

that in Maryland, hunters should not be able to hunt on Sundays, a day many enjoy for a diverse range of outdoor activities. That year, however, legislators began chipping away at the regulation, and they are planning to do it again in 2021.

Now, most counties have opened up **hunting** on Sundays in one form or another, mostly for deer. The sole exceptions are Baltimore, Howard and Prince George's Counties, which bar Sunday **hunting**.

The proposed bills will increase the number of Sundays available for **hunting** for certain open seasons, with each county amending it in a different way.

On the Mid-Shore, the most controversial bills for the 2021 legislative session are in Talbot, Queen Anne's and Caroline County — taken together, the bills would drastically increase the number of Sundays available for **hunting** in the region. In Queen Anne's, Sunday hunting would be expanded to cover all types of game bird and

more accidents and more pressure on enforcement officers.

**Brenda Kibler**, a former DNR employee and natural resources officer who helped enforce **hunting** laws for years before retiring, said DNR was often short-staffed, and **hunting** accidents were common.

"There were constant **hunting** complaints," she said. "It was ridiculous."

**Kibler** predicts DNR will be even more stretched if there is more **hunting** on Sundays — a hard day to enforce because officers need days off, too.

"With more increased calls, there's (a need) for more law enforcement. What are they going to do to increase pressure? Are they going to kick back money for more hires?" she asked. "When you have more hunting activity you have more **hunting** accidents — it doesn't stop."

A bill for Talbot County would allow turkeys to be hunted on Sundays during the spring season for the

Maryland, 88,000 people hunt in Maryland every year, a chunk of them from out of state. This contributes \$401 million to the economy and in state and local taxes.

**Kibler**, the former DNR officer, said **hunting** is increasingly becoming "commercialized" and "a lot of (the bills) have to do with money."

"I used to be the one to step out of the truck so I know where this is coming from," she said. Private property owners lease land to hunters, who can pay up to \$300 a day to hunt waterfowl.

"**Hunting** has been commercialized and that is the problem," she continued. "When I grew up here, property owners hunted their own land. Now, it's about lining their pockets."

While most **hunting** in the state is on private property, there are public lands in every county — with Queen Anne's having three of them, including Tuckahoe State Park.

If the bill passes in Queen Anne's, it would likely be the first to allow Sunday **hunting**