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**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.

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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