland State Director
The Humane Society of the United States
jbevandangel@humanesociety.org

⁹ National Park Service. (2022). National Park Service Visitor Spending Effects Report. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>.

¹⁰ Bureau of Economic Analysis: Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2021. <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>

¹¹ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (2021). Hunting Licenses, Holders, and Costs by Apportionment Year.

Natural Resources – Hunting – Tundra Swans - HB 95

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: UNF



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 3, 2023

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Natural Resources - Hunting - Tundra Swans – HB 954- Oppose

Chair Barve, Vice - Chair Stein, members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across the State of Maryland, I respectfully ask that the House Environment & Transportation Committee give an unfavorable vote to Natural Resources - Hunting - Tundra Swans – HB 954.

This bill would require the Department of Natural Resources to establish an annual tundra swan hunting season if authorized by federal law; requiring the Department to request that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service authorize an annual tundra swan hunting season in the State and provide the Department with a certain number of permits to take tundra swan annually; requiring the Department to distribute tundra swan permits annually using a lottery-based system under certain circumstances; and generally relating to a tundra swan hunt in the State.

Tundra Swans are monogamous, and a mated pair will remain together for life. Therefore, killing one of a pair impacts the mate, as well.

Maryland Votes for Animals opposes adding this species to the list of birds killed during a hunting season. Tundra Swans are monogamous, and a mated pair will remain together for life. Therefore, killing one of a pair impacts the mate and the possibility of having future offspring. Very few states allow the hunting of Tundra Swans. Maryland already has a robust list of birds to hunt without adding this species.

I urge the committee to give HB 954 an unfavorable vote.

