

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

# **The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission**

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM  
On Wed., January 15, 2025  
Department of Natural Resources  
Google Meet**

**Meeting Agenda:**

**Annual Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair (Group Discussion)**

**Approval for January 15, 2025, Meeting Agenda**

**Approval of November 20, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

**Proposed Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits (Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack and Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey)**

**2025 Legislative Session Update (Associate Director Brian Eyler)**

**Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Tyler Hough)**

**Natural Resources Police Update (Captain Shawn Garren)**

**Old Business:**

- **Revamping Trapping Course Update - (Commissioner Kaitlin Rossignuolo)**
- **License Portal Update (MD Outdoors) - (Associate Director Brian Eyler)**
- **Use of Drone for Deer Recovery and Hunting – Tabled to a future date.**
- **Fox Chasing Non-License Requirement – Tabled to a future date.**
- **Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition – Commissioner Ryan Showalter**
- **WHS Money Allocation Document – (Associate Director Kristen Fleming)**

**New Business:**

- **Potential Agenda Topics for May and September Meetings**

**Public Comment:**

**Adjourn**

***NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.***



**The Proposed Schedule for the 2025 Meetings  
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

<b>January 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>February 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>March 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>April 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>May 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>June 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building</b>
<b>July 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>No Meeting</b>
<b>August 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>September 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>October 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Google Meet</b>
<b>November 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building</b>
<b>December 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>No Meeting</b>

***PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING DATES ARE HELD  
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH***

**Note:** Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held via Google Meet. When meeting in person, they will be held in the C-4 Conference Room of the Department of Natural Resources—Tawes State Office Building beginning at 10:30 a.m. Available parking is located at the Navy Stadium Parking Lot.

***NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.***



THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES  
JANUARY 15, 2025

Chair Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. This meeting was held by teleconference. Chair Wagner asked for a roll call of individuals on the “call.” Unfortunately, because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant.

**Annual Election for the Chair and Vice Chair**

- Commissioner Smith moved to retain Carl Wagner as Chair and Joe Schroyer as Vice Chair.
- Commissioner Keithley seconded.
- All in favor. Motion Passed.
- Carl Wagner will remain Chair, and Joe Schroyer will remain Vice-Chair of the Wildlife Advisory Commission.

**Approval of January 15, 2025, Meeting Agenda**

- Motion:
  1. Commissioner Keithley moved to accept the January 15, 2025, Wildlife Advisory Commission meeting agenda.
  2. Commissioner Parks seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Approval of Minutes from November 20, 2024, Meeting**

- Motion:
  1. Commissioner Showalter moved to accept the November 20, 2024, meeting minutes as presented.
  2. Commissioner Kullberg seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**2025 Legislative Session Update – Associate Director Brian Eyler**

- Associate Director Eyler mentioned that he listed four bills on the Summary of 2025 Proposed Legislation as of January 10, 2025. **[ATTACHMENT A]**
- The Commission members can track the bills online at the Maryland General Assembly website at <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebbsite/>.
- Q&A Section:
  1. Mr. Web Johnson commented about SB0100 Natural Resources – Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours – Authorization. Hunters have 24 hours to check in a deer, and Mr. Johnson thinks this will open a bag of worms that people will kill deer after hours. Currently, a hunter can return to the field during regular hunting hours to track a deer that has potentially bled out and shoot the deer during legal time.
    - a. From that standpoint, staff and Natural Resources Police officers are concerned about it.
    - b. To clarify, the 24-hour check-in starts when the animal is recovered. So, if a hunter shot a deer and did not return until the next day to recover it, that is when the 24-hour period would start. It does not begin when the animal is first hit but when someone recovers it.
    - c. Chair Wagner told Mr. Johnson that this discussion is for Senator Bailey and the bill discussion. At the point of the presentation, the Commission is not here to debate the bill, and the stance on these bills is yet to be determined.
    - d. Chair Wagner thanked Mr. Johnson for his comments.
  2. Commissioner Kullberg asked if these were new bill concepts or if any of these were reintroductions.
    - a. These are new bills; none were recycled from the last session. Prince George’s County may have had Sunday bills in the past, but nothing precisely like SB0272.



3. Commissioner Showalter added that it is essential in the after-hours bill that there is language requiring the Department to promulgate regulations to implement it. Commissioner Showalter mentioned he had a deer several years ago that was not located during hunting hours. The deer was still alive when the deer was located on a Sunday morning after the end of Firearm Season. Commissioner Showalter did not want to leave it, so he called the Natural Resource Police Communication 800 number and received permission to dispatch/recover the deer. In practice, some of the after-hours' shooting happens.
  - a. Assistant Secretary Peditto responded that SB100 allows the Department to set regulations. Director Karina Stonesifer and the team would draft a regulation that requires the hunter who is recovering the deer to call in, request permission to dispatch, and provide enough information to make it unlikely that somebody who's doing something nefarious would use this process as one of the tools to get away with something.
  - b. Assistant Secretary Peditto acknowledged that if hunters are going to shoot at night, they will not call in.
  - c. SB0272 will codify the Department's authority.
4. Commissioner Showalter asked about the non-lead legislation that the Commission has been discussing, which is not on the Summary of 2025 Proposed Legislation as of January 10, 2025. Commissioner Showalter noted that Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition is listed under Old Business.
  - a. Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto stated that he has not seen a formal bill introduction of non-lead ammunition. It appears that there are two iterations, one that would have required implementation for all species, all ammunition in two to three years, and then another that stretches the implementation out to as many as five years with deer being on the back end and some of the easier lift species like turkey and Regulated Shooting Area upland game species on the front end. Again, Assistant Secretary Peditto has not seen a formal bill on this topic.
5. Chair Wagner informed the Commission that there was a lawsuit in West Virginia where the lead ammunition was dismissed. Chair Wagner asked if the West Virginia dismissal lawsuit would have any bearing on the potential non-lead legislation.
  - a. That is a different jurisdiction. Remember that non-lead ammunition is already required on federal lands, and no one has challenged that directly.
  - b. Opponents could pursue litigation in Maryland related to non-lead ammunition. Commission and staff would have to wait and see what happens.
6. Chair Wagner asked if the sponsor was considering Sunday hunting related to HB0173 Baltimore County—Deer Management Program—Establishment because Baltimore County is one of the three counties that does not have Sunday hunting as a management tool.
  - a. It is too soon to answer Chair Wagner's Baltimore County Sunday hunting question.
7. Commissioner Jenkins asked if the Sika deer stamp could be eliminated from the apprentice license.
  - a. Chair Wagner answered that eliminating the Sika deer stamp for apprentice hunters would require legislation change, which would change something Senator Bailey introduced. Chair Wagner indicated that the Commission could discuss that with Senator Bailey and have Senator Bailey submit another bill. However, Chair Wagner expressed that he thinks hunters may need to live with the outcome of the \$200 charge for non-resident apprentice hunters.
  - b. Commissioner Jenkins noted that three young females are not coming to Maryland to hunt due to the cost of the Sika deer stamp.
  - c. Assistant Secretary Peditto suggested that the senator may not have considered the nonresident Sika stamp cost for apprentices when adopting the \$200 Sika deer stamp cost. Remember, the multi-year option for the apprentice junior license was only adopted two years ago. Therefore, this would have been moot up until two years ago. Assistant Secretary Peditto acknowledged Commissioner Jenkins's comments about the cost of the Sika deer stamp for apprentice hunters. It may not be a lot of individuals, but we want new hunters coming to Maryland, and



- we want these hunters coming to Maryland 30 years from now. If we start to lose these young hunters now, we may not get them back.
- d. Chair Wagner and Commissioner Keithley will contact Senator Bailey about introducing a bill to tweak the current law to eliminate the stamp requirement for junior apprentices and hunting license holders. This would only change the stamp requirement.
8. Chair Wagner asked if the \$200 Sika deer stamp is still reasonable or if it is hurting WHS's out-of-state participation. The Commission did not propose the \$200 Sika deer stamp; it was through the legislation.
- a. WHS sales declined about 25%, roughly based on the last time staff checked related to the non-resident Sika deer stamp. Yes, that number of non-resident stamps is significant.
  - b. Staff recognized that the \$200 cost for a parent with young ones who want to try Sika deer hunting is steep, especially with the non-resident license fees and everything else associated with it.
  - c. Commissioner Showalter commented that he completely understands Commissioner Jenkins's input, which was focused on the magnitude of the \$200 non-resident stamp. Commissioner Showalter added that if the Commission recommends eliminating the Sika deer stamp for non-resident juniors, it would be hard for Maryland hunters to accept. Commissioner Showalter emphasized that if the Commission suggests eliminating the non-resident junior Sika deer stamp, the same should apply to Maryland junior hunters.
  - d. Associate Director Brian Eyler recommended to the Commission that the non-resident Sika stamp price for apprentice hunters and junior hunters be the same as a resident Sika deer stamp or a reduced amount be charged. Chair Wagner and Commissioner Showalter acknowledged Associate Director Brian Eyler's recommendation and said it was a fair compromise.

**Proposed Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits – Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey**

- Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey presented the Proposed Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons for 2025-26. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
  - Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey reminded the Commission that in the last presentation, staff reviewed the most recent waterfowl status updates, and the Atlantic Flyway Council voted on the harvest packages for the upcoming hunting season 2025-2026. The Service Regulation Committee has voted on those items.
  - Staff had selected dates and presented the proposed seasons and bag limits for the 2025-2026 hunting season.
  - Staff apologized for not updating the Commission that the September Teal Season was going from a 16-day season down to a 9-day season. The reason is that the blue-wing population estimate went below a certain threshold. Therefore, the federal framework for the Teal Season is a 9-day season between September 1 and September 30 with a six-bird bag limit. Remember that the Teal Season cannot run concurrently with other seasons that allow special considerations, including the resident Canada goose from September 1 through September 15. The teal season has traditionally run during the last two weeks of September for several years.
1. With the shortened 9-day season, staff had to decide where to place those dates, whether to start at the end of resident goose season or have the dates run until the end of September. Staff looked at a few things when deciding on this one. Staff pulled harvest data from several years for those last two weeks of September for the Teal Season. Staff did not find any harvest peaks or trends for blue or green wings during that time period. Therefore, staff reviewed eBIRD data for blue wings; they're most abundant in the middle, early to mid-September, and green wings are most abundant in late September. After not seeing any real way to use trends or peaks to optimize harvest during this season, the staff selected the 16th to September 25th dates for this Teal Season, allowing hunters to jump from the early resident goose season into that Teal Season.
  2. The Teal Season is not incredibly popular with hunters. Staff don't expect many comments, but we want to let you know how we came to that decision.
- Canada Goose Migratory Atlantic Population (AP) data was presented to the Commission at another



meeting. However, the staff reviewed it with the Commission, starting with the 2024 breeding pair estimate from the survey, which was 89,000 pairs, and the previous year was 115,000. The 2024 breeding pair was among the lowest in the last several years. The integrated population model (IPM) used survey data, banding data, weather data, and harvest data to create an out-year prediction of 133,000 pairs for 2025, and that would put Maryland in the moderate package again for the 2025-2026 hunting season. The Atlantic Flyweight Council voted to go to the restrictive package, a 30-day season with a one-bird bag limit in the abundance of caution for the low survey count and juvenile-to-adult ratio at banding.

1. Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey informed the Commission that staff received many comments last year and a few comments this year that staff should have selected a 45-day season with a one-bird bag limit. Staff reiterated that this is not an option in the AP harvest strategy. Therefore, what you see on the slide are the options for the harvest strategy. So, if you receive any more questions or comments about that, remember it is not something staff could have chosen.
2. The federal framework for the AP Canada goose hunting season for the 2025-2026 hunting season is a 30-day season held between November 15th and February 5th with a one-bird bag limit and up to two segments. Staff selected time frames similar to this 30-day season, starting December 19th and ending January 3rd over the Christmas and New Year's holidays and finishing January 14th to January 31st for the last two weeks of the season.
- Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey displayed slides on the Mallard Telemetry Project and the American Black Duck Telemetry Project as of January 8. The different-colored pins show the various states put on transmitters. The light green pins are Maryland birds. There are not as many transmitters for the American Black Duck Telemetry Project.
- Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey provided an AP Canada Goose Telemetry Update. Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey explained what color each pin represents. So, the green pins are birds that were captured in Maryland over the winter. The gray birds are captured in Virginia over the winter. The orange pins are birds that were captured during the summer or on the breeding grounds up on the Ungava Bay side of the Ungava Peninsula. Then, the purple pins were on the Hudson Bay side again during the summer months during the breeding season. A couple of slides (11/4/24, 12/4/24, and 1/4/25) demonstrated the migration of the birds. At the beginning of November, the slide showed quite a few birds up in southern Canada and New York, and then when the December slide showed quite a few birds up north, a bunch had moved down to the Maryland area. As the slide moved to the beginning of January, most birds were down in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Staff noticed that the purple pins (birds) stayed separated from each side of the peninsula during migration.
- Comments Section:
  1. Commissioner Showalter suggested that staff consider shifting it by two days. So, instead of starting it on Tuesday and ending it on a Thursday, Commissioner Showalter proposed beginning on Thursday the 18th and ending on Saturday the 27th. That would give hunters two Saturdays. In doing so, staff would find that most people who have the opportunity to hunt, especially kids since school will be back in session, will hunt on Saturdays.
    - a. Chair Wagner noted that Commissioner Showalter made a fair comment.
    - b. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack thanked Commissioner Showalter for his comment. Commissioner Showalter's recommendation is doable and makes a lot of sense.
- Q&A Section:
  1. Chair Wagner asked if the staff had any numbers on the early duck season. Chair Wagner recalled that the early Teal Season is not as popular. Chair Wagner also asked how to utilize the November first date for early youth and military day or if it would be better to have another date later in the year. Chair Wagner added that he does not know many who take advantage of the November 1<sup>st</sup> duck season date. Chair Wagner suggested that the youth and military waterfowl's initial hunting date should be scheduled for later in the season when there might be greater participation.
    - a. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack responded that the suggestion had been discussed



- before. Regarding utilization between the two, the staff had no numbers for the November date. Still, the later date in February is more popular with youth hunters and eligible military hunters. There's no doubt. The issue we run into a little bit between November and the end of January is finding a Saturday where nothing else is happening.
- b. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack added that there are only a few Saturdays when the other waterfowl seasons are closed, occupied mainly by deer firearm seasons and other big things. Staff run out of days on the calendar; therefore, locating another date is a challenge.
  2. Mr. Web Johnson asked why Maryland could not start the AP season on Sunday, February 1st.
    - a. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack explained that the Commission recommended to slide AP season back one day, so even though Sunday or Saturday of the first this year doesn't overlap with duck season, hunters get another Saturday out of goose season. Next year, staff could move the AP season theoretically as late as February 5th, but then you lose overlap days with duck season.
    - b. It's essential to have as much overlap with duck and goose season as possible.
  3. Commissioner Showalter asked if the birds in Canada were dead or if the transmitters fell off.
    - a. Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey pointed out that as far as staff are aware, a few of them are still transmitting; however, some birds have not checked in a while, probably due to a loss of cell connection. It could be their last known location.
    - b. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack explained that if the bird is in a place where the transmitter has not been able to lock onto a cell tower and download, that's what the map shows. Some of those will stay that way for a long time. Then, the bird will pop up someplace, and staff will get an upload showing its current location. There are birds along the St. Lawrence River Valley that are probably legitimate, and those birds are probably alive and hanging out there. There are birds further northeast of James Bay that perhaps do not reflect reality.
  4. Chair Wagner asked to explain the difference between orange and purple pins related to the type of birds.
    - a. Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey replied that all the pins on the AP Canada Goose Telemetry slide are the Atlantic Population of Canada Goose.
    - b. The orange pins represent the Ungava Bay Summer breeding grounds, and the purple pins represent the Hudson Bay side of the Ungava Peninsula breeding grounds.
  5. Chair Wagner asked if the Ungava and Hudson Bay Group were part of the 89,000 nesting pair number.
    - a. These are all AP geese and part of the 89,000 nesting pair number.
    - b. The two areas where banding is focused on the Ungava Peninsula. It is a peninsula jutting north and east/west sides. The peninsula's west side is known to be the better breeding habitat and the more significant concentrations of these birds. It is the principal place that the AP goes to nest. Therefore, biologists have banded and put collards on the birds historically there.
    - c. Staff changed the color of the birds on the east side of the peninsula compared to those on the west side.
    - d. Biologists noted how the birds stayed east/west through their migration and wintering grounds.
  6. Commissioner Showalter asked how staff delineate between the resident and AP geese and if there is a scenario in which this data changes or shifts the resident zone further west. Commissioner Showalter expressed that he was surprised by the number of purple pins that looked like they were in the western resident goose season.
    - a. There were two purple pins in the western APR boundary.
    - b. GPS technology confirmed our zone boundaries based on band return data.
    - c. This is the third year staff members have placed collars on geese and observed where the birds are wintering.
  7. Chair Wagner requested staff to send a more detailed and blown-up section of the AP Canada Goose Telemetry maps because their location is tight. It would be great to show with complex



- data that staff have a delineation line that they see very clearly in the number of birds in the western versus the eastern zone of hunting in Maryland.
- a. Commissioner Showalter mentioned that doing so would end much criticism that the Commission members hear and substantiate the boundary. Commissioner Showalter added that having a map showing the boundary would be great.
  8. Chair Wagner asked if staff have any resident Canada goose telemetry or banding data.
    - a. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack requested that Chair Wagner allow him to address some of the questions sequentially. Chair Wagner agreed but temporarily put Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack on hold because a public member had a question.
  9. Mr. Web Johnson asked if the Atlantic Flyway has had the opportunity to review this data, which is used to potentially move some borders for the AP and resident Canada geese.
  10. The AP Canada Goose Telemetry Project is an ongoing research project. This research project is not just a Maryland project. It is part of the Atlantic Flyway, or at least the states that hunt AP geese. Staff requested patience before answering the questions because next year's final data analysis is scheduled. Staff plans to collect another entire season of data. The goal is to keep the Commission informed on the data collection.
  11. The AP Canada Goose Telemetry Project was designed to review whether migration timing and wintering areas have changed and whether the AP warrants a closer look at season timing and boundaries.
  12. Mr. Web Johnson expressed that Lawrence gets a lot of AP geese in November and December.
    - a. Harvest data matters, and biologists look at the harvest from the entire Atlantic Flyway, not just one area. There are multiple things to review, but the Atlantic Flyway has been looking at this data. The data presented today is preliminary. However, the Atlantic Flyway Council will obtain the entire report.
  13. Chair Wagner asked if last year the Atlantic Flyway Council agreed that everybody would have the same standard for season limits on AP geese.
    - a. The AP restrictive package will require all states in the Atlantic Flyway to have the same season and bag limits. Next year, every state will have a 30-day season and a one-bird daily bag limit.
  14. Chair Wagner inquired whether Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) transfers from wild birds to commercial poultry and vice versa or if this information is unknown.
    - a. It is a transmission from the wild birds into the commercial poultry houses, which is the same across the country, and not just a Maryland and Delaware thing.
    - b. Regarding human health concerns, relatively few humans have contracted influenza. CDC and all of our state veterinarians, Maryland and Delaware, consider this a low risk to human health. So, we still consider hunting perfectly safe.
    - c. Anytime a person encounters a sick or dead bird in the wild, you should avoid it. It's not something a person wants to drag home, let a dog around, or attempt to eat, but washing hands, using hand sanitizer, disposing of any carcasses, and when hunting and a person finishes cleaning birds, double bagging the remains, putting them in the trash.
    - d. Cook the meat at the proper temperature. The recommendation for waterfowl is 165.
    - e. The recommendations are on these websites, particularly this USDA advice to hunters. The websites are <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/alert-ws-hpai-hunters.pdf>; <https://mda.maryland.gov/Pages/AvianFlu.aspx>.
  15. Mr. Web Johnson asked for an update on the swan season.
    - a. Staff wrote a draft on this topic. It is part of the legislative record; a swan season does not require a legislative change but is under the administration's authority. This administration and the prior administration questioned if Maryland could biologically sustain a swan hunt, and the answer was yes.
    - b. A handful of permits would be available from the allocation currently available to the other states in the region.
    - c. It is not a rich biological question. The data is pretty crystal clear that Maryland could have a



- swan hunt for a handful of swans.
- d. Ecological briefs are on the legislative website.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB)** – Tyler Hough, MFB Director of Government Relations - Absent

**Natural Resources Police Update (NRP)** – Lieutenant Brian Miller gave an update.

- Lieutenant Brian Miller and Lieutenant Bill Davis are assigned to the Wildlife Advisory Commission.
- Lieutenant Brian Miller provided the November 2024 stats.
  1. Traffic violations (do not include criminal arrest or civil or parking) were 109 citations; public lands citations were 89; wildlife citations were 145; fisheries citations were 109; boating citations were 53. The total for November 2024 was 505.
  2. The total year to date, excluding December 2024, was 33,178, with 4,454 traffic, 3,892 public lands, 1,485 wildlife, 10,859 fisheries, and 12,438 boating.
- Q&A Section:
- Chair Wagner asked if the total ratio of traffic to wildlife and boating violations was comparable to last year.
  1. Lieutenant Brian Miller could not provide the answer to Chair Wagner at this meeting.
  2. Lieutenant Brian Miller agreed to figure out the statistical data and report that information to the Commission at another meeting.
  3. Chair Wagner suggested that Lieutenant Brian Miller obtain the December numbers and gather data comparisons from 2023 and 2024 for the Commission.

**Old Business**

- Revamping Trapping Course Update—
  1. Commissioner Rossignuolo indicated that she discussed the course with one of the Natural Resources Police Safety Education Coordinators. The Course is still a work in progress. The NRP Safety Education Coordinators are working on creating a PowerPoint that will accompany the trapper education program.
  2. Chair Wagner requested that the Trapping Course PowerPoint be presented to the Commission once completed.
- License Portal Update –
  1. Associate Director Eyler informed the Commission that Brandt is on track for a target date of March 4. Staff have been working with Brandt on ironing out items related to deer and turkey check-in and duck blind licensing components.
- Non-use of Drones for Deer Recovery and Hunting —
  1. Chair Wagner indicated that the Commission might be able to take this topic off the agenda for future meetings unless members have input. Chair Wagner added that it seems the Department will hold steady on what is current in the system.
- Fox Chasing Non-License Requirement—Tabled for a future date.
  1. Chair Wagner suggested Director Karina Stonesifer discuss some license requirements and participation with the Fox Chasing Community. The Fox Chasing Community Representatives would like clarification on how they can move forward, particularly with not having to qualify with a gun, which was their biggest concern. The Fox Chasing Community Representatives told Chair Wagner they had no issue with purchasing a license.
  2. Director Karina Stonesifer agreed to discuss this with the WHS team and get up to speed on this topic.
- Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition –
  1. Commissioner Showalter indicated that the Commission is waiting for legislative developments.
  2. Chair Wagner requested that this topic be removed from the agenda. The Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition will be handled under the Legislative Update.
- WHS Money Allocation Document – Associate Director Kristen Fleming presented a WHS Special Fund Revenue slide. [ATTACHMENT C]



1. WHS uses special fund revenue as matched dollars to the federal funding.
2. Some of our grants must have a 25% match.
3. Some WHS staff members are dependent on special fund revenue specific to their work that cannot be billed to federal funds. WHS has around 100 staff members.
4. The list of partners is not inclusive, but it is a good sample size.
5. Chair Wagner recalled the discussion about where the increases in the license fees were going. There were discussions about getting new R3 personnel on board. However, Chair Wagner received questions about where the money raised from SB327 (two years ago) is going and what it is doing for the hunters. The information in the [ATTACHMENT C] will help.
6. Chair Wagner requested that Associate Director Kristen Fleming share specific details and hard facts that the Commission could share that would be helpful as discussion points—for example, the Sika Deer Study, Whitetail Deer Study, and Bobwhite Quail Habitat Improvement Study.

### **New Business –**

- Potential Agenda Topics for May and September Meetings –
  1. Chair Wagner suggested adding the Trapping Revamp Course Discussion at the May or September meetings.
  2. Chair Wagner requested a May presentation on the new License Portal.
  3. Please contact Chair Wagner and Ms. Tracey Spencer about the new May or September agenda topics the Commission should discuss.
- Subject-Matter Meeting – Chair Wagner noted that it has been requested that some in-person subject matter meetings be held. Chair Wagner recommended that the Commission get involved with setting up these meetings, probably in Annapolis, during the Legislative Session. This request is coming from some of the legislators. Chair Wagner asked members of the Commission for their input on providing some venues or opportunities for people to voice their opinions directly to the Commission, and the Commission will be better informed and report to DNR on the information collected.
  1. Commissioner Showalter expressed that he is happy to participate.
  2. Commissioner Kullberg said it sounds good, and people want to be heard, so it is a nice idea.
  3. Chair Wagner pointed out that legislators and stakeholders will have many questions about the AP Canada Goose Season and the guidelines.
  4. Commissioner Keithley emphasized that this idea is worthy of further discussion and that much thought must be given to how it is advertised.
  5. Commissioner Kullberg suggested that it could be a meet-and-greet type of meeting with an introduction to what the Wildlife Advisory Commission does because many people do not know our role. With the mid-March bills crossover date, WAC must assemble this reasonably quickly.
  6. Mr. Web Johnson asked if the Commission would open these meetings to the public and host them at Chesapeake College.
    - a. Chair Wagner responded that the meetings at Chesapeake College were held with minimum attendance, which is why the virtual options exist.
    - b. Chair Wagner recommended that the legislators and stakeholders' meeting that WAC will host be held in Annapolis since it will be during the session.
    - c. Director Stonesifer agreed to contact Chair Wagner about the legislators and stakeholders meeting.
- Chair Wagner commended Information & R3 Manager Chris Markin for organizing a youth hunt and producing QR codes for people to volunteer as hosts for the youth and veteran hunters. This February 8<sup>th</sup> event is an excellent opportunity to donate to some hunting spots. There were 350 applicants. There are never enough spots for youth and veteran hunters. Please contact Chris Markin at [chris.markin@maryland.gov](mailto:chris.markin@maryland.gov) if you are interested in being a host or mentor. There is a spot on the website where you can register.
  1. Commissioner Schroyer recommended that the Commission move away from using youth only because some individuals purchased apprentice hunting licenses; we must include them in these hunting events. Commissioner Schroyer mentioned that the Commission and staff would probably



- observe much bigger results when we include the apprentice hunters at these events.
2. Associate Director Eyler estimated that Maryland sold around 3,000 apprentice hunting licenses and 5,000 junior hunting licenses.
  3. Commissioner Schroyer drew attention to the age group of the apprentice license holders. These individuals are old enough to make decisions and spend money. The Commission and staff need to cater to those folks a bit more and include them in some of these special hunts.
  4. Director Stonesifer informed the Commission that WHS changed its focus on youth because it is evident that youth is not the only audience. Director Stonesifer commended Commissioner Schroyer for his observation that these events should be open to everybody and that the focus should be on recruiting regardless of age.
- Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting—WHS is co-hosting this meeting with Delaware from February 16 to 18. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge, MD. Around 250 deer professionals from state agencies and universities will attend. Associate Director Eyler will send the invitation to the Commission.
  - Black Bear Talk Meeting – Game Mammal Section Leader Jonathan Trudeau explained that a group that started as a Facebook Group in early fall is now a non-profit organization. This group is now called the Maryland Black Bear Association (MBBA). On Saturday, January 18, a small group along with NRP will attend a meeting at one of the local fire halls and present to roughly a hundred people about bear management in Maryland and answer some questions related to management strategies and the history of bear management in the state. Game Mammal Section Leader Trudeau and Associate Director Eyler met with the organizer Ryan McCoy several times, and the MBBA plans to do a fair amount in the state beyond bear hunting. MBBA wants to start educational outreach events and organize forest cleanup initiatives. Again, it is a brand-new organization, and they are beginning to get members on board. The next meeting will be held on March 9<sup>th</sup> in Frederick.

#### Public Comment –

- The public may contact the Members of the Commission at [wac.dnr@maryland.gov](mailto:wac.dnr@maryland.gov).

#### Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

The next meeting will be virtually using Google Meet at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 19, 2025.

#### Attendance

Members:	TJ. Jenkins, S. Keithley, K. Kullberg, J. Parks, K. Rossignuolo, J. Schroyer, R. Showalter, M. Smith, and C. Wagner
Absent:	
Guest:	S. Boyles Griffin, E. Gulbrandsen, W. Johnson, T. Leggett, K. Thompson, and A. Ward
Staff:	C. Coriell, H. Devine, B. Eyler, K. Fleming, K. Harvey, J. Homyack, K. Lamp, J. McKnight, B. Miller, P. Peditto, L. Sarratt, T. Spencer, K. Stonesifer, and J. Trudeau



**Summary of 2025 Proposed Legislation  
Wildlife and Heritage Service  
(as of January 10, 2025)**

<b>Number/ Chapter (Cross File) Total: 4</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Primary Sponsor</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Original House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates</b>	<b>Opposite House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates</b>
<a href="#"><u>HB0173</u></a>	Baltimore County - Deer Management Program - Establishment	<a href="#"><u>Delegate Nawrocki</u></a>	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	<a href="#"><u>Environment and Transportation</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>SB0100</u></a>	Natural Resources - Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours - Authorization	<a href="#"><u>Senator Bailey</u></a>	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>SB0128</u></a>	Hunter Safety Education - Issuance of Identification Number	<a href="#"><u>Senator Bailey</u></a>	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a>	
<a href="#"><u>SB0272</u></a>	Prince George's County - Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones	<a href="#"><u>Senator Jackson</u></a>	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a>	



# Proposed Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons for 2025-26





# September Teal Season



## Federal Framework:

A **9-day** season may be held between Sept. 1 and Sept. 30 with a 6 bird daily bag limit. Teal season may not run concurrently with other seasons that allow special considerations (resident Canada goose) such as modified shooting hours or unplugged guns.

## Proposed Season and Bag Limit:

Sept. 16, 2025 – Sept. 25, 2025

**Daily Bag Limit:** 6 blue-winged or green-winged teal, singly or in aggregate, per day



*Note: Early Resident Goose is Sept 1-15*



# "Regular" Duck Hunting Season



## Federal Framework:

60-day season between Saturday nearest Sept. 24 and January 31 with a daily bag limit of 6 ducks (species restrictions).

A photograph of two ducks swimming in a body of water. The ducks are white with dark brown or black patches on their wings and backs. They are facing left, and their heads are slightly above the water.

Eastern Duck Zone	Western Duck Zone
Oct. 11, 2025 – Oct. 18, 2025	Oct. 4, 2025 – Oct. 18, 2025
Nov. 15, 2025 – Nov. 28, 2025	Nov. 22, 2025 – Nov. 28, 2025
Dec. 16, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026	Dec. 16, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026

## Daily Bag Limit:

6 per day (including mergansers) but no more than 4 sea ducks (3 long-tailed ducks, 3 scoters, 3 eiders), 4 mallards (2 hens), 3 wood ducks, **3 pintails**, 2 redheads, 1 scaup\*, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks (during black duck season), 1 mottled duck, and 1 fulvous tree duck.

*Scaup hybrid season: Daily bag limit is 1 except between Jan.9, 2026 and Jan. 31, 2026 when 2 scaup per day may be harvested.*



# Youth/Military Waterfowl Hunting Days



**Federal Framework:** States can hold 2 youth/military personnel days outside of regular duck season but within 14 days of the end framework dates (Sept. 21 and Jan. 31). Must be on weekends, holidays, or other non-school days.

**Proposed Dates:** Nov. 1, 2025 and Feb. 7, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 6 ducks (certain species bag restrictions), 1 Canada goose in the AP Zone or 5 Canada geese in the late RP Zone, 1 brant, 25 <sup>Tight</sup> geese, 2 scaup and 15 coots.

Requirements: Youth hunter must be 16 years of age or younger and accompanied by an unarmed adult at least 21 years old. The adult may assist in calling, setting decoys, and retrieving downed birds. Military veterans (as defined in Section 101 of title 38, United States Code) of any age and members of the armed forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on Active duty (other than for training) can participate in these two hunt days.





# AP Pair Estimates and Hunting Implications



- AP CAGO Breeding Pair Data

2024 – 89,000 pairs

2023 – 115,00 pairs

2022 - 164,000 pairs

2021 - No survey

2020 - No Survey

2019 - 120,000 pairs

2018 - 112,000 pairs



- 2021: AFC recommended keeping restrictive seasons for 2022-2023 although the harvest plan called for a moderate (30 days/2 bird per day) package.
- 2022: the AFC recommended the standard package (45 days/ 2 bird per day) for 2023-24 based on a predicted breeding pair estimate of 180,500 in 2023.
- 2023: AFC recommended the moderate package (30 days/2 birds) for 2024-25 based on a predicted breeding pair estimate of 140,000 in 2024.
- 2024: AFC recommended a restrictive package (30 days/1 bird) for the 2025-26 based on a breeding pair estimate of 133,500 in 2025



# Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season



Population Thresholds (Breeding Pairs)	Harvest Package	Target Adult Harvest Rate	Packages for Chesapeake Region AP Areas	Packages for Mid-Atlantic and New England Region AP Areas
> 160,000	Liberal	7%	45 days and 2 geese/day	45 days and 3 geese/day
≤ 160,00 and > 125,000	Moderate	5%	30 days and 2 geese/day	30 days and 3 geese/day
≤ 125,000 and ≥ 60,000	Restrictive	3%	30 days and 1 goose/day	30 days and 1 goose/day
< 60,000	Closed	0%	Closed	Closed

- AP Canada goose IPM predicts 133,500 (95% CI = 93,000–187,500) breeding pairs for June 2025, however, AFC recommended restrictive package



# Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season



## Federal Framework:

A 30-day season may be held between Nov. 15 and Feb. 5 with a 1 bird daily bag limit. The season may be divided into no more than 2 segments.

## Proposed Season and Bag Limit:

Dec. 19, 2025 – Jan. 3, 2026

Jan. 14, 2026 – Jan. 31, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 1 per day





# Calendar View of Proposed 2025-26 AP Canada Goose Season



December 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Duck Season	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
January 2026						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

30 day season, 1 goose per day



# AF Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season

(AFRP Zone)



## **Federal Framework:**

80-day season between Nov. 15 and Mar. 10

**Daily Bag Limit:** 5 per day

## **Proposed Season and Bag Limit:**

Nov. 22, 2025 - Nov. 28, 2025

Dec. 15, 2025 - Mar. 7, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 5 per day



# Atlantic Brant Hunting Season



## **Federal Framework:**

30-day season between the Saturday nearest Sept. 24 and Jan. 31 with a 1-bird daily bag limit.

## **Proposed Season:**

Dec. 29, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 1 per day





# Light Goose Hunting Season



## Federal Framework:

107-day season between Oct. 1 and Mar. 10 with a 25-bird daily bag limit and no possession limit.

## Proposed Season:

Oct. 1, 2025 - Nov. 28, 2025

Dec. 15, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026

Feb. 7, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 25 per day  
No Possession Limit



# Light Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season



## Federal Framework:

The Conservation Order allows extended shooting hours for light geese (one-half hour after sunset) and imposes no daily bag limits for light geese. The CO may only open when all waterfowl (including light goose) and crane hunting seasons (excluding falconry) are closed.

## Proposed Season:

Dec. 1, 2025 - Dec. 13, 2025

Feb. 2, 2026 - Feb. 6, 2026

Feb. 9, 2026 - April 15, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** No bag limit  
No possession limit





# Mourning Dove Season



## Federal Framework:

States may select a 90 day season between Sept. 1 – Jan. 31 with 15 birds/day. There can be no more than 3 season segments.

## Proposed Season:

Sept. 1, 2025 – Oct. 18, 2025

Oct. 25, 2025 – Nov. 28, 2025

Dec. 20, 2025 – Jan. 9, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 15 birds/day





# Woodcock Season



## **Federal Framework:**

States may select a 45-day season between October 1 and January 31 with a 3-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

## **Proposed Season:**

Oct. 25, 2025 – Nov. 28, 2025

Jan. 12, 2026 – Jan. 28, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 3 birds/day





# Calendar View of 2025-26 Atlantic Population Canada Goose Hunting Season Proposals



## No Sunday Hunting

December 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
January 2026						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

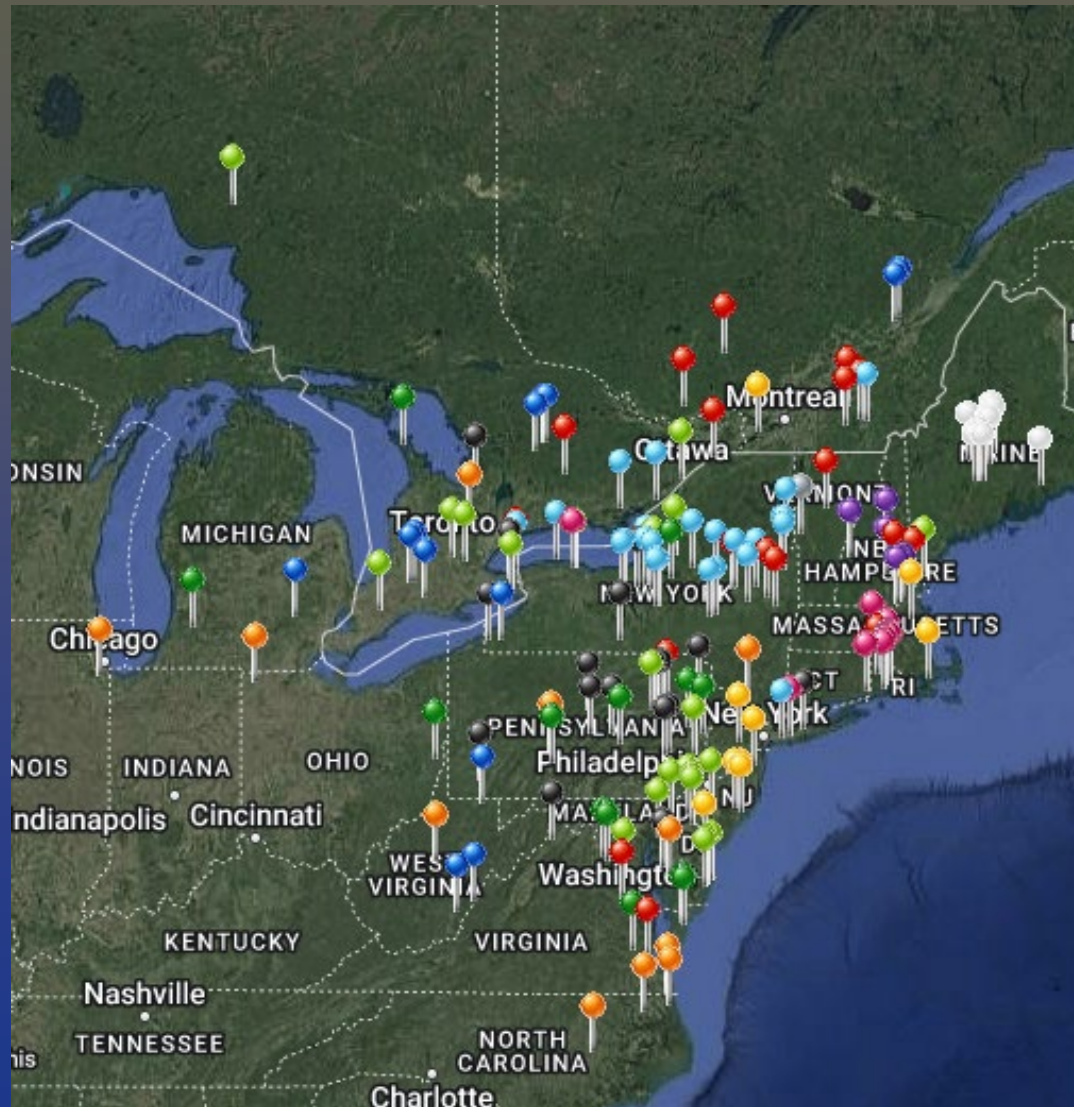
## Sunday Hunting

December 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
January 2026						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

*30 day season, daily bag limit of 1 geese per day*



# Mallard Telemetry Update



1/8/25



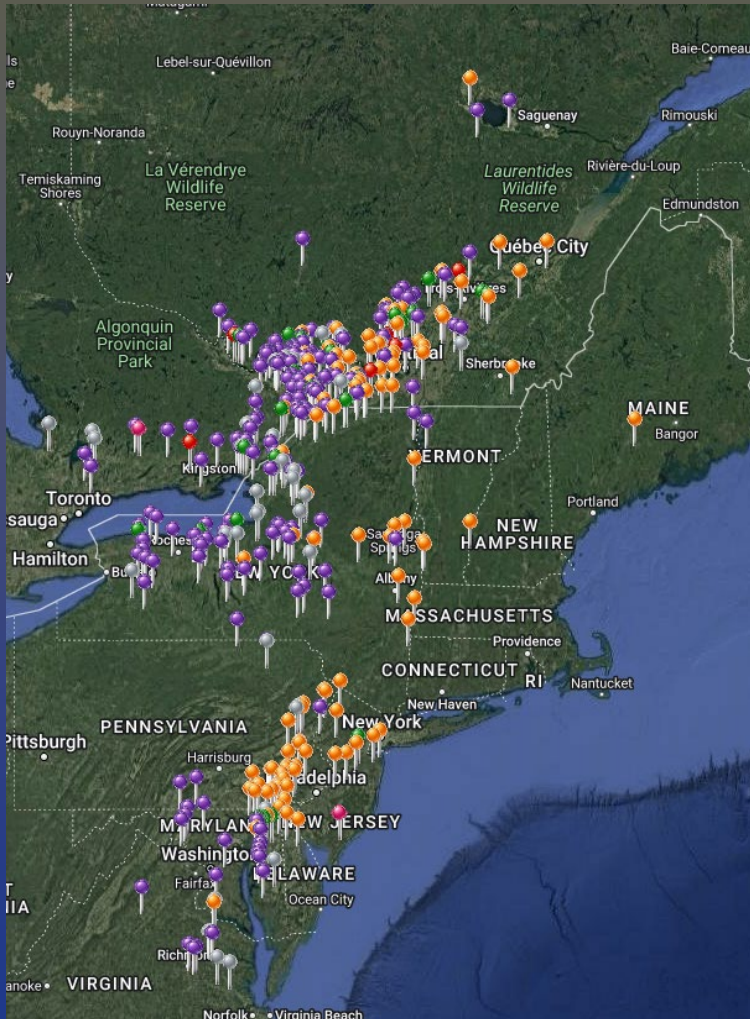
# American Black Duck Telemetry Update



1/8/25



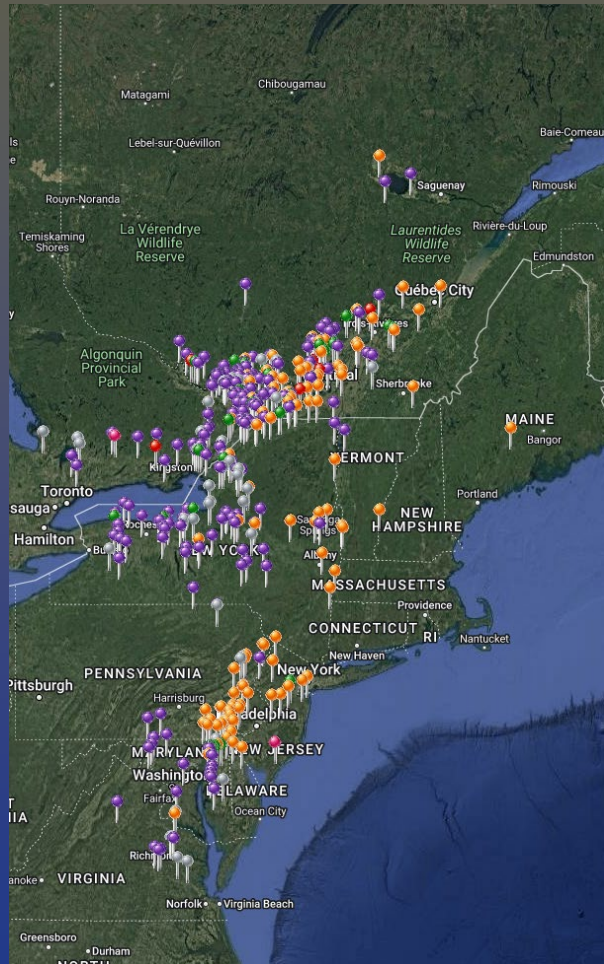
# AP Canada Goose Telemetry Update



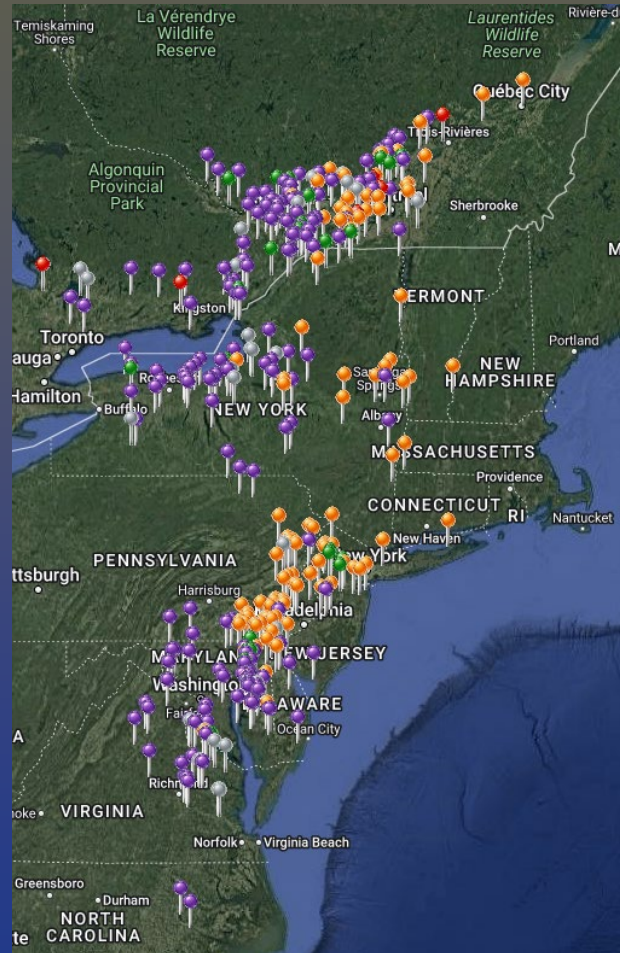
- **Green – MD Winter**
- **Gray – VA Winter**
- **Orange – Ungava Bay Summer**
- **Purple – Hudson Bay Summer**



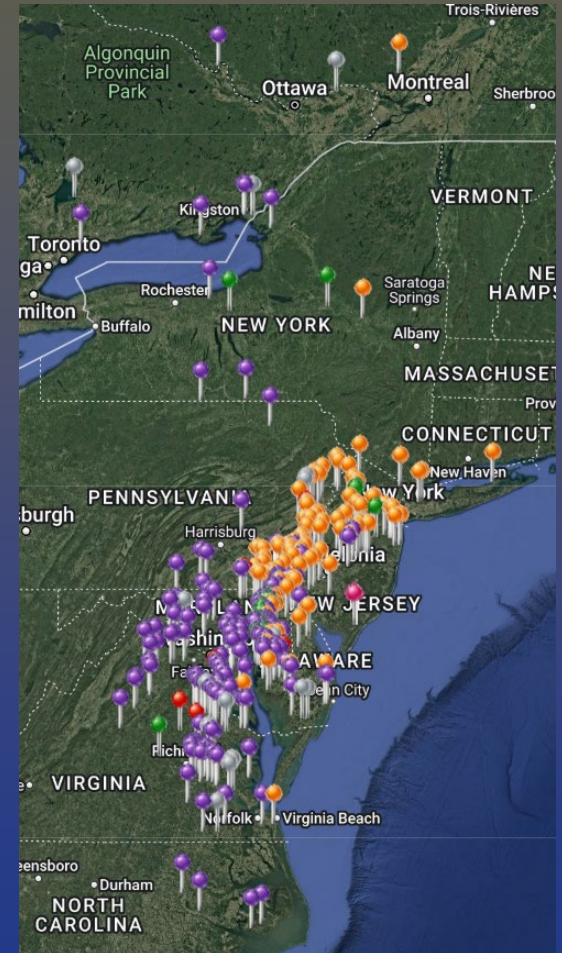
# AP Canada Goose Telemetry Update



11/4/24



12/4/24



1/4/25



# Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza



- Presumptive positive in wild birds found in MD and DE (as well as throughout country)
- Presumptive positives in commercial poultry operations in MD and DE
- [LINK: USDA Advice to Hunters Regarding HPAI](#)
- [LINK: Maryland Department of Agriculture HPAI Information](#)



# Questions?

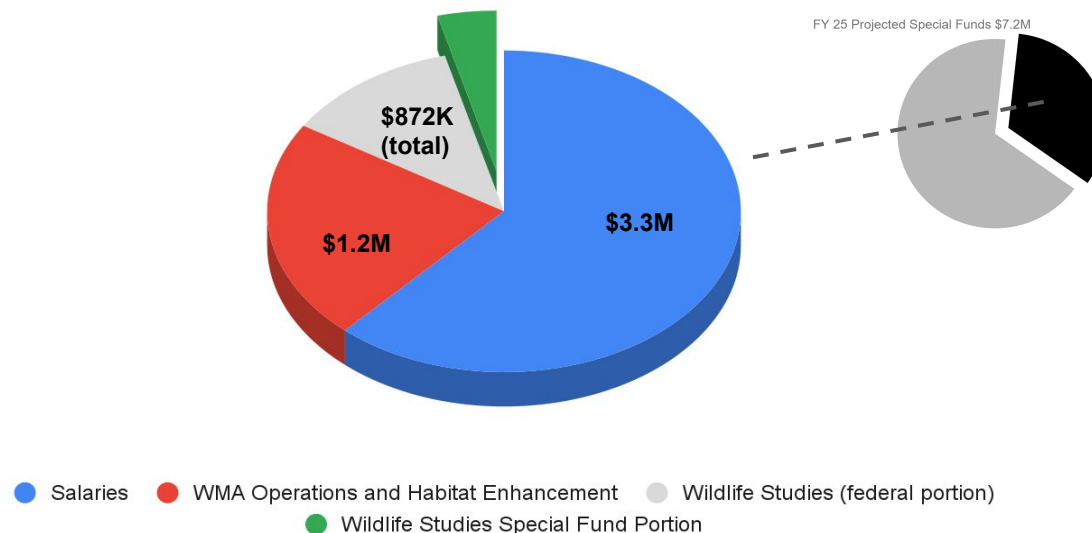




## Special Fund Distribution Wildlife &amp; Heritage Service

## PARTNERS

Ducks Unlimited,  
Delmarva RC&D, National  
Bobwhite and Grassland  
Initiative, Maryland  
Coastal Bays Foundation,  
Chesapeake Bay Trust,  
National Wild Turkey  
Federation, University of  
Delaware, University of  
Maryland, National  
Audubon Society, USDA,  
Maryland Ornithological  
Assoc, Western Maryland  
RCD

**Wildlife Studies in FY 24/FY25**

- Blind site data updates
- Aerial waterfowl surveys
- Wood duck, mallard, black duck, mourning dove ecology
- Tiger beetle monitoring
- Bobwhite habitat
- Long-eared bat
- Landbird migration habitat surveys
- Resource assessment survey monitoring
- Black bear habitat
- Turkey technician assistance
- Sika deer