



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

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March 8, 2023

**BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1119 – First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Dorchester County - Hunting - Fur-Bearing Mammals**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION WITH AMENDMENTS**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION:**

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The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information and suggested amendments regarding House Bill 1119. It is the understanding of the Department that the primary goal of House Bill 1119 is to authorize year-round hunting of coyotes in Dorchester County, primarily due to human safety concerns. The Department recommends that House Bill 1119 be amended to specifically address coyote hunting in Dorchester County, and avoid altering long-standing seasons and bag limits for the remaining fur-bearing mammals. Suggested amendments are attached. The Department would note that it has the authority to address this issue in regulation.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

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Fur-bearing mammals include beaver, bobcat, coyote, fisher, fox (red and gray), long-tailed weasel, mink, muskrat, opossum, otter, raccoon, and skunk.

Most fur-bearing mammals are highly valued by hunters, trappers, wildlife watchers, and many of the general public who like to view them. Like other game species regulated by DNR, they are carefully managed using long-standing wildlife management principles. Hunting seasons and bag limits for these species are conservation-based and structured to ensure their populations are not exploited. Hunting and trapping seasons typically coincide with colder months when fur is prime and reproductive activities of the species are not occurring. The populations of most of these species do not warrant a year-round season, and having year-round seasons is not ecologically responsible.

Of the 13 fur-bearing mammals defined in statute, currently only coyote, fox, opossum, raccoon, and skunk may be hunted. Most of these species have a November – February hunting season for the reasons mentioned above.

**BILL EXPLANATION:**

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This bill, as drafted, would authorize the year-round hunting of 13 fur-bearing mammal species in Dorchester County.

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BY:

(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1119  
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 2, strike “**Fur-Bearing Mammals**” and substitute “**Coyote**”; strike beginning with “requiring” in line 3 down through “Sundays” in line 8 and substitute “authorizing a person to hunt or trap a coyote or possess the pelt of a coyote at any time of year in Dorchester County”; in line 9, strike “fur-bearing mammals” and substitute “coyote”; in line 12, strike “10–406, 10–410(a)(1)(iv) and (15)(i)6.” and substitute “10–406(b)”; and strike in their entirety lines 15 through 19, inclusive.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 2, strike the brackets; in the same line strike “SUBSECTIONS”; in the same line, after “(b)”, strike “AND (C)”; after line 30, insert:

**“(6) IN DORCHESTER COUNTY, A PERSON MAY HUNT OR TRAP A FOX OR COYOTE OR POSSESS THE PELT OF A FOX OR COYOTE AT ANY TIME OF YEAR.”**;

and in lines 31 and 33, strike “(6)” and “(7)”, respectively, and substitute “**(7)**” and “**(8)**”, respectively.

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 3, strike in their entirety lines 6 through 7, inclusive; in line 16, strike the brackets; in line 17, strike “; AND”; strike in their entirety lines 18 through 19, inclusive; in line 22, strike the brackets; in the same line, strike the colon; in line 23, strike “A. TURKEY”; in the same line, strike “; AND”; and strike in their entirety lines 24 through 25, inclusive.