

**WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

**Deer**

Maryland farmers have an increasing problem with deer damage to crops. We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to implement effective practices to control the deer population in our state. These practices should include, but not be limited to the following:

- (1) Allow hunters to harvest a buck after they have harvested one doe during all hunting seasons. #2001
- (2) More accurately estimate the deer population within the state, using deer/vehicle collision reports and other methods. #2000
- (3) Establish a deer population threshold in each of the four current DNR deer management areas. #2000
- (4) Establish new seasons or a longer gun season wherever necessary to control the deer herd.
- (5) In counties with excessive deer population increasing or eliminating the bag limit. #2001
- (6) To continue the use of rifles to hunt deer in counties where allowed.
- (7) To work with local jurisdictions to open appropriate public lands to deer hunting.
- (8) The state designating the number of deer allowed to be killed.

Several Maryland counties allow spotlighting of deer for viewing purposes only until 9 p.m. This practice tends to be abused, resulting in illegal poaching and trespassing. We recommend that those county Farm Bureaus involved and the Department of Natural Resources work to outlaw this practice and have spotlighting of deer made illegal throughout the state. #97

We encourage the forest management of trees on public owned land in such a manner that would establish and maintain a desirable habitat for wildlife, especially deer. #96

We support a requirement that property purchased by the state be required to have a plan to manage and control wildlife populations. #2001

We propose that the Department of Natural Resources plant some state land in wildlife food as it suggests we do. We recommend opening the land for hunting and charging a fee to defray the cost of planting the wildlife crops. #97

We urge that deer harvested be utilized by charitable organizations wherever possible. #98

We support the "Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry" program. #98

When harvesting animals under crop damage permits, state and federal agencies should approve and encourage, through inspection of meat and other methods, the sale and/or donation of said animals.

We oppose DNR's conflicting policy that pays a landowner to grow habitat and/or feed for deer and then later gives the same landowner permits to kill the deer because of crop damage. #98

**Waterfowl**

We urge DNR to do more to control resident geese in Maryland by authorizing additional resident goose hunting dates including but not limited to a Spring (April) hunting season and increasing the bag limits during those dates or by other means which limit reproduction. #2001

We recommend that the opening date for the goose season in the state be uniform throughout, starting about November 5th.

We strongly support the continuation of the migrating Canada goose season. We support increasing bag limits. # 2001

We request DNR to reimburse farmers for crop damage caused by waterfowl. #98

We urge the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to implement effective practices to limit the non-migrating wild goose population in our state. We further urge the Department of Natural Resources to follow the federal recommendations of season and bag limits for non-migrating geese. #2001

We recommend legislation that would require that land blinds be prohibited within an appropriate distance of property lines.

We request that DNR change the duck blind license procedure as follows:

- a. One license will cover the entire shoreline.
- b. Application for license and renewals will be mailed to the shore owner. #98

Many farms raise waterfowl on their farm ponds for reasons other than hunting. We urge the Department of Natural Resources to define a specific distance, (for example, a 200-yard radius) around a posted pond where no waterfowl hunting can occur.

**Black Bear**

We recommend that the Department of Natural Resources continue in its effort toward resolving the problem with black bear and request the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division to seriously consider having a limited Black Bear season in areas where bears are a problem. #98 We urge DNR to institute a black bear hunting season in Garrett County. #2001

We oppose the movement of black bear by government agencies from western Maryland to other counties. #2000

**Crop Damage - Economic Losses**

We believe that DNR should take the following actions:

- (1) Issue permits for additional deer kill to farmers when complaints are received and investigations support the claims of loss or damage.
- (2) Reimbursement of farmers for crop losses due to deer damage. #98
- (3) Allow farmers to control deer on public lands rented for agricultural purposes. #98
- (4) The landowner, and/or permit holder, should have the option to use the weapon of choice, within county regulations, for filling permits during deer season.
- (5) When permits are issued for deer kill to protect crops, the permit should allow for up to 10 percent of the kill to be antlered deer.
- (6) A landowner/farmer should have the right to destroy a deer whenever the deer are destroying a crop. #98
- (7) Farmers should be allowed to extend the hunting on current crop damage permits to one hour after sundown. #2001
- (8) That the deer management permit be valid for a year, reporting the harvest at the end of the year. #96
- (9) Allow controlled bait stations to attract deer for controlled night harvesting then processed deer will be donated to soup kitchens. #2001

**Furbearers**

The Eastern Coyote is migrating into Maryland from the Virginia and Pennsylvania borders. Due to the damage and destruction to farm animals and wildlife for which the coyote is noted, it is in the best interest of farmers in Maryland to encourage the Department of Natural Resources to list the Eastern Coyote as an unprotected mammal or fur bearer in Maryland DNR regulations.

We urge the repeal of the ban on the harvesting of red foxes. #97

**Hunting Ethics and Liability**

The landowner shall not be held liable for any accidents on his property when hunting is taking place.

We recommend legislation that would provide for hunting violations to be handled in a manner similar to motor vehicle violations, which would remove the violation from the record after an appropriate time of good behavior.

**Hunting Methods and Seasons**

The opening dates for all seasons should be announced six months in advance so that all interested parties can appropriately schedule their activities. Furthermore, once the rules and regulations have been established for a season they should remain in effect and not be changed during that season.

We believe that the shotgun season for deer hunting should be moved one week earlier and remain for the same length of time. #2001

We oppose legislation banning use of steel leg hold traps in Maryland.

In cooperation with State Game Management efforts, we support the privileges of citizens to continue to hunt, trap, and fish in accordance with State Game Management regulations. #97

We are opposed to allowing any increases to Sunday hunting other than what currently exists. #2001

We oppose the introduction of non-native wildlife species to any area of the state. #98

The depredation permit process should be simplified and made easier for farmers to obtain. #98

**ZONING**

We recognize the concern of historical and environmental preservationists in their efforts to preserve such land areas against further development. However, the landowners involved should not be required to suffer a loss in the equity of their land to land use criteria changes. Any change in zoning or regulations that would cause loss of equity in land shall provide for just compensation to the landowner. Therefore, there should be no down zoning on agriculture land.

Zoning regulations should be determined at the local, not state level.

Furthermore, these powers should not be delegated to the state by either legislation or default. #97

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