

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM
On Wed., April 17, 2024
Department of Natural Resources
Google Meet**

Meeting Agenda:

Approval for April 17, 2024, Meeting Agenda

Approval for Minutes from the March 20, 2024, Meeting

2024 Legislative Session Outcome (Associate Director Brian Eyler)

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Tyler Hough)

Natural Resources Police Update (Captain Shawn Garren)

Old Business:

- **Use of Drone for Deer Recovery and Hunting (Group Discussion)**
- **License Portal Update (Associate Director Brian Eyler)**

New Business:

Public Comment:

- **Sika Deer Discussion (Maryland Sika Deer Coalition Jason Lambert)**

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 2024 meetings
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

January 17th	Google Meet
February 21st	Google Meet
March 20th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
April 17th	Google Meet
May 15th	No Meeting
June 19th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
July 17th	No Meeting
August 21st	Google Meet
September 18th	TBD - Google Meet or No Meeting or Field Day
October 16th	Google Meet
November 20th	Google Meet
December 18th	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, the meetings will be held in the C-1 Conference Room Department of Natural Resources - Tawes State Office Building beginning at 10:30 am. 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

APRIL 17, 2024

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

Chair Wagner informed the members of the public to hold their comments and questions for the Public Comments Section of the meeting.

Approval for April 17, 2024, Meeting Agenda

- Motion to Approve the Agenda:
 1. Vice Chair Schroyer moved to accept the Commission Meeting Agenda for April 17, 2024.
 2. Commissioner Parks seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from the March 20, 2024, Meeting

- Motion to Approve the March 20, 2024, Meeting Minutes:
 1. Commissioner Keithley moved to accept the March 20, 2024, Meeting Minutes.
 2. Commissioner Smith seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

2024 Legislative Session Outcome – Brian Eyler, Associate Director

- Associate Director Brian Eyler gave an overview of the WHS-related bills that passed during the 2024 Legislative Session, along with bills that did not. **[ATTACHMENT A]**
- Discussion on some of the bills ensued.
- Chair Wagner emphasized that as the Commission continued to move forward, members needed to examine the legislation sooner rather than later since the Commission serves as an advisory body. Therefore, as bills are introduced, the Commission could assist in ensuring that the bills would benefit DNR and the resources for the right reason.

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

- Director Hough was not in attendance for the update.

Natural Resources Police Update (NRP) – District Supervisor Robert Karge gave a presentation.

- Orlando Lilly was sworn in as the New Superintendent of Natural Resources on April 17, 2024, at the Helen Avalynne Tawes Garden.
- For the year total, the breakdown was 4,065 total violations.
- There were 14.5% wildlife violations, 12.6% boating violations, 12% public lands violations, 34.5% fisheries violations, and 26% traffic violations.
- With the opening of the turkey season, the Natural Resources Police will be very busy.

Old Business

- The Use of Drones for Deer Recovery—Chair Wagner requested that the Commission members review the Drone Data Information. **[ATTACHMENT B]** It is obvious that something needs to be added to the regulations about the use of drones for recovery and scouting.
 1. Commissioner Showalter pointed out that hunting from an aircraft is prohibited in Maryland. Aircraft are not necessarily defined to include drones, but Commissioner Showalter mentioned that it is interpreted broadly at this time to include drones. Also, Commissioner Showalter explained the verb hunt, which consists of a person pursuing or attempting to capture a game. Commissioner Showalter raised the possibility of a debate about whether using a drone to scout,

- locate, or drive a game is hunting from an aircraft.
 2. Commissioner Showalter indicated that the language in the [ATTACHMENT B] summary from other states often includes additional verbs, such as using an aircraft to pursue a game or states specifically referencing scouting. No matter what the Commission and DNR decide, looking at the verbs and defining the word drone in the regulations is essential.
 3. Commissioner Showalter expressed that relying on the general prohibition on hunting from an aircraft is a risk. There is a need to consider both expressly permitting drones to be used in deer recovery and the prohibitions to ensure it is clear.
 4. Commissioner Showalter disagreed with using drones to drive game species or locate game species in connection with pursuit.
 5. Chair Wagner acknowledged the vital points that Commissioner Showalter made. Chair Wagner heard reports of people harassing geese with drones, trying to move the geese around, and scouting with drones. Also, Chair Wagner received notification of arguments about the usage difference between a trail camera and a drone.
 6. DNR proposed regulations are reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General at DNR.
 7. Chair Wagner requested that staff provide the Commission with what DNR allows and prohibits drone usage to assist with the discussion platform. The sooner staff can do that, the better. It will be a massive help to NRP and the public.
 8. WHS does not prohibit much related to the use of drones. Staff could develop ideas of where the Commission may want to go with this issue. Staff would run it through a regulatory process like other WHS regulations.
 9. Staff had conversations with NRP, and NRP would like to see more regulations on this topic.
 10. Assistant Secretary Paul Peditto reminded the Commission that staff must explain to the leadership, including the State House, what the regulation will accomplish and to what end we are going with the proposed regulation. Assistant Secretary Peditto reiterated to the Commission that there is a history of aircraft usage that has not created a problem. Staff would need to demonstrate that people are using drones illegally to the State House.
 11. The use of drones will be tabled for the June 26, 2024, meeting.
- Associate Director Brian Eyler announced that Kristen Fleming is the new Associate Director of Administration. Fleming came from Chesapeake and Coastal Watershed Services, which will allow Associate Director Brian Eyler to transition back to the Game Management Program.
 - License Portal Update—Associate Director Eyler met with Brandt, who is building the new licensing system. The latest target date for running the system is October 1, 2024. The old system will be in place to ensure the new system is correct. Most of our hunters purchase their hunting licenses before this date, which is before the transition. Brandt has informed staff that everything is going as planned. DNR will have many features other states have, such as automated emails. Some features will not be available immediately because Brandt is focused on building the system.
 - R3 Positions and Budgetary Update -
 1. Two employees transitioned into the R3 positions.
 2. There is a hiring plan that staff are putting together for recruiting for the remainder of those positions.
 3. Revenue dollars from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024: This money must be budgeted for the following fiscal year, and six months after that, staff will request reimbursement from the federal government for the eligible reimbursable dollars. So, there is a 14 to 20-month lag from when the revenues came in when staff were authorized to spend. WHS is spending last year's revenues for the FY24 budget, which differs from the federal fiscal budget. The good news is that it gives WHS time to plan for those expenditures as part of the budget exercise.
 - Proposed Waterfowl Regulation to extend the AP Canada Goose Season to February 1st.
 1. Game Bird Section Leader Josh Homyack mentioned to the Commission that the second AP Canada Goose Season segment will end on February 1. Staff sent in Maryland's season selections to the USFWS. There is no approval process because it is within the boundaries of the federal frameworks.

- Raccoon Hunting Competitions—Commissioner Jenkins received comments that individuals have to purchase a hunting license to participate in raccoon competitions even if they are not killing the raccoons. Commissioner Jenkins requested input on why these individuals must buy a hunting license in this scenario, especially since fox chasers with hounds do not need a hunting license.
 1. Fox chasing is not hunting as defined by Maryland law, so fox chasers are not required to have a hunting license.
 2. State law would need to be amended to require fox chasers to purchase a hunting license.
 3. Many fox chasers must buy a hunting license in other states.
 4. There should be equity in license requirements for fox and raccoon chasing. The money would be used to conserve wildlife and their habitats and manage trails.
 5. Chair Wagner advised that removing unarmed fox chasing from the law would require a legislator to introduce a bill and have support from the Horse Council, the Fox Chasing Community, or clubs willing to support conservation and be part of the solution alongside the hunting and outdoor communities.
- Having Written Permission—Commissioner Keithley mentioned that some fox chasers tend to go where they want to go. Hunters must have written permission to hunt on private lands. Commissioner Keithley asked if any language in the law requires people chasing foxes on horses to have written permission.
 1. These individuals are not hunting.
 2. The language in the law from §10.301 down arguably does not apply, absent some things like negligence.
 3. The language in §10.604 and §10.314 could be written to exclude the unarmed sport of fox chasing.
- Revamping the Trapping Course—Commissioner Kaitlin Rossignuolo updated the Commission on a discussion with Ron Leggett about revamping Maryland’s trapping course to boost participation because trapping, like hunting, is declining.
- Vice Chair Joe Schroyer reminded the Commission that if the members received the Black Bear Survey, they should take the time to complete it.
 1. Commissioner Jeremy Parks commented that he thought the survey was well done and kept him engaged throughout the process.
 2. Staff credited Morgan State University with that kind of survey.

Public Comment –

- Sika Deer Discussion (Maryland Sika Deer Coalition) – Jason Lambert
 1. Mr. Lambert informed the Commission that he had sent earlier emails to Associate Director Brian Eyler and Director Karina Stonesifer between November and December about some Sika Deer topics he wanted to address during the public comment period. Mr. Lambert indicated that he did not receive a response. Mr. Lambert would like the Commission to consider an Antlered Sika Deer restriction, creating an antler point restriction of at least two points to one side as a legal shootable stag. The current Antlered Sika Deer bag limit is three stags, one per weapon season. The antler point restriction on Sika deer would allow the one-choice stag that does not meet the antler point restriction. Now, if more than one stag is harvested, the remaining two stags must meet the antler point restriction; at least two points to one side of an antler to be legal, and youth hunters would be exempt from the antler point restriction. Any violation of the antler point restriction would involve a penalty fine set by DNR.
 2. Mr. Lambert added data that he collected on April 3, 2024, on Facebook with a 24-hour poll. Mr. Lambert used Sika deer groups to compile information supporting antler point restriction. Of 180 votes, 124 endorsed the antler point restriction, 68%, and 57 didn’t support it, 31%.
 3. Mr. Lambert referenced his information from the Morgan State University Sika Deer Study, demonstrating that roughly 60% of respondents supported the antler point restriction. Mr. Lambert recalled that the Morgan State University Sika Deer Study displayed an upward trend in people hunting Sika deer.

4. Mr. Lambert highlighted in conclusion that with the rise in hunter participation in Sika deer and the increase in the non-resident Sika deer stamp, we, as locals, have seen threats posted on social media that people will shoot all of the Sika deer in Maryland because the non-residents are paying more of a fee. Therefore, the Maryland Sika Coalition is trying to set the antler point restriction to help decrease the 'shoot them all up' mentality and help protect the resources for the future. Also, it creates revenue for the DNR and the State.
5. Assistant Secretary Peditto reported that staff received this information for the first time through a legislature member, with a proposal package including fees, penalties, and some information related to antler point restrictions. Staff were responsive to the lawmaker in that process as far back as December. Staff completed an analysis that found around 42 non-residents killed multiple Sika deer.
6. Assistant Secretary Peditto added that as part of the WHS process and developing concepts presented first to the stakeholders and then ultimately to the larger public, staff analyzed the value of the antler point restriction, changing seasons, and bag limits. As the Commission members know, the antler point restriction did not come up at the January stakeholders meeting. Staff are substantially pressured to reduce the deer population, so antler point restriction and changes to overall bag limits would likely reduce the number of deer taken, and the Commission could imagine the pushback WHS would receive on that front.
7. Associate Director Eyler explained that the Department previously proposed antler point restriction for Sika deer, but staff could not get consensus from the stakeholders, so staff never enacted the restriction.
8. Associate Director Eyler indicated that the hunter harvest data demonstrates no need for antler point restrictions for Sika deer because the hunter harvest comprises only 27% spike antlered Sika deer without restrictions. There is a relatively small number of non-residents who hunt Sika deer. In reference to the number of non-resident Sika deer stamps sold, which was 3200, staff recognized that the number would go down with the stamp costing \$200. Staff do not perceive a risk to the sika deer population that requires immediate attention.
9. Mr. Lambert recalled when the DNR implemented the antler deer restriction for white-tailed deer, which are thriving in people's backyards. Mr. Lambert commented that white-tailed deer are overpopulated. Mr. Lambert questioned DNR about why there is an antler point restriction on white-tailed deer and not on Sika deer, which is a limited resource.
10. Assistant Secretary Peditto jumped in at the request of Chair Wagner to respond to Mr. Lambert's comment. Assistant Peditto said comparing the Statewide white-tailed deer population to the Sika population is difficult. Many people do not think deer are limited in any sense. Staff and the Commission have been part of the conversations that people wanted white-tailed deer characterized as vermin, and in that case, there would be no antler restrictions, seasons, or bag limits. Staff tried to strike a balance. There is a process for having these types of discussions. When these concepts were presented to staff, it was through the legislative process. Staff provided comments to the lawmaker. The lawmaker decided it would not be pursued during the 2024 Legislative Session, except for the fee change.
11. Chair Wagner concluded that the Commission understands and heard Mr. Lambert's concerns. Implementing antler point restrictions on Sika deer for the 2024-25 season is impossible in the current process. The Commission and staff will review this in the next two-year regulation cycle. Therefore, it will be discussed at the stakeholders' meeting. DNR did respond to this issue. It is not going to happen in this 2024 game regulation cycle. The Commission and staff will monitor the Sika deer population. Chair Wagner expressed appreciation for Mr. Lambert's input.
12. Mr. Lambert followed with a question about spending the Sika deer stamp. Mr. Lambert does not want DNR to hire more staff or buy more vehicles. Mr. Lambert wants the revenue to be used for Sika deer studies. Hunters wish for the revenue to be used accordingly.
 - a. There is no dedicated Sika fund, but the money will be used for wildlife management since it goes into the Wildlife Protection Fund.
 - b. The Department has always focused on Sika deer management and research. DNR has

conducted far more studies on Sika deer in two counties in Maryland than the statewide whitetail population.

- c. Staff have done genetics work, collared hinds for calve survival, conducted numerous habitat studies, and tagged hundreds of Sika deer.
 - d. Staff know more about the Sika deer than the native whitetail deer in the state.
 - e. Money has been devoted to Sika deer management, which will not change. Staff recognize Sika deer as a valuable resource and do not desire to harm the population.
- The public may contact the Members of the Commission at wac.dnr@maryland.gov.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

The following virtual meeting will be held using Google Meet at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 26, 2024.

Attendance

Members:	M. Cole, T.J. Jenkins, S. Keithley, K. Kullberg, J. Parks, J. Schroyer, R. Showalter, M. Smith, and C. Wagner
Absent:	K. Rossignuolo
Guest:	L. Compton, J. Lambert, and K. Thompson
Staff:	B. Eyler, J. Homyack, R. Karger, C. Markin, J. McKnight, P. Peditto, and T. Spencer

**Summary of 2024 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(Final Results - April 15, 2024)**

Number/ Chapter (Cross File) Total: 45	Title	Primary Sponsor	Current Status	Original House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates	Opposite House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates
HB0022 (SB0178)	Agriculture - Pollinator Habitat Plan - Requirements for State Highway Administration	Delegate Ruth	In the Senate - First Reading Finance and Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/07/2024 - 2:30 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0045 (SB0284)	Natural Resources - Sale, Barter, or Exchange of Mounted Specimens From Decedent's Estate	Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 1/31/2024 - 3:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0345 (SB0916)	Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations	Delegate Palakovich Carr	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/14/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0379 (SB0547)	Wildlife - Traveling Animal Acts - Prohibition	Delegate Love	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/14/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0430 (WAC Opposed)	Firearms - Liability Insurance - Public Wearing and Carrying	Delegate Hill	In the House - Hearing 2/28 at 1:00 p.m. (Judiciary)	Judiciary 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM Economic Matters	
HB0444 (SB0339)	Environment - Duck Nest Boxes - Wetlands License Requirements	Delegate Otto	In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor		Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/20/2024 - 1:00 PM
HB0447 (SB0440)	Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation	Delegate Ziegler	In the House - Hearing 2/08 at 1:00 p.m.	Ways and Means 2/08/2024 - 1:00 PM	Budget and Taxation 1/31/2024 - 1:00 PM
HB0481 (SB0367)	Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization	Delegate Hutchinson	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/16/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0497 (SB0508)	Hunting - Nonresident Sika Deer Stamp - Fee Alteration	Delegate Hornberger	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/16/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0530 (SB0645)	Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)	Delegate Boyce	In the House - Hearing 2/29 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/29/2024 - 1:00 PM	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/16/2024 - 9:00 AM
HB0581 (SB0472)	State Government - Permits, Licenses, and Certificates - Processing (Transparent Government Act of 2024)	Speaker	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Health and Government Operations 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Health and Government Operations

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HB0590 (SB0924) (WAC Opposed)	Boating - Migratory Waterfowl Season - Prohibited Acts	Delegate Hutchinson	In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor	Environment and Transportation 2/16/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - Withdrawn by Sponsor
HB0631	Natural Resources - Protection of Beaver Population and Habitat - County Authority (Beaver Believer Act)	Delegate Allen	In the House - Hearing 2/21 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/21/2024 - 1:00 PM	
HB0715 (SB0533)	Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable	Delegate Griffith	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/21/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB0729	Department of the Environment - Nontidal Wetlands - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2024)	Delegate Hill	In the House - Hearing 2/21 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/21/2024 - 1:00 PM	
HB0778	Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting - Migratory Game Birds	Delegate Hornberger	In the House - Hearing 2/21 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/21/2024 - 1:00 PM	
HB0866 (SB0857)	Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Trail Fund and Off- Highway Recreational Vehicle Recreation Oversight Board – Alterations and Establishment	Delegate Buckel	In the House - Hearing 2/29 at 1:00 p.m. (Environment and Transportation)	Environment and Transportation 2/29/2024 - 1:00 PM Ways and Means	Judicial Proceedings 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM
HB0929 (SB0854)	Agriculture – Nuisance Insects	Washington County Delegation	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment	Environment and Transportation 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - Second Reading Passed
HB0957	Natural Resources - Hunting - Tundra Swans	Delegate Hornberger	In the House - Hearing 2/28 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM	
HB0979 (SB0915)	Agriculture - Invasive Plant Species - Regulation (Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act)	Delegate Foley	In the House - Third Reading Passed (105- 30)	Environment and Transportation 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation
HB1129 (SB0902)	Wildlife - Protections and Highway Crossings	Delegate Ruth	In the House - Hearing 2/28 at 1:00 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM Budget and Taxation
HB1190	Pesticides - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions	Delegate Ruth	In the House - Hearing 3/13 at 1:00 p.m.	Health and Government Operations 3/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	

**Summary of 2024 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(Final Results - April 15, 2024)**

HB1473 (SB0983) (WAC Opposed)	Hunting - Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition - Phase-Out	Delegate Stewart	In the House - First Reading House Rules and Executive Nominations	Rules and Executive Nominations	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM
HB1480 (SB0611)	Frederick and Washington Counties - Bow Hunting - Openly Carrying Handguns	Frederick County Delegation	In the House - Hearing 3/20 at 1:00 p.m.	Rules and Executive Nominations	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM
HB1500 (SB0847) (WAC Supports)	Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions	Dorchester County Delegation	In the House - First Reading House Rules and Executive Nominations	Rules and Executive Nominations	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM
SB0178 (HB0022)	Agriculture – Pollinator Habitat Plan – Requirements for State Highway Administration	Senator Klausmeier	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Finance 1/31/2024 - 1:00 PM Education, Energy, and the Environment	In the Senate - First Reading Finance and Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0284 (HB0045)	Natural Resources - Sale, Barter, or Exchange of Mounted Specimens From Decedent's Estate	Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 1/31/2024 - 2:00 PM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0339 (HB0444)	Environment - Duck Nest Boxes - Wetlands License Requirements	Senator Carozza	In the Senate - Withdrawn by Sponsor	Education, Energy, and the Environment	In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor
SB0367 (HB0481)	Natural Resources - Antlerless Deer Hunting Programs - Authorization	Senator Mautz	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0440 (HB0447)	Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation	Senator Elfreth	In the House - Hearing 3/21 at 1:00 p.m.	Budget and Taxation 1/31/2024 - 1:00 PM	Ways and Means 3/21/2024 - 1:00 PM
SB0472 (HB0581)	State Government - Permits, Licenses, and Certificates - Processing (Transparent Government Act of 2024)	President	In the House - First Reading Health and Government Operations	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/22/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0508 (HB0497)	Hunting - Nonresident Sika Deer Stamp - Fee Alteration	Senator Bailey	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0533 (HB0715)	Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable	Senator Gallion	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment

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SB0547 (HB0379)	Wildlife - Traveling Animal Acts - Prohibition	Senator Elfreth	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0611 (HB1480)	Frederick and Washington Counties – Bow Hunting – Openly Carrying Handguns	Senator Folden	In the Senate - Hearing 2/13 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/13/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - Hearing 3/20 at 1:00 p.m.
SB0645 (HB0530)	Maryland Trails Advisory Committee and the Maryland Office of Trails - Establishment (Great Maryland Trails Act)	Senator Elfreth	In the Senate - Hearing 2/16 at 9:00 a.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/16/2024 - 9:00 AM	Environment and Transportation 2/29/2024 - 1:00 PM
SB0847 (HB1500)	Dorchester County - Sunday Hunting - Repeal of Time Restrictions	Senator Mautz	In the Senate - Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading House Rules and Executive Nominations
SB0854 (HB0929)	Agriculture – Nuisance Insects	Washington County Senators	In the Senate - Second Reading Passed	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/08/2024 - 9:00 AM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0857 (HB0866)	Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Trail Fund and Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle Recreation Oversight Board - Alterations and Establishment	Senator McKay	In the Senate - Hearing 2/28 at 1:00 p.m.	Judicial Proceedings 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM	Environment and Transportation 2/29/2024 - 1:00 PM Ways and Means
SB0902 (HB1129)	Wildlife – Protections and Highway Crossings	Senator Lewis Young	In the Senate - Second Reading Passed with Amendments	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM Budget and Taxation	Environment and Transportation 2/28/2024 - 1:00 PM
SB0915 (HB0979)	Agriculture – Invasive Plant Species – Regulation (Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act)	Senator Brooks	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 3/05/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - Third Reading Passed (105-30)
SB0916 (HB0345)	Fish and Wildlife - Endangered and Threatened Species - Definitions, Petitions, and Regulations	Senator Brooks	In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/16/2024 - 9:00 AM	In the Senate - First Reading Education, Energy, and the Environment
SB0924 (HB0590)	Boating - Migratory Waterfowl Season - Prohibited Acts	Senator Mautz	In the Senate - Withdrawn by Sponsor	Education, Energy, and the Environment	In the House - Withdrawn by Sponsor

**Summary of 2024 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
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SB0983 (HB1473)	Hunting - Lead and Lead-Based Ammunition - Phase-Out	Senator Lewis Young	In the Senate - Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Energy, and the Environment 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM	In the House - First Reading House Rules and Executive Nominations
SB1097	Public Safety - Firearm Safety and Firearm Crimes	Senator Smith	In the House - First Reading Judiciary	Judicial Proceedings 2/27/2024 - 1:00 PM	Judiciary

 Sent to the Governor for signature

Jurisdiction	Region	Drone regulation (Y or N)	Can Drones be Used for Hunting (Y or N)	Can Drones be Used for Recovery (Y or N)	Web Page Link	Regulation/Law Language	Comments
Maryland	NE & SE	N	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Texas	SE	Y	N	N	https://tpwd.texas.gov/warden/law-enforcement-faq/drones-uavs	https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=31&pt=2&ch=65&sch=F&rl=Y	UAVs can be used to locate feral hogs but not deer
Louisiana	SE	TBD	N	Y	N/A	Use of Drones for the Recovery of Wounded Deer or Bear. The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) (commonly referred to as a drone) to aid in the recovery of a wounded deer or bear is prohibited	New game recovery language is in the final stages of the rule-making process. Under consideration 2024 Notice of Intent (2024-25 LDWF WMA and General Hunting Regulations).
South Carolina	SE	Y	N	N		On Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) launching or landing parachutes or parasails or aircraft including models or remotely piloted aircraft and similar devices, except for law enforcement emergencies	Not restricted as long as FAA regulations are observed.
Missouri	SE	Y	N	M		Drones can not be used for hunting in Missouri.	In the process of crafting regulations to allow the use of UAVs for the recovery of deer, turkey, bear, and elk. In the midst of this process and will provide an update if it passes.
Arkansas	SE	TBD					In the middle of their regulation cycle so things are likely to change. Will provide an update mid-May when the cycle is completed.
Virginia	SE/NE	Y	N	Y	https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency15/chapter20/section240/	<p>4VAC15-20-240. Use of drones for certain activities prohibited.</p> <p>A. Except as authorized by the director or the director's designee, it shall be unlawful at any time for any person to use a drone or unmanned aircraft:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To hunt, take, or kill a wild animal or to drive or herd any wild animal for the purpose of hunting, trapping, or killing. 2. To harass any wild animal. For the purposes of this section, "harass" means any action that creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns, which include breeding, feeding, or sheltering. 3. On department-owned lands, except that department employees and contractors or agents acting on behalf of the department may use drones or other unmanned aircraft when addressing human safety, law enforcement, management, or other needs approved by the department. 4. It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or assist another to hunt on the same calendar day on a property after having used a drone or unmanned aircraft to locate or surveil any wild animal during any open season. <p>B. No part of this section shall be construed to restrict the use of drones or other unmanned aircraft for wildlife management activities conducted or authorized by the department, by employees of the United States government or any of its agencies whose responsibility includes fisheries and wildlife management, or by county, city, or town animal control officers in the performance of their official duties.</p>	
Quebec	NE	Y	N	N	https://www.legisquebec.gc.ca/en/document/cs/C-61.1	<p>27.1. No person may use an aircraft to locate or drive an animal so that it can be hunted.</p> <p>In this section, the term "drive" means "to guide animals in a given direction.</p> <p>2021, c. 24, s. 22.</p>	In this Act, "aircraft" means any machine capable of deriving support in the atmosphere from reactions of the air, including a drone

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Vermont	NE	Y	N	N	https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10APPENDIX/001/00020	<p>Title 10 Appendix : Vermont Fish and Wildlife Regulations Chapter 001 : Game Subchapter 001 : General Provisions (Cite as: 10 App. V.S.A. § 20) § 20. Aerial Hunting</p> <p>1.0 Authority</p> <p>This rule is adopted pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4081(a). In adopting this rule, the Fish and Wildlife Board is following the policy established by the general assembly that the protection, propagation, control, management, and conservation of fish, wildlife and furbearing animals in this state is in the interest of the public welfare and that the safeguarding of this valuable resource for the people of the State requires a constant and continual vigilance. In accordance with 10 V.S.A § 4084(a)(4), the Fish and Wildlife Board has the authority to prescribe the manner and means of taking any species or variety, and including reporting and tagging of game.</p> <p>2.0 Purpose</p> <p>The purpose of this rule is to restrict the taking of wild animals by use of aircraft and drones.</p> <p>3.0 Definitions 3.1 "Aircraft" means a contrivance used for navigation of or flight in the air and specifically includes, but is not limited to, planes, helicopters, hang-gliders, hot air balloons and any other device that allows a person to fly or hover above the ground.</p> <p>3.2 "Take or taking" as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 4001: pursuing, shooting, hunting, killing, capturing, trapping, snaring and netting fish, birds and quadrupeds and all lesser acts, such as disturbing, harrying or worrying or wounding or placing, setting, drawing or using any net or other device commonly used to take fish or wild animals, whether they result in the taking or not; and shall include every attempt to take and every act of assistance to every other person in taking or attempting to take fish or wild animals, provided that when taking is allowed by law, reference is had to taking by lawful means and in lawful manner.</p> <p>3.3 "Unmanned aerial vehicle" means any device capable of flying in the air which is remotely, automatically or otherwise piloted without an occupant, including but not limited to drones.</p> <p>3.4 "Wild animal" as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 4001: all animals, including birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles, other than domestic animals.</p> <p>4.0 Aerial Hunting and Taking Prohibitions; Generally.</p> <p>4.1 It shall be unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take wild animals while a person is in an aircraft.</p> <p>4.2 It shall be unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take wild animals by use of an UAV.</p> <p>4.3 It shall be unlawful for any person within an aircraft, or with the use of a drone or UAV, to:</p> <p>(a) attempt to locate, surveil, or aid or assist in attempting to locate or surveil any wild animal, for the purpose of taking or attempting to take the wild animal; or</p> <p>(b) drive or harass any wild animal, or otherwise aid or assist in taking or attempting to take a wild animal.</p> <p>5.0 Authorized Exceptions.</p> <p>Nothing in this rule shall be construed to relieve or modify the requirement to comply with applicable state and federal regulations, regarding aircraft and UAVs or, to apply to qualified personnel carrying out their lawful duties, in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations and permits, regarding aircraft and "UAVs". (Added 2015, Fish and Wildlife Board Reg., eff. Mar. 14, 2015.)</p>	<p>A little related information – we (really our F&W Board, but on the recommendation of our Department) recently denied a petition to allow the use of drones for recovery of wounded game. The primary reason being that the hunter could not know the animal was dead prior to deploying a drone, so it would inevitably result in the use of drones to take animals, which is illegal. Everyone was supportive of the concept but felt it would create far too much gray area.</p>

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New Hampshire	NE	Y	N	N	https://gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state_agencies/fis300.html See Fis 312	<p>PART FIS 312 USE OF DRONES, SMART RIFLES, AND LIVE ACTION GAME CAMERAS</p> <p>Fis 312.01 Definitions.</p> <p>(a) "Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)" means any device capable of flight which is remotely, automatically, or otherwise piloted without an occupant, including, but not limited to, drones.</p> <p>(b) "Smart rifle" means any firearm that is equipped with one or more of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A target tracking system; (2) An electronically-controlled, electronically-assisted, or computer-linked trigger; or (3) A ballistics computer. <p>(c) "Live-action game camera" means any device capable of recording and transmitting photographic or video data wirelessly to a remote device, such as a computer or smart phone. "Live-action game camera" does not include game cameras that merely record photographic or video data and store such data for later use, as long as the device cannot transmit data wirelessly.</p> <p>(d) "Take" or "taking" means pursuing, shooting, hunting, killing, capturing, trapping, snaring, and netting wildlife, and all lesser acts, such as disturbing, harrying, worrying, wounding, or placing, setting, drawing, or using any net or other device commonly used to take wildlife, whether they result in taking or not, and includes every attempt to take and every act of assistance to every other person in taking or attempting to take wildlife, in accordance with RSA 207:1, XXVII.</p> <p>Fis 312.02 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.</p> <p>(a) No person shall take or attempt to take wildlife by use of a UAV.</p> <p>(b) No person shall use a UAV to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Attempt to locate, surveil, or aid or assist in any attempt to locate or surveil any wildlife, for the purpose of taking or attempting to take the wildlife; (2) Use in any manner to communicate the location or approximate location of any wildlife to any person on the ground for the purpose of taking or attempting to take the wildlife; or (3) Drive or harass any wildlife, or otherwise aid or assist in taking or attempting to take wildlife. <p>(c) The provisions of this section shall not apply to the actions of law enforcement officers and personnel of the fish and game department in the performance of their official duties.</p>	
Tennessee	SE	Y	N	N	https://www.tn.gov/twra/guide/hunting-regulations.html#:~:text=UAV%20(unmanned%20aerial%20vehicles)%20cannot,used%20to%20hunt%20any%20wildlife	"UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) cannot be used to hunt wildlife"	As of right now, it is illegal to use drones in any capacity for the purposes of hunting in the state of Tennessee. By definition, game recovery falls under the act of hunting.
North Carolina	SE	Y	N	Unknow	chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://www.ncleg.gov/enactedlegislation/statutes/pdf/bychapter/chapter_14.pdf	<p>§ 14-401.24. Unlawful possession and use of unmanned aircraft systems. (a) It shall be a Class E felony for any person to possess or use an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system that has a weapon attached. (b) It shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person to fish or to hunt using an unmanned aircraft system. (c) (d) The following definitions apply to this section: (1) To fish.— As defined in G.S. 113-130, except when an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system is used during, immediately preparatory to, or immediately subsequent to the taking of fish for (i) spotting; locating; recording, broadcasting, or streaming video of fish; or (ii) deploying bait. (2) (3) (4) (5) To hunt.— As defined in G.S. 113-130. Unmanned aircraft.— As defined in G.S. 15A-300.1. Unmanned aircraft system.— As defined in G.S. 15A-300.1. Weapon.— Those weapons specified in G.S. 14-269, 14-269.2, 14-284.1, or 14-288.8 and any other object capable of inflicting serious bodily injury or death when used as a weapon. This section shall not prohibit possession or usage of an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system that is authorized by federal law or regulation. (2014-100, s. 34.30(d); 2023-69, s. 2.6(a).)</p>	From JT research

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Maine	NE	Y	N	Unknown	https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/12/title12sec11216.html	<p>§11216. Hunting with aid of aircraft</p> <p>1. Prohibition on use of aircraft to hunt. A person on the ground or airborne may not use an aircraft to aid or assist in hunting:</p> <p>A. Bear; [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]</p> <p>B. Deer; or [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]</p> <p>C. Moose. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]</p> <p>[PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]</p> <p>2. Penalties. The following penalties apply to this section.</p> <p>A. A person who violates subsection 1 without the taking of a bear, deer or moose commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged. [PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §148 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]</p> <p>B. A person who violates subsection 1 and takes a bear, deer or moose commits a Class E crime for which the court shall impose a fine of not less than \$500, none of which may be suspended. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]</p> <p>C. A person who violates subsection 1 without the taking of a bear, deer or moose after having been adjudicated as having committed 3 or more civil violations under this Part within the previous 5-year period commits a Class E crime. [PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §149 (NEW); PL 2003, c. 655, Pt. B, §422 (AFF).]</p>	From JT research

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New York	NE	Y	N	N	https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/ENV/11-0901	<p>SECTION 11-0901 Prohibitions Environmental Conservation (ENV) CHAPTER 43-B, ARTICLE 11, TITLE 9 § 11-0901. Prohibitions.</p> <p>1. No person while in or on a motor vehicle, as defined in section 11-0931 of this chapter, shall take wildlife other than migratory game birds, or use any lights on any such vehicle for such purpose.</p> <p>* 2. Wildlife shall not be taken on or from any public highway, except:</p> <p>a. that in the forest preserve counties it may be taken from highways other than state, county or town highways; and</p> <p>b. by a nuisance wildlife specialist with a permit issued pursuant to section 11-0522 of this article provided that such activities are in furtherance of the site-specific deer management plan.</p> <p>c. by a nuisance wildlife specialist with a permit issued pursuant to section 11-0522-a of this article provided that such activities are in furtherance of the site-specific deer management plan.</p> <p>* NB Effective until January 1, 2027</p> <p>* 2. Wildlife shall not be taken on or from any public highway, except that in the forest preserve counties it may be taken from highways other than state, county or town highways.</p> <p>* NB Effective January 1, 2027</p> <p>3. a. Migratory game birds shall be taken only as permitted by regulations of the department adopted pursuant to section 11-0307.</p> <p>b. Wild deer and bear shall not be taken except by gun, crossbow or by long bow. Where an open season, set forth in the table of open seasons in section 11-0907 of this title or otherwise established by law or fixed by regulation, is specified as an open season for taking such game by shotgun or long bow only, or is specified as an open season for taking such game by long bow only, they shall not be taken except as so specified.</p> <p>c. Wild small game and wild upland game birds shall be taken only by longbow or gun, or by the use of raptors as provided in title 10 of this article, except that:</p> <p>(1) skunk, raccoon, bobcat, coyote, fox, mink and muskrat may be taken in any manner not prohibited in this section or in title 11 of the Fish and Wildlife Law;</p> <p>(2) frogs may also be taken by spearing, catching with the hands, or by the use of a club or hook; and</p> <p>(3) crossbows may be used but only by licensees who are fourteen years of age or older.</p> <p>d. Muskrat shall not be taken by the use of a spear and shall not be taken by shooting except that until the state of Vermont shall prohibit taking of muskrats on Lake Champlain by shooting, muskrats may be taken, by shooting with a firearm not larger than twenty-two caliber, on Lake Champlain, exclusive of the tributary streams flowing into such lake. Possession of pierced or stabbed muskrats shall be presumptive evidence that they were unlawfully taken. Wild mink shall not be taken by the use of firearms in the Northern Zone nor elsewhere within the state with a firearm larger than twenty-two caliber. Skunk, raccoon, bobcat, mink and muskrat shall not be taken by the use of smoke, chemicals, gas or poison. Beaver, fisher and otter shall not be hunted.</p> <p>e. Wild pheasant shall be taken only by shotgun or long bow, or by the use of raptors as provided in title 10 of this article. Except as specifically authorized by regulation of the department adopted pursuant to section 11-1007 or whenever the department determines that the taking of hen pheasants will result in better pheasant management and not be detrimental to the natural propagation of such pheasants, only male wild pheasants shall be taken.</p> <p>f. No wildlife shall be taken with an arrow with an explosive head or shaft, or with an arrow, dart or any device, propelled by any means, that is used for the purpose of injecting or delivering any type of drug into the blood system of such wildlife. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as prohibiting a wildlife biologist or employee of the department or anyone acting under a license from the department from using any method to take wildlife if he is doing so within the scope of his employment for the department, or pursuant to the license issued by the department.</p> <p>g. Wildlife shall not be taken by the use of a device commonly called a spear gun.</p>	<p>"No person shall hunt deer: with the aid of a dog, or aircraft of any kind,"</p> <p>NY Law prohibits hunting deer with "aircraft of any kind" and DEC considers tracking and recovery of deer to be part of the hunt. Therefore, drones are not allowed for deer hunting or recovery in NY and do not have specific regs for drones</p> <p>Newsletter published on Nov 21, 2023 stated, "Drones not allowed for deer recovery in New York"</p>

