

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM
On Wed., June 17, 2026
Department of Natural Resources
Google Meet**

Meeting Agenda:

Approval for June 17, 2026, Meeting Agenda

Approval of April 15, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Game Program Update (Associate Director Brian Eyler and Game Mammal Section Leader Jonathan Trudeau)

- **Black Bear Project Update**
- **New Drone Regulation Update**

Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation (R3) Program Update (Associate Director Chris Markin)

Maryland Farm Bureau Update

Natural Resources Police Update (Lieutenant Brian Miller or Lieutenant Bill Davis)

Old Business:

- **Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition – (Group Discussion)**
- **Reptile and Amphibian Regulation Concepts – (Group Discussion)**
- **WAC Legislative Concepts – (Group Discussion)**
- **Conservationist and Farmer of the Year Nominations**
- **September 15, 2026, Tuesday, Field Day at Blackwater NWR**

New Business:

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 2026 Meetings
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

January 21st	Google Meet
February 18th	Google Meet
March 18th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
April 15th	Google Meet
May 20th	No Meeting
June 17th	Google Meet
July 15th	No Meeting
August 19th	Google Meet
September 15th?	Field Trip (Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge)
October 21st	Google Meet
November 18th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
December 16th	No Meeting

***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. Parking is available at the Navy Stadium Parking Lot.

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THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES

JUNE 17, 2026

Chair Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. This meeting was held by teleconference and in person. Chair Wagner requested a roll call from individuals on the teleconference. Unfortunately, due to Google Meet's anonymous caller system, it was impossible to identify every participant.

Approval of June 17, 2026, Meeting Agenda

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Rasche moved to accept the agenda for the June 17, 2026, Wildlife Advisory Commission meeting.
 2. Commissioner Parks seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval of April 15, 2026, Meeting Minutes

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Smith moved to approve the April 15, 2026, meeting minutes.
 2. Commissioner Schroyer seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Game Program Update – Associate Director Brian Eyler

- Game Mammal Section Leader Jonathan Trudeau gave a Black Bear Project Update PowerPoint presentation. [ATTACHMENT A] Presentation Notes provided by Game Mammal Section Leader Jonathan Trudeau are below.
 1. Game Mammal Section Leader Trudeau summarized that the presentation will highlight the bear population historically, the research conducted, and different management tools, along with the long-term project being conducted with the assistance of the University of Maryland.
 2. Slides Two and Three depicted the historic black bear range in the Mid-Atlantic region back in the 60s and 70s. Black Bears were relegated to a relatively small area in the Mid-Atlantic. Still, when fast-forwarding to more recent maps, bears occupied almost the entirety of the Mid-Atlantic region.
 3. Slide Four demonstrated that in Maryland, there is an occupied bear range. This range is in the four western counties of Maryland. These are considered occupied because staff had marked female bears producing cubs within those counties multiple years in a row, and that is our defining metric. If sows are giving birth within that county regularly, that indicates bears are living there and utilizing that county to meet their metabolic, social, and reproductive needs.
 4. Slide Five highlighted that the Black Bear Project has three main areas of focus: Management, Outreach/People Management, and Research. These are not mutually exclusive.
 5. Slide Six noted the two main management tools: the Annual Bear Hunt and the Bear Agricultural Damage Permit.
 - a. Maryland has an annual bear hunt. Unlike other states, Maryland operates under a lottery-based system. For the first few years of the bear hunt, it was a quota-based hunt that closed after a certain number of bears were harvested. However, staff moved away from that and now have just a set number of permits per year. The way the black bear lottery works is that hunters apply every year for the black bear hunt. As hunters apply, they accumulate preference points. Preference points are essentially just their name in the hat, so to speak, and the extra time period; on average, it takes about three to four preference points to be selected. Maryland has one of the most restrictive black bear hunts on the East Coast. Maryland does not allow the use of any bait, scent attractants, electric calls, or hounds. Also, the bear hunt is only six days long, and there are no over-the-counter tags; because of that, it can be difficult to harvest bears during the Maryland bear season.

- b. There is the bear agriculture damage permit, which is designed to allow farmers to use the permit during two weeks between the middle of August and the end of December. The rationale was that staff wanted farmers to use the permit during the period when bear damage was occurring. Black bears can cause extensive damage to row crops, specifically oats and corn. When a bear gets into a cornfield, especially when the corn is in that milk phase where it's the most nutritious, a bear can consume a large amount of corn in a relatively short period of time. Unlike deer that work from the outside in, a bear will go into the middle of a cornfield, lie down, and consume corn. Staff referred to bears as metabolically efficient creatures, meaning bears are relatively lazy when they want to eat. Bears will lie down in a cornfield, pull the corn stalks to themselves, and eat what they want. The agricultural damage permit has improved staff relationships with producers in the occupied bear range.
 - c. There is also a Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund for compensation of bear damage, but unfortunately that fund is really limited, and it's funded completely by donations. Basically, if a person has registered for the Black Bear Lottery, there is a question that asks, "Do you want to donate?", and if the person checked yes, that donated money goes into the Black Bear Damage Reimbursement Fund, which is pennies on the dollar. So, farmers were not getting a whole lot. But now, with this permit, farmers can use it for a longer period of time, when they actually want to use it.
 - d. Bear damage can be difficult to spot until crops are harvested, which means that the damage is already done by the time the producer actually catches it. So in areas where we have known black bear damage to crops, as soon as a farmer detects any damage, one of our staff will go out to assess the damage and can then issue a permit. These permits are valid from the middle of August through the end of the year and can be used for any consecutive week period to harvest a bear.
6. Slide Eight highlighted that a large part of bear management comes down to "Outreach/People Management." The annual black bear hunt and the agricultural bear permits provide valuable management tools; probably the most effective management tool is people management, which involves outreach and communicating with the public about bears. The cartoon shows how human behavior or decisions can have a large impact on wildlife responses, in this case, bears. The caption said, "And no one ever heard from the Anderson brothers again." There is a sow in the background, and these two brothers are playing with the cub. We probably know what likely happened to the Anderson brothers.
7. Slides Nine through Eleven summarized staff efforts to improve outreach. Maryland became a BearWise member a few years ago. BearWise is an NGO (nongovernmental organization) that focuses on educational materials and products. It's based on sound science, so all the products it provides or puts out are vetted and verified by a panel of state or federal bear biologists.
- a. BearWise provides consistent messaging from state to state. The message about bears you received in Maryland is the same as the one you would receive in Vermont, Pennsylvania, Florida, or even Colorado. That consistent messaging is imperative to ensure the public knows how they should behave around bears.
 - b. BearWise products are visually appealing, high quality, and affordable. Instead of each state or jurisdiction producing its own educational or outreach materials, the state can now use the BearWise products, which may be slightly tailored for each state. When a person looks at these products, they can see relatively short, easy-to-read, and attractive materials.
8. Slide Twelve outlined regular research that staff conducts. Staff's best-known research is the Annual Reproductive Survey, which is the one survey that staff conducts each winter. During that survey, staff checks to see how many cubs each sow produces every other year. We average three per litter, which is some of the highest reproductive rates in the black bear range, indicating we have very good habitat and a healthy black bear population. No other information will be provided at this meeting because staff had discussed this topic in the past. Also, staff monitor public reports every year and use that as an index of bear abundance. Additionally, Maryland is in the middle of a four-year study with the University of Maryland.

9. Slide Thirteen reported on the recent black bear sightings. The map depicted each confirmed bear sighting within a county in the last 10-year period. So, each county that is orange on the map is a confirmed sighting of a bear. The vast majority of the state has had confirmed bear sightings at one point or another, with many having been spotted in these areas frequently. In reality, Washington, DC could be included, as there have been confirmed bear sightings in DC.
10. Slide Fourteen provided a figure showing the number of black bear reports by county. The chart included reports ranging from a bear hit by a vehicle to a bear getting into a bird feeder or trash can. The chart revealed that Garrett County has the most black bear reports, and this has held year after year. However, staff are starting to see counties like Frederick County that are consistently seeing more bear activity. Last year, a black bear was reported in 15 of our 23 counties. Granted, some of the sightings are one-offs, like the one in Anne Arundel County, and then you have Garrett County with almost 225 reports in a single year. Much of that was due to bear density, tourism around Deep Creek Lake, which generates a lot of reporting, and known agricultural damage and things of that nature.
11. Slide Fifteen was a video of a bear that was embracing the metabolically efficient nature of a bear consuming all the black oil sunflower seeds from a bird feeder.
12. Slide Sixteen highlighted the (UMD) University of Maryland Project, which is a four-year study. There are two graduate students on this DNR-funded project, which has two main objectives: to estimate the abundance of bears in the state and to identify dispersal and travel corridors. To address the first objective, the students are deploying over 200 hair snares. These hair snares are designed to collect hair from bears, which they can then send to a laboratory to obtain genetic markers and determine how related each individual is to one another and approximately how many bears visit their site. From that, the students can then generate an abundance estimate.
13. Slides Seventeen and Eighteen demonstrated the map of the 211 hair snares.
 - a. UMD deployed 211 hair snare sites across the state to address the abundance estimate, with a heavy focus on Western Maryland due to the higher bear density in those areas.
 - b. The students deployed 155 hair snares, and the students collected about 2,542 confirmed hair samples in 2025.
 - c. In the image on the left, you can see what the hair snare setup looks like. It's essentially a circle or triangle setup within the trees, with a scent attractant in the middle. Barbed wire is strung around the trees in a way that forces a bear to go through, over, or under it. When that happens, the hair gets snagged and pulled out, and the students can then retrieve it and extract genetic information from the hair follicles.
 - d. The image on the right is a heat map that indicates where the most samples were collected. The yellows and reds/oranges are areas with a greater number of samples collected, while the purple areas are those with fewer samples collected. This image shows a large number of hair samples collected from the western portion of Garrett County (the yellowish area), which is primarily Savage River State Forest.
 - e. It's going to be interesting once the students start to analyze the genetics on this and put together some of these estimated abundance maps as to where bears are occurring throughout the counties and across the region.
14. Slides Nineteen through Twenty-One displayed the GPS Collar Process.
 - a. Staff paired the hair snare sites with collared sows to provide additional information for estimating the abundance of bears. Over the past few years, staff have been working to increase the number of collared sows in these areas. Staff collar these sows by first trapping them using a variety of methods.
 - b. The two primary methods include a foot snare system, which is the image on the left, and our more traditional culvert trap, which is the image on the right. Each trap setup has its benefits and will be utilized in different situations.
 - c. Staff deployed collars on adult sows and young males to study that dispersal pattern. Young males at 18 months old will leave their natal range, where they were born, to establish a new range.

15. Slides Twenty-Two and Twenty-Three displayed a map of the Maryland Black Bear Home Range Estimates (mi²) from March 20, 2025, through December 15, 2025.
 - a. This map provided an idea of the area these bears occupy.
 - b. There were 12 bears collared last year, 11 of which staff were able to calculate home ranges for. The white one that is identified as 17.03 is a yearling male. The number was in square miles, so that's the area that the bear occupied.
 - c. On average, collared sows occupy ~6.6 square miles, with the smallest range at 1.7 square miles and the largest just under 10 square miles. These bears are using relatively small areas.
 - d. The bear that's somewhat maroon in color at the bottom left and the purplish one are where these bears overlapped, but not a lot, which confirms research has shown that bears, or females, overlap and tolerate one another, but that overlap can differ.
16. Slide Twenty-Four showed two sows that are currently collared and overlapping. The two sows shared about 50% of their range. Therefore, knowing how much the bears overlapped helps determine how much time they occupied the same area at the same time, whether they come into proximity to one another, or whether they have worked out a schedule where each bear has a certain time of day for the overlapping areas. All of this data is incredibly useful.
17. Slide Twenty-Five provided dispersal data characteristics on one young male bear that was collared when staff removed it from a tree in the Takoma Park area, in the border area of Silver Spring and Takoma Park last year. Staff relocated the bear to a more appropriate wooded area, but it decided it wanted to go down into Virginia. The bear moved very quickly from May 29th to June 1st, when it went from Maryland to Virginia. Unfortunately, it ended up getting stuck in a tree in Herndon, Virginia, before the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources had to remove it, relocate it to a new area, and return our collar.
18. Slide Twenty-Six also provided dispersal data characteristics on another yearling male bear that was collared on South Mountain in Washington County on the border of Frederick County this year. That bear also ended up making its way down toward DC, and it was still moving around.
- Q&A Section on the Black Bear Project
 1. Chair Wagner asked, based on the presentation, it seems the young bears follow the roadways.
 - a. It seems when a young bear reaches a road, it sticks with it for a while. In fact, many species do that. It's a hard barrier. However, WHS is still researching dispersal data on bears.
- Commissioner Parks thanked Game Mammal Section Leader Jonathan Trudeau for a great report, and Commissioner Parks expressed that it was super informative and appreciated the time in putting this presentation together for the Commission.
- Associate Director Brian Eyler reminded the Commission that once the UMD finishes everything, staff will move forward with revising the Black Bear Management Plan in a few years. The UMD study will conclude in 2028, so the revised Black Bear Management Plan will be out soon after that.
- Director Karina Stonesifer mentioned that some people have approached WHS about making changes to bear management, specifically the hunt. Director Stonesifer stated that WHS is holding the line to allow staff to get a good picture before making any significant changes.
- Chair Wagner suggested that WHS release information in the interim, including that WHS has an ongoing black bear study, when it is expected to conclude, and when the results will be released, to help reduce questions about when Maryland will change the management of black bears.
- Director Stonesifer agreed that staff will have a message compiled for the next regulation cycle.
- Associate Director Brian Eyler gave a New Drone Regulation Update PowerPoint Presentation.

[ATTACHMENT B]

1. Associate Director Eyler informed the Commission that Maryland will have a new drone regulation soon.
2. Associate Director Eyler will send the Commission a copy of the drone regulation.
3. The drone regulation specifies that a person cannot hunt, trap, pursue, or harass wildlife or other hunters with a drone. A person may scout with a drone, but if so, that person cannot hunt on that property or assist someone else in hunting on that property for 24 hours. The regulation allows a person to track wounded game, but the person must notify Natural Resources Police before doing

so. Additionally, the regulation provides an exemption for using drones in approved wildlife management practices and research.

Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Program Update – Associate Director Chris Markin

- Associate Director Chris Markin presented the Outreach and Community Engagement Program (OCEP) Update. [ATTACHMENT C]
- The R3 team is excited about the Train the Trainer Shooting Sports Program. Essentially, the R3 team is reaching out to DNR staff who are not typically involved in R3 efforts or in WHS to train them to be more comfortable around firearms and shooting sports, participate in events as an instructor, or at least be knowledgeable enough that they feel comfortable being at R3 events.
 1. There are two events in July and one event in August at different locations.
 2. It involves classroom instruction and some hunter safety instruction, range time, and time to familiarize with firearms.
 3. The idea is to have more staff who know about R3 and get them comfortable helping out at these events and, in doing so, hopefully increasing R3 efforts.
- The NASP Basic Archery Instructor Trainings are held throughout the year. Staff recently held a NASP Basic Archery Instructor Training with a group called Ancestral Knowledge, which OCEP hopes to partner with. Ancestral Knowledge is a hunting group that focuses mainly on primitive hunting styles.
- The Senior Rangers Archery Workshops – Senior Rangers is a Park Service program. OCEP staff are working with Park Service staff to engage senior citizens and help them learn more about parks. OCEP partnered with the Park Service to get senior citizens involved in archery workshops to learn about and practice archery. Past feedback from senior citizens is that they love and enjoy it. OCEP staff are trying to reach people who might not typically be reached by staff.
- The Waterfowl Hunting 101 Workshop – Some individuals who attended the First Shot Program attended this workshop. Staff taught them how to deer hunt at the First Shot Program, and these same individuals are preparing to waterfowl hunt. This is the progression through the OCEP programming, which is ultimately what staff really want.
- Outdoor Recreation Summit – R3 Meeting is coming in September. OCEP staff are working with other staff in the Outdoor Recreation Unit also to co-host the Annual R3 Meeting. Once details are finalized, staff will ensure the Commission receives it and hopefully get involved.
- Hunter Education – Year to Date (June 16, 2026), Hunter Education (HE) staff conducted 46 basic hunter education classes as well as advanced training workshops. HE staff certified 710 people through those programs. The numbers will probably increase starting in a couple of months.
- Q&A Section
 1. Chair Wagner asked if all those 710 people transition into a full-season hunting license.
 - a. Staff are looking into that and discussing easier ways to track students through the hunter education process.
 - b. A meeting was held with the Licensing and Registration Service to figure out that component. Staff are working with Brandt, who manages Maryland Outdoors, to determine how we can track from obtaining the DNRID to purchasing a hunting license.
 - c. To obtain that information, it currently has to be done manually.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB) – No Update

Natural Resources Police Update (NRP) – Lieutenant Bill Davis gave an update.

- Lieutenant Davis provided statistics for May 2026, noting 721 fisheries violations, hunting violations (mostly turkey hunting related), 219 public lands violations, 35 forestry violations, and 629 boating violations, with a total of 2,319 violations.
- NRP also responded to 9,032 calls for service and filed 238 reports for May.
- These numbers are typical and most likely consistent for this time of the year.
- Chair Wagner requested trend data from NRP.

Old Business

- Non-Lead Ammunition Discussion – no further discussion.
- Farmer of the Year deadline was extended to July 1, 2026.
- September 15, 2026 (Tuesday): Field Day at Blackwater NWR; getting a tour of the property.
- Chair Wagner requested that the Reptile and Amphibian Regulation Concepts and WAC Legislative Concepts be removed from the agenda.

New Business

- Staff provided the status of the Atlantic Population Canada Goose Season and the 2026-2027 Hunting and Trapping Guide. The guides are being shipped, and staff included a caveat for hunters to double-check the DNR website for the Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Season. Staff heard that the USFWS may publish the season next week, which will give staff enough time because the AP season is a little later. Director Stonesifer has been in a meeting with all the directors across the country, along with higher-ups from the USFWS, but the country is on hold on this species. All the other states have published about the Canada Goose Season, but to be clear, the other states do not have any more insight or news than Maryland. All the states publish their seasons and bag limits during this time period, so all the states are in the same situation. Staff are definitely on top of the situation and are working with all of our partner agencies to help mitigate the situation as well, so that is the best we can offer. Staff have been in conversations related to what we do if this does not get handled by USFWS.
- Commissioner Parks commented that he hoped nothing would change with the 45-day and two-bird bag limit, but maybe staff would have to provide some form of notice, or whatever is appropriate, to all the supply stores that sell guns, ammunition, and other components, so the information is put out there. Commissioner Parks understood the law enforcement element, but staff has an obligation to inform the hunters.
 1. Director Stonesifer agreed with Commissioner Parks' comments, and staff are aware that there is a lot to be done in terms of notification, as this significant issue is ongoing.
- Assistant Secretary Peditto noted that everybody is focused on the 2 and 45 issue, and that's important. Still, if what USFWS is contemplating is finalized, the most significant issue is that it could be finalized because USFWS still has to conduct its public comment period and then review those public comments. All of that would fall within a roughly 60-day window. All of this could come down to the last business day before the opening day of dove season. So it's not enough for us to be contemplating what happens on November 22nd for the first split of the AP season. This issue is quite literally one of those where staff won't know until the last business day before the big open for migratory game birds.
- Assistant Secretary Peditto informed the Commission that Senator Angela Alsobrooks, who sits on the EPW Environment and Public Works Committee in the US Senate, put several questions on the record, including this issue, before USFWS Director Brian Nesvik. This issue is a 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Federal Regulatory directive that affected all agencies of the U.S. government that do regulatory rollouts. Assistant Secretary Peditto indicated that this issue is impacting multiple agencies of government.
- Q&A Section:
 1. Chair Wagner asked what was published in the regulation.
 - a. The 45 days and two-bird bag limit were published in the Maryland Register.
 2. Chair Wagner also asked what the contingency plan would include: 30 days with a one-bird bag limit.
 - a. DNR does not have a finalized contingency plan, and staff will explore every single option.
 3. Chair Wagner asked how upset the outfitters and farmers are about the situation.
 - a. These groups are very anxious about it, and staff completely understand because these groups are booking for the 2026-2027 hunting seasons. Staff have been trying to make decisions with the hunters, outfitters, and farmers in mind on this significant issue.

4. Chair Wagner asked if the USFWS is going to move towards a two- or three-year program setting bag limits versus a yearly process.
 - a. Staff are unsure if that is going to be tied in.
 - b. That is one of those things that makes this a little challenging or a little more concerning, because the three-year proposal will be part of this public comment period. So it won't just be collecting public comment on the seasons and bag limits. It will include the three-year proposal structure.
- Chair Wagner stated that there is nothing DNR did to cause this significant issue. It's important to get that message out. Unfortunately, it occurred higher up and was outside the state's control.
- Vice Chair Schroyer heard that Pennsylvania is considering a one-bird bag limit on wild turkey.
 1. Associate Director Eyler mentioned that Bob Long, our turkey biologist, informed staff that Pennsylvania was entertaining that idea.
 2. Vice Chair Schroyer discussed with Bob Long briefly in the past the pressure on the wild turkey, especially in Garrett County, and if Pennsylvania moves to a one-bird-bag limit, Maryland's pressure on wild turkey will get really bad.
 3. Vice Chair Schroyer expressed that he thinks this will force WHS to make some changes to the wild turkey regulation to reduce the pressure.
 4. Vice Chair Schroyer suggested that Bob Long provide a wild turkey update at the next WAC meeting.
 5. Director Stonesifer mentioned that staff are already in discussions and that the Commission will have an update on this topic this fall. Staff received a lot of feedback last year about the pressure on the turkey population, so staff are conducting a thorough review and plan to get back to the Commission.

Public Comment –

- There were no other public comments.
- The public may contact the Members of the Commission at wac.dnr@maryland.gov.

Adjournment

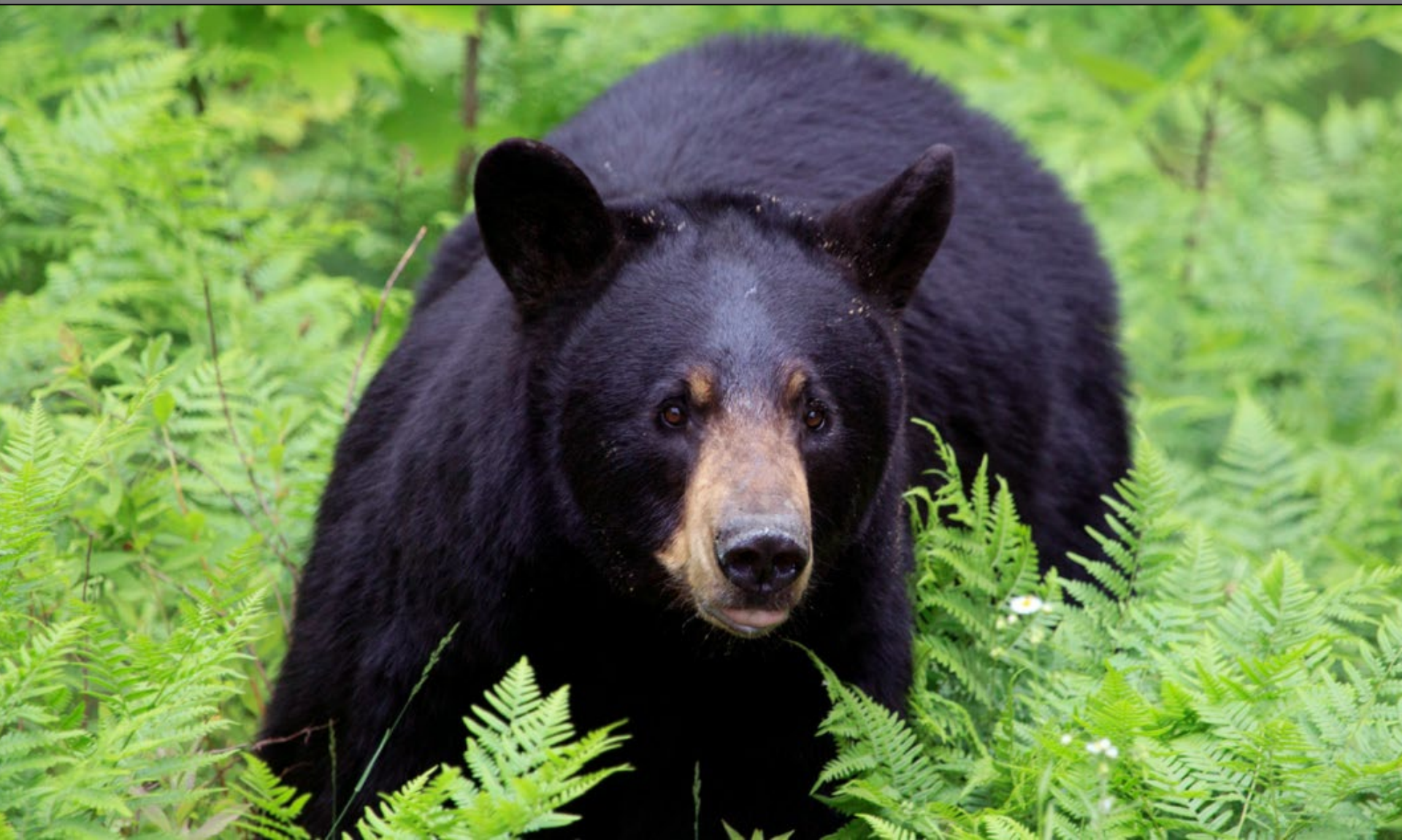
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. and will be held via Google Meet.

Attendance

Members:	J. Bowman, D. Herrera, J. Parks, W. Rasche, K. Rossignuolo, J. Schroyer, M. Smith, and C. Wagner
Absent:	K. Kullberg and E. Cohen
Guest:	H. Bailey, MHG, K. Thompson, and S. Volodin
Staff:	G. Brewer, C. Coriell, B. Davis, B. Eyler, K. Fleming, K. Lamp, C. Markin, J. Moulis, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, N. Stonesifer, K. Stonesifer, J. Tabora, and J. Trudeau

WHS Black Bear Project



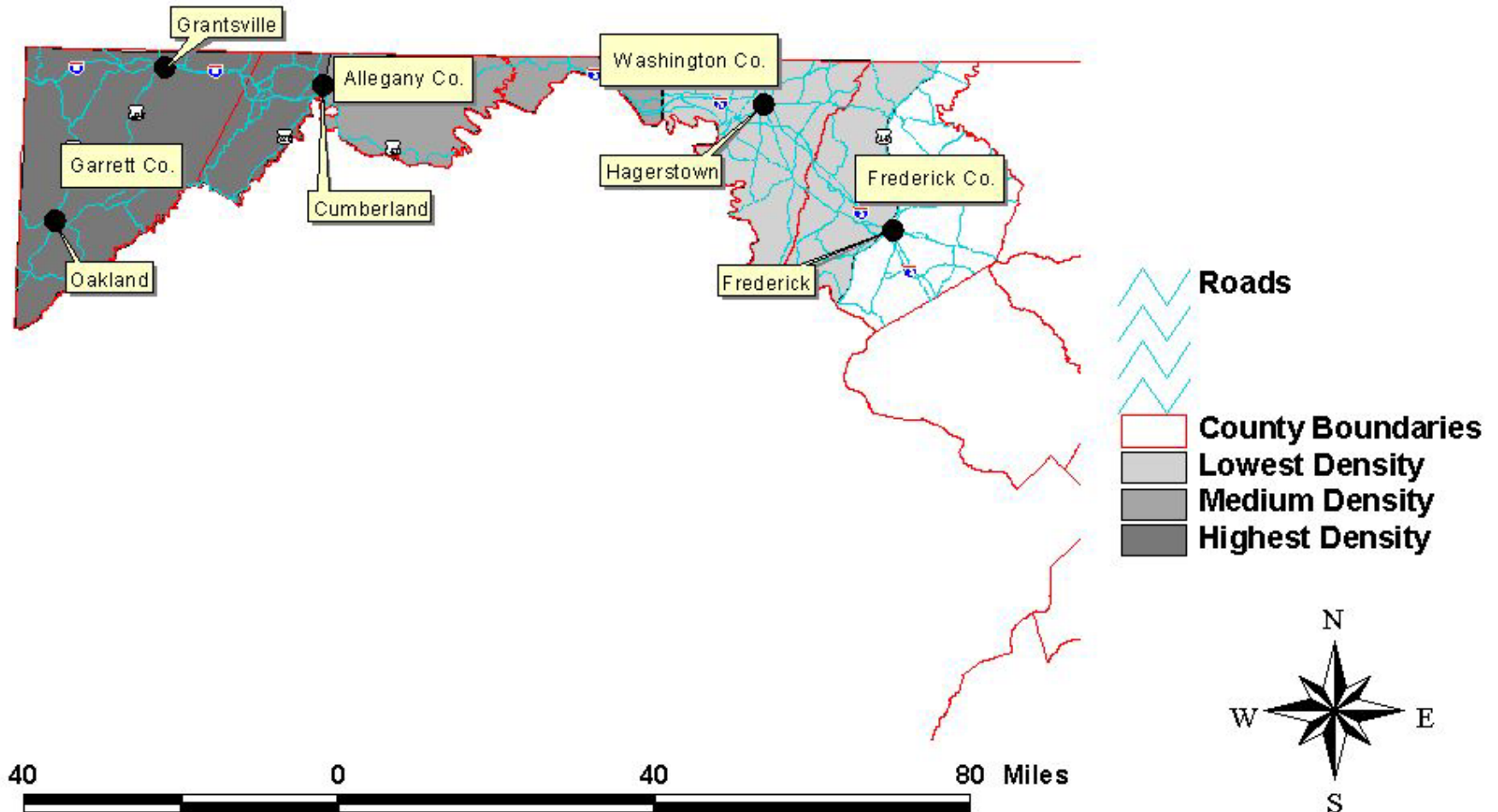
**Historic
Black Bear
Range**
circa 1966-1974



**2007
Black Bear
Range**



Maryland's Occupied Bear Range



What does the project do?



- Management
- Outreach/People Management
- Research

Management

- Annual Bear Hunt
- Bear Agricultural Damage Permit





Outreach/People MGMT



BearWise



- Non-profit NGO
- Focus on educational products
- Sound science
 - Review panels of state and federal bear biologist
- Consistent messaging
- Affordable products



BearWise Products



MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

BearWise Outdoor Safety Tips

Black bears are seldom aggressive and rarely injure people. Follow these BearWise tips to avoid encounters.



Camping

- Keep a clean camp.
- Don't burn food scraps or trash in your fire ring or grill.
- Do not store food, trash, clothes worn when cooking, or toiletries in your tent. Store in approved bear resistant containers OR out of sight in a locked vehicle OR suspended at least 10 feet above the ground and 10 feet from any part of the tree. Local storage regulations vary.
- Cook downwind and as far from your tent as possible.
- Set up backcountry camps away from dense cover and natural food sources.

Hiking, Walking

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Try not to hike alone.
- Keep kids within sight and close by.
- Make noise periodically so bears in the area can avoid you.
- Keep dogs leashed at all times, or leave them at home. Don't force a bear to defend itself.
- Double bag your food and pack out all food and trash. Leaving scraps, wrappers or "harmless" items like trail mix and campfires bears to associate trails and campfires with food.

Fishing, Hunting

- You are more likely to encounter bears when moving quietly and traveling early and late day when bears are most active.
- Follow tips for hiking and camping safety.
- Know that carcasses, gut piles, and bait may attract bears.
- If a bear beats you to your catch or kill, don't try to reclaim it. Leave the area when it is safe to do so.

Carry Bear Spray & Know How To Use It

Keep bear spray accessible. It's proven to be the easiest and most effective way to deter a bear that threatens you. It doesn't work like bug repellent, so **never** spray your tent, campsite or belongings.

If You Encounter a Black Bear

- If you see a bear before it notices you, don't approach.

Be BearWise AT HOME

Six At-Home BearWise Basics

Never Feed or Approach Bears

Intentionally feeding bears or allowing them to find anything that smells or tastes like food teaches bears to approach homes and people looking for more. Bears will defend themselves if a person gets too close, so don't risk your safety and theirs!

Secure Food, Garbage and Recycling

Food and food odors attract bears, so don't reward them with easily available food, liquids or garbage.

Remove Bird Feeders When Bears Are Active

Birdseed and grains have lots of calories, so they're very attractive to bears. Removing feeders is the best way to avoid creating conflicts with bears.

Never Leave Pet Food Outdoors

Feed pets indoors when possible. If you must feed pets outside, feed in single portions and remove food and bowls after feeding. Store pet food where bears can't see or smell it.

Clean & Store Grills

Clean grills after each use and make sure that all grease, fat and food particles are removed. Store clean grills and smokers in a secure area that keeps bears out.

Alert Neighbors to Bear Activity

See bears in the area or evidence of bear activity? Tell your neighbors and share information on how to avoid bear conflicts. Bears have adapted to living near people; now it's up to us to adapt to living near bears.

Black bear is a species; common colors include black, brown and cinnamon.

Learn More: BearWise.org

Helping People Live Responsibly with Black Bears

BearWise® CREATED BY BEAR WISDOMS, SUPPORTED BY LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BearWise Vacation Tips

You are in bear country, so there's a good chance you'll see black bears here, even if you never go into the woods.



Don't Feed the Bears

- Don't leave food, trash or pet food outdoors when no one is around. A few seconds is all it takes for a hungry bear to swipe it.
- Feeding bears or using food to encourage bears to approach you is often illegal and always dangerous.
- Don't throw scraps or leftovers out the car window or into the woods behind your vacation rental.
- If trash container or dumpster is full, don't pile trash outside; take it with you when you leave.

Bear Viewing Guidelines

- Stay in your vehicle; even bears that seem comfortable around people are still wild animals.
- Never approach bears or enter them to approach you, or 10 car lengths away.
- Enjoy bears from a safe distance. Stay at least 50 yards.
- Don't block the road to view bears. If permitted, pull over and take photos from the safety of your vehicle.
- If you want to see bears, early morning and early evening are good times for viewing and photography.

Discourage Break-Ins

- Lock vehicles; don't leave windows open even a crack. Remove anything with an odor (food, drinks, trash, pet food, scented products).
- Keep exterior doors closed, even when you're there.
- Don't stash food, beverages, trash or recycling on porches/patios/decks.

If You See a Black Bear

- If a bear comes around your place, try to scare it away by making lots of noise yelling or banging pots and pans together from a safe distance.
- If you see a bear near a dumpster or in a building, don't approach or corner it. Give the bear an escape route.

In the Woods

- Carry bear spray and know how to use it.
- If you see a bear before it notices you, don't approach.

Be BearWise OUTDOORS

Six Outdoor BearWise Basics

Stay Alert & Stay Together

Pay attention to your surroundings and stay together. Walk, hike, jog, or cycle with others when possible. Keep kids within sight and close by. Leave earbuds at home and make noise periodically so bears can avoid you.

Leave No Trash or Food Scraps

Double bag your food when hiking and pack out all food and trash. Don't burn food scraps or trash in your fire ring or grill. Leaving scraps, wrappers, or even "harmless" items like apple cores teaches bears to associate trails and campfires with food.

Keep Dogs Leashed

Letting dogs chase or bark at bears is asking for trouble; don't force a bear to defend itself. Keep your dogs leashed at all times or leave them at home.

Camp Safely

Set up camp away from dense cover and natural food sources. Cook as far from your tent as possible. Do not store food, trash, clothes worn when cooking, or toiletries in your tent. Store in approved bear-resistant containers OR out of sight in a locked vehicle OR suspended at least 10 feet above the ground and 10 feet from any part of the tree. Local regulations vary.

Know What To Do If You See a Black Bear

If you see a bear before it notices you, don't approach. Stand still, enjoy, then quietly move away. If a bear sees you, back away slowly. Never turn running may trigger a chase response. If a bear approaches, hold your ground, wave your arms and yell. If a black bear makes contact with you, do NOT play dead; fight back aggressively.

Carry Bear Spray & Know How To Use It

Bear spray is proven to be the easiest and most effective way to deter a bear that threatens you. It doesn't work like bug repellent, so **never** spray your tent, campsite or belongings.

Black bear is a species; common colors include black, brown and cinnamon.

Learn More: BearWise.org

Helping People Live Responsibly with Black Bears

BearWise® CREATED BY BEAR WISDOMS, SUPPORTED BY LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

BearWise Products



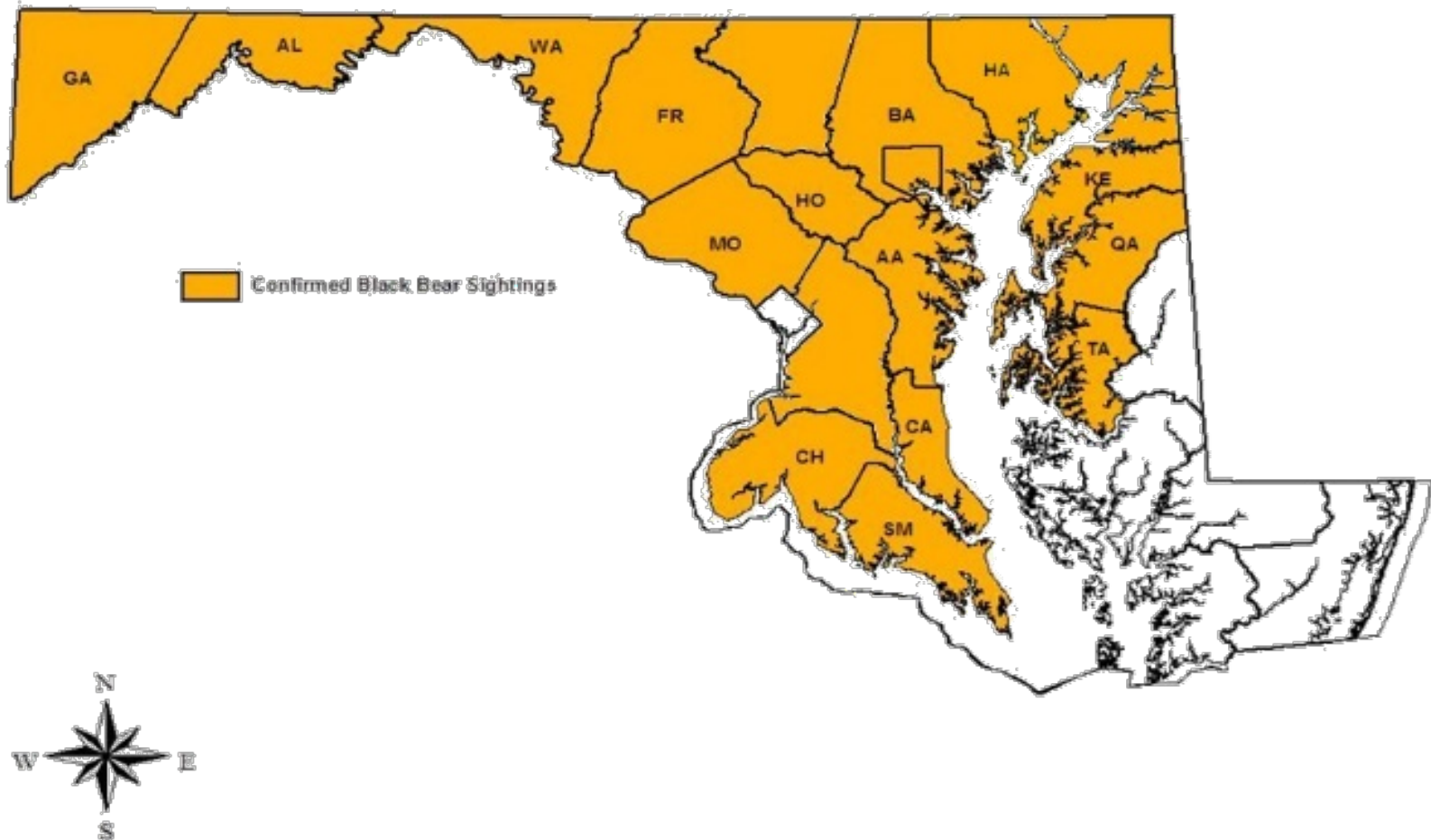
Research



- Reproductive Survey (Den Surveys)
- Public Reports
- UMD Collaborative Project

Public Reports

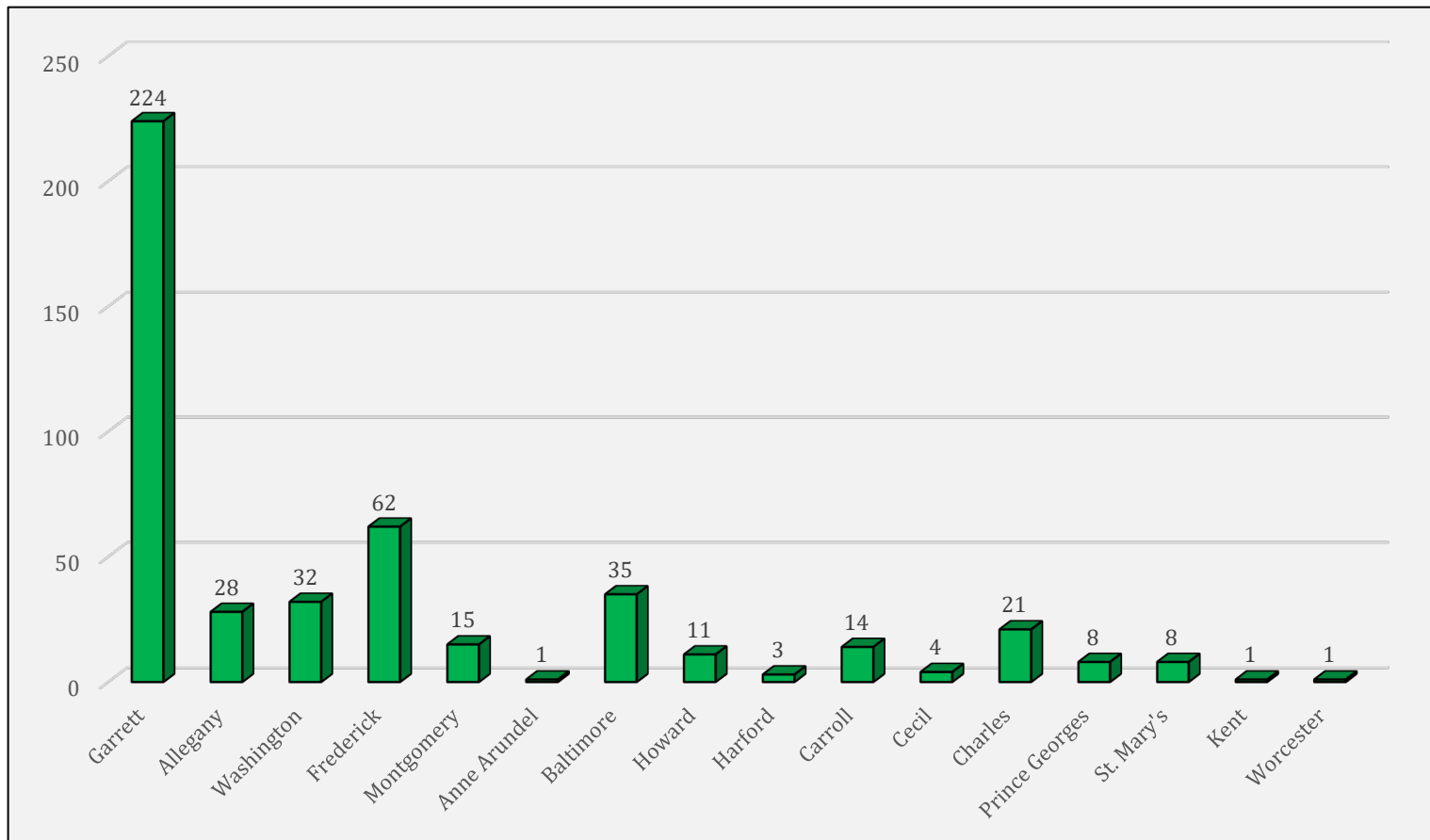
Recent Black Bear Sightings



Public Reports



Recent Black Bear Reports



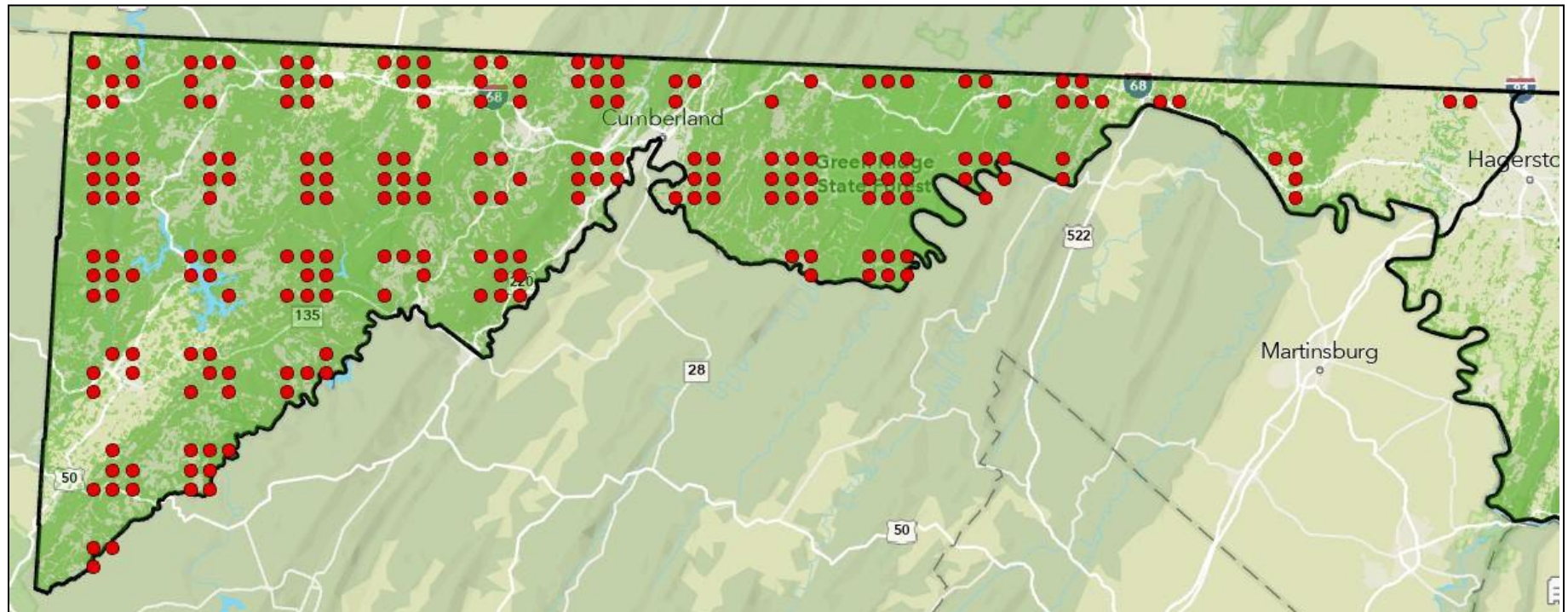


UMD Project

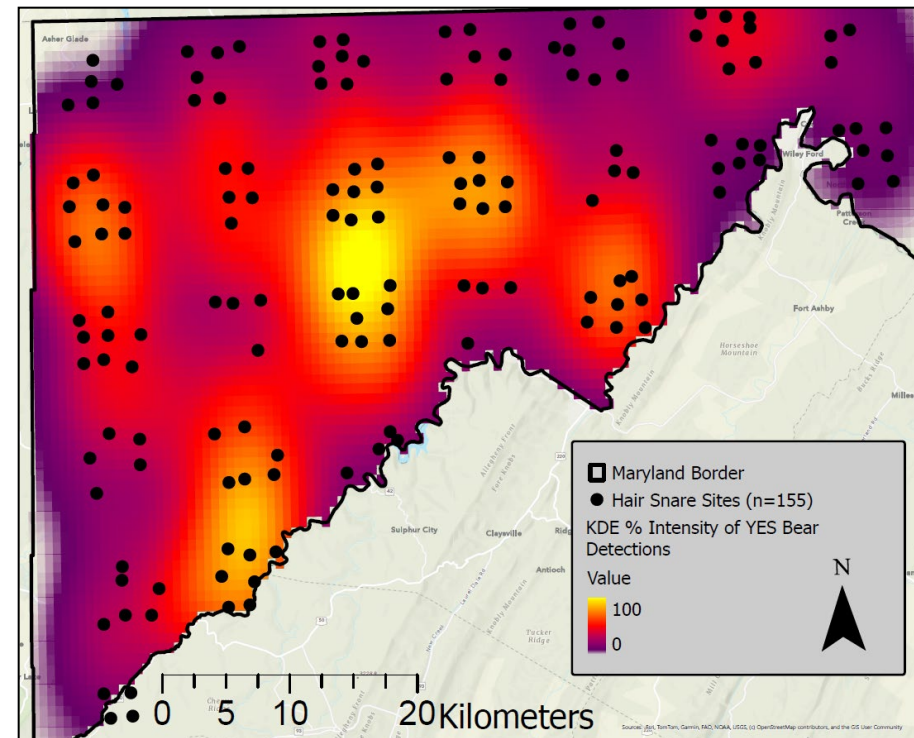


- 2 Graduate Students
- 4-Year Study
- Objectives:
 - Abundance Estimation
 - Dispersal/Travel Corridors

- 211 sites



- 155 Snares deployed in 2025
 - 2,542 hair samples

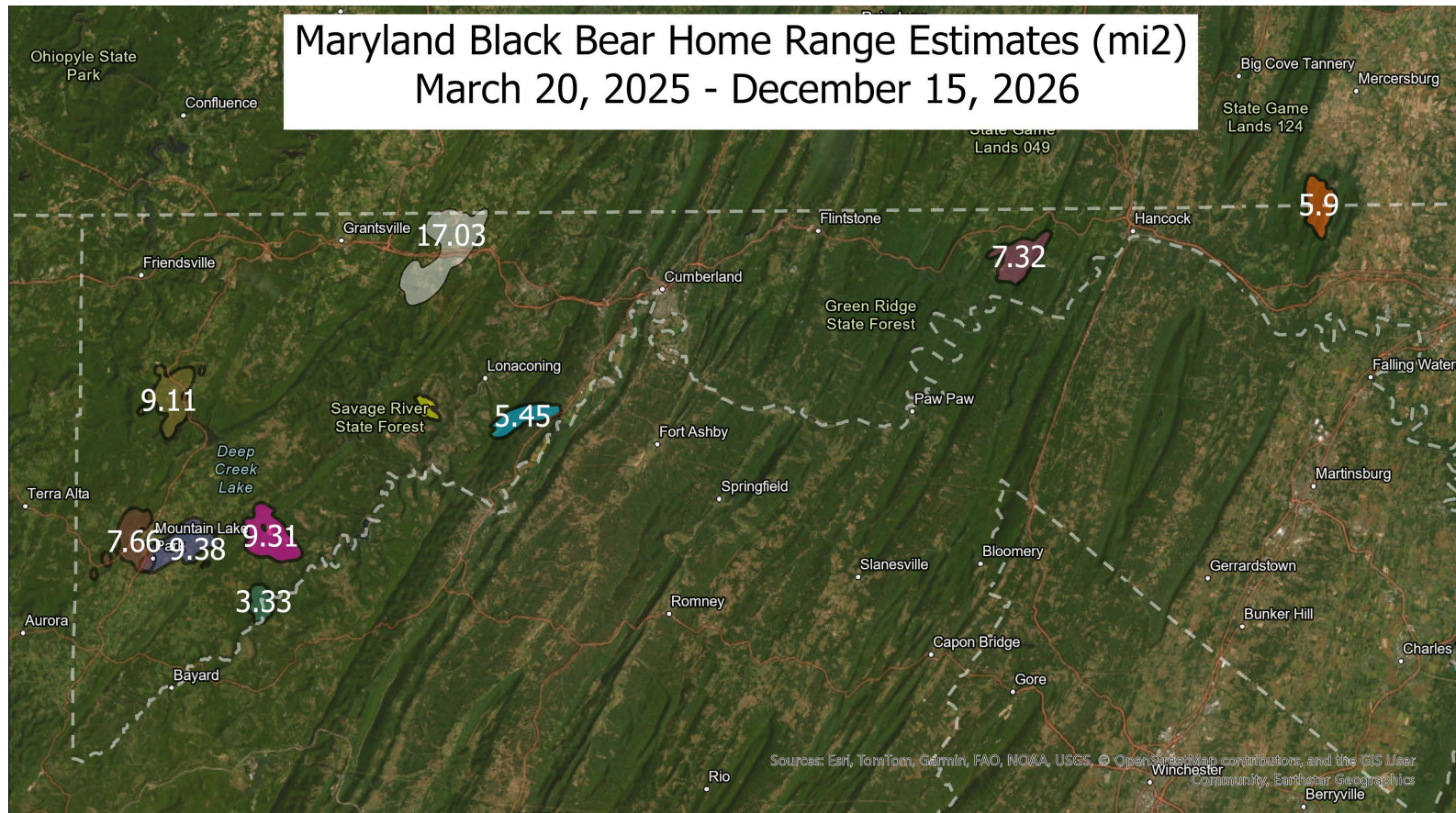








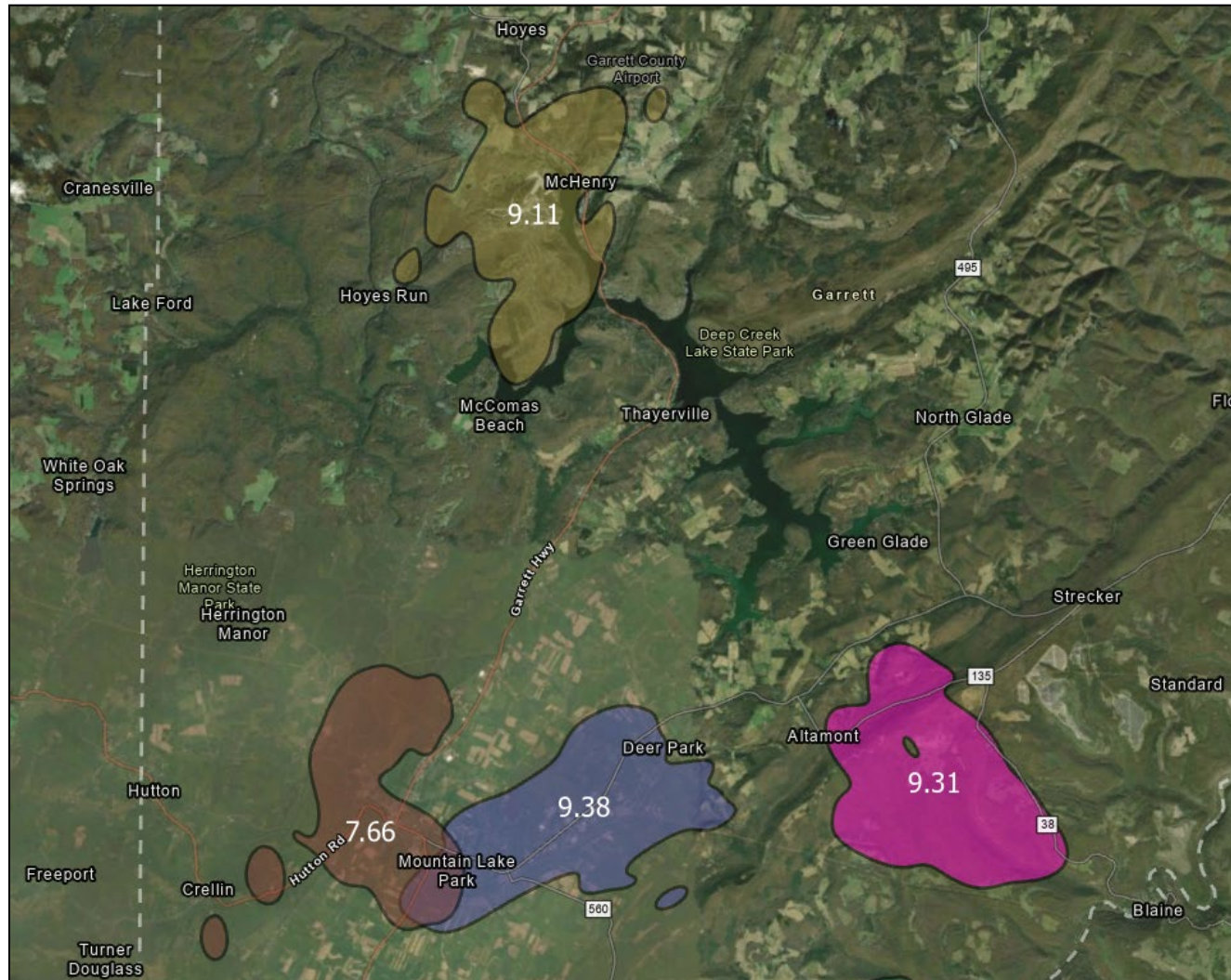
Maryland Black Bear Home Range Estimates (mi²) March 20, 2025 - December 15, 2026



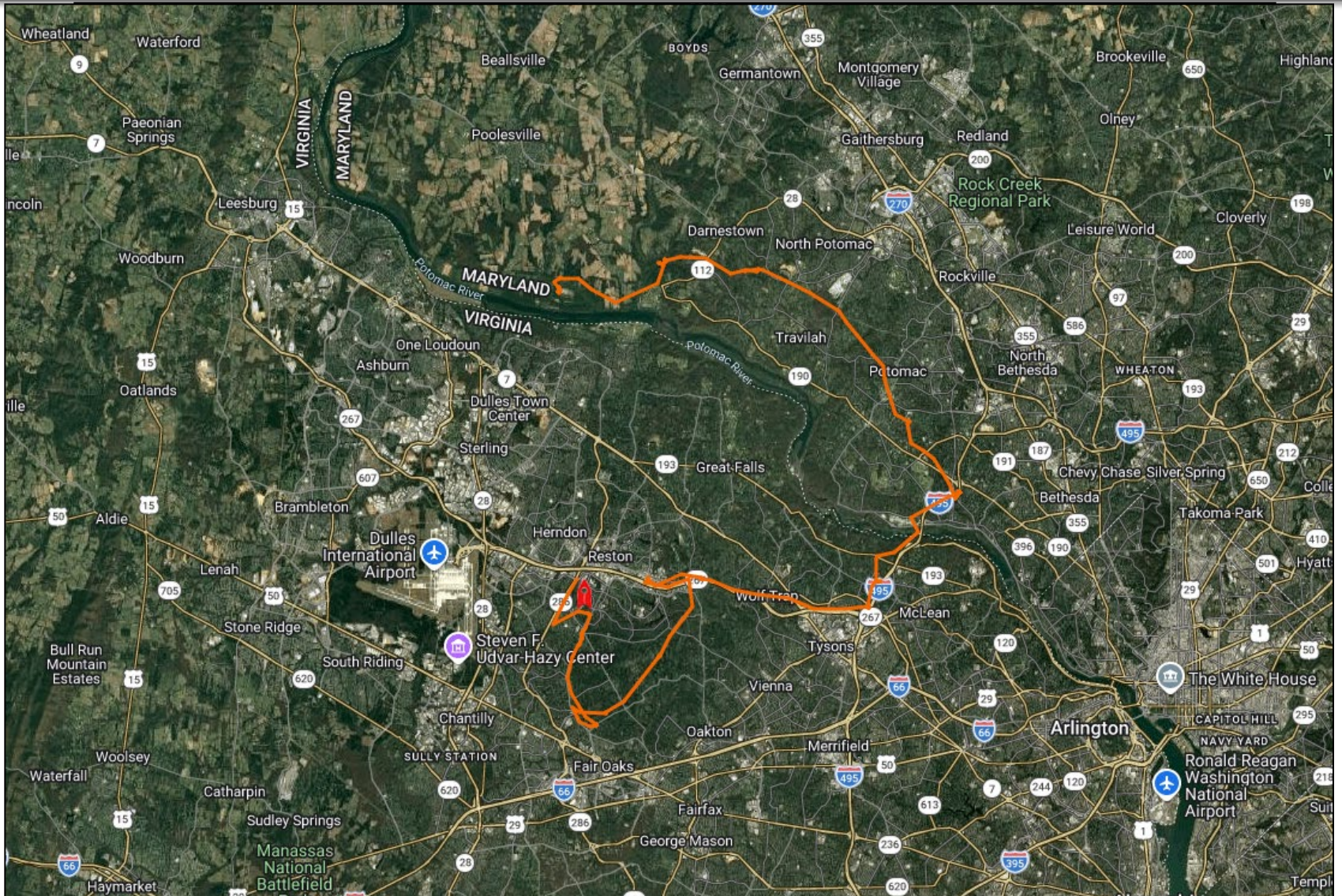
0 10 20 40 Miles

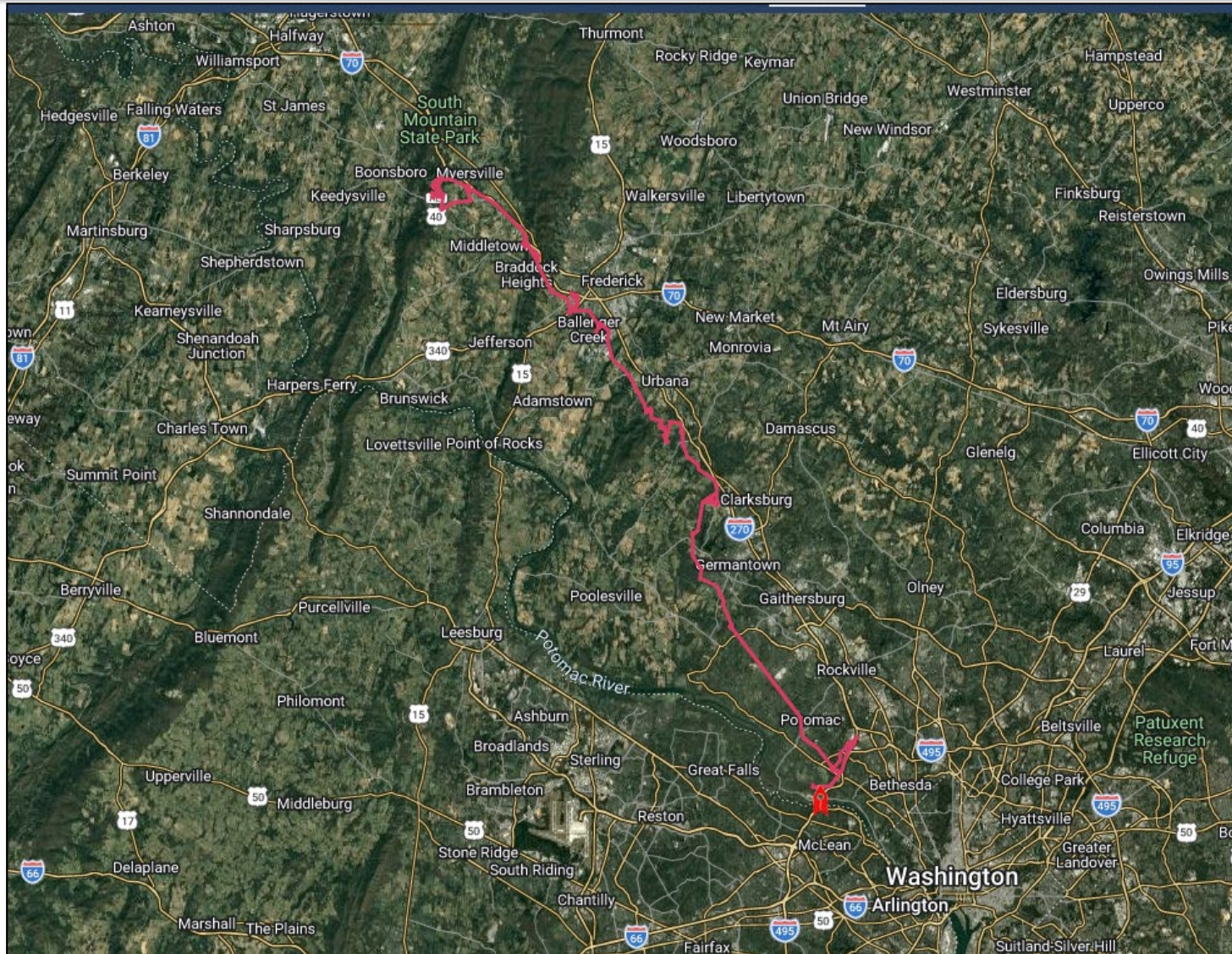


Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Earthstar Geographics, Berryville











Title 08

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Subtitle 03 WILDLIFE

08.03.10 General Wildlife Hunting Regulations

Authority: Natural Resources Article, §§ 10-205 and 10-408, Annotated Code of Maryland

.17 Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

A. Definitions.

(1) “Unmanned Aircraft System” means an aircraft operated without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the aircraft.

(2) “Drone” means an Unmanned Aircraft System.

B. Except as provided for in §C of this regulation, a drone may not be used to:

- (1) Hunt or take any wildlife;
- (2) Purposely disturb wildlife in a manner that would cause injury or death, or disrupt normal behavior patterns including breeding, feeding, resting, and sheltering;
- (3) Interfere with or disrupt the hunt of another; or
- (4) Commit or attempt to commit any other act in violation of the Natural Resources Article.

C. A drone may be used to:

- (1) locate wildlife that has been lawfully wounded or killed, and
- (2) scout an area for wildlife, except that information obtained from drone scouting may not be used for hunting the scouted area until at least 24 hours have elapsed from the last drone flight.

D. A drone operator may carry a firearm or bow that is legal for the open hunting season and may dispatch a lawfully wounded deer or black bear if the hunter who wounded the deer or black bear is unable to do so.

E. Except as provided for in this subtitle, the act of searching for a wounded or expired animal with a drone constitutes hunting and is subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and conditions, including the possession of a Maryland hunting license.

F. Before and after using a drone to attempt to locate a wounded or expired animal, the hunter or drone operator shall notify the Natural Resources Police by calling the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Communication Center 24-Hour Emergency telephone number. The hunter or drone operator shall provide the following information:

- (1) Where the animal was killed, wounded, or injured;
- (2) The name, address, telephone number, and DNRid number of the hunter and drone operator;
- (3) The general location of the dead, wounded, or injured animal;
- (4) The name of the landowner where the search will be conducted; and
- (5) The status of the search when it concludes.

G. This subtitle does not authorize a drone operator or hunter to trespass onto the property of another in pursuit of a wounded or killed animal or fly a drone where otherwise prohibited.

H. This subtitle does not exempt a drone operator from federal, State, or local laws pertaining to aircraft operation, including those found under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

I. No part of this subtitle shall be construed to restrict the use of a drone or other unmanned aircraft for wildlife management activities conducted or authorized by the Department; by employees of the United States or any of its agencies in the performance of their official duties; or by county, city, or local government employees in the performance of their official duties.

wildlife until 9 p.m. A person may not have a hunting device in their possession while casting rays of an artificial light. Note: coyotes, foxes, opossums or raccoons may be hunted on foot at nighttime during open season with the use of a dog and light and hunters may use a light when pursuing and killing a wounded deer after legal shooting hours.

- **Safety Zones:** It is illegal to **hunt, shoot or trap wildlife within 150 yards** of any building or camp occupied by human beings without permission of the owner or occupant. For archery hunters this distance is 100 yards in Anne Arundel County and 50 yards in Allegany,

home schools.

- **It is unlawful to tamper with** and remove the catch from **any legally set trap**.

Drones

It is unlawful to use a drone (i.e., Unmanned Aircraft System) to hunt, trap, or pursue wildlife with the exception that a drone may be used to assist with the recovery of a wounded or expired animal. Drones may not be used to locate, drive, or flush game. It is also unlawful to scout or surveil for game and then hunt, or assist someone else to hunt, on the surveilled property within 24 hours of the last drone flight. Drone operators must contact Natural Resources Police at 800-628-9944 (available 24/7) before attempting to locate a wounded or expired animal and at the conclusion of the search. Drone operators must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning the use of drones when attempting to recover game.

Hunting on Private Property

Written permission is required from the property owner to **hunt or trap** on private property in all counties.

Liability

Any person hunting on private property shall be liable for any damage caused by that person to private property while hunting. The

mit may hunt specified resident game birds and mammals on Sundays during the open season (pgs. 47 and 58).

- An unarmed person participating in an **organized fox chase** may chase foxes on Sundays.
- Persons hunting on **Regulated Shooting Areas** may shoot captive raised game birds (except free-flying captive-raised waterfowl) on Sundays.
- Persons may hunt **deer** (pg. 24), **turkeys** (pg. 37), **small game** (pg. 52) and **fur-bearers** (pg. 54) **on certain Sundays in certain areas**.

State Owned Lands

- It is illegal to **target shoot on state lands** except in designated areas.
- It is unlawful to **construct or use permanent blinds or tree stands on state-owned** or controlled properties, unless provided by DNR. Tree stands and blinds are limited to those of a temporary nature which must be removed at the end of each day. **Hunters may not pierce the bark of a tree** on state lands for any reason, including to install tree stands or cameras.
- It is unlawful to **trap on state lands** without written permission from the controlling agency.
- It is **illegal to place bait** for hunting on state lands.



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- **Train the Trainer – Shooting Sports**
 - 3 Sessions
 - DNR staff
- **NASP Basic Archery Instructor Trainings**
- **Senior Rangers Archery Workshops**
- **Waterfowl Hunting 101 Workshop**
- **Outdoor Recreation Summit – R3 Meeting**
- **Hunter Education (01-01-26 - 06/16/26) :**
 - Classes: 46
 - Certified students: 710