

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

Senate Bill 930 (Senator Bailey)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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Natural Resources - Resident Canada Geese - Restrictions on Shooting in Charles County

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This bill prohibits the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from authorizing a person to shoot resident Canada geese in Charles County during late resident Canada goose season unless DNR extends the same privileges to people in St. Mary's County. The bill defines "resident Canada goose" to mean a Canada goose that either (1) nests in the State during the months of March, April, May, or June or (2) resides in the State during the months of June, July, or August. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2020.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill does not materially affect State finances or operations. DNR can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources.

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

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal overall, but potential meaningful impact on some small businesses in Charles County, as discussed below.

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Analysis

**Current Law/Background:** Statute is silent with regard to resident Canada geese. A Canada goose is considered a wetland game bird, which is a type of migratory game bird. A "migratory game bird" means any wetland game bird, dove, or woodcock, or any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of any of them. A "wetland game bird" means brant, coots, ducks, gallinules, geese, mergansers, rails, snipe, and swan or any part, egg, offspring, or dead body of any of them (including birds raised in captivity and released to the wild or

otherwise used for hunting purposes). A Maryland migratory game bird stamp, in addition to a hunting license, is required to hunt all migratory game birds (coots, doves, rails, snipe, waterfowl, and woodcock). In 2019, the migratory Canada goose season was December 20 through January 4 and January 14 through January 31. There is a bag limit of one per day, with a possession limit of three. St. Mary's County and the portion of Charles County east of Route 301 are included in the Atlantic Population Hunt Zone where this season is applicable.

There are also two resident Canada goose seasons. The timing of these seasons is based on the times when migratory Canada geese are not present. The early resident Canada goose season in the Eastern Zone is September 2 through 14, and includes St. Mary's County and the part of Charles County east of Route 301. The late resident Canada goose season is November 23 through November 29 and December 16 through March 10, and includes the portion of Charles County west of Route 301. St. Mary's County is not included in the late resident Canada goose season. The zones for these resident Canada goose seasons are developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) based on bands collected from Canada geese. DNR advises that it does not have authority to expand the late resident Canada goose season to St. Mary's County.

Regulations also establish conditions under which a person can obtain a permit to use lethal means to control resident Canada geese outside the provisions of the Canada goose hunting seasons established annually by USFWS. An agricultural producer must have a resident Canada goose depredation permit to use lethal means to control resident Canada geese outside of the seasons established by USFWS. A resident Canada goose depredation permit, which is managed by DNR in conjunction with USFWS, enables an agricultural producer to control resident Canada geese at agricultural facilities through harassment and lethal means depending on the season.

**Small Business Effect:** If DNR must close the late resident Canada goose season in Charles County, small businesses that support hunting, including sporting goods stores, restaurants, and motels, may see a loss of business.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Charles County; St. Mary's County; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 2, 2020  
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