



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 Lindquist  
President - Safari Club International