

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

# **The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission**

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM  
On Wed., March 19, 2025  
Department of Natural Resources  
Google Meet**

**Meeting Agenda:**

**Approval for March 19, 2025, Meeting Agenda**

**Approval of February 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

**Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits (Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey)**

**Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee Report (Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack)**

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

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

**Natural Resources Police Update (Lieutenant Brian Miller)**

**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.**
- **Subject Matter Meetings Update – (Chair Wagner)**
- **Potential Agenda Topics for May and September Meetings – Group Discussion**
  - **May Agenda Item:** Morgan State University Bear Hunter Opinion Survey (Dr. Scott Knoche from Morgan State University)

**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 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  
MARCH 19, 2025

Chair Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. This meeting was held by teleconference. Chair Wagner requested a roll call from individuals at the virtual meeting. Unfortunately, due to the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identities of every participant.

**Approval of March 19, 2025, Meeting Agenda**

- Motion:
  1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to accept the agenda for the March 19, 2025, Wildlife Advisory Commission meeting.
  2. Commissioner Smith seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Approval of February 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

- Motion:
  1. Commissioner Showalter moved to accept the February 19, 2025, meeting minutes.
  2. Commissioner Smith seconded.
  3. All in favor. Motion passed.

**Proposed 2025-2026 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons – Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey**

- Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey started the presentation with an overview of the Annual Regulatory Process for Migratory Game Birds.
- Waterfowl Project Leader Kayla Harvey summarized the 2025-2026 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons comments and recommendations. **[ATTACHMENT A]**
- Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack reminded the Commission that, generally, the Commission votes on the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits as a whole package, so staff don't have to review each of the seasons individually.
- Commissioner Showalter commented that he had no concerns related to the proposals. Commissioner Showalter thanked the Department for making those minor adjustments, which allowed additional Saturdays, thereby increasing opportunities for young people and individuals who work during the week. Commissioner Showalter requested that staff share the public comments with WAC in the future.
- Chair Wagner noted that Ms. Spencer had shared the comments with WAC before the meeting. Also, the comments are available on the DNR's website.
- Chair Wagner discussed with Director Karina Stonesifer the production of educational videos and the use of social media to inform the public. Staff post information, but people do not always read it. Utilizing social media and video allows us to reach people more effectively, help correct misinformation and educate people on why we have the seasons the way we do. The Commission acknowledges that some individuals may not accept scientific evidence and that DNR is efficient.
- Director Karina Stonesifer mentioned that, regarding the proposals, two bills regarding Canada Geese (HB0892 and SB0335) impact Southern Maryland. Staff will later circulate information on how this will affect matters. If these bills pass, the regulation process will close, but the changes should be included in the 2025-2026 Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping.
- Q & A Section:
  1. Chair Wagner inquired whether the staff had addressed the comments.
    - a. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack stated that the staff responded to the comments appropriately. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack mentioned that some questions are rhetorical and do not warrant a reply. However, regarding those questions that do require answers, the staff replies accordingly.

- Motion:
  1. Vice Chair Joe Schroyer moved to approve the 2025-2026 Migratory Waterfowl Season package as presented.
  2. Commissioner Keithley seconded the motion.
  3. Motion passed with one abstaining vote.

**Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee Report** – Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack

- Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack reported that this update should have been presented before the Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits.
- The Migratory Game Bird Seasons package and public comments were presented to the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee (MGBAC).
- Staff did not receive much feedback from the MGBAC members.
- MGBAC agreed with the staff summaries of the public comments, noting that most comments fell outside the federal framework.
- Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack announced that Ladd Johnson passed away. Mr. Johnson was one of the founding members of the MGBAC, which was formed in 1974. As one of the original members and having served as chair for a long time, this individual was a partner to Maryland's waterfowl, wildlife, and conservation community, marking a significant loss.
- Chair Wagner recognized Ladd Johnson's work and sent his regrets to Mr. Johnson's family.
- Chair Wagner suggested that the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee Report be presented next year, before the proposals.

**2025 Legislative Session Update** – Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto

- Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto outlined the bills from the Summary of 2025 Proposed Legislation as of March 18, 2025. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
- The Commission members can track the bills online at the Maryland General Assembly website at <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/>.
- Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto stated that HB0717, Natural – Public Lands – Acquisition, Staffing, Operations, and Funding, should be included in the list. This bill allows the Department to establish a foundation parallel to the National Park Service Foundation for raising funds to manage public lands. Embedded within the bill is a provision that permits the Department to acquire one full-time equivalent position for every 400 acres of land it manages for public use. A calculated model also authorizes the Department to allocate some Program Open Space funds for operational purposes. This HB0717 encompasses all three land management units: parks, forests, and wildlife.
- Q&A Section:
  1. Chair Wagner inquired about discussions regarding the allocation or reduction of funds from Program Open Space in the FY26 budget.
    - a. The Department of Legislative Services is independent of the executive team. Its analysts are for the legislature.
    - b. The analysts recommended a significant, if not complete, sweep of Program Open Space dollars to include several essential grant funds used to support agricultural easements, among other initiatives.
  2. Chair Wagner asked for the dollar amount that the Department of Legislative Services is considering reducing or eliminating from the Program Open Space Fund. If the Department of Legislative Services were to take it away, would that amount have to be repaid to the Program Open Space Fund?
    - a. As proposed, it will be gone once the amount is removed.
    - b. The Program Open Space Fund is considering around \$150 million for the Stateside acquisition fund. Each year, every residential real estate transaction is subject to a transfer tax; an annual portion of this tax is allocated to fund the Program Open Space, thus increasing the funds in that account. Therefore, considering this over a four-year discussion proposed by the

analysts, it could total nearly \$250 million being redirected. More importantly, these funds encompass both operating and acquisition dollars. As proposed, this would effectively prevent Program Open Space from acquiring land.

- c. Chair Wagner informed the Commission that numerous discussions have occurred among organizations, including Ducks Unlimited and the Eastern Shore Land Trust. Many organizations are carefully evaluating HB0717 and its effects on various programs and the DNR. Chair Wagner recognized the budget limitations, but losing some of that funding is significant because it decreases the state's wildlife and conservation benefits

- Discussion on the Hunting – Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management – Letter of Support and HB1024/SB0946 Agriculture – Catastrophic Damage Caused by Deer – Letter of Opposition
  1. Commissioner Showalter dictated two letters he had promised to draft for the Commission shortly after the February 19th meeting. However, upon reviewing the meeting minutes, he realized he had not circulated them. Commissioner Showalter apologized to the Commission and mentioned that he does not think there is any downside to continuing with one letter of support and the letter of opposition.
  2. Chair Wagner acknowledged that the letters not going out this year are not a big deal.
- Discussion on HB0731/SB0635 Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings
  1. Chair Wagner mentioned that numerous amendments have been made to this bill.
  2. Commissioner Showalter noted that the principal amendment stripped all the funding. Chair Wagner agreed with Commissioner Showalter's assessment of the principal amendment.
  3. The amendment has removed all obligations except creating the committee, which the Department of Transportation will primarily manage. Due to the amendment, WHS reduced the fiscal impact to zero.
- Discussion on HB0741/SB0634 Hunting – Non-Lead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management.
  1. Chair Wagner noted that he believes this bill won't progress this year; thus, there is no reason to send the letter of support that Commissioner Showalter prepared.
  2. Commissioner Kullberg agreed that this bill would not move forward and had been stripped down. Additionally, Commissioner Kullberg stated that the Commission should actively support it.
  3. Chair Wagner acknowledged that the Hunting – Non-Lead Ammunition bill will likely resurface, despite many hunters disapproving of it. He noted that there was an elegant solution this year concerning the bill. Chair Wagner expressed his belief that it will be different next time. The Commission should continue to examine this concept closely. The DNR needs to promptly address this issue and develop a proposal for next year to prevent any harsh measures from being enacted due to potential future lack of cooperation.
  4. Commissioner Showalter agreed with Chair Wagner's remarks. He reminded the Commission of previous discussions about being proactive; however, those conversations did not progress significantly. Subsequently, the Commission recognized the need to act on this bill. Now, the Commission has eight months until the next legislative session begins. Commissioner Showalter emphasized that the Commission should actively address the issue of hunting with nonlead ammunition and also identify and resolve the few concerns related to fox chasing before the upcoming legislative session.
  5. Vice Chair Schroyer agreed that the Commission needs to be proactive; however, we should determine whether to adopt a voluntary program and assess its impact once it is implemented.
  6. Commissioner Keithley also agreed that hunting with non-lead ammunition is not going away. Commissioner Keithley recalled several Commission members attending the non-lead ammunition seminar at Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge last year. Additionally, Commissioner Keithley concurred with the general philosophy of being proactive regarding implementing non-lead ammunition and trying to stay ahead of the curve and plan accordingly.
  7. Commissioner Jenkins and Commissioner Kullberg agreed that the Commission needs to be

proactive.

8. Commissioner Showalter requested clarification on the timing of promulgating regulations to implement and transition to the use of non-lead ammunition, possibly allowing additional time for small game, and noted the absence of .22 non-lead ammunition.
  9. Staff will initiate the regulations process internally at the beginning of summer or midsummer and make it public in the fall. This conversation has given staff something to consider.
  10. Chair Wagner confirmed with Director Stonesifer that the Commission supports the Department's implementation of non-lead ammunition for game species and is willing to assist in facilitating and being proactive.
- Chair Wagner expressed concern that someone may have taken the information during the discussion of the Summary of the 2025 Proposed Legislation for the Wildlife and Heritage Service (as of February 14, 2025), which was presented as testimony in a March 19, 2025, hearing. The testimony indicated that the Commission did not take a position on HB0766, Wildlife Advisory Commission – Membership – Alterations, and that the Commission was not opposed to it. The testimony stated that the Commission remained silent.
    1. Chair Wagner suggested that the Commission should not remain silent on any issue. The Commission must take a stance and either support or oppose this bill. Chair Wagner added that the Commission's decision not to send a letter does not imply that the Commission favors or opposes the bill. Chair Wagner emphasized to the Commission the need to clarify their position.
    2. Chair Wagner recalled the discussion surrounding HB0766, which indicated that the Commission was dissatisfied with the Maryland Farm Bureau's effort to appoint a representative to the Commission. Chair Wagner listened to the testimony, and the committee raised questions about farmers who are not members of the Farm Bureau. There was also a conversation about the Farm Bureau providing a list of farmers instead of nominating a specific individual.
    3. Chair Wagner recommended reviewing the 2025 Proposed Legislation for the Wildlife and Heritage Service bills and outlining WAC's position on them. This will help prevent anyone from claiming that the Commission did not make a statement about them, which could imply that the Commission favors them, as silence may be interpreted as consent in some situations.
  - Discussion on HB0766 Wildlife Advisory Commission – Membership – Alterations
    1. Chair Wagner reviewed the meeting minutes. The comments in the minutes indicate that the Commission opposes HB0766, Wildlife Advisory Commission—Membership—Alterations.
    2. Chair Wagner suggested that the Commission vote on HB0766, Wildlife Advisory Commission—Membership—Alterations.
  - Motion – HB0766 Wildlife Advisory Commission – Membership - Alterations
    1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to oppose HB0766, Wildlife Advisory Commission – Membership – Alterations.
    2. Commissioner Keithley seconded the motion.
    3. All in favor. Motion passed.
    4. The Commission is officially opposed to HB0766, Wildlife Advisory Commission – Membership – Alterations.
  - Discussion on HB0857 Natural Resources – Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours - Authorization
    1. Commissioner Showalter recommended that the Commission support this bill, which was amended to authorize the use of light.
  - Motion – HB0857 Natural Resources – Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours - Authorization
    1. Commissioner Showalter moved to support HB0857, Natural Resources – Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours – Authorization as amended.
    2. Vice Chair Schroyer seconded the motion.
    3. Motion passed with one abstaining vote.
  - Discussion on HB0892 Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits

1. Commissioner Showalter reminded the Commission that, based on the discussion at the previous meeting, the Commission generally supported the sunset provision added as an amendment after the bill's introduction.
- Motion – HB0892 Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits
  1. Commissioner Showalter moved to support HB0892, Natural Resources – Canada Geese – Bag Limits.
  2. Commissioner Jenkins seconded the motion.
  3. Motion passed with one abstaining vote.
- Discussion on HB1024 Agriculture – Catastrophic Damage Caused by Deer
  1. Vice Chair Schroyer informed the Commission that he had watched SB0958, and no one was present to oppose it. He expressed disappointment that it did not receive more attention. Commissioner Schroyer noted that the farmer referenced in this bill had removed 200 Sika deer from her farm, yet still claimed to have suffered catastrophic damage. Commissioner Schroyer recommended that the Commission engage in this dialogue and oppose the bill if it resurfaces next year.
  2. Chair Wagner agreed that the Commission should have voted on this bill and issued a letter of opposition if it was the Commission's will. Furthermore, the Commission should have had someone testify at that hearing, as it is dangerous whenever politicians take control and attempt to manage a species through legislation. Chair Wagner suggested that the Commission should consider providing letters of support or opposition and testifying at future hearings.
  3. Chair Wagner asked why the Department had not testified to this bill.
    - a. The bill was overly broad and vague. It was challenging for the Department to comprehend what 'catastrophic' meant, and the Department was uncertain about the scope of 'extraordinary measures'.
    - b. The Commission could respond to the hearing.
    - c. Some individuals from the hearing wanted to hunt at night. Staff noted that a potential issue is allowing them to shoot the deer without requiring retrieval, which leaves the deer on the ground. This outcome is unpopular among staff, the public, and most legislators-
    - d. Chair Wagner noted that the Commission will leave this one alone.
- Discussion on Commissioner Showalter indicated that the bills with “no comment” were those on which the Commission wanted to take a position.
- Discussion on SB0711 Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Recreation Oversight Board – Establishment.
  1. Vice Chair Schroyer remarked that it may be vital to the Department; however, it falls outside the purview of WAC unless it involves something that affects wildlife.
  2. Commissioner Showalter noted that the bill requires the Wildlife and Heritage Service (WHS) to support the Off-Road Recreational Oversight Board. Therefore, it may impact WHS and impose additional burdens on DNR staff. However, Commissioner Showalter agreed that it is beyond our purview and indicated that it should be the Commission’s comment.
  3. Commissioner Smith inquired whether this bill permits off-road vehicles to retrieve animals on public land, etc.
  4. Based on Commissioner Showalter's understanding, the bill creates an oversight board to review the use of off-highway recreational vehicles.
  5. Chair Wagner reiterated that the bill aims to establish a board and its associated meetings.
  6. The bill provides another opportunity for a conversation with stakeholders, and the Wildlife and Heritage Service will be a board member. The board will meet four times a year. It is possible that the board could include WHS as part of its agenda, discussing the use of off-highway vehicles in wildlife retrieval. However, as the Department understands it, the bill's primary interest is establishing a board of stakeholders who have not sat at the table for decades.
  7. About 20 years ago, the Department quickly closed two areas where off-highway vehicles had been used without consulting stakeholders. While the stakeholders continued the legislative

process, the Department did not participate in any related legislative activities. The legislative initiative effectively redirected funds from the Maryland Department of Transportation into the Department's portfolio, amounting to several million dollars over the last few years, solely to create and maintain trails for the off-highway vehicle community. Yet, stakeholders do not have representation on essential bodies such as the Wildlife Advisory Commission, the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee, and the Maryland Horse Industry Board. One could examine the list of all stakeholders with a seat in either the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Natural Resources, and this group is notably absent. This marks their second attempt to advance this bill, which has been diluted to become more of a discussion than a framework for oversight, review, and approval. The Department did engage in this bill, and it is crucial to highlight the history of how Maryland reached this juncture.

8. Chair Wagner inquired about ATV regulations.
  - a. There are some in large part because a funding source was created. There are several miles of trails in St. John's Rock on Savage River State Forest and an extensive network of trails in the old mine gravel operation known as Wolf Den Run State Park. There are a handful of short trails with very few users.
  - b. Chair Wagner acknowledged Commissioner Smith's concern regarding using ATVs for retrieving game or hunting.
  - c. Chair Wagner emphasized that this might be an issue the Commission should address proactively to help guide it before it escalates.
- Motion – SB0711 Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle – Recreation Oversight Board – Establishment
  1. Commissioner Showalter moved that SB0711 Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle—Recreation Oversight Board—Establishment is outside the Wildlife Advisory Commission's purview.
  2. Vice Chair Schroyer seconded the motion.
  3. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB)** - Tyler Hough, MFB Director of Government Relations, needed to leave the meeting early.

- Chair Wagner acknowledged that the MFB desires more airtime on WAC; however, Mr. Hough is again absent from the MFB update.
- The Commission has not observed a strong track record from the MFB regarding participation in the WAC meetings. Although the MFB requested more representation on the WAC, no one attended to provide input.

**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 2025 stats.
  1. Traffic violations (excluding criminal arrests, civil, and parking) resulted in 460 citations; public lands citations totaled 182; wildlife citations were 445; fisheries citations were 221; and boating citations were 174. The total number of violations to date is 1,482.
- Chair Wagner expressed appreciation for the NRP's time and updates. This information helps the Commission review where enforcement time is being spent within DNR. Therefore, the Commission recognized the NRP's attendance at every meeting and the provision of a report.

## **Old Business**

- Revamping Trapping Course Update— No update
- License Portal Update (MD Outdoors) – No update.
- Use of Drone for Deer Recovery and Hunting Discussion – Tabled for a future date.
  1. Commissioner Showalter mentioned that, in light of the upcoming regulatory season process, is the Use of Drones for Deer Recovery and Hunting a topic that the Commission wants to address proactively, rather than continue to defer and consider whether it should be included in the regulatory updates?



- a. Director Stonesifer recommended an internal discussion with staff to determine if WHS wants to formally review it and provide some background information. Director Stonesifer recognized that Associate Director Brian Eyler had collected data from some states. WHS can prepare and have something ready for the next meeting.
- b. Chair Wagner agreed that this should be added to the proposed regulations for this year.
- Subject Matter Meetings – Chair Wagner informed the Commission that there is no update on the subject matter meetings. Chair Wagner and Commissioner Showalter made themselves available to attend the potential meetings. However, the parties who requested these meetings have not sent any further feedback. Chair Wagner requested that the subject matter meetings be removed from Old Business.
- Potential Agenda Topics for May and September Meetings – Group Discussion
  1. The Morgan State University Bear Hunter Opinion Survey, presented by Dr. Scott Knoch, will be on the May agenda.
  2. Non-Lead Ammunition Discussion

#### **New Business –**

- Commissioner Keithley informed the Commission about several large deer illegally harvested. He provided some examples, noting that he scored one of the deer for the Poaching Restitution Act a few years ago; this deer was a 200-inch gross specimen from Prince George's County. Over the years, the antlers and skull caps have been relocated to various locations throughout the state. Commissioner Keithley suggested that the Bucks-Bears-Stags state program have access to these racks for a couple of shows each year, to display them as part of a "wall of shame" or a similar display. Additionally, Commissioner Keithley would like the larger animals to be scored and entered in the Boone and Crockett alongside the state program, just like other states. The Department of Natural Resources owns the specimens.
  1. Commissioner Keithley provided a summary of the Poaching Restitution Act. When a large deer is illegally harvested, NRP, as part of the court proceedings, needs a Boone and Crockett score for these animals. Commissioner Keithley added that a white-tailed deer with more than eight measurable antler points and a gross score exceeding 150 inches is subject to a higher fine.
  2. Commissioner Keithley requested an open dialogue, particularly regarding the location where these larger antlers are being stored. He would like them secured in one location, and for these animals to be entered into Boone and Crockett as well as Bucks-Bears-Stags as a true testament to wildlife conservation.
  3. Director Stonesifer agreed to investigate where these deer are stored and what we need to do to provide Bucks-Bears-Stags with access to them. Director Stonesifer recognized that these specimens are moved around the state for various shows at different times of the year.
  4. Lieutenant Miller noted that the antlers are usually given to someone for educational purposes after the case has been adjudicated. Also, Lieutenant Miller recalled that there used to be several "walls of shame" in each region.
  5. Commissioner Keithley said we don't care about the smaller ones that are poached; however, it resonates with the hunters, particularly the law-abiding ones, that this large animal was taken off the grounds illegally. Commissioner Keithley thanked NRP for its enforcement efforts.
  6. Commissioner Showalter clarified in the meeting minutes that the Commission, including Commissioner Keithley, is concerned about all poached deer and that we understood Commissioner Keithley's comments within the context of the scoring and entry discussion.
  7. Commissioner Showalter reported reviewing some poaching convictions in other states. He pointed out that the statute establishes a minimum fine of \$5,000 and a maximum fine of \$10,000 for any deer exceeding 150 gross inches, as scored under the Boone and Crockett standard. He stated that he did not know how many poached deer NRP has in the 170- or 180-inch-plus range, but he wondered if this is something the Commission should recommend amending to add another level of classification. Specifically, if a person kills a white-tailed deer that is 170 inches or larger, should the minimum fine be \$10,000, or should there be a higher threshold for killing

those larger bucks?

8. Commissioner Keithley replied that Commissioner Showalter raised good points. He clarified that a poached animal is a poached animal, regardless of size. Commissioner Keithley emphasized that when the public sees a 200-inch gross deer at an open arena or banquet, it resonates with them regarding what has occurred. The public hears about the 120-inch deer that are poached, and NRP does a great job following up and posting that information on their website. However, when people see a 200-inch deer and touch it, the sight is impressive, and witnessing the number of these animals likely coming from private property, along with the effort required for that animal to achieve maturity, is remarkable. Commissioner Keithley would like to see this issue publicized more than it is currently.
9. Chair Wagner commented that he is unsure whether a higher fee for larger animals is a sufficient deterrent. He suggested that everyone feels significant pain when someone illegally poaches a deer, regardless of whether it is a small 4-point deer or a 200-inch deer. Additionally, Chair Wagner expressed doubt about the necessity of distinguishing between those who kill a 200-inch deer and others. He pointed out that to prevent individuals from escalating to poaching larger deer, it is essential to begin imposing penalties at a lower level and ensure they are substantial enough to deter any further illegal actions or progression to hunting bigger deer. Chair Wagner recommended that all poaching fines should be exceedingly severe.
10. Vice Chair Schroyer pointed out that few judges are educated in wildlife or, for that matter, even care because it's just a deer. He added that if the monetary value increases, the judges are more likely to dismiss the case, as NRP encountered early on. Vice Chair Schroyer remarked that the amounts and standards set by DNR are good. Additionally, Vice Chair Schroyer mentioned that if DNR imposes a \$25,000 fine on a 200-inch deer in Maryland, the judge will likely dismiss the case.
11. Commissioner Jenkins commented on the issue of poaching and the use of drone technology. The Commission has been discussing using drones for deer recovery and hunting for some time. The Commission and the DNR should take action to address this issue sooner, especially with the increasing likelihood of more people using drones for poaching.
12. Director Stonesifer clarified that the suspensions and penalties outlined in our regulations are separate from the court system. DNR operates on the administrative side, not the judicial side. Therefore, when someone violates one of those regulations, which can lead to a license suspension or an associated fine, NRP brings it to the attention of the WHS Director. Consequently, the regulations provide WHS with guidance to treat suspension as a penalty, which is distinct from any decisions made by a judge.
13. Director Stonesifer outlined that if the Commission requests WHS to revisit these regulations, WHS can discuss this internally and review them through the broader regulatory review process that WHS is about to undertake.
14. Commissioner Showalter asked whether the information about the statute was mandatory. The statute states that a person "shall" pay that fine and provide mandatory community service.
15. Director Stonesifer responded that the regulation is 'may'.
16. Assistant Secretary Peditto indicated that both Madame Director and Commissioner Showalter are correct. The statute is mandatory, while the regulations are discretionary. Commissioner Showalter likely understands that the bench does not appreciate being directed on sentencing. In response to Vice Chair Schroyer's point, in rural Maryland, particularly in counties where NRP lacks a prosecutor, NRP presents the court with a \$10,000 fine and 80 hours of community service. If the defendant responds, "I can't afford it, and I will lose my job if I take 80 hours off," these cases often receive probation before judgment (PBJ). In such instances, we can no longer impose the administrative suspension referenced by Director Stonesifer.
17. Assistant Secretary Peditto informed the Commission that it's essential to note that a bill was proposed to effectively transfer the authority of deer management to the Department of Agriculture, as there is a community that wants to reduce the deer population significantly. Therefore, if that narrative reaches the bench, it becomes difficult for the DNR to secure

convictions related to fines, bond schedules, or penalty provisions. Sometimes, the situation worsens when the penalty is so high that the courts question whether the DNR is going to ruin someone's life over a deer. There are people and staff who view deer as a vital part of the public trust that the DNR is responsible for protecting and enforcing.

18. Director Stonesifer highlighted that losing the hunting license or the privilege to hunt outweighs whatever price tag it holds for some people.
19. Chair Wagner requested that this topic be added to the regulation process for Director Stonesifer.
- Commissioner Showalter informed the Commission and staff that a constituent approached him regarding Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The constituent explained that the website displayed a tally of CWD-positive deer over three to four years. However, it did not indicate whether that represented an increase or decrease, or if it demonstrated a trend moving east or becoming a growing concern. Commissioner Showalter mentioned that he was uncertain if the Commission needed to place a CWD report on the agenda. It might be helpful to provide additional context on the webpage to clarify whether the situation is evolving, expanding, or relatively stable.
  1. Director Stonesifer agreed to have our team review the CWD webpage.
  2. Chair Wagner informed the Commission that the 2024-2025 Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping has a CWD update. In fact, the information is located next to Director Stonesifer's picture., "Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area now includes Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Montgomery, and Washington counties, pages 30-32."

#### **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 12:04 p.m.  
The next meeting will be virtually using Google Meet at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 16, 2025.

#### **Attendance**

Members:	TJ. Jenkins, S. Keithley, K. Kullberg, J. Schroyer, R. Showalter, M. Smith, and C. Wagner
Absent:	J. Parks and K. Rossignuolo
Guest:	Bowman, Sir, MHC, J. Seigler, and A. Ward
Staff:	C. Coriell, B. Davis, H. Devine, K. Fleming, K. Harvey, J. Homyack, K. Lamp, C. Markin, J. McKnight, B. Miller, J. Moulis, P. Peditto, L. Sarratt, T. Spencer, K. Stonesifer, and J. Tabora

# Proposed Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons for 2025-26





# Annual Regulatory Process for Migratory Game Birds



- **2025-2026 seasons**
  - Atlantic Flyway Council, September 10-15, 2024.
  - FWS Regulations Committee, November 2024.
  - Proposed federal frameworks, early 2025.
  - MGBAC early January, WAC reviews late January.
  - Maryland public comment period (mid February).
  - WAC votes on proposed seasons in late March.
  - Final season selections due to FWS in late April.

# 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).

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

# Regular Duck Hunting Season



**Recommend accepting regular duck seasons as proposed.**

- Most public comment was favorable or outside the boundaries allowed by the federal frameworks (ex. hunting ducks in February).

# 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:**

Friday, Dec. 19, 2025 – Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026

Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026 – Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026

**Daily Bag Limit:** 1 per day



# Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season



**Recommend accepting the AP Canada goose seasons as proposed.**

- Most public comment asked for more opportunity (longer seasons and higher bag limits). These requests fall outside the Federal Frameworks.
- A few “asks” for moving days earlier or later in the season (Thanksgiving).
- A few “asks” to move zone boundaries.

# Atlantic Population Canada Goose Harvest Strategy



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

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

# **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**

# **AF Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season (AFRP Zone)**



## **Recommend accepting the Resident Canada Goose Seasons as proposed**

- There was little public comment on this season.

# 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 Dates:

Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025 – Saturday, Sept. 27, 2025

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

# September Teal Season



**Recommend accepting the September Teal Season as proposed.**

- There was little public comment on this season.

Questions?



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<a href="#">HB0173</a>	Baltimore County - Deer Management Program - Establishment	<a href="#">Delegate Nawrocki</a>	In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a>		Bill Withdrawn.
<a href="#">HB0483</a>	Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation - Alterations	<a href="#">Delegate Ziegler</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/06 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Ways and Means</a> 2/06/2025 - 1:00 PM		Support
<a href="#">HB0511</a> (SB0449)	Frederick and Washington Counties - Bow Hunting - Openly Carrying Handguns	<a href="#">Frederick County Delegation</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/26 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/26/2025 - 1:00 PM		Support
<a href="#">HB0540</a>	Maryland Green Schools - Website, Outreach, and Designations (Green Schools Stewardship Act)	<a href="#">Delegate Wolek</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/12 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Ways and Means</a> 2/12/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#">HB0654</a>	Wicomico County - Sunday Hunting Time Restrictions - Repeal	<a href="#">Wicomico County Delegation</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/28 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/28/2025 - 1:00 PM		Support
<a href="#">HB0717</a>	Natural Resources - Public Lands - Acquisition, Staffing, Operations, and Funding	<a href="#">Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/25 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/12/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 3/25/2025 - 1:00 PM	It was added after the March 18, 2025, meeting.
<a href="#">HB0731</a> (SB0635)	Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings	<a href="#">Delegate Ruth</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a>	No Comment
<a href="#">HB0741</a> (SB0634)	Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management	<a href="#">Delegate Allen</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM		A letter of Support was compiled.
<a href="#">HB0766</a>	Wildlife Advisory Commission - Membership - Alterations	<a href="#">Delegate Otto</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM		Voted - Oppose
<a href="#">HB0832</a> (SB0417)	Carroll County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting	<a href="#">Carroll County Delegation</a>	In the House - Hearing 3/12 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a>		Support



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				3/12/2025 - 1:00 PM		
<a href="#">HB0854 (SB0128)</a>	Hunter Safety Education - Issuance of Identification Number	<a href="#">Delegate Hornberger</a>	In the House – Withdrawn by Sponsor	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a>		Hearing Canceled.
<a href="#">HB0857 (SB0100)</a>	Natural Resources - Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours - Authorization	<a href="#">Delegate Hornberger</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a>	Voted - Support
<a href="#">HB0878</a>	Department of the Environment - Water Resources - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2025)	<a href="#">Delegate Hill</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#">HB0882 (SB0272)</a>	Prince George's County - Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones	<a href="#">Delegate Valderrama</a>	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a>		Support
<a href="#">HB0892 (SB0335)</a>	Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits	<a href="#">Delegate Jacobs</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM		Voted – Support
<a href="#">HB0894 (SB0946)</a>	Endangered and Threatened Species - Incidental Taking - Bats	<a href="#">Delegate Jacobs</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/19 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/19/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a>	Okay
<a href="#">HB0954</a>	Public Safety - State and Local Governments - Use of Unmanned Aircraft	<a href="#">Delegate Grammer</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/25 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Judiciary</a> 2/25/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#">HB1024 (SB0958)</a>	Agriculture - Catastrophic Damage Caused by Deer	<a href="#">Delegate Hutchinson</a>	In the House - Hearing 2/26 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 2/26/2025 - 1:00 PM		A Letter of opposition was compiled.

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<a href="#">HB1270</a> (SB0399)	Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines	<a href="#">Delegate Hinebaugh</a>	In the House - Hearing 3/06 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Economic Matters</a> 3/06/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#">HB1299</a>	Natural Resources - Western Maryland - Elk	<a href="#">Delegate Hornberger</a>	In the House - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 3/05/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#">HB1511</a> (SB0736)	Natural Resources - Wildlife Damage Prevention and Reimbursement Fund - Establishment	<a href="#">Delegate Ruth</a>	In the House - Hearing 3/12 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a> 3/12/2025 - 1:00 PM		Oppose
<a href="#">SB0100</a> (HB0857)	Natural Resources - Pursuing Wounded Deer After Legal Hunting Hours - Authorization	<a href="#">Senator Bailey</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 2/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 2/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		Voted – Support
<a href="#">SB0128</a> (HB0854)	Hunter Safety Education - Issuance of Identification Number	<a href="#">Senator Bailey</a>	In the Senate - Withdrawn by Sponsor	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a>		Withdrawn – No Comment
<a href="#">SB0272</a> (HB0882)	Prince George's County - Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting and Archery Hunting Safety Zones	<a href="#">Senator Jackson</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 2/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 2/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		Support
<a href="#">SB0335</a> (HB0892)	Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits	<a href="#">Senator Bailey</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 2/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 2/04/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a>	Voted – Support
<a href="#">SB0399</a> (HB1270)	Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines	<a href="#">Senator McKay</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 2/11 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 2/11/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Economic Matters</a>	No Comment
<a href="#">SB0417</a> (HB0832)	Carroll County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting	<a href="#">Carroll County Senators</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		Okay

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<a href="#"><u>SB0449</u></a> (HB0511)	Frederick and Washington Counties - Bow Hunting - Openly Carrying Handguns	<a href="#"><u>Senator Folden</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#"><u>Environment and Transportation</u></a>	Support
<a href="#"><u>SB0551</u></a>	Private Passenger Motor Vehicle Insurance - Collisions With Wild Animals - Prohibited Actions by Insurers	<a href="#"><u>Senator Bailey</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 2/12 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>Finance</u></a> 2/12/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#"><u>SB0634</u></a> (HB0741)	Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, Fox Chasing, and Deer Management	<a href="#"><u>Senator Lewis Young</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		A Letter of Support compiled.
<a href="#"><u>SB0635</u></a> (HB0731)	Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings	<a href="#"><u>Senator Lewis Young</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		No Comment
<a href="#"><u>SB0711</u></a>	Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Recreation Oversight Board - Establishment	<a href="#"><u>Senator McKay</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>Judicial Proceedings</u></a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#"><u>Environment and Transportation</u></a>  <a href="#"><u>Ways and Means</u></a>	This bill is outside of WAC's purview.
<a href="#"><u>SB0736</u></a> (HB1511)	Natural Resources - Wildlife Damage Prevention and Reimbursement Fund - Establishment	<a href="#"><u>Senator Folden</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m. (Education, Energy, and the Environment)	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM  <a href="#"><u>Budget and Taxation</u></a>		Oppose
<a href="#"><u>SB0796</u></a>	Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restriction	<a href="#"><u>Senator Mautz</u></a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		Support
<a href="#"><u>SB0870</u></a>	Boating - Migratory Waterfowl Season - Prohibited Acts	<a href="#"><u>Senator Mautz</u></a>	In the Senate – Withdrawn by Sponsor	<a href="#"><u>Education, Energy, and the Environment</u></a>		Bill withdrawn.

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<a href="#">SB0946</a> (HB0894)	Endangered and Threatened Species - Incidental Taking - Bats	<a href="#">Senator Carozza</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM	<a href="#">Environment and Transportation</a>	Okay
<a href="#">SB0958</a> (HB1024)	Agriculture - Catastrophic Damage Caused by Deer	<a href="#">Senator Mautz</a>	In the Senate - Hearing 3/04 at 1:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Education, Energy, and the Environment</a> 3/04/2025 - 1:00 PM		A letter of opposition compiled.