

**SENATE BILL 500** to expand Sunday hunting with a firearm during deer season on both public and private land in Talbot County; also applies to Turkey season

**SENATE BILL 312** to expand hunting on Sundays for bow hunters from the first Sunday in October through mid-January Talbot and Dorchester Counties

***Do not support these bills! Leave the remaining Sundays open to all Maryland enthusiasts – Share our Land!***

**FACT: in 2013-14 Deer Season Results Report: Caroline County is up 6.9% and Dorchester County is up 13.0% with existing 5 Archery & 1-3 Firearms Sundays**

<http://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2014/02/11/2013-14-deer-season-results-released>

***BILL:***...In addition to businesses directly affected by hunting, the bill may also affect several other types of businesses. Most farms, for example, are small businesses. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service estimated that Maryland deer caused \$7.7 million in agricultural damage statewide. Based on past estimates of crop damage losses, DNR estimates that an individual deer causes \$33.05 in agricultural damage annually. To the extent that the bill reduces crop damage, farmers benefit.

**FACT: in the Wildlife Damage to Agriculture Interest in Maryland report with 99 Eastern Shore Farmers said they were 68% Very Satisfied with the Crop Damage Permits; 20% were Somewhat Satisfied and Less than 5% were Dissatisfied. This program is state-wide and year-round and the DNR says this program is underutilized. There's more opportunity here for hunters.**

([http://mda.maryland.gov/about\\_mda/Documents/wildlifedamageag.pdf](http://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Documents/wildlifedamageag.pdf))

**FACT: Success Story—Chester River QDM Cooperative (without Sunday Hunting)**

- Grown to include 10+/- farms in Queen Anne's County with more requesting membership.
- Hunting rules include strict limits on bucks taken (via antler size).
- Places intense hunting pressure on adult does (most productive in herd).

**Results:**

- Hunters have reduced deer densities nicely.
- Crop yields have gone up considerably.

([http://mda.maryland.gov/about\\_mda/Documents/wildlifedamageag.pdf](http://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Documents/wildlifedamageag.pdf))

***BILL:***..The bill may also affect vehicle owners and businesses involved in the repair of vehicles. DNR estimates that there were 31,300 deer-vehicle collisions in 2013 and that the average cost per collision is \$3,400. Reducing the deer population in the affected counties will likely reduce the number of deer-vehicle collisions, which will have a positive impact on vehicle owners and a corresponding negative impact on vehicle repair businesses.

**FACT: Caroline experienced 57 deer collisions (0.18%) while Dorchester County reported 77 (0.24%) - one of the lowest in the state.**

**FACT: Maryland White-Tailed Deer Plan 2009-2018**

[http://dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Hunt\\_Traps/pdfs/2009-2018MarylandWTDeerPlan.pdf](http://dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Hunt_Traps/pdfs/2009-2018MarylandWTDeerPlan.pdf)

**Recreation Goal (pg 43): Provide the opportunity for all citizens to safely, fairly and ethically enjoy diverse deer-related recreational experiences and traditions consistent with established deer population trend goals.**

*Objective 3, Strategy 3:* Ensure that deer hunting regulations are responsive to the needs and traditions of the hunting community while remaining compatible with the expectations of the majority of the public.

*Objective 4, Strategy 3:* Evaluate the safety and efficacy of new hunting techniques, seasons or weapons and review these for compatibility with hunter expectations and acceptance by the general public.

***FACT: Large Landowners (who support hunting) and Maryland Residents do NOT support Sunday hunting.*** [http://dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Hunt\\_Traps/pdfs/2009-2018MarylandWTDDeerPlan.pdf](http://dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Hunt_Traps/pdfs/2009-2018MarylandWTDDeerPlan.pdf) – Page 64

#### **LANDOWNERS' USES OF LAND AND HUNTING PERMISSION ON LANDS**

*Opposition exceeds support for deer hunting on Sundays in Maryland among Maryland residents.*

Large landowners are like residents in that opposition exceeds support for hunting deer on Sundays.

An overwhelming majority of large landowners allow deer hunting on their property. However, most of those who allow hunting allow only friends and family. Of those who allow others besides friends and family to hunt on their property, just more than a 25% charge hunters for that privilege.

- Reasons for allowing only friends and family include:
- not wanting strangers on the property,
- concern about personal safety,
- limit crowding on the land, the poor behavior of hunters, and legal liability.
- In line with their majority opposition to Sunday hunting, large landowners are less likely to allow Sunday deer

hunting on their property than to allow it. *(Therefore, the hunters might want more Sunday hunting, but the*

*Large Landowners who control the private lands, have final say, and do NOT want Sunday hunting.)*

## **Conclusion:**

*Public lands are already available 6 days a week in Talbot & Dorchester Counties with an additional **9-15** Sundays during the archery & firearm seasons. Not many non-Sundays remain gun and arrow free! To balance the weekends with the public NOT carrying a weapon suggests that Sundays remain open to non-hunters. When walking/riding through the woods or fields, the public can be free to move about without looking over their shoulder for a hunter in their vicinity.*

*WIN/WIN approach: Allowing the Hunters to keep their weekend day, Saturday only, then they are likely to have an uninterrupted, successful hunt without other dogs, horses, human voices and scents interruptions. The public plan their outdoor days to avoid hunting days as much as possible. **Let's keep the balance we have for ALL Marylanders.***

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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