

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1067 (Delegate Stein)
Environment and Transportation

Natural Resources - Wildlife Management - Nighttime Hunting

This bill authorizes (1) the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow a person who holds a deer cooperator permit or an agricultural deer cooperator permit, as specified, to hunt deer at nighttime for up to two months each year and (2) a holder of a deer cooperator permit or agricultural deer cooperator permit hunting deer at nighttime (as authorized by DNR) to hunt using a light, as specified. By December 1, 2023, and annually thereafter, DNR must report to specified committees of the General Assembly on the following from the preceding calendar year: (1) the number of deer cooperator and agricultural deer cooperator permits issued, including an analysis of the results of each permit compared to the operational plan for the permit; (2) the number and type of wildlife taken at nighttime in the State; and (3) to the extent practicable, an analysis of the socioeconomic impact of nighttime hunting. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances. DNR can update regulations as necessary and comply with the bill's reporting requirements with existing budgeted staff and resources.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law:

Hunting at Nighttime

Hunting any game bird or mammal at “nighttime” is generally prohibited, except for specified species. “Nighttime” means the time beginning one-half hour after sunset and ending one-half hour before sunrise the following day, as published in DNR’s hunter’s guide, unless otherwise provided by statute. With specified exceptions, a person may not hunt at nighttime with a light, including with the headlights of a vehicle. Raccoon, fox, coyote, or opossum may be hunted on foot at nighttime during open season with the use of a dog or light, or both.

Deer Cooperator and Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permits

Deer cooperators are businesses that provide deer control assistance through nonlethal and lethal deer management techniques. A deer cooperator permit is valid for one year, and the annual fee is \$100. There are two types of deer cooperator permits available, a standard deer cooperator permit and an agricultural deer cooperator permit. The standard deer cooperator permit allows the applicant to conduct deer removal operations on any lands that are approved through an operational plan. The agricultural deer cooperator permit is site-specific and is only valid for agricultural lands actively farmed for commercial crops. Applicants for an agricultural deer cooperator permit, and shooters acting under an agricultural deer cooperator permit, must be the owner, lessee, or employee of the property. Anyone shooting under the authority of either the standard or agricultural deer cooperator permit must pass both a written and shooter qualification test.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 1, 2022
fnu2/lgc

Analysis by: Kathleen P. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510