

Regulation Changes for the next 2 Years

HUNTING AND TRAPPING REGULATION PROPOSALS

Final Selections

For 2014-2015 and 2015-2016

Changes in Proposals are noted in red, underlined font.

Deer

NOTE: Current Maryland law prohibits DNR from amending Sunday hunting restrictions through the regulatory process without prior approval from the Maryland Legislature. However, DNR has supported legislative efforts to expand Sunday hunting for deer in recent years.

1. Establish a regulation to prohibit the wanton waste of white-tailed and sika deer.

Selected to become a regulation.

Rationale/Goal: To require a person to make every reasonable and legal attempt to take possession of deer killed or wounded while hunting or shooting under the authority of a permit issued by the Department (crop damage permits, sharp shooting permits).

Comments: The regulation would not supersede laws or regulations requiring written permission to enter private land and certain public properties. Deer that have been checked-in may be butchered in the field to allow the hunter to take possession of only the edible parts.

2. To adjust the current zone that limits deer hunting to shotguns only in Frederick County. A draft map of the proposed new zone is attached at the end of this document.

This proposal was dropped due to extensive negative comment from Frederick County residents.

White-tailed Deer

1. Implement an antler point restriction (APR) specifying that no more than two antlered deer harvested per license year (statewide) may have less than three points one inch or longer on each antler present. This would apply in Region A and Region B. Selected to become a regulation.

Rationale/Goal: Yearling buck (i.e. 1½ years old) harvest in Maryland ranges from 50–80% depending on the region and year. The nationwide average is under 40%. Implementing an APR will reduce yearling buck harvest and shift some of the harvest to antlerless deer, aiding with population management.

Comments: Implementing APRs is one of the most common requests the Department receives from deer hunters. Current yearling buck harvest rates are not a significant management concern for the Department, particularly in Region B. The Department recognizes that harvest trends in Region A are more heavily skewed towards yearling bucks. Antlered deer can be harvested in any order concerning the APR, and Junior Hunters are exempt from the APR during all deer seasons.

2. Reduce the bag limit on antlerless deer in Region A to two per year, but no more than one in any weapon season. Selected to become a regulation.

Rationale/Goal: Reducing the antlerless deer bag limit will aid in reducing pressure on this component of the Region A deer population should antler point restrictions be implemented.

Comments: Many hunters remain dissatisfied with the current deer population levels in Region A and think they should be higher. This change will ensure the population remains stable.

The next 2 years regulation selections above should go through. As the process came about some questions seem to repeatedly come up;

Is implementing APR's (antler point restriction's) biologically necessary or are APR's a cultural change? To answer this question it would depend who you ask. Brian Eyler (Maryland's Deer Project Leader) has said at stakeholder's meeting and at public hearings, that APRs are NOT biologically necessary. I'm not trying to explain his wording by explaining the way I took the statement meaning is Whitetail deer will survive without APRs. Sure deer have not only survived deer but populations have exploded since restocking efforts by conservation pioneers.

Many states (including Maryland) enacted laws restricting the number and size of deer harvest to manage the restocking efforts. Deer Management goals were started. Changes in Deer Hunting Regulations may need some culture; refinement to ensure management goals.

Are APR's regulations biologically sound? Yes.

Are APR's a cultural change?

Sure, as much as harvesting does to manage populations was. Deer management goal for the future will need to include informing deer hunters (deer managers) about the benefits of protecting yearling bucks and to garner their support for biologically sound deer management programs. This support is needed to monitor success or lack of effectiveness.

Who will this APR's regulation effect?

Harvest data history shows a small percentage (approximately 38%) of successful hunters harvest one or more deer per year statewide. Of these deer taken, antlerless, and antlered or age and male or female data is not available. Short version is only effected hunters are those who harvest three spikes and/or four point yearlings in Region A or whomever harvests four yearlings, spikes and/or four points in Region B.

Many hunters are already voluntarily passing young bucks, however the percentage of yearlings in the antlered harvest do justify APR's as educational avenue with limited overall effectiveness.

The take home message,

Deer Hunters in the know let young bucks grow.

Respectfully,



E. W. Grimes

Former President of the Maryland State Chapter QDMA