

Summary: A Study of the Social and Economic Impacts of Hunting Migratory Birds on Sunday

Per Section 2 of [House Bill 559](#), the [NC Wildlife Resources Commission](#) (Commission) has been charged with completing a study that includes, but is not limited to, examining the economic and social impacts associated with hunting migratory birds on Sunday. Any potential changes in migratory bird hunting, including the longstanding migratory game bird hunting season structure, must be cautiously considered before determining whether changes to hunting regulations should be implemented. Commission staff and leadership will draw from these results to explore the social and economic impacts of potential alterations to rules regarding hunting migratory birds on Sunday. Study objectives are to:

1. Elicit public perspectives about hunting migratory birds on Sunday;
2. Elicit [Federal Harvest Information Program](#) (HIP) certified hunters' perspectives about hunting migratory birds on Sunday;
3. Explore the economic impacts of hunting migratory birds on Sunday;
4. Prepare final report, due to the Commission on Feb. 28, 2018.

Approach

[Responsive Management, Inc.](#) has been contracted to collect information that will be necessary to determine how to proceed with research and policy concerning hunting migratory birds on Sunday. Specifically, public meetings will inform the Commission what are the public's chief interests on the topic. The Commission will also be able to identify which stakeholders and their views will impact Commission decision-making on the topic. These findings will inform the Commission of future research needs. Responsive Management will hold four public meetings the week of Dec. 11, 2017, and moderate a virtual public meeting that will collect public comments for two months (**Objective 1**). Focus groups will identify problems, approaches, and opportunities that are salient to HIP-certified hunters. Focus groups will a) provide a qualitative assessment of hunter views (i.e., the range of views and concerns), b) explore these views through discussions and personal interactions; and c) provide guidance on the development of the hunter phone survey instrument (**Objective 2**). The phone survey will rigorously quantify HIP-certified hunters' perspectives at a broad scale. An ALVIN-based sampling frame of HIP-certified hunters has been developed, and hunters from inside and outside of North Carolina will be randomly selected to participate. Sampling will be conducted with a 95 percent confidence interval and in proportion to which different sub-populations exist. Survey questions and research categories will be adapted from the 2006 Sunday hunting survey instrument, and new ones will be generated by the focus groups and public meetings. The phone survey instrument will be pretested to safeguard logic, flow, and wording, and revisions to the instrument will be made as necessary to accommodate the migratory bird context and a phone survey lasting 10-15 minutes. Responses will be weighted to reflect real-world proportions and nonresponse bias will be tested (**Objective 3**). Finally, Responsive Management will generate a comprehensive report on the social and economic impacts of hunting migratory birds on Sunday. Along with the report, Responsive Management will provide the Commission with a clean data file of survey responses. (**Objective 4**).