

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 66 (Dorchester County Delegation)  
Environmental Matters

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Dorchester County - Turkey Hunting on Public Land - Sundays

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This emergency bill authorizes turkey hunting on public land in Dorchester County on Sundays during the spring turkey hunting season.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State operations or finances.

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

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes the open season to hunt forest and upland game birds and mammals by regulation each year. DNR may adopt regulations to enlarge, extend, restrict, or prohibit hunting wildlife. Currently, wild turkey hunting takes place during the fall – in only Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties and with a bag limit of one turkey – and the spring. During the 2012-2013 hunting season, turkey hunting is authorized October 27 through November 3, April 18 through May 23, April 13 (junior hunting only), and April 14 (junior hunting on private land in Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, and St. Mary’s counties only).

With specified exceptions, hunting game birds or mammals on Sundays is generally prohibited. Among the exceptions, in Allegany and Garrett counties, a person may hunt turkey on the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, except if it is Easter Sunday. Also, turkey hunting is authorized on private property in Calvert,

Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, and St. Mary's counties on Sundays during the spring turkey hunting season.

**Background:** Maryland's spring turkey hunting season is generally a five-week period running from mid-April through May. During the spring hunting season, only male wild turkeys may be taken by hunters. In spring 2012, approximately 730 hunters harvested 219 turkeys in Dorchester County. This is below the county's 10-year average spring harvest of 254 turkeys.

DNR's annual hunter mail survey estimates that the number of turkey hunters in Maryland has generally declined over the last 10 years. Spring turkey hunting participation peaked in the mid-1990s when the season was opened statewide and has gradually declined since then. The most recent hunter mail survey estimates that 9,889 spring turkey hunters hunted 45,301 days during the 2010-2011 hunting season.

Based on the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, turkey hunters contributed over \$5.0 million to the State's economy in the form of food, lodging, equipment, and transportation while hunting in Maryland.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 2 (Senator Colburn) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** Dorchester County, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 14, 2013  
ncs/lgc

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