

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 187 (St. Mary's County Delegation)
Environment and Transportation Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

St. Mary's County - Foxes and Hounds - Repeal of Provisions

This bill repeals the prohibitions against trapping a fox in any manner, shooting a fox while it is being pursued by hounds, and shooting or molesting a hound while chasing a fox in St. Mary's County. The bill also repeals the related misdemeanor penalties for violating these prohibitions.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: In St. Mary's County, it is illegal (1) to trap a fox in any manner, or to set a trap to catch a fox and (2) to shoot a fox while it is being pursued by hounds, or to shoot or molest a hound while chasing a fox. If found guilty of either provision, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, liable for a fine of \$25 for trapping or setting a trap to catch a fox, and a fine of between \$5 and \$25 for shooting a fox while it is being pursued by hounds, or molesting a hound while chasing a fox. St. Mary's County advises that the provisions being repealed by the bill are obsolete and are not currently enforced.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals, including fur-bearing mammals like foxes, by

regulation each year. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. The fox hunting and trapping season for the 2016-2017 hunting season for St. Mary's County is November 1, 2016, through February 1, 2017.

Generally, in order to hunt a fox, which is a fur-bearing mammal, both residents and nonresidents must have a furbearer permit. Maryland residents do not need a trapping permit in order to trap furbearers in the State, but must have either an individual furbearer permit or be authorized under a group furbearer permit. Nonresidents must have, among other license and permit requirements, a nonresident trapping license to trap furbearers in the State.

According to DNR, there has been a recent increase in rabies in the fox population throughout southern Maryland. To the extent that repealing the prohibition on trapping and shooting foxes in St. Mary's County reduces the fox population, there may also be a reduction in the incidence of rabies there.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 103 (Senator Waugh) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 20, 2017
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