



HOUSE BILL 614: Scientific Wildlife Management Act.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:	House Wildlife Resources	Date:	April 11, 2017
Introduced by:	Reps. Malone, Adams, B. Turner	Prepared by:	Jennifer McGinnis Committee Counsel
Analysis of:	Filed Edition		

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 614 would: (i) enact language providing that the people of the State have a fundamental privilege to hunt, trap, and fish, and that public hunting and fishing are the preferred means of management and control of marine, estuarine, and wildlife resources for the State agencies charged with those resources oversight; and, (ii) repeal statutory provisions related to hunting on Sundays.*

BILL ANALYSIS and CURRENT LAW:

Section 1 of the bill would add language to the statutes to provide that the people of the State have the fundamental privilege to hunt, trap, fish, and harvest marine, estuarine, and wildlife resources subject only to the acts of the General Assembly and regulations adopted by the State agencies with jurisdiction over such matters, to promote conservation and management of these resources and preserve the ability of the people of the State to hunt and fish. The language further establishes that public hunting and fishing "shall be a preferred means of managing and controlling marine, estuarine, and wildlife resources," provided that the language is not to be construed to modify or repeal any provision of law relating to trespass or property rights.

Current law provides that the marine and estuarine and wildlife resources of the State belong to the people of the State as a whole. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) are charged with stewardship of these resources.

Section 2 of the bill would repeal the statute that allows hunting on Sundays. The bill would also repeal a provision that allowed counties to enact ordinances to prohibit Sunday hunting, effective October 1, 2017.

Current law authorizes hunting on Sundays, subject to the following restrictions:

- Hunting with firearms between the hours of 9:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. on Sunday is prohibited.
- Hunting migratory birds with firearms on Sunday is prohibited.
- The use of a firearm to take deer that are run or chased by dogs on Sunday is prohibited.
- Hunting on Sunday with a firearm within 500 yards of a place of worship or a residence not owned by the landowner is prohibited.

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- Hunting on Sunday with a firearm in a county having a population greater than 700,000 people is prohibited.

The statutes also authorize the WRC, subject to requirements and limitations that may be established by statute, to establish by rule the manner of take for wild animals and wild birds, and to fix seasons and bag limits upon wild animals and wild birds authorized to be taken that it deems necessary or desirable in the interests of the conservation of wildlife resources.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This bill would become effective October 1, 2017.